

Research Article

Emigration of Adult Children of Older Academics in Southwestern Nigeria and the Future of Child-Parent Support Culture

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Abstract: The evolving reality of many adult children emigration from Nigeria may create an ‘empty-nests’ for many elders in the future; especially among the older academics. With a qualitative approach, this study conducted 60 in-depth interviews to: establish the proportion of older academics in the Southwestern Nigeria in relationship to their children living abroad; assess the general effects of such journeys on the emigrants and their parents, and finally, to seek ways of monitoring emigration abroad to deter an ‘empty-nest’ situation. The interviews revealed that less than one-fifth of the older academics had children abroad, a result of stronger “pull factors” from countries abroad than the “retention factors” in Nigeria, and jealousy among the children.

Key Words: emigration, empty nests, older academics, stereotype.

Introduction

Prominent among factors that enhance quality care at all ages is proximity. Care provision is facilitated when the person in need is close to the care providers. This has been stressed in earlier works such as: Oyeleke and Tanga, 2014; Kidman and Thurman, 2014; Orubuloye, 1995; Adisa, 2000 and 2008; Onipede and Isiugo-Abanihe, 2006; and Togonu-Bickersteth, 2014. They all pointed out that traditional extended family living or living in proximate environment is important to caregiving among many Nigerian societies, especially the Yoruba people of Southwestern Nigeria. Although, Togonu-Bickersteth (2014) noted that, what subsists now is that the adult children – and not the romanticized extended family system- provide the major care for the elderly parents. The concept, *Olo mu da omu iya re gbe*, (every person to him or herself) has made care an unavoidable responsibility for adult children.

This paper also stresses that the results of high technology of modern times, such as cell-phones and *skype*, cannot substitute for closeness in physical space sense to push care to the desired level. For instance, *skype* may project images of those to be involved in the communications/networks of care living far apart, but cannot bring them together physically to express intimate feelings, touch, run some errands or assist in activities of daily living. This study, therefore, considered possible effects of children’s emigration on care of older academics in Southwestern Nigeria. Older academics in this study comprised academic staff, working and retired, of the Nigerian universities who at the period of fieldwork were 55 years and older. The view was held that children’s emigration might currently not have created problem for every person in this cohort, but this work was anticipatory. It projected into what the future would hold for many of them when emigration of

their children has created empty nests. Empty nest situation describes a family with no child around because the children have all left home, either to marry or to make a living.

In the literature, the economic needs of the adult children themselves have been seen to determine their proximity to the parents (Bickersteth, 2014). Later, the parents’ economic and health needs strongly influence how close children live to them (Spitze and Logan, 1990; Silverstein and Litwak, 1993). Researchers also identified three phases in the life course patterns of parent-child proximity. One, children are said to usually live with or near parents before they reach 25 years. This age may, however, not hold for some countries where children live independently of their parents at younger ages. Later, there is a period of separation. Two, children marry and move away in pursuit of education and employment. Healthy elders may also move away from children to retirement destination. Three, when aging parents become ill or disabled in later life, they move again to be close to the children. Thus, families reconstitute themselves in later life, not necessarily in intergenerational households but through close contacts and frequent visits (Silverstein, 1995).

The importance of children in ensuring old age care and support cannot be overstressed, even as friends and associates now play visible roles in care giving. It is usually stressed that the frail and dependent elders of today once enjoyed youthful age while the youths and adults of today will one day age. Maintaining a good care system will, therefore, ensure future care for all. Outside Nigeria, scholars that have studied other cultures in relation to the role of children in care giving are: Gupta, Solanki, Koolwal and Gehlot, 2015; Erlingsson, Magnusson, and Hanson, 2012; Dowd, 1975; Bengtson and

Dowd, 1981; Bernheim, Shleifer, and Summers, 1985; Passut and Bengston, 1988; Bould, Sanborn and Reif, 1989 and Bengston, Parrot and Burgess, 1997.

Life course assessment manifests that every stage of life is characterized by one form of dependency/interdependency or another. Old age dependency requires serious attention since resilience may be lacking. This degree of dependency can be mediated by factors such as: previous lifestyle, gender, occupation (previous and/or present), religion, race/ethnicity, socio-economic and health statuses, and proximity to caregiver(s). Solitude of empty nests can be mind-bugging; hence, makes a person unhealthy. World Health Organisation (1946) described health as, enjoyment of equilibrium at physical, mental and social states and not merely by an absence of disease or infirmity. Being at a balance in the three states is, therefore, important.

