

Original Research Article

# Knowledge and Attitude of Infertile Women towards Child Adoption as Infertility Management in South-Western, Nigeria

Oluwatobi Emmanuel Adesida<sup>1\*</sup>, Oyedunni Sola Arulogun<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of health Promotion and Education, faculty of public health, College of medicine, University of Ibadan

**Article History**

**Received:** 23.08.2023

**Accepted:** 29.09.2023

**Published:** 06.10.2023

**Journal homepage:**

<https://www.easpublisher.com>

**Quick Response Code**



**Abstract:** Infertility is a major societal problem with public health importance in developing countries and child adoption provides an alternative for infertile women to have children but misconceptions, myths and misinformation surrounding child adoption hinders infertile couple from adopting a child. This study was a cross sectional qualitative research carried out to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of infertile women towards child adoption as infertility management among 20 infertile women attending gynecology clinic in a government owned hospital in Southwest Nigeria. Respondents were purposively selected and data was collected with the aid of in-depth interview guide. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Obstacles of child adoption include psychological dissatisfaction and negative reaction of husbands and family members. Husbands' reaction includes preference for biological children and marrying of second wives. Child adoption was psychologically dissatisfying to participants with some suggesting that it will make no difference and that step is a sign of acceptance of defeat in the quest to have biological children. Family dynamics found to hinder the practice of child adoption includes high value for blood relations, blaming of the woman, unpredictable family influence, discrimination against the adopted child, and family not allowing the adopted child to inherit property. To improve attitude and acceptability there is the need for community-wide sensitization programme targeting dispelling of myths and misconceptions and highlighting the benefits of child adoption among key stakeholders.

**Keywords:** Infertility, Child adoption, Knowledge, Attitude, Acceptability, Infertile women.

**Copyright © 2023 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution **4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0)** which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

## INTRODUCTION

Children are the lifeblood of a marriage; they bring happiness and a sense of success. Children are crucial to marriages in the same way that water is to fish. Infertility is a common health problem with devastating psychosocial consequences on the affected couples especially in Africa (Araoye, 2003). In African society many women are depressed and sad because they could not have a child of their own and usually they are blamed for it. Now the times have changed immensely. Although the idea of adopting a child is not new, the trend of adopting an orphan child from an agency is taking firm roots. The number of such parents is noticeably increasing day by day (Nwobodo and Isah, 2011) and a life without a child is not accepted (Orji, Kuti and Fasubaa, 2002). In all traditions, childlessness is seen as a predicament that has the potential to cause threat to the stability of individuals, relationships, and communities

and this problems are not only limited to the developing countries of the world (Rutstein and Shah, 2005) In the past, it was assumed that infertility in Africa did not warrant specific interventions and pragmatic effort since many African countries have simultaneously high rates of fertility. With the paradigm shift that happened after the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, it became obvious that a conceptual reassessment about infertility in Africa is required (Etuk, 2009). Infertility is a universal health issue, and it has been estimated that 8 to 12% of the couples worldwide are infertile (Boivin, Bunting and Collins, 2007). Estimates suggest that between 48 million couples and 186 million individuals live with infertility globally, half of these couples are living in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Rutstein, *et al.*, 2005; Mascarenhas, Flaxman, Boerma, 2012). The rate of infertility in sub-Saharan Africa is very high, with 10% to 30% of married partners affected in Nigeria

\*Corresponding Author: Oluwatobi Emmanuel Adesida

Department of health Promotion and Education, faculty of public health, College of medicine, University of Ibadan

