

## DO MEN ADOPT? UNDERSTANDING MEN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS CHILD ADOPTION BASED ON INCOME STATUS, AGE, AND ETHNIC AFFILIATION

Bolajoko I. Malomo & Gbolahan S. Afolayan  
University of Lagos

**Correspondence:** Bolajoko I. Malomo, Department of Psychology, University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria.  
E-mail: [bmalomo@unilag.edu.ng](mailto:bmalomo@unilag.edu.ng)

### ABSTRACT

The rate of infertility among Nigerian couples is increasing and child adoption is advocated as a solution. However, a number of the existing child adoption studies focus on females, with less research attention on men and this creates a significant gap in knowledge. Current studies on child adoption in Nigeria involving women participants reported cost, cultural factors and age among the challenges of child adoption. Therefore this study focused on men and their attitude towards child adoption based on the differences in their income status, age, and ethnic affiliations. The economic theory of fertility and the theory of symbolic anthropology explained how differences in income status, and ethnic affiliation would create differences in attitude towards child adoption among 200 men in Lagos State. The responses obtained were analyzed using One-way analysis of variance statistics. The findings revealed that males whose income status is classified as low reported negative attitude towards child adoption ( $M=42.073$ ,  $SD=13.21$ ), compared to other income statuses ( $F(197) = 16.64$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Thus, the economic theory of fertility was confirmed. The significant differences in the attitude of men towards child adoption based on ethnic affiliation ( $F(197) = 19.55$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), also confirmed that culture is a reflection of our real world and our interpretation of culture is based on the symbols that function within our culture to guide and determine our actions. Differences in age were also significant in contributing to the differences in men's attitude towards child adoption. It is recommended that government should award child adoption grants to families whose income status may be a factor in the inability to adopt children as an option to infertility challenges in their families. Advocacy messages may be utilized to create awareness among men on child adoption benefits focusing on the demographic variables investigated.

**Keywords:** Child adoption, economic theory of fertility, symbolic anthropology, ethnic affiliation, Lagos

### INTRODUCTION

Attitude is a social psychological concept that sums up people's likes or dislikes about an object, place or person. It conveys the positive or negative evaluations of situations. Marcinkowski and Reid (2019) describe attitude in an evaluative capacity albeit in a judgmental sense. Our attitude may be used to infer our choices, and thus behaviour over time (Kroesen, et al, 2017). Attitude consists of three components. These are the cognitive (beliefs), affectionate (emotions or feelings) and the behavioural components (inclination to act); the aggregate of these three elements determines attitude.

Extensive studies have examined child adoption globally, but majority focus on women alone as participants (Ekeng, Ekwok, & Akpama, (2021); Nachinab, Donkor, & Naab (2019); Abubakar, Lawan, & Yasir, (2013); Adewunmi et al. (2012); Omosun and Kolawole, 2011, Viana, & Welsh (2010). This appears one sided as a couple's childlessness has negative implications on the psychological and social well-being of the family (Dimpka, 2010). The concentration of child adoption studies on women participants may be due to the perception of infertility as a

woman's problem and burden (Inhorn & Patrizio, 2015), though this perception lacks empirical data. The question is; why not investigate men to understand their attitude towards child adoption? A browse through Google search on child adoption studies involving only men is scarce. One exception though is the study of Seeman (2018) who focused on single men only. We hope to contribute to child adoption literature by providing empirical data on attitude of men towards child adoption. There appears also to be scarcity of theoretical explanation on child adoption, especially by investigators from Nigeria. Additionally, demographic variables such as income, age and ethnic affiliation are factors that may influence positive attitudes of men towards child adoption. These factors are yet to be investigated among Nigerian population. Given these limited evidence background, we hope our attempt to embark on this present study will add value to the adoption literature.

Income of adoptive parents has been reported to influence child adoption decisions. In Mohanty (2013) study on attitude towards adoption in Singapore, income was reported to be a factor among women participants. Men are yet to be investigated on this factor. We therefore adopted the economic theory of fertility by Bethmann and Kvasnicka (2012). The economic theory of fertility argues that the cost of child adoption may be a factor necessary to influence child adoption. We therefore associated the income statuses of men and their attitude towards child adoption.