As expressed earlier, the significance of this study lay in the fact that it was not after already created problems, but was preemptive, precautionary and preventive. This was envisaged to be capable of aiding long-term plans to avoid future problems. For instance, the recent worry over financing the health needs of children of the baby-boom era in the United States ought not to have been if they had proactively planned ahead on the cost implication of their aging. The oldest among them now are in their 68th year while the youngest are 50 years; and, they may live up to late 80 years or more.

There are many reasons a study of this nature should be of concern, especially to sociologists. One, emigration seems not easy to curtail, especially in Nigeria or any other country at her level of development, where the push factors range from high rate of insecurity, to high rate of unemployment, attachment of high social status to those who make overseas journeys and their relations. Travelling abroad has always attracted high social standing. In the past, returnees from overseas were always held in honour and welcomed home in fanfare. Among the Yoruba people of Southwestern region, popular musicians might even come around to wax a record for such a returnee. The case of late Professor Akinsola Akiwowo's arrival is an example. If such emigrant stayed long enough to have a child at the period of sojourn, they usually gave names such as *Tokunbo* (Brought from overseas; and not in a derogatory manner *tokunbo* tags used vehicles nowadays) and *Moronmubo* (of literal meaning: I got something back), among others. Holders of such names usually knew they were of better backgrounds. They enjoyed higher status than children of wealthier cocoa merchants, who because of illiteracy, never travelled abroad.

Even in the contemporary times, overseas trips still bestow honour on the travellers and their relations. A friend who is a printer once asked me sarcastically that: "Do they use obituary announcements to grade lecturers nowadays?" That, some customers who are academics recommend the listing of places of residence of their children (grandchildren to the dead) who are abroad. For instance, when they say, the dead is survived by a child and three grandchildren: grandchild 'A' lives in the

United Kingdom, grandchild 'B' the United States and grandchild 'C' Saudi Arabia. These places are always printed broadly in brackets as a marker of success of their parents. Some parents show delight in this even if they are the ones funding the stay/sustenance of such grown-up children who reside abroad. They seem to be little bothered whether the children are doing well or not, keeping the pride is the ultimate. The security situation of Nigeria is used to prefer such actions to allowing them to remain in Nigeria. But, the truth is that each generation has its accompanying safety/security challenge. The fear of witches and wizards in the past was also as grave as the fear of kidnappers, fraudsters, and insurgents among others, nowadays yet, majority were still returning. Fear of insecurity is, therefore, not sufficient for staying put. There is even no place or country that can be said to be assuredly entirely peaceful in the entire world now. A situation, where for status symbol, many older academics may likely turn to a goal, having children abroad before their own parents' deaths, should be foreseen. This is especially so because Umberson and Chen (1994) noted that most people lose one of the parents when they are in their 50s. By age 62 years, 75% of adult children would have lost both parents.

Another reason why emigration in the contemporary times demands research attention has to do with multiplicity of factors leading to overseas journeys. While education might be the main reason for travelling in the past, nowadays, sports such as basketball, football, nursing and other care professions and entertainment industries such as music and movies, have added to the list. There is also a category of children whose desire is to go and stay abroad permanently, even if they cannot secure gainful employment. Post-fieldwork 4-month personal observations and interactions with other Nigerians in Denton, Texas affirmed this earlier submission. It was clearly observed that: The longer one stays abroad, the better the appreciation of reality of the situation abroad. A Christian colleague at Denton once put a question to me after he has worshipped in a number of churches in the State of Texas that: "Don't you think if one takes a video of congregations here in the US and some in big churches in Nigerian cities of Lagos, Abuja or elsewhere, life appears more comfortable in Nigeria if one judges by physical appearances of members?" He added: "The prisons here are full of black populations, all because they could not get good attorneys. This seems to account for high rate of HIV/AIDS among the blacks." But, these Nigerians will not want to return to Nigeria, he exclaimed. Whichever way it is viewed, one of the observations that triggered interests in this study earlier in Nigeria was that, some Nigerian parents seemed to consider sending children abroad as a marker of successful parenting. And, as reasons why some emigrants might be unwilling to return to home country, Pittin (1983) explained, that the harshness of rural life and the social network built up during the years of residence in the city, with its greater opportunities for trade and economic independence may act as barriers to returning.

