

# Child Adoption as a Social Imperative: Navigating Cultural Beliefs and Community Influence

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Leaders of United Nations Member States adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 to create a world where no one is left behind by 2030. As world leaders work to deliver on the 2030 promises, children around the globe are standing up to secure their rights to good health, quality education, a clean planet and more.

Despite the National Child Right Act enacted on Nigeria in 2003 to regulate the welfare of children including child adoption practices, majority of Nigerians do not understand the concept of child adoption and the policy regulating it.

A cross sectional descriptive survey was conducted to assess the knowledge and attitude towards acceptability of child adoption among adults in Ohaukwu Local Government Area, Ebonyi State Nigeria.

The study found that majority of the respondents had good knowledge and positive attitude towards child adoption but the acceptability of child adoption was poor.

Educational status and number of living children were seen to be associated with the willingness to adopt a child. Awareness on child adoption as a social responsibility to child welfare in the community should increase.

## Introduction

Child Adoption is a universal concept that provides legal rights for the adopter and adoptee to become a family, thus enabling the child to access good quality life. But formal child adoption practice may or may not be acceptable to couples and individuals because the African society places a passionate premium on procreation in any family setting (Ezenwankwo et al, 2015). Child adoption is a challenging social process in Nigeria generally and more in Igbo land where the issues of inheritance and child rights are socio-culturally integrated. These challenges range from individual, family and community socio-cultural behaviors towards inheritance to the complex ethno-religious inclinations (Omeire et al, 2015). This study assessed the knowledge and attitude towards acceptability of child adoption among adults in Ohaukwu Local Government Area, Ebonyi State Nigeria.

## Our approach

A cross sectional descriptive survey was conducted among adults who are aged 18 years using a pre-tested questionnaire, Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. Chi-square analysis was performed to test the associations between socio-demographic variables, knowledge and attitude towards acceptability of child adoption.

## What we found

About three-quarters of the respondents had good knowledge of child adoption.

Attitude towards child adoption shows most of respondents 234 (54%) have positive approach to child adoption, while 196(46%) had negative attitude towards child adoption.

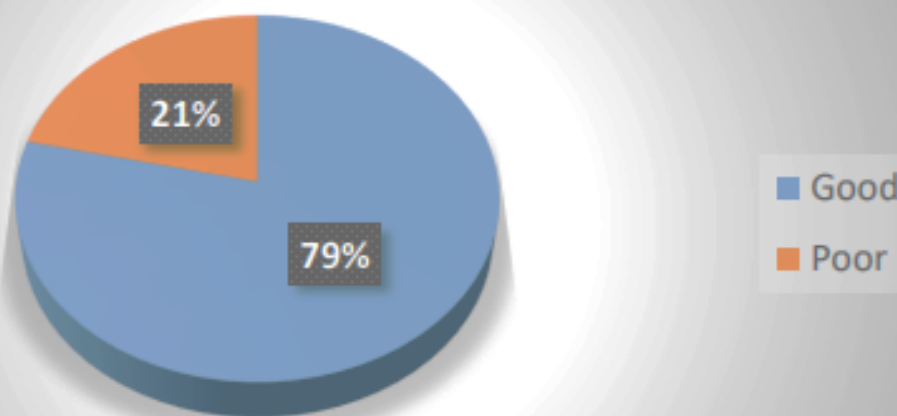
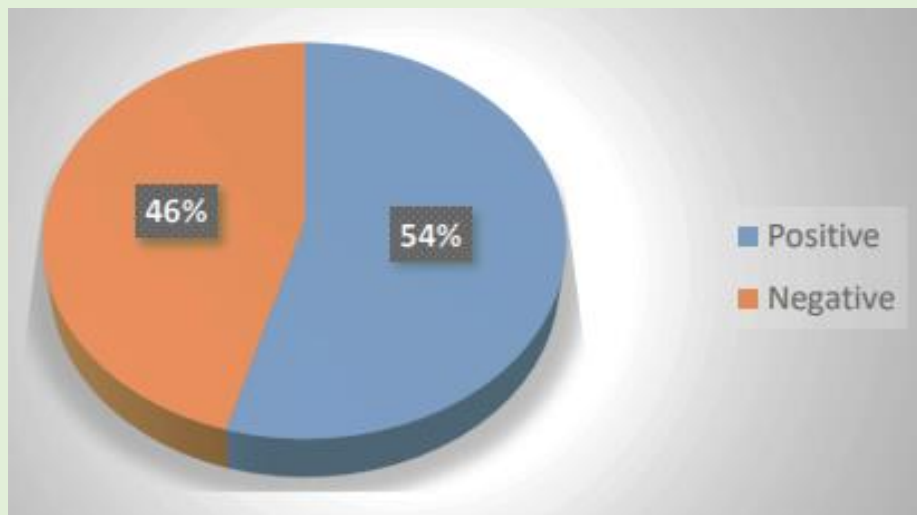


FIGURE 1: Pie chart showing the overall knowledge of child adoption

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocacy among stakeholders and opinion leaders on positive attitude towards acceptability of child adoption practice in the community.
- Public health practitioners should create more awareness on the viability of child adoption as an alternative solution for infertility, and social responsibility to child welfare in the community.
- Curriculums for schools at various level of education should be reviewed to integrate child welfare programs and services including adoption and the education of the girl child.
- Mass campaigns by NGOs, key family members and religious leaders in the community for the acceptability of child adoption practice.
- Government should encourage and provide funding for research on child adoption with the aim of developing cultural sensitive interventions



**FIGURE 2: Pie chart showing overall Attitude towards child adoption**

On the participants level of acceptability of the practice of child adoption. Results indicates that majority of the respondents had not taking child adoption as a good practice as acceptability was as low as 160(37.2%) while nonacceptability was as high as 270(62.8%). The number of living children is strongly related to the willingness to adopt a child. Respondents with higher educational status had positive attitude towards acceptability of child adoption than those with lower educational attainment. No factor was found to be significantly associated with attitude to adoption

## Conclusion

There is a high level of awareness and knowledge of child adoption among respondents in the communities. The respondents concerns about adoption show that adoption it is still viewed differently as having one's biological children. The opinions and acceptance of relatives and friends is likely to influence prospective adoptive parents' decision indicating that other factors like societal and cultural values may be a key determinant of respondents' disposition toward child adoption. There is a need to increase the awareness on child adoption as a social responsibility to child welfare in the community.

## References

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