We also adopted the theory of symbolic anthropology to explore differences in the attitude of Nigerian men from three ethnic affiliations in Nigeria. Nigeria is an example of a patriarchal society, where males are more visible in all levels of the society especially in the family. The man, who is traditionally the head of the home, is responsible for most of the decisions taken concerning the family and its future. To this end, when an important issue concerning the family, such as the possibility of adopting a child arises, the man may have the final say on the subject (Ojelabi, Osamor, & Owumi, 2015). The authority associated with men in patriarchal cultures may be played out in decision making on child adoption. Very few studies (Joshi, Prasad & Kushwaha, 2015) sought to know how ethnic affiliations influenced men's attitude towards child adoption.

Age is a demographic variable that is influenced by biological processes (Na, Huang & Park. 2017). In Sheela and Manerring (2019), attitude is reported to change as more information is acquired on a subject matter. In Ezedindu and Nwosu, (2017), the authors recommended that infertile mothers between the ages of 40-50 years needed encouragement to accept child adoption. This suggests that these women reported poor attitude towards child adoption. The (U.S. Centre for Disease Control 2008) reported that women between the ages of 40-44 years were most likely to adopt children. Some investigators (Joshi, Prasad & Kushwaha, 2015; Jones, 2009) included men in their study. In Jones (2009), men who have adopted more children were over 30 years of age and are married. In Herrera (2013), data analysis suggests that men and women reported active and equal participation in child adoption. These aforementioned studies may be peculiar with other countries. A need therefore arises for such empirical data to be established for Nigerian population. This study hopes to fill this gap.

### **Child adoption practices**

Adoption is a process involving the formal request and integration of a child into a family through legal procedures. The adopted child is meant to be treated as an equal member of the family, and eventually transit into the various units in the society. While some individuals are very accepting of child adoption practice and encourage it, others are still

skeptical. Studies on adoption suggest that there exist a difference in attitude between men and women on the subject of child adoption (Gibbons, Rufener, & Wilson, 2006).

Bethmann and Kvasnicka (2012) suggested that every couple prefer having their own biological children, but several other reasons may prompt them to adopt. Among the reasons given by Bethmann and Kvasnicka (2012) include infertility, relationship to the child (such as a distant relative), a woman's earning power, cost of having biological children. In a related but different perspective is the finding in the study of Adewunmi, Etti, Rabiu et al., (2012) where women in the lower income group reported poor disposition towards child adoption. This present study examined income statuses of men and how it would influence their attitude towards child adoption.

Several studies on adoption investigated the age of adopted children as factors for adoption. For instance, Rolock, Blakey, Wahl et al. (2018); White (2016) and Julian (2013) investigated factors associated with different ages of adopted children. However, there is a dearth of research on the age of adoptive parents. But Adewunmi, Etti, Rabiu et al., (2012) opined that couples who have waited for five years and above for their own biological children reported a favourable attitude towards child adoption. This may translate to middle-age men favoring adoption compared to young men. Empirical data on the age of adoptive parents may provide insightful data and knowledge on the period and decision for men to adopt children. Therefore, this current study examined differences in the age of Nigerian men and their attitude towards child adoption in Lagos State. One study (Hinterlong & Ryan, 2008), focus on kinship care and adoption among grandparents due to the death of a relative. In this case, Hinterlong & Ryan (2008) investigated older couples whose motive for adoption was altruism toward children of their relations and not children outside their families.

Ethnicity has also been studied as a factor influencing child adoption. But these studies focus on second party report of male attitude towards child adoption from their wives. The outcome of our study presents a unique opportunity as it focuses directly on male attitude towards child adoption; a situation that may also improve the life of additional abandoned street children (Taiwo & Adejuwon, 2005) who need to gain a home filled with warmth and care.