Another justification of this study is that, the vacuum that non-return of emigrants is creating now leads to evolution of some Yoruba concepts of mockery/abuse to describe victims of such circumstances/arrangements. Now, if a young wife appears abandoned because the husband cannot secure her visa, people call her *opo alaaye* (widow of a living husband). The same can be vice versa. And, in the case of aged parents with no child around to care or support, they label them *agan olomo* (couple/individuals considered barren, not because they did not procreate or that the children died, but because the children do not live close home to be useful). This can generate conflict anytime such labels filter into the hearing of the victims. And, even as conflict is seemingly an essential part of living-interjecting cooperation, competition and exchange, sociologists should be duty-bound to understand its avoidance or reduction to its barest minimum.

Although 2008 might be seen as becoming dated, the picture of records for causes of emigration from Nigeria still seems to hold. Education and job opportunities were and still remain key factors of emigration from Nigeria. The United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (2008), revealed that approximately 6,000 Nigerians studied at universities in the United States. In addition, based on the past growth rates of student migration, some studies estimated that the Nigerian student population in the United Kingdom might increase from 2,700 in 2007 to 30,000 in 2030 (Economists Intelligence Unit, 2009). UNESCO (2008) still added that from 2000 to 2006, the number of students of Nigerian origin abroad more than doubled, from 10,000 to 22,000. Although UNESCO might not investigate this, it certainly fell within the period when salaries of university lecturers increased in Nigeria; and, inference could be drawn that they became more empowered if they wanted to send children abroad. For job seekers, it has been documented that on the average, 64% of the Nigerian emigrant populations had tertiary education (Docquier and Marfouk, 2006). In the medical field, 14% of physicians who trained in Nigeria, worked abroad; and, 90% of whom lived and worked in the United States and the United Kingdom (Clemens and Petterson, 2007).

The curiosity that culture can hardly be preserved in a country where emigration is not curtailed is one of the reasons for this study, especially as issues of segregation and fission are of interest to sociologists. Some people abroad (individuals or families) have broken away completely from the indigenous cultures of their parents. The projection in *Anthem* that by 2050, one in every two Americans will be African/American, American Indian/Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latino, or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, is a proof of high rate of emigration towards the US. The use of green cards, visa lottery and other drawing or magnetizing devices by the United States of America, sustains inflow of many nationals to the country. Despite that the non-whites are said to be faced with a number of disadvantages, it has not deterred Nigerians from emigrating. What this portends is that in the future, there will be an accumulation of disadvantages which will be manifest in

a great proportion of the population of Americans who are not Whites. Among these migrant population in America, evidences abound that Nigerians will be of high proportion. The literature notes that one of every five black men is a Nigerian, worldwide.

The timeliness of this study lies in the fact that processing and analyzing migration data need to be improved upon. There is yet to be seen any known collated official data on Nigerian emigrants despite that the Nigeria Immigration Service collects a wealth of administrative data on entries, departures and registration. The lack of data disaggregating by sex, age and other relevant characteristics makes meaningful analysis difficult. But Nigeria has to be commended for being one of the few countries in West Africa to have developed a draft national policy on migration.

It should as well be stressed that, emigration has its own benefits. The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) (2007a) showed the dramatic increase in the inflow of remittances to Nigeria. In 2007, remittances increased from USD 2.3 billion in 2004 to USD17.9 billion in 2007. This increase was said to have occurred despite the high transfer fees that averaged 10% of the amount transferred. In that year, remittances accounted for 6.7% of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In terms of formal remittance flows, the United States was the biggest remittance-sending country. This was followed by the United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, Spain and France. On the African continent, despite that the pre-war era in Sudan recorded highest inflow of Nigerians, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Chad, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and South Africa were important source countries of remittance flows to Nigeria. China was the biggest remittance-sending country in Asia.

History of Migration

Broadly speaking, migration could be said to occur in two ways, namely: forced migration through slave trade, ecological disaster, political crisis, and other life-threatening occurrences, among others; and two, voluntary. The involuntary reasons that are prominent in the contemporary times are: ecological disasters, political and religious crises.

From the fifteenth century onwards, Europeans began to venture into previously uncharted seas and unexplored land masses, pursuing the aims of exploration and trade, but also conquering and subduing native peoples in many areas. Settling in those areas, they poured out in their millions from Europe. By way of the slave trade, they also brought about a large-scale movement of population from Africa to the Americas (Giddens, 1994). It was in 1619 that the first Africans arrived in Virginia (Quadagno, 1999). The following are the major shifts of population which have occurred over the past 350 years as presented by Giddens (*ibid.*).