(Chimbatata and Malimba, 2016). It has a harmful mental, emotional and social outcome on the partners that are affected, mostly in 2 Africa (Araoye, 2003). Child adoption is gradually becoming more well-known in most African countries, although culture appears to be providing a barrier to its acceptance and practice among many ethnic groups (Nwaoga, 2013; Oladokun, Arulogun, Oladokun, Adenike, Morhason-Bello, Bamgboye, Adewole and Ojengbede 2010). Other militating considerations against child adoption, aside from cultural implications, include misinformation, social stigmatization, lack of biological/genetic linkage with the child, future claim by biological parents, fear of the unknown, high premium, the hijacking of the adoption process by middlemen, and religious beliefs were found to be the major obstacles militating against the smooth running of the adoption process (Eke, Obu, Chinawa, Adimora and Obi, 2014; Avidime, Ameh and Adesiyun, 2013). Various studies in Nigeria revealed a high level of adoption knowledge, even though only a few people are aware of the exact meaning of the term (Oladokun, Arulogun, Oladokun, Morhason-Bello, Bamgboye and Adewole, Ojengbede 2009; Ezugwu, Obi and Onah, 2002; Avidime, Isaac, Aliyu, Sullyman, Idris, and Ojabo, 20013). Furthermore research from the south-eastern (Ezugwu, *et al.*, 2002) and south-western (Oladokun, *et al.*, 2009) parts of Nigeria have revealed a low degree of acceptability. In southwest, some Yoruba cultural belief perceives an adopted child as a bastard. As result men in infertile marriages are rather encouraged to marry another woman (Ojelabi, Osamor and Owumi, 2015). In another study by Obeta and Chimezie (2013) it was revealed that adopting children into families pose challenges for both the adopted child and the adoptive parents. For instance, some adopted children face the challenges of acquiring a sense of belonging and the adoptive parents also face the challenges of adopting a child who may develop one form of deformity, or abnormal/undesirable behaviors later in life. Others are illegal adoption fraud which is a criminal act and involves establishing illegal adoption agencies and orphanages; obtaining money from adoptive parents under false pretences; wrongful adoption; and exploitation. Adoption practices in the past were very different from those in the present. They were first and foremost legal instruments for strengthening political relationships between affluent families and providing male successors to govern other notables. Adoption was always an act that favoured the interests of adults over the interests of those who were adopted. Local (inside the country), international (outside the country), and relative adoption within a family are the three types of adoption available in Lagos State, Nigeria. A stepparent adoption for example, is when a parent's new partner can legally adopt a child from the parent's previous relationship. Surrendering, as a result of parental death, or when the child 3 cannot be cared for otherwise and a family member decides to take responsibility, this can also result in intra- family adoption (Omosun and Odeyemi, 2011). Today, however, infertility is the main reason

parents seek to adopt children to whom they are not related (Omosun, *et al.*, 2011). Infertility is a public health concern in Nigeria and many other African countries due to its high prevalence, which ranges from 10% to 20% in sub-Saharan Africa (Bhattachanya and Edmonds, 2007) even as high as 32% in Gabon, owing to the country's terrible societal consequences. Procreation is highly valued in any family setting, in African. The woman's position in the marriage remains unstable until she bears children. In today's society, a woman must establish her womanhood by having children. In the same way, a man must confirm his manhood. Children are regarded as sources of pride, strength, and financial prosperity for the family, with a man's wealth and strength being equated to his children's riches and strength (Ezugwu *et al.*, 2002). In general, women are blamed for almost every occurrence of infertility, men are thought to be blameless, and consequently, the woman is humiliated, isolated, derided, abused, and rebuffed. Such life crises have been the experience of most infertile women in Africa. Amongst the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria, infertile women are called, „agan“, from a word that means to hold in contempt or to despise“ Even when male infertility is the reason a couple cannot have children; women may still face the threat of divorce. As a result, they go to various lengths to seek relief from conventional medical practitioners, herbalists, traditionalists, and spiritualists. That is why some women apply various strategies to have children such as visiting traditional healers and prayer houses. They would even buy babies (following the faking of their pregnancy) without caring about the source or engage in secret extramarital sexual relationships (Ezugwu, *et al.*, 2002). Others, who can afford it, resort to assisted reproductive treatments, which are both costly and have a low success rate. This study then aims to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of infertile women towards child adoption as infertility management at Adeoyo Maternity Teaching Hospital Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. Infertility affects about 8% to 12 % of couples across the world (Boivin, *et al.*, 2007) according to estimates. This incidence could be as high as 10 % to 30% in Nigeria (Chimbatata, *et al.*, 2016). The toughest part is the psychological and emotional stress, especially for women in many impoverished nations who are often blamed for infertility. Furthermore, there are few treatment alternatives available, and those that are offered are expensive and have low success rates, and there are fewer prospects for personal fulfilment outside of the family. Adoption of children is an alternative treatment option, but misinformation, myths and misconception surrounding child adoption makes it difficult for couples in infertile marriage to consider also just a few studies have been done in this region to offer background information so that interventions to promote it can be planned (Omosun, *et al.*, 2011).

## EXPERIMENTAL SECTION/ MATERIAL AND METHOD

The study was a hospital-based qualitative study that utilised the in-depth interview to investigate the knowledge and attitudes of infertile women towards child adoption as infertility management at the Adeoyo Maternity Teaching Hospital in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

In accordance with the qualitative descriptive approach, the criterion of saturation (where no new information emerges with the addition of new cases) was used to determine the sample size. Data saturation was achieved after the sixteenth interview and the researcher conducted extra four interviews in order to near the priori number set before the commencement of this study which was pegged at twenty interviews.

Participants for In-Depth-Interview from the study were selected using purposive sampling technique from the gynaecology clinic in Adeoyo Hospital. This technique was chosen because it is the most suitable for this type of study that involves a special and scarce group of participants.

