

Influence of Western Culture on Wedding Events in Southwestern Nigeria

Alidu Olatunji Kareem,
Department of Sociology,
Federal University of Wukari,
Taraba State, Nigeria

Abstract

The study examined the influence of western culture on wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria and the transformative effects of this culture on indigenous wedding activities in the study area. The study was carried out in the six states of the southwest: Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo States. The study adopted the quantitative research design. Data were collected from 200 events planners who were purposively selected from the six State Capitals. Ado-Ekiti, Ikeja, Akure, Ibadan, Abeokuta and Osogbo. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics (ANOVA and Multiple Regression). The findings revealed that western culture has significantly transformed the indigenous wedding activities in southwestern Nigeria as evident of the regression analysis; $a = 0.24$, $B = 0.905$; $B_2 = 0.27$; $B_3 = 0.035$; and $B_4 = 0.66$. The study identified: education, ideology, religion, belief system, industrialization, urbanization, and technology as components of Western culture that had influenced wedding events in Nigeria.

Keywords: Wedding, Western Culture, Industrialization, Urbanization, Religion, Nigeria.

Background

The marriage institution is established by human society to control and regulate the sex life of men. It is a socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation. Marriage is an institution of society that can have different implications in different cultures. Its purposes, function and form may differ from society to society but is present everywhere as an institution. For a man or woman who has reached the age of marriage to remain single is against the mores of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria regardless of religious beliefs, social class or ideology. Men get married even when they are sexually important to

save either their faces or the faces of their immediate relatives, as well as to get someone to look after the domestic establishment.

Marriage in human society is marked with the wedding ceremony; the public joining together, under socially specified regulations of a man and woman as husband and wife. The *wedding* is to the bride's parents merely the conclusion of a contract to 'give' her to the man. Traditionally as far as her family was concerned, despite the preparation for the day and the fore-gathering of Kinsfolk on an actual day, it was relatively a quiet event.

Despite the relative stability of some of its cardinal features, like any other society, marriage is one social institution of the Yoruba's which has been mostly in a state of flux as a result of the diffusion of Western culture and the quick process of economic growth. The rapid change in custom and practices have been steadily going on since the establishment of British rule over the whole country (Akinleye, 1946; Coker, 1958; Fadipe, 1978).

The western culture influence on marriage institutions began in 1896, with the opening up of the interior to trade through the building of a railway line in Lagos to Kano, this accelerates these changes. The railway's construction camp and later on the railway stations open lines attracted women and girls, chiefly for trade (Forde, 1951; Marshal, 1962; Fadipe, 1978). Their contacts with clerks and artisans born or trained in Lagos led to some, who were already married, leaving their husbands to become the mistresses of the men from Lagos. Beautiful girls who had already been betrothed, almost invariably without their consent, could defy both their parent and public opinion and become attached to some clerks or artisan as mistresses' (Ajisafe, 1924; Abiola, et al, 1932; Marshal, 1962). Thus three most important changes in the traditional marriage customs were effected. The first was the popularization of the practice, hitherto largely conferred to slaves and people without kin, of marriage by the mutual consent of both parties and with or without the preliminaries of the consent of parents and payment of the bride price; second, the abandonment of the betrothal of girls in infancy and without their consent; and thirdly the popularization of divorce (Akinleye, 1946; Delano, 1960; Fadipe, 1978).

As in the case of divorce and the right of the father to dispose of the hand of the daughter in whatever way he pleases, an important change has seen going on for many years in the matter of the bride price or the '*idana*'. Before the outbreak of the First World War, the complaint was common about extravagant rates which parent demand as bride price. With the introduction of wage labour

by the British imperialist, an opportunity arose for young men to earn in one year in wage labour what would be earned in three years of painful savings by a farmer on the farm. Parents, most of them in no position to take advantage of these increased economic opportunities by offering their service for wages, seemed nevertheless anxious to enjoy their share of the enhanced standard of living. Hence the scale of the bride price kept some pace with the rise in prosperity (Abiola, et al, 1932; Marshall, 1962; Walker, 1984).

Of equal note is the influence of western religion or Christianity on wedding events. The Christian religion abhorred child marriage, provide the girls with the right age, parents prefer young suitors come into the open than to Carry on their courtship clandestinely and without the parent formal approval (Fadipe, 1978; Forde, 1951). As soon as it comes to the parent notice that a young man and their daughter have been seen together repeatedly, they make the girls understand that they do not like clandestine dating. Rather, the proper customary procedure should be followed. As soon as the father of the boy or someone else acting for him has obtained the consent of the girl's parents the two are considered as engaged. There is no consultation of the '*Ifa*' oracle.