From the seventeenth century to the present, some 45 million people emigrated from Europe to what is now the United States and Canada. Many went back to Europe again, but most settled permanently; and, about 150 million people in North

America today can trace their ancestry to this migration. About 20 million people from Europe, mostly coming from Spain, Portugal and Italy, migrated to Central and South America. Some 50 million people in these areas today are of European ancestry. Approximately 17 million people in these continents are of European ancestry. In Africa, the majority are in South Africa, colonized mainly by the British and the Dutch. Starting in the sixteenth century, about 10 million blacks were transported to the American continent as slaves: some 2 million in the seventeenth century; in the eighteenth century, about 6million; and roughly 2 million in the nineteenth century.

As expressed, migration as a phenomenon is not new. It has attracted various academic discourses. However, migration cannot be over-emphasized because around the phenomenon are new changes, in terms of causes, forms, people involved, and challenges faced, which call for attention. A type of migration, involving both the Fulani nomads and their cattle, also occurs on a seasonal basis in Nigeria. They both will migrate to the southern parts of the country in search for field to graze in dry seasons. Historically too, many settlements in pre-modern era were not as sedentary as settlements in the modern times are. They had history of movements in search for basic necessities of life, a terrain good for agriculture and very safe. In the contemporary times, a kind of migration which, in my view, calls for greater attention is migration of knowledge and ideas. Nigeria has been facing problem of brain drain, which is the emigration of professionals such as nurses, physicians and engineers among others to places such as Saudi Arabia, the United States, the United Kingdom and other European countries since early 80s. Poor treatment of workers chiefly accounts for this seemingly unstoppable exodus of professionals from Nigeria.

Methodology

The first question that may be asked is: Why older academics? This choice of the population was informed by two principal factors. The two factors responsible will be extensively discussed to serve as background to the dimension that this study took. A meta-analysis of some studies in gerontology will reveal a lumping together of the elderly. Attempt is made here not to adopt a large-scale study where elders are assumed similar in composition and experiences. Many of the reported studies on aging, well-being, care and support of the elderly are on large-scale basis where many of the peculiar features of each un-identified cohort are lost or are not adequately featured. A micro-level study has an advantage because, even though people generally will be guided or influenced by the general culture of a wider society, the influence of a group subculture cannot be overlooked. The bid to suit the smaller group and gain members' approval is always stronger because subgroup members are usually closer. Although one may argue that human beings are so complex and diverse that adoption of micro- approach always may be an un-ending exercise, the advantages derivable from micro approaches outweigh macro-level studies, usually characterized by

assumptions of representativeness. That may be why positive changes appear elusive despite many research works already done. The dynamics among the older population in terms of age, gender, marital status, beliefs, occupational history, health status, and socio-economic status among others, have differing effects on explanation of complete well-being of the elderly. All these differences that are usually not clearly focused and examined make the seniors to unduly suffer from ageism. By ageism, Butler (1969) referred to a systematic stereotyping of and discrimination against people because they are old. According to him, 'old people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old-fashioned in morality and skills....' For instance, how acceptance will a study that assumed the needs of 55-year olds were the same as those of 90-year olds? This is a simple illustration showing that it is methodically inadequate lumping elders together. Recommendations arising from any such macro-level studies, where these dynamics are not focused, will be defective.

The foregoing was not to condemn totally every large-scale study. Bell (1992), also pointed out a change in the image that was portrayed of the elderly in some shows, such as: "The Golden Girls", "Murder She Wrote", "Matlock", "Jake and the Fatman", and "In the Heat of the Night." In the shows, older people were depicted as powerful, affluent, healthy, physically and socially active, quick-witted, and admirable. These positive traits also could not have reflected the reality of every older person.

Many previous works were also fond of bulk-passing, shifting all the blame of whatever was not right on the government. This consequently generated recommendations that have never yielded the needed results. For instance, a low income earner with many more children than his Head of Department can also blame the woes of his old age on the government. The developed world has gone past this era, even in their welfare programmes. For instance, in the United States of America, means-testing is used in their entitlements philosophy and controls. Social assistance programmes are based on the philosophy that presumes that people suffer from a lack of medical care, food, housing, and income because they did not live as they should (Marmor, Mashaw, and Harvey, 1990). There are rules encouraging the able-bodied to work, families to take responsibility for the care of the needy, and everyone to prepare for future. The eligibility criteria spell out who can apply for benefits-widows, the sick, the disabled, or the aged and being in this condition is not sufficient. Applicants are often subjected to means-test, where the applicants' income, assets and behavior are examined and judged by case workers. A poor person can be denied if found to have lived thrifless or immoral life. This has roots in the early poor law philosophy which emphasized that the non-working poor should not be treated better than the lowest wage earners (Myles, 1989). This will always teach the moral lesson of the importance of being self-sufficient. This way of allocating benefits on the basis of need encourages people to work and efficiently distributes scarce resources. This is, however, not to exonerate

the Nigerian government of all blames but to be fair, many of what the government is blamed for usually fall at the doorsteps of the respondents covered in such studies.