In-Depth-Interview guide was used for data collection process as its structured nature allows the interviewee to share their experience in its purest and unadulterated way with options to fully express their total opinion. All recorded data from the interviews were fully transcribed verbatim; after transcription, the researcher typeset and read it so as to get familiar with

the data by reading through the entire transcripts many times; to obtain a sense of totality; significant statements were underlined and extracted. Meanings of significant statements and sentences that have similar characteristics were labelled by the researcher. Different parts of the text that contained significant statements were marked with appropriate labels for further analysis. Manual qualitative thematic analysis method was used for analysis of all recorded data in order to summarise the informational contents of the data. Themes and categories were formed after the first few numbers of interviews while subsequent information gathered were fitted into the categories and new categories were formed as soon as new theme(s) emerge(s). This procedure was to inform each of the following interviews and to detect if there were new theme(s) or not.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

All the infertile women voluntarily participated in this study and their socio-demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1. Table 1 presents participants' age as at last birthday, ethnicity, occupation and religion. Majority (40%) of the participants falls within the age range of 38-42 years with mean age of 37.5±5.6 years. All the participants were of Yoruba ethnicity, and (65 %) were Christians. It also revealed the highest level of education, type of marriage, years of marriage and household monthly income. Majority of the participants (85%) reportedly have completed tertiary level of education. Most participants interviewed who had tertiary education attended a variety of post-secondary institutions, levels and with various certificate. Majority of the participants (60%) are in a monogamous marriage.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants**

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
28-32	7	35
33-37	1	5
38-42	8	40
43-47	4	20
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Yoruba	20	100
<b>Occupation</b>		
Trader	6	30
Teacher	5	25
Artisan	3	15
Business woman	1	5
Environmental officer	1	5
Fashion designer	1	5
Health worker	1	5
House wife	1	5
Record officer	1	5
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	13	65
Muslim	7	35
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Bachelor's Degree	4	20

Socio-demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Higher National Diploma	4	20
Master’s Degree	1	5
Nigeria Certificate in Education	4	20
Ordinary National Diploma	4	20
Primary School Leaving certificate	2	10
Secondary School Leaving Certificate	1	5
<b>Types of Marriage</b>		
Monogamy	12	60
Polygamy	8	40
<b>Years of marriage</b>		
2-6	10	50
7-11	3	15
12-16	5	25
17-21	1	5
22-26	1	5
<b>Household monthly income in Naira</b>		
10000-50000	12	60
60000-100000	5	25
>100000	3	15

**Table 2: Summary of the Research Results Showing Themes and Sub-themes**

MAIN THEME	SUB THEME
1. Knowledge of child adoption	Proper definition of child adoption. Knowledge of adoption process and requirements.
2. Willingness to adopt	Preference for formal child adoption Preference for informal child adoption Preference for younger child Preference for female child
3. Unwillingness to adopt	Financial factor Religious factor Lack of precedence
4. Psychological dissatisfaction	Child adoption will not make me feel like a mother. Natural parenthood brings joy and satisfaction than adoptive parenthood. Child adoption is rendering a favour it makes no difference.
5. Negative reaction of families	Importance of blood relation. Discrimination among family members. Husband prefers biological child.

**Theme 1: High Knowledge of Child Adoption**

For all the participants who were interviewed, their knowledge of child adoption circled round the theme of High knowledge of child adoption. This was exceptionally good because they all explained the correct meaning of child adoption. The participants gave different correct definitions of child adoption and they all had good knowledge of child adoption process and requirements. The high knowledge of child adoption comes with ‘Proper definition of child adoption’ ‘Good knowledge of adoption processes and requirements’

**Proper Definition of Child Adoption**

Most of the participants interviewed responded to the definition of child adoption correctly as it was reported in the quotations below:

**One of the Participants said that:**

*“Child adoption is a way of helping others that are not financially stable to take good care of their child and also taking a child for someone who is childless not to be lonely to prevent the person from worrying about not having a child” (A 31 year old Teacher)*

**Another Participant said that:**

*“Child adoption is like taking the full ownership of a child that belongs to others that cannot properly take care of them after taking proper legal process” (A 45 year old Housewife)*

**Another Participant said that:**

*“Child is when you take a child that is not your biological child home to take care of and take full responsibility of a parent” (A 32 year old fashion designer)*

### **Knowledge of Adoption Processes and Requirements**

Some of the participants interviewed understood the child adoption process and the requirements of child adoption while some also know where child adoption can be obtained. Some of the participants stated that they acquired the knowledge through watching movies on the television while some have family members and friends that have adopted a child. They all gave different opinions as it was represented in the quotations below:

#### **One of the Participants Verbalized that:**

*"I know about child adoption process I also know that people needs to go to orphanage home and follow due process. I am also aware that one of the requirements for child adoption is for the adopter to have a source of income to be able to take care of the child"* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant stated that:**