### **Justification for the study**

Childlessness brings a lot of emotional and social problems to the affected couples. This may be traced to societal, religious, and extended family expectations that may make the infertile couples feel inadequate (Rustein, 2005). Many factors could be responsible for desiring to adopt a child. It may be for replacing a lost child through death, inability to procreate, to provide a home for an abandoned child and preference for a particular gender (Eke et al., 2014). Through medical sciences, assisted reproductive techniques such as intra-uterine insemination or in-vitro fertilization can now be employed to deal with infertility. However, these measures are limited in accessibility, come at a high cost and lack an assurance of success. This means that individuals of low income statuses are likely to find it difficult to go through the endeavor. The challenges associated with childlessness may give rise to soliciting religious leaders to provide solutions to infertility. This sometimes involves prayer sessions in mosques or churches (Kositer-Oyekan, 1999); a situation that may create lack of data for scientific research and further trauma when the situation persists without a solution. Adequate knowledge of demographic characteristics associated with attitude of men towards child adoption will provide informed decisions on child adoption and the trauma of waiting for a biological child may be avoided. Also, concerned stakeholders would direct resources on advocacy and provision of incentives that would target appropriate age groups. For instance,

the cost of adoption is not clear, but the general conclusion is that it is not cheap. The influence of economic factors can be mitigated by the government through adoption agencies when data suggests that a significant influence exists. Likewise, empirical data on age and ethnic affiliation will inform and educate infertile men on the relationships between these variables and child adoption. This will enable the men to take decisions on child adoption appropriately.

### **Theoretical background**

Bethmann and Kvasnicka (2012) extended the economic theory of fertility to explain the economic factor in child adoption. The economic theory of fertility affirms that the degree to which adoption will be considered is premised on the cost of having a biological child and the financial benefits accruing from adopting a child. In Becker (1992), fertility theory assumes that income determines the need for family size. To this effect, economic buoyancy of a couple relates to additional children, just as the ability to purchase a better quality product is determined by higher income. The economic theory of fertility was tested in this study by investigating three income statuses of the participants. Thus; males from the low income status group are expected to earn just enough to care for their daily needs and are predicted to express a negative attitude towards child adoption due to their income earnings compared to men in the middle and high income categories. This consideration was also expressed in the income fertility theory of Leibenstein (1974). Income status is considered an important consideration in an adoption decision. It has been established that cost of child adoption is high in Nigeria (Oladokun et al., 2009). If that be the case, we can predict that males who are economically insolvent will have a attitude towards child adoption. It is thus expected that people would rather wait to have their own biological children; considered as a cheaper option all things being equal. This present study will thus examine the applicability of the income fertility theory as it explains the role of income status of males in adopting children.

A second theory considered in this study to explain how differences in ethnic affiliation will bring about differences in attitudinal expression towards child adoption is the theory of symbolic anthropology. The theory of symbolic anthropology proposed that culture is a mental phenomenon. Symbolic anthropologists view and study culture with the aid of analytical tools from other disciplines such as history, literature and psychology (McGee, 2008). A combination of two parts of the theory are represented by the work of Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) and Victor Turner (1920-1983). In Geertz's view, culture is an organized collection of symbolic systems. From the perspective of Turner, symbols maintain the society. This enables the understanding of the various dimensions of culture and the function of symbols in the day-to-day life of different groups of people. It is therefore apt to suggest that people give meaning and interpretation to their experiences through symbols, which in turn, direct their behaviour. From the aforementioned, the theory of symbolism emphasizes the process through which people of a culture understand their real world, interpret it and allow such knowledge to guide and determine their actions to fall in line with the members of their culture or society. The relevance of this theory to this present study lies in the understanding men have about child adoption, and the societal interpretation to child adoption. In Nigeria, only few studies (Taiwo & Adejuwon, 2005) have reported the attitude of men towards child adoption and their attitude is molded by what the society or their culture symbolizes about child adoption. Therefore, if cultural differences exist on child adoption for example, between ethnic groups, in Nigeria, an empirical data of such differences will contribute to the literature on child adoption. For example, men who are affiliated to the different ethnic groups will understand the status quo and direct their thoughts and behaviour accordingly. Moreover, understanding

the current culture on child adoption in the various ethnic groups will also enable child adoption agencies to direct advocacy programmes on child adoption to the ethnic regions that requires more enlightenment.