Another noticeable defect before embarking on this study was that most books and articles purporting to deal with migration of people in fact focused on migration of men. Or, they treated women as being dependent on migrating men (Quadagno, 1999). Migration is involving high number of females now, and this calls for reckoning. The older academics, males and females, were then targeted because of the following reasons:

- (i) Older academics do not usually have integrity problem with the Immigration Office and can easily facilitate visa processing of children or wards.
- (ii) Inferences from the literature also drew attention to them as might be largely involved in emigration of youths who travel with legal means and not those who embark on shady means of traveling. Even as no known study has correlated youth emigration in Nigeria and the salary increase of between 2000 and 2006 for academics, a coincidence of strong relationship could be inferred between the two.
- (iii) Even as every lecturer cannot fall into the age cohort of 55 years and above, a sizable number of people in that age cohort may later fall victim in the region by imitation of others whose children are abroad. Of all the zones in Nigeria, the Southwest has a larger number of tertiary institutions, owned by the government, Federal and State, private individuals and religious bodies; hence the choice of the study location.
- (iv) Education as a factor may reduce fear over old age needs; hence, the confidence not to anticipate problems if children go abroad. In a study on the importance of children to the older ones among Ijebu people of Ogun State, Wahab and Isiugo-Abanihe (2008), found children to be important, bearing 60% of support for the elders there. But, they also found, through regression analysis, that among the female respondents, those with primary education were 4.3 times more likely than counterparts with secondary education to view children as being very important in care-giving. It can be inferred that the more educated one becomes, the less importance one attaches to children as important care givers at old age. It then was assumed for the older academics that it might be responsible for their attitude of not minding whether children go abroad and probably choose to stay long before returning.

Religion was also used as a factor of evaluation and the same study found that Muslims were 1.8 times and those in traditional faiths were 3.5 times more than Christians, in viewing children as important agents of help at old age. Could it be that Christians had fewer needs at old age, planned better ahead or had alternative means of coping? Even if any statistics may not be available, the Southwestern Nigeria has

Christians in the majority, especially in the university communities as academic staff.

Since methodology proceeds from the design to population and the sample, the sampling technique, description of the instruments, data collection and analysis, the following will be stated about this study.

As at the period of the study, there was no sampling frame showing the number of academics in the region who were 55 years and above. Sampling was then not probabilistic. Those involved were covered by snowballing; that is, by referral from those who knew colleagues with children abroad. On the whole, forty interviews were conducted via the use of cell-phones and twenty offline interviews. The sample might be seen appear small but qualitative probing emphasizes depth and not necessarily largeness of sample, especially with homogeneous population.

Findings

In all, 60 older academics were interviewed and out of which 8 (33.3%) were already retired. On sex distribution, 33.3% were females, and by religious affiliations, 80% were Christians, 16.7% were Muslims and 3.3% indicated traditional faith. Ethnic distribution showed 10% of those involved in the study were Igbo and 90% were Yoruba people. However, these findings may not truly represent the actual ratio with the larger population. All of them said they were married but 20% were in their second marriage. Also, 6.7% were once widowed and 13.3% were once married abroad and later got separated without hope of being rejoined. As expressed, there was no actual divorce between them anyway. Of all the interviewees, 73.3% themselves once schooled abroad.

From them, 13.3% had all the children abroad. When asked why, they said there was no explanation to give to other children why they should not go as their siblings or friends were there already. And there are also many factors that attract youths abroad- connections, education and job opportunities and peace. Also, 46.2% of the remaining 52 parents who had children but not all abroad were also not against the idea of having all the children abroad. The remaining 53.8% would leave it for the children themselves to decide. Contrary to expectation that the majority would claim to have maximum of three children, 90% had four or more children. This might be as a result of the fact that some claimed to be in second marriage and three children per family situation that is common among younger academics now might not be in vogue then.