*"I know that one of the process of child adoption is to complete some legal procedures and one of the requirements of child adoption is for the adopter to have a home address and be employed"* (A 28 year old Artisan)

#### **One of the Participants stated that:**

*"I do see on television where people go to motherless babies home to adopt a child they will sign some documents and also get a letter from the court before they can finally adopt a child"* (A 45 year old Housewife)

### **Theme 2: Willingness to Adopt**

The participants stated that they would consider adopting a child as management of infertility but there are some criteria they will consider before they can adopt a child. Some of the criteria's are Types of child adoption, Age and gender of the child. The willingness to adopt a child comes with 'Preference for formal child adoption' 'Preference for informal child adoption' 'Preference for younger child' and 'Preference for female child'

#### **Preference for Formal Child Adoption**

The participants indicated why they would like to adopt a child from orphanage homes. Several women in this group believed that adopting a child formally would give them the legal right and full ownership of the child. Others stated that this kind of child adoption provides them with permanence in terms of retaining the child and in terms of freedom from harassment by the child's biological parents, some believed that the child can leave one day and go back to their biological parents. They also have the confidence that formal child adoption will make the child bear their husband name.

#### **One of the Participants Commented that:**

*"I prefer formal child adoption because of the legal right it will give me. Also, I will prefer not to know*

*the child family background because I do not want any traces or contact between the biological parent and the child"* (A 32 year old Fashion designer)

#### **Another Participant Verbalized that:**

*"I do not really care about knowing the child family background because I want to totally take full ownership of the child and the child will bear my name forever so I prefer to adopt formally"* (A 45 year old Housewife)

#### **One of the Participants stated that:**

*"I prefer formal child adoption because adopting from relatives is like a waste of time and resources, families and friends can come for their child at any time and even embarrass me if I tried to stop them from taking their child away from me"* (A 45 year old Teacher)

#### **Preference for Informal Child Adoption**

Reasons for expressing interest in this type of adoption include familiarity with the adopted child's parents, and the option to be able to send the child back to their biological parents because on the long run they cannot be satisfied with only adopting a child without having their own biological child and in case the child misbehaves. The participants also stated that adopting a child from relatives prevents them from picking a child with an unknown family background and health status.

#### **One of the Participants stated that**

*"I will prefer informal adoption because it will only be for a short period of time. Adopting a child cannot fill the gap of biological child also I will like to know the family Background and health history of the child so I will be able to treat the child properly in case the child falls sick"* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"I prefer informal child adoption because if the child is sick I will knowhow to take care of the child and if the child is not acting well I will return the child back to his biological parents also because of the family background and health histories of the child. I do not care about the legal right because I do not want to be the owner of the child that is not my own by the grace of God I will surely give birth to my own child"* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant Commented that**

*"I will prefer to adopt informally because no documentation that will make me to be obliged to any responsibility on the child and I can return the child anytime the child troubles me also I will know the health history and family background of the child though his parent"* (A 43 year old Trader)

#### **Preference for Younger Child**

The participants interviewed said they were willing to adopt a younger child of age 0-5 years because

of proper bonding. They believed at that age the child will be able to bond with them properly and recognize them as their mother also they stated that the adopted child at that young age will be very easy to groom.

#### **One of the Participants Verbalized that**

*"If I am to adopt a child I will choose a child at the age of 1 year old so the child can easily be groomed and it will make the child to recognize me and my husband as parent"* (A 32 year old Fashion designer)

#### **Another Participant stated that**

*"Personally, I will Love to adopt a child from the age of 1-5 years because that is a formative age so the child will easily get used to my way of life, training and instructions"* (A 45 year old Teacher)

#### **Another Participant Commented that**

*"I will like to adopt an infant because the child will easily bond with me and growing up with my family the child will recognize me and my husband as biological parent"* (A 42 year old record officer)

#### **Preference for Female Child**

The participants stated that if they are to adopt a child, they will prefer to adopt a girl because they thought a girl child would provide them with immediate assistance at home and will be much easier to groom than a boy also they believed that the female child will get married and leave the house which will protect her from having issues with their husband family in the future.

#### **One of the Participants Commented that**

*"If I want to adopt a child I will prefer a female child because they are very easy to raise and train also female child will be helpful for me when it comes to domestic work at home than a male child"* (A 31 year old Teacher)

#### **Another Participant Verbalized that**

*"I prefer a female child so that she will be able to do some little domestic chores at home with me and she will get married and go to her husband house but a male child might be feeling entitled to some things in the family which will cause a lot of problem for him in the future especially among my husband family"* (A 28 year old Artisan)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"I will prefer to adopt a female child because girls helps a lot with domestic work at home for example if I am cooking she will be washing plates or sweeping the floor but a male child will only want to play football in the street, go out with friends and they will not make themselves available for help at home"* (A 32 year old Artisan)

#### **Theme 3: Unwillingness to Adopt**

Unwillingness to adopt a child might be seen as rejection of child adoption as infertility management.