### **Related Studies**

Literature on male attitude towards child adoption is sparse. In the African context, emphasis is placed on biological offspring's. According to Silk (1990), a reason for a more favorable attitude of females compared to males on child adoption, is that motherhood is essential to the definition of a woman. This makes women more accepting to becoming mothers by any means, which includes adoption. This may be the reason why studies conducted on adoption is greatly concerned with the woman's attitude or motivation towards child adoption. Another reason for the sex difference in adoption attitudes is that women could be said to be more open towards non-traditional family structures and roles, such as single parenthood and women finding themselves as family breadwinners. As single mothers, with financial freedom, women's acceptance of child adoption will be high.

Gibbons et al. (2006) reported that men have less positive attitude towards child adoption than women. In the study, attitude towards traditional male role, women, machismo and adoption was investigated. The first three variables were intended to study the individual's attitude towards gender roles. It was suggested that man's belief or attitude towards what roles men and women play in society is a determinant of their child adoption attitude. This may suggest that if a man favours the traditional views of gender roles, he would possess a more unfavourable attitude towards child adoption. The study bears great relevance to this study as it aids in giving a description of the attitude men have towards child adoption. The paper also clearly shows that there exists a significant difference between the child adoption attitudes held by men and this reinforces the need for our study.

According to Fyre (2010), adoption may be viewed as an option for individuals who cannot biologically produce children, though it is also employed by others who do not want biological children or individuals who simply want to increase their family size. In the study, Fyre (2010) gave an overview of different aspects of adoption including a clear picture of the need for adoption services in the United States, its outcomes, its problems as well as its benefits. The study focused on college students because as most college students are people who want to get married and start a family soon, it is of the utmost importance to investigate the perceptions and attitudes these soon-to-be parents have towards child adoption. This knowledge will serve as an encouragement of a positive attitude towards child adoption. The study highlighted three reasons why it is important to study college student's attitudes towards child adoption. First, is to fully understand how younger adults view the subject of adoption, and secondly, since their attitude will affect their choice of who to marry, and if they would be satisfied with their marriage. Thirdly, the knowledge gained will be of immense help to investigators interested in the study of child adoption in other fields. Thus, demographic variables may play a significant part in what attitude the individual has towards adoption.

A study by Oladokun et al. (2009) investigated child adoption, its acceptability, and the possibility of child adoption solving the problem of infertility in south-western Nigeria. The investigators employed the use of twelve focus groups, and adopted stratified sampling in three inner core areas of Ibadan metropolis. Participants, who were married men and women, aged between 20-30 years expressed their opinions on awareness of the health facilities in their communities, knowledge of the various diseases that affect fertility, awareness of the presence of adoption and its processes, how adoption is viewed in their communities, their attitudes towards child adoption, factors affecting the process of child adoption, benefits and

hindrances to adoption, and child adoption laws. The authors stated that the perceptions or attitudes held by the participants varied based on gender and income status, as well as locality. Here the females held a negative attitude towards child adoption as they felt an adopted child can never take the place of a biological child. This attitude was based on the ethnic belief that people cannot gain marital satisfaction without procreation. This then means that it will more or less be an admission of failure to accept adoption as an option. As regards to income status, individuals who belonged to the lower levels believe that child adoption serves as a substantial burden. This is a burden that is too great for them to bear. The negative attitude held by the people towards child adoption comes as a result of a few reasons with Yoruba ethnic beliefs and low income status being chief among them. This study gives an insight into the attitudes of people living in the Ibadan metropolis towards child adoption. Due to the similarities between the inhabitants of Lagos and Ibadan, the work is highly relevant to this study.

Of central importance to this study is male attitude towards child adoption. In Taiwo and Adejuwon (2005), attitude towards adoption and adoptive parents was investigated on the bases of gender, self-esteem and locus of control. In the study that involved 300 male and female participants within the age range of 21 to 55, the result of the study failed to reveal significant gender differences in the positive attitude towards adoption. It was concluded that both men and women expressed a positive attitude towards child adoption with women scoring slightly higher.