The act of joining man and woman in wedlock (wedding) is as old as the institution of marriage itself, but the structures, forms; organization and management of it and materials used for the event is perpetually undergoing serious changes due to the influence of western culture – conceptualized as the “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society (Taylor, 187). The influence of western culture on wedding planning in African society is so profound that the local or traditional wedding had been put to the background. The wedding event has assumed greater sophistication, is no longer an event that ordinary person can handle the planning, execution and delivery are now within the purview of a new set of professionals – the wedding planners/supervisors.

The need for systematic planning of wedding events cannot be overestimated. Apart from being the major sources of income for the planners and executor of wedding programmes – musician, canopy and chairs suppliers; wedding gown clothes sellers, fashion designers, ring manufacturers, caterers and others, it is also a source of income for the three tiers government in Nigeria, as some of the wedding materials are imported and taxes are paid to the cover of the government. Also, the need to study the wedding event becomes imperative considering the dwindling resources from the oil sector, there is increasing

agitation for the country to explore new sources of income which tourism and hospital industries are possible options. Most of the studies on wedding events were majorly carried out in Western societies, therefore, the need for this study.

Objectives of the study

The major aim of the study was to investigate the influence of western culture on wedding event planning in Southwestern Nigeria and ascertain the extent of transformation that had taken place on indigenous wedding activities since the contact with Western societies. In achieving this aim, the specific objectives were to:

1. Identify the wedding variables that are most likely to change or considered as trendy in Southwestern Nigeria.
2. Investigate the extent to which wedding events changed due to the influence of western culture in Southwestern Nigeria.

Literature review

The concept of culture has recently proved attractive not only to those who seek to understand variations in wedding events (e.g. Ronen 1986) but also to those who attempt to delineate contrasts between different cultural prescriptions in wedding events world over (Schein 1985). Robert and Boyacigiller (1984) suggest that the most fundamental problem in this area has been the lack of any agreement as to how to define culture and the consequent lack of a currency within which to conduct studies. As culture is not clearly defined and cultural boundaries do not necessarily overlap with national boundaries but are usually taken to do so. Cultural factors are commonly brought in to explain social facts without any explanation of their origins in the social history of a society, or of their functioning, and not enough has been done to specify which components of which cultures are relevant to wedding events, and also which aspects of wedding events are influenced.

Consequently, conceptual and operational problems continue to hinder the measurement of the influence of culture on wedding events. The process of cultural influence in society and of the stability and persistence of certain cultural transmissions should be understood. Industrialization/modernization are arguably expressed concerning a nation's tradition and are thus achieved in many different modes. This notion serves to unify the otherwise competing culturalist and contingency school of thought and should prove fertile in building necessary more complete models.

The literature abounds with definitions of culture. Culture however has come to mean two different things. One is the mental programming that arises from socialization into the value, symbols and preferences that are specific for a society. This concept has been pioneered by the seminar research programmes and published works of Hofstede (1980, 1991). An alternative concept considers organizations as entities that are cultures themselves, being institutions in the sense of interactionist or interactionist-structuralist social science approaches. (Mausice et al 1980; Pondy 1977; Wieck 1979).

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory locates culture in the mind of the human individual. This definition put forward by psychologists and micro economically oriented students of the event business. The second definition is mainly preferred by sociologically oriented scholars. Culture, to some researchers, is some combination of norms, values, feelings, thinking, roles, behaviour, beliefs, attitude, expectations, meaning, and so on. To others, culture is understood by what it does not include; economics, politics, law, religion, language, education, technology, industrial environment, society or the market. Whatever 'culture' is or is not the problem, as Chapman (1992), points out, will not be solved by making further efforts in the same direction. It is too fundamental to be solved through a tighter definition. 'Culture' resists operational definition, not because it is a particularly intractable area of human affairs, but because the idea is tied to a particular context.

For conceptual clarification, Tylorian (1871), definition was adopted when he stated that "culture is the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of the society. The popular theory of culture in anthropology by Tylor (1871), states that: Culture is learned; Culture derives from the biological, environmental, psychological, and historical components of human existence; Culture is structured; Culture is divided into aspects; Culture is dynamic; Culture is variable; Culture exhibits regularities that permit its analysis by the methods of science and; Culture is the instrument whereby the individual adjusts to his total setting and gains the means for creative expression.

All the same, in the light of experience, not even the most emancipated Yoruba individualist would think of getting married to a third cousin, much less a second or first. The possibility of such close relatives pledging their troth