Financial constraints, Religious issues and lack of precedence were all grounds for refusal of child adoption as infertility management.

#### **Financial Constraints**

The participants interviewed stated that financial problem is one of the major reasons why they cannot adopt a child. They reiterated that they do not have enough money to adopt a child and take care of the child properly. Some said all the money spent on the adopted child is a waste and they are not financially strong enough to take such risk.

#### **One of the Participants stated that**

*"I think financial issue is an hindrance for adopting a child because I and my husband are just managing the little we have so adopting a child at the moment is not a wise idea for us we only hope in God to give us our own baby"* (A 32 year old Fashion designer)

#### **Another Participant Verbalized that**

*"Personally, financial problem will hinder me from adopting a child because my household monthly income is very low and we cannot spend the little on a child that is not our biological child"* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"I think financial issue is a major problem in adopting a child because if I have my own child I can be giving the child anything I am eating like garri nobody will call me as a wicked mother but if I adopt a child and started giving the child garri to drink people will think I am been wicked because the child is not my biological child"* (A 43 year old Trader)

#### **Religious Issue**

The participants interviewed equated child adoption with admitting defeat in their quest to deliver their own biological child. They felt that waiting for God's favour for their own child was preferable to adopting a child. Some participants also claimed that they cannot adopt if the child they want to adopt is not of the same religion as them. Some believe that because their religion allows their husband to marry more than one wife, adopting a child will force the husband to look for a biological child outside.

#### **One of the Participants Lamented that**

*"Religion can hinder me for example if the child is a Christian and he is a little bit grown due to my fate I will not adopt the child because I am a Muslim and I cannot adopt a Christian child"* (A 32 year old Fashion designer)

#### **Another Participant Commented that**

*"I have a strong believe that very soon God will answer my prayers and I will give birth to my own child so I do not have any reason to adopt a child"* (A 41 year old Health worker)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"I and my husband just got married and we have strong faith that God will give us our child so for now we cannot adopt a child"* (A 30 year old Artisan)

#### **Lack of Precedence**

Some of the participants reported that in their community there is no family that has adopted a child and they cannot be the first to adopt a child instead they will wait till they give birth to their own child.

#### **One of the Participants said that**

*"No one in my community has adopted even thou I know some people that have infertility problem but none of them has adopted a child so I cannot be the first to do that in my community"* (A 31 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"Since I have been living in my community no one has ever adopt a child and due to that I cannot adopt a child because they will always call the child bastard and the child will find it difficult to be happy in the community"* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"personally, I love children but due to the fact that no one has ever adopted in my community I will not adopt a child because I fear me and the child will suffer from insults and abuses in the community"* (A 45 year old Teacher)

#### **Theme 4: Psychological Dissatisfaction**

One of the most significant hurdles to child adoption was perceived to be psychological dissatisfaction. The participants indicated that adopting a child will not provide the same psychological gratification as having a biological child and may even show acceptance of infertility. The psychological dissatisfaction comes with Child adoption will not make me feel like a mother, Natural parenthood brings joy and satisfaction than adoptive parenthood, Child adoption is rendering a favour it makes no difference.

#### **Child Adoption Will Not Make Me Feel like A Mother**

The participants said that adopting a child will not make them feel like a mother and it will not be a solution to their infertility

#### **One of the Participants said that**

*"Personally, I will not be satisfied as a mother with having just a child I adopted because blood is thicker than water and every women wants to birth their own child"* (A 31 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant stated that**

*"I do not think I will feel like a mother if I settle to adopt a child without having my own biological child because that will not make me a genuine mother"* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **One of the Participants Verbalized that**

*"I cannot be satisfied with child adoption because nothing beats biological child and it will not even make me to feel like a mother because the joy of giving birth will not be there and the happiness of carrying my own biological baby will not there"* (A 32 year old Artisan)

#### **Natural Parenthood Brings Joy and Satisfaction than Adoptive Parenthood**

The participants interviewed were fuelled by the hope that they would discover a solution to their infertility problem and find happiness. Adopting a child was thus viewed as less satisfactory.