The reservation men have for child adoption may not extend to approving same for other relations. This is reflected in the findings of Nwachukwu et al. (2020), where 57.2% of the study's male participants were supportive of child adoption for their relatives.

This study therefore sought to examine and find answers to the following research questions:

- What is the attitude of males from different income status towards child adoption?
- What is the attitude of males from different age groups towards child adoption?
- What is the attitude of males who belong to different ethnic affiliations in Nigeria towards child adoption?

#### **Research Hypotheses**

- Men from low income status will report significantly poor attitude towards child adoption when compared to the male participants from the middle and high income status groups.
- Men who are between 20-40 years will express favourable attitude towards child adoption when compared to those in the middle adult (41-60 years) and late adult (above 60 years) groups.
- Men from Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa ethnic backgrounds will express significant differences in their attitude towards child adoption.

#### **METHOD**

##### **Research Design**

This study employed cross-sectional and survey research design. This is because three variables, namely income status, age and ethnic affiliation were investigated and measured at the same time among students and workers.

### **Research Setting**

The University of Lagos campus was the setting for this study. This location is a hub for academic learning, a melting pot for capturing potential participants of different income statuses, age groups, and ethnic backgrounds. Academic programmes are available for full-time and part-time students who also attend physical classes on the campus. The University of Lagos is located in Lagos, the former capital of Nigeria. Due to the numerous industries, public and private organizations, international markets and sea ports operating in Lagos State; many Nigerians seek residence and employment in Lagos. Thus, the ethnic affiliations are well represented in Lagos. The University of Lagos creates opportunities for self-development academically hence; workers from various sectors of the economy seek admission from the University of Lagos to obtain various degrees. Thus, University of Lagos was ideal as a setting to pull participants that suit this study because people from all sectors of the economy converge for various management and academic degree programmes.

### **Sample**

Only men were participants in this study. The participants were expected to be 18 years and above, were working and earning income, and may be married or single. Only part-time students offering postgraduate diploma, Masters and Ph.D degree programmes in management were included. This is because being employed is a condition for admission in these programmes. These aforementioned demographic variables were the inclusion criteria. A random selection of faculties among the 12 faculties in the university resulted in 6 faculties actively engaged in the study. Thereafter, a convenient sampling was adopted to administer the survey instruments to the participants. A total of 375 survey instruments were distributed. Out of these, 290 instruments were returned, but 200 (53.3% response rate) respondents satisfied our inclusion criteria. The demographic information of the 200 respondents is summarised in Table 1.

### **Measuring instruments**

The Attitude Towards Child Adoption Scale (ATCAS) (Adegoke & Adeleke, 2010) was presented to participants at various locations on the premises of the University of Lagos. The scale was adopted and validated for use on Nigerians, a psychometric property that makes it relevant for this present study. The ATCAS consists of 13 items whose response range is based on the 5 point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree which represented 1 to Strongly agree which represented 5. This scale has been found to be psychometrically reliable with Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.90, and split-half reliability of 0.88 for the first half and 0.92 for the second. The validity of the scale was confirmed using discriminant validity and convergent coefficient, both of which produced satisfactory results of 0.71 and 0.67 respectively. There are 3 negatively worded items which were Item 5, 7 and 11. These items were reversely scored, as instructed by Adegoke & Adeleke (2010). Some of the items included; I can adopt a child to make him or her a member of my own family, lack of faith in God make people adopt a child at least, my religion is not favourable to child adoption. According to the scales developers, a group mean was calculated from the average of the summation of all the scores from the individual participants in the study. The group average score served as a barometer for the type of attitude towards adoption each participant possesses. In this present study, the groups mean score is 49.86 and it has a standard deviation of 10.43. Participants who scored above the group mean can be said to have a favourable attitude towards child adoption and vice versa.

### **Informed consent**

The study participants were allowed to give their consent prior to administering the research instruments. Specifically, an informed consent form was attached to the survey instrument. Participants indicated a yes or no response to participate in the research and were informed to withdraw from their participation at any time.