Responses to the issues raised in the interviews will be supported with excerpts from some interviewees. The following are some excerpts from the interviews on personal experiences:

When the interviewees were asked on reasons behind their choice of current location and where those yet to retire would love to reside, the principal reason expressed by majority of

the interviewees was closeness, not to kith and kin, but to friends and/or work colleagues. This can be supported by the excerpt that follows.

Excerpt 1: *I will forever be grateful to my friends who advised I should not relocate to my town. All those I grew up with stayed back in the upper North. I would have died of loneliness if I had gone back to Kwara. I myself schooled at Wichita, in the United States and I now have all my children there in the US. They are not only there; I usually tell them they do not allow me to enjoy my wife as they always send for her in turns. I do feel absence of care when she is away to stay with the children. Here, I have told them at the different places where I play routinely that if by 11am any day I am not out, or I have not called, that means I am dead at home-* An 83-year old retiree.

Efforts were also made to consider whether being alone without children around brought about disruptions to feeding, an interviewee had this to say and which, of course, was similar to the expressed experiences of some others who were even without physical disability.

Excerpt 2: *For me, I do not have problem with how to eat. They have arranged for a cook for me, even though it took time for my taste bud to adjust to the little girl's taste. Where I have difficulty always is when to take bath. My wife does it for me anytime she is home but I cannot assign the role to anyone now. Sometimes I was jealous of those with multiple wives before I thought deeply polygyny may not solve the problem. The younger wife, out of jealousy, also may choose not to stay at home permanently-*A 71-year old retiree with disability.

Some of those who have had more than a single child abroad were asked on why they so allowed it to be; and, it became apparent many parents of similar features with subjects of study might not have the mind to discourage children from emigrating. The next excerpts can be inferred from.

Excerpt 3: *I have two children there in the UK but their younger brother has been mentioning US (hoping to go to the US). I still have the strength to travel myself but that will be at another life. I usually do tell the children I have got no need to travel again because I was there 6 years and I left nothing behind that I need to pick up now. (He faced me and said) My friend, let the children live their lives, we will plan our own comfort -* A 62-year old lecturer.

Excerpt 4: *I'm also guilty of this because I have lived all my life in Yoruba land here and I am Igbo. My father worked here in the university. My mother is here with me. My other sisters and brother are also at Lagos. But, I agree with you it is good to have at least a child around at old age even if one will not be under the same roof. Let them just be near-* A 57-year old male lecturer.

Excerpt 5: *Aburo, gbigba adura ni jare, (meaning, Young man, when children go abroad, I see it as answered prayers). We usually pray on the day of naming that this or that baby will go abroad; we then should not be blaming God. But it is*

true we need the children around occasionally, not only at our old age. That is why I will never allow my children to marry a non-Yoruba abroad. That may make you wave bye, bye, to your child as/he may go away for life – A 55-year old Yoruba female lecturer.

Excerpt 6: *I have just my first two sons there. They facilitated the medical treatment I received abroad shortly after my retirement. They do send money to me but I want them to come and marry at home even if they will return. I, myself, stayed abroad for twenty years and even worked temporarily. I can tell you what the gains of marrying from one's country are. I won't say more-* A 68-year old male retiree.

Discussion and Conclusion

From all these, it is clear the story cannot be similar with all the older academics. It has also become clear that some parents may not boldly claim they have the determining influence on where a child can sojourn, which work to take up there, who to marry and how long the children should stay. Contrary to expectations also, all the interviewees did not condemn the act of allowing children to study or work abroad. They presented their children as positively engaged. Some said that, even though they may not be where they ought to be but they are not where Nigerian situation would have put them-the labour market. A large proportion of those interviewed did not wish that children stay permanently away from home country regardless of what the sex of such children could be. This, however, places caution in inferring to the university level, the findings of Wahab and Isiugo-Abanihe (2008), which concluded just on those with primary and secondary education. It might also mean that the Ijebu people differed in expectations from children from other Yoruba sub-ethnic groups. This is so much so, as this study found 10% of the interviews to be Igbo. The Igbo people's culture of care-giving may be slightly or markedly different from that of the Yoruba; hence all these might affect the findings that the level of education of the sample could not be assumed to influence acceptance of children as being very important to care-giving. The word, assumed is used here because the study adopted a qualitative data collecting technique. The future of having all the investments in children as the sole care providers may be frustrating, considering the rate of children's emigration abroad. An alternative (which may vary per couple) should be designed as second plan if circumstances do not allow children to be close home. Whatever cannot be avoided should be managed.

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