#### **One of the Participants Commented that**

*"Having your own biological child is the best feeling a woman can ever experience so adopting a child will not really make me happy and be satisfied personally"* (A 31 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*"Natural parenthood is better because no matter how you take care of the child it will not be like your own and there will not be the joy attached to having your own child"* (41 year old Teacher)

#### **One of the Participants said that**

"Natural parenting is superior and the best, I remembered when my brother's daughter was living with me, the girl will do some things and if I punish her for it people will be saying it is because I am not her biological mother but if it is my own biological child even if I give her non-verbal cues she will understand for example if you want to give my child something and I look at the child somehow the child will definitely get the information I am trying to pass across but an adopted child will be like ah! Mummy has looked at me somehow, mommy has given me bad eyes but your own biological child will not sell you out like that. So having your own biological child is the best" (A 46 year old Teacher)

#### **Child Adoption is Rendering a Favour it Makes No Differences**

The participants felt that they simply need their own biological child while others thought that adopting a child is like doing a favour for families that cannot afford to raise their child so child adoption id never an alternative for infertility.

#### **One of the Participants said that**

*"Personally, I think it will take a God fearing person to adopt a child and treat the child well because child adoption is like doing a favour and it is only GOD that can pay you back"* (A 31 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant stated that**

*"Child adoption is good it is like rendering favour for people with financial issues but personally I*

*prefer to have my own biological child because I want to become a genuine mother not an adoptive mother”* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **One of the Participants Verbalized that**

*“Child adoption is like doing a favour for example if the biological parent of the child does not have the financial power to cater for the child I can adopt the child and I will later return the child back to the parent, adopting a child cannot be a solution for infertility because I hope in God that I will deliver my own child soon”* (A 32 year old Teacher)

#### **Theme 5: Negative Reaction of Families**

When it comes to child adoption, family is really crucial. One of the key issues was the negative reaction of families, which underlined the importance of blood relations, discrimination among family members, and the husband preferring biological child.

#### **The Importance of Blood Relations**

Some participants claimed that their family will not accept the adopted child due to the importance they place on blood ties.

#### **One of the Participants lamented that**

*“Child adoption will be a problem for my husband families because if I do not have my own biological child in the nearest future they will not see the adopted child as their own and they will always remind my husband he is not the biological father of the child which will eventually cause problem”* (A 46 year old Teacher)

#### **Another Participant Commented that**

*“My families and husband families will not encourage child adoption because there is no wife in my husband house that resort to adoption they all have their own biological child they will not treat the child well and I am still young so I cannot adopt a child”* (A 31 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant stated that**

*“The adopted child will not be loved in the family because of blood connections, my husband families place high value to blood relation”* (A 41 year old Teacher)

#### **Discriminations among Family Members**

The participants interviewed thought the family at large will not treat the adopted child well. The adopted child will receive insults and they will always mock the adoptive parents as well.

#### **One of the Participants said that**

*“Family members will always call the child bastard especially if he is a boy and they will also make sure he will not have entitlement in the family”* (A 41 year old Teacher)

#### **Another Participant stated that**

*“Other children in the family will find it difficult to associate with the child especially if they want to share something they will always make the child know he is not part of them”* (A 33 year old Business woman)

#### **Another Participant verbalized that**

*“The child will be marginalized in the family especially among my husband family and only me cannot raise the child”* (A 32 year old Artisan)

#### **Husband Preferring Biological Child**

The participants also stated that their husbands prefer their biological children due to a preference for blood connection. The participants believed that their husbands would not consider adopting a child as a solution to their infertility.

#### **One of the Participants said that**

*“My husband will never consider child adoption due to his love for biological child and that is why I am in this hospital trying my best to get pregnant Gods willing”* (A 31 year old Trader)

#### **Another Participant said that**

*“It will be difficult to convince my husband to accept child adoption because he really wants his own biological child as we have been waiting for long”* (A 39 year old Trader)

#### **One of the Participants Verbalized that**

*“My husband does not like the idea of child adoption and that is why I am here and we have never considered the idea of adopting a child”* (28 year old Artisan)

## **DISCUSSION**

The study investigated the knowledge, attitude and factors that influence the attitude of infertile women towards child adoption as infertility management. The study found that infertile women have high knowledge of child adoption which was measured by their definition of child adoption and their knowledge of child adoption process and requirements. Findings from this study is also similar to a result of previous study conducted by (Oladokun *et al.*, 2009) in Ibadan which revealed all the participants know what Child adoption is. The result of this study is also in accordance with that of Avidime *et al.*, (2013) which was conducted in Zaria; Northern Nigeria which also revealed that majority of the respondents has high knowledge of child adoption.

The study finding suggests that some of the infertile women willing to adopt a child prefer a formal adoption since it allows them to keep the adopted child permanently due to the legal procedure involved which is similar to a study conducted by Gilbert Ti-enkawol, Ernestina, and Donkor (2018) which revealed that the women favoured formal adoption because it would enable them to permanently retain the adopted child

because there would be a legal process involved. In this finding the infertile women revealed that formal adoption will provide them with permanence in terms of retaining the child and in terms of protection from harassment by the biological child's parents.