### **Results**

**Table 1**

*Frequencies and cumulative percentage of participant's demographic variables*

Variable	N	%
<u>Income Status</u>		
Low	41	20.5
Middle	119	59.5
High	40	20.0
<u>Age</u>		
20-40	112	56.0
41-60	73	36.5
61+	15	7.7
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
Igbo	64	32.0
Yoruba	108	54.0
Hausa	28	14.0

The result represents the number and percentages of the categories of the independent variables in the study. These also represent the demographic information of participants.

Our hypotheses were tested with the One Way ANOVA statistics. Firstly, a summary of descriptive statistics showing the mean differences on income status, age and ethnic affiliation of participants were run. The results are presented in table 2 and table 3.

**Table 2**  
*Summary of Descriptive Statistics Showing Mean Differences on Income Status, Age and Ethnic Affiliation of Participants*

Variables	N	Mean	SD
<u>Income status</u>			
High	40	52.03	8.29
Middle	119	51.82	8.66
Low	41	42.07	13.21
Total	200	49.86	10.43
<u>Age</u>			
20-40	112	51.71	9.2
41-60	73	48.33	11.10
61 and above	15	43.47	12.28
Total	200	49.86	10.43
<u>Ethnic Affiliation</u>			
Igbo	64	48.28	10.54
Yoruba	108	53.13	8.15
Hausa	28	40.86	12.10
Total	200	49.86	10.43

**Table 3**  
*One way analysis of variance showing the influence of income status, age and ethnic affiliation on ATCA*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<u>Income status</u>					
Between Groups	3128.392	2	1564.196	16.644	.000
Within Groups	18513.688	197	93.978		
Total	21642.080	199			
<u>Age</u>					
Between Groups	1169.380	2	584.690	5.626	.004
Within Groups	20472.700	197	103.922		
Total	21642.080	199			
<u>Ethnic Affiliation</u>					
Between Groups	3583.529	2	1791.764	19.546	.000
Within Groups	18058.551	197	91.668		
Total	21642.080	199			

For the income groups, a multiple comparison analysis was performed to determine which group mean is significantly different. This is presented in table 4.

**Table 4**

*Multiple Comparison Analysis Showing a Scheffe Post Hoc Analysis for Income Status Categories*

(I) Income status	(J) Income status	Mean Difference(I-J)	Std Error	Sig.
High	Middle	.210	1.772	.993
	Low	9.952	2.154	.000
Middle	High	-.210	1.772	.993
	Low	9.742*	1.756	.000
Low	High	-9.952*	2.154	.000
	Middle	-9.742*	1.756	.000

\*The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level

The results in tables 3 and 4 revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between income status categories as determined by One Way ANOVA ( $F(2,197) = .000$ ). A Scheffe post hoc test revealed that attitude towards child adoption was positive among participants in the high income category ( $M=52.03$ ,  $SD=8.39$ ,  $p=.000$ ) and middle income category ( $M=42$ ,  $SD=8.66$ ,  $p=.000$  compared to the participants in the low income categories ( $M=42$ ,  $SD=13.21$ ). There was no statistically significant difference between high and middle categories ( $p=.993$ ).

## DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis investigated the participant's income status and attitude towards child adoption. Based on the results (table 3 and 4), participants from the low income status reported a negative attitude towards child adoption. This suggests that males in the low income status are not likely to adopt children due to their earning capacities when compared to men in the middle and high income categories. This is in line with the economic fertility theory (Bethmann & Kvasnicka; 2012; Leibenstein, 1974). The implication is that men classified as low income earners may not have the opportunity to be parents through adoption. This may aggravate the plight of couples in the low income categories that are experiencing challenges with natural conception. Adewunmi et al. (2012) study also supported our study. In the study, participants who earn  $>\$650$  expressed positive attitude towards child adoption. A person's income status is a combination of their monthly or yearly income or wage. Individuals within a low income status may be discouraged from pursuing a child adoption request due to the cost of adopting a child. For instance, Ijewereme (2015) cited bureaucratic corruption in child adoption consisting of bribery and extortion of money in the child adoption process. This may be a burden and a factor for discouragement. Also, Rochat et al (2015) cited income status as an important determinant factor of an individual's attitude towards child adoption. According to Rochat et al (2015), the finances that are required to adequately care for the adopted child's education and other needs influences the adoptive parent's attitude. The study points out that it is not much the case of a lack of an emotional investment but rather a lack of finances that causes negative attitudes towards child adoption among the study participants who were investigated by a qualitative study. This led to one of the participants proposing that