This present study also revealed that some infertile women prefer an informal child adoption because of familiarity with the adopted child's parents, their background, health status and the option to be able to send the child back to their biological parents which concurs with the study conducted by Adewunmi, Arichi-Etti, Adetokunbo, Rabiu, Akindele, Ottun, and Akinlusi (2012) which revealed that majority of the study participants preferred to raise a child from their family member and someone they know even if the person is not a member of their family without any legal child adoption process.

This study also revealed that, infertile women who were open to adoption chose to adopt infants or young children in order to promote early and effective bonding and for the child to grow up knowing the adoptive mother as her real mother. Also, they favoured female children over male child because they believed a female child is easy to train and they will eventually get married and leave the house also the female child will be able to help them with domestic work at home better than male child. This is also similar to a study conducted by Avidime *et al.*, (2013) which revealed that most of the study participants responded that they preferred little children below the age of 6 months and female gender was favoured by the study participants.

This study further revealed that some infertile women are unwilling to adopt a child due to financial issues; this study shows that they have low household monthly income and spending it on a child without biological connection is like a waste of money, the study revealed religious issues as reason why infertile women are unwilling to adopt a child while the infertile women with Islamic faith believed since their religion permits their husband to marry another wife, husbands will never consider child adoption and if they go ahead to adopt a child the husband will see it as a sign of defeat and go ahead to marry another wife, some infertile women with Christian faith said they cannot adopt a child of another religion and they believe God will answer their prayers soon so they have no reason to adopt a child.

Lack of precedence was also a reason why some infertile women were unwilling to adopt a child they felt that since no one in their community has adopted they cannot be the first to adopt a child they will rather wait till they have their own biological child this findings is in accordance with what Oladokun *et al.*, (2009) where participants revealed that they did not know how the members of the community would feel about child adoption if they do it due to the fact that it has never occurred in their community before.

This study showed that child adoption is psychological unacceptable by most of the infertile women and it was seen as one of the most significant barriers to child adoption which is in accordance with a study conducted by Omosun, *et al.*, (2011) where the participants stated that they cannot adopt a child because child adoption is not psychologically acceptable and they will prefer to have their own biological child. In this present study, adopting a child will not bring the same psychological satisfaction as having biological child and may even demonstrate acceptance of infertility. This study further explained that child adoption will not make infertile women feel like a genuine mother which makes them favours natural parenthood over adoptive parenthood because natural parenthood offers more joy and fulfilment than adoptive parenthood.

This study also revealed that negative reactions from families is another reason why infertile women will not consider child adoption because families place high values on blood relations and they will not totally welcome an adoptive child into the family. This finding indicated that adopted child will not be treated well, will face discrimination among the family members and will be called several names like bastards and this will eventually lead to trouble in the family. This is similar to the findings of the study on Socio-Religious Implications of Child Adoption in Igbo land South-eastern Nigeria by (Chinyere and Nwaoga 2013) which revealed that the Igbos value legitimacy as proof of paternal lineage that can be traced from generation to generation. The patrilineal nature of the Igbo family is well-known.

The inference is that the 'father figure,' who is hereditary but limited to the legitimate and truly biological sons of the family's father, wields supreme authority over entitlement to wealth. The bottom line is that in Igbo society, most people have little regard for any child adopted by a family, and such an adopted child is frequently considered as a "bastard" who will not inherit. Adopted boys and daughters have no say in the village assembly, which contrasts with their right to free expression. An adopted child, for example, has no right to speak in a gathering of his kindred in some sections of Nsukka, Enugu State, unless he pays a penalty.

This finding also revealed that husbands preferred having biological children and they can resort to polygamy instead of adopting a child which is in accordance with the study by Oladokun *et al.*, (2009) where that families will allow their children to marry another partner rather than adopt a child.

## CONCLUSION

This study provided a better understanding of the knowledge, attitude and factors that influence the attitude of infertile women towards child adoption as infertility management in Adeoyo Hospital in Ibadan North Local Government. It can be concluded that there has never been a formal child adoption in the area where

this study was conducted. According to the findings of this study lack of precedence, and psychological dissatisfaction influenced people's attitude towards child adoption. To ensure the acceptability of child adoption orphanage homes, government agencies should increase awareness of child adoption as management option for infertility and religious leaders, family's key stakeholders and traditional leaders should be educated properly on child adoption.

Also the study findings revealed that infertile women are under more pressure to find a solution to infertility, while the husband will consider resorting to polygamous marriage in order to find a biological child.

## REFERENCE

- Adewunmi, A. A., Etti, E. A., Tayo, A. O., Rabi, K. A., Akindele, R. A., Ottun, T. A., & Akinlusi, F. M. (2012). Factors associated with acceptability of child adoption as a management option for infertility among women in a developing country. *International journal of women's health*, 365-372.
- Araoye, M. O. (2003). Epidemiology of infertility: social problems of the infertile couples. *West African journal of medicine*, 22(2), 190-196.
- Avidime, S., Ameh, N., Adesiyun, A. G., Ozed-Williams, C., Isaac, N., Aliyu, Y., ... & Ojabo, A. (2013). Knowledge and attitude towards child adoption among women in Zaria, northern Nigeria. *Nigerian medical journal: journal of the Nigeria Medical Association*, 54(4), 261.
- Avidime, S., Isaac, N., Aliyu, Y., Sullyman, K., Idris, H., & Ojabo, A. (2013). Women's knowledge and acceptability of adoption in Zaria, Northern Nigeria. *Tropical Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*. 8
- Bhattacharya, S., & Edmonds, D. (2007). Dewhurst's Textbook of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In D. T. Publishers, Infertility In (pp. 440–460). Oxford, 7th ed Oxford University Press.
- Boivin, J., Bunting, L., Collins, J. A., & Nygren, K. G. (2007). International estimates of infertility prevalence and treatment-seeking: potential need and demand for infertility medical care. *Human reproduction*, 22(6), 1506-1512.
- Chibatata, N., & Malimba, C. (2016). infertility in sub Saharan Africa; a women's issue for how long? A qualitative review of literature *open Journal of social science*, 96-108.
- Eke, C. B., Obu, H. A., Chinawa, J. M., Adimora, G. N., & Obi, I. E. (2014). Perception of child adoption among parents/care-givers of children attending pediatric outpatients' clinics in Enugu, South East, Nigeria. *Nigerian journal of clinical practice*, 17(2), 188-195.
- Etuk, S. (2009). Reproductive health; global infertility trend. *Nigerian journal of physiological sciences*, 24, 85-90.
- Ezugwu, F. O., Obi, S. N., & Onah, H. E. (2002). The knowledge, attitude and practice of child adoption among infertile Nigerian women. *Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, 22(2), 211-216.
- Gilbert, T. E., Ernestina, S. D., & Florence, N. (2018). Child Adoption as a Management Alternative for Infertility: A Qualitative study. *International Journal of Caring Sciences*, 11, 1763
- Mascarenhas, M. N., Flaxman, S. R., Boerma, T., Vanderpoel, S., & Stevens, G. A. (2012). National, regional, and global trends in infertility prevalence since 1990: a systematic analysis of 277 health surveys. *PLoS medicine*, 9(12), e1001356.
- Nwaoga, C. T. N. (2013). Socio-religious implications of child adoption in Igboland South Eastern Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(13), 705.
- Nwaoga, C. T. N. (2013). Socio-religious implications of child adoption in Igboland South Eastern Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(13), 705.
- Obeta, A., & Chimezie, F. (February, 22 2013). Challenges facing the adoption of children among families in Abia state, Nigeria. Conference paper-Canadian Symposium XII issues and directions for home economics/family studies/human ecology education. Abstract retrieved from <http://catalog.ihsn.org/citations/64659>
- Ojelabi, O., Osamor, P., & Owumi, B. (2015). Policies and Practices of Child Adoption in Nigeria: A Review Paper. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(1), 75-81.
- Oladokun, A., Arulogun, O., Oladokun, R., Morhason-Bello, I. O., Bamgboye, E. A., Adewole, I. F., & Ojengbede, O. A. (2009). Acceptability of child adoption as management option for infertility in Nigeria: Evidence from focus group discussions. *African journal of reproductive Health*, 13(1).
- Oladokun, A., Arulogun, O., Oladokun, R., Morhason-Bello, I., Bamgboye, E., Adewole, I., Ojengbede, A. (2010). Attitude of Infertile Women to Child Adoption in Nigeria. *Nig. Journal of Physiological Sciences*, (25), 2010 47 – 49.
- Omosun, O., & Odeyemi, K. (2011). Knowledge, attitude and practice towards child adoption amongst women attending infertility clinics in Lagos State, Nigeria. *Africa Journal of Primary Health Care Family Medicine*, 3(1) 259.
- Orji, E. O., Kuti, O., & Fasubaa, O. B. (2002). Impact of infertility on marital life in Nigeria. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 79(1), 61-62.
- Rutstein, S. O., Shah, I. H. (2005). *Infecundity infertility and childlessness in developing countries*. Geneva: World Health Organization.

**Cite This Article:** Oluwatobi Emmanuel Adesida & Oyedunni Sola Arulogun (2023). Knowledge and Attitude of Infertile Women towards Child Adoption as Infertility Management in South-Western, Nigeria. *East African Scholars J Med Sci*, 6(10), 347-356.