government should provide adoption grants to adoptive parents to enable them provide adequately for their adopted children.

The findings suggest that males between the ages of 20 to 40 reported a significant positive attitude towards child adoption when compared to males between 41 and 60 years, and 61 years and above. What this suggests is that males between 20 to 40 years are more open to the idea of adoption than males above 40 years of age. This finding is supported by Gupta and Ignatius (2018); Fyre (2010) and Jones (2009). According to Fyre (2010), the younger generation is more liberal than the previous ones, thus the decision to adopt a child is more readily acceptable. A plausible explanation may be that due to the influence of globalization, young males are much more exposed to western ideas and information than the middle or later years' males. They readily assimilate global ideas, values, and attitudes. This result is partially reflected in the study of Jones (2008) where males over the age of 30 expressed desire to adopt a child. In Gibbons et al. (2006) study, the results suggested that although younger males were less favourable towards child adoption than women, they still reported a positive attitude towards child adoption.

Our result revealed significant differences in attitude toward child adoption among three ethnic affiliations of Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. The theory of symbolic anthropology is confirmed whereby the different cultural symbols representing different perceptions of child adoption reflected in the mean value. Men from the Yoruba ethnic affiliation reported the highest mean score ( $M=53.13$ ,  $SD= 8.15$ ) compared to me from Igbo ( $M=48.28$ ,  $SD=10.54$  and men from Hausa ( $M=40.86$ ,  $SD=12.10$ ) towards child adoption the mean values obtained for men who are Igbo and Hausa were below the average mean for the scale ( $M=49.86$  with  $SD=10.43$ ). the result relating to men who are Hausa may be due to the sample size. Our result is supported by Rochat et al (2015), Avidime et al. (2013). Rochat et al. (2015) identified sociocultural influences as important determinants of attitude towards child adoption. The authors stated that different ethnic groups or cultures view their responsibilities to children around them differently. In this present study, the result on ethnicity and child adoption suggests that the males who are from the Yoruba ethnic affiliation expressed a significant positive attitude towards child adoption, followed by the men from the Igbo and the Hausa ethnic affiliation. In Lagos state, the Igbos and Yorubas predominantly practice Christianity which is more favourable towards child adoption. In the Igbo culture however, a child adopted may not be regarded as part of the family due to cultural norms and practices (Nwaoga, 2013).

## CONCLUSION

This study sought to investigate the significant differences between the age groups (20-40, 41-60 and above 60years) based on their attitude towards child adoption. The results of this study revealed that there exists significant differences among the age groups, with the participants in the young adult group (20-40) reporting a positive attitude towards child adoption. The study succeeded in identifying significant differences between the ethnic groups with the Yoruba ethnic group reporting a positive attitude towards child adoption. The study also examined differences in income status and attitude towards child adoption. It was revealed that adult males in the low income status group reported a significant negative attitude towards child adoption.

The findings obtained in this present study may be utilized as content to assist social workers and adoption service practitioners in formulating new policies to advocate for a positive attitude towards child adoption among adult males. This will also guide stakeholders in child welfare agencies in engineering their efforts to the appropriate demography. It is

recommended that future research efforts may be geared towards identifying factors associated with poor attitude towards child adoption among males through qualitative methods.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The issue of social desirability may be consciously considered when generalizing the findings of this study. The sample size may also be considered as a limitation. For example, each of the ethnic groups in Nigeria can be studied in their ethnic location. This is likely to reveal more factors associated with child adoption among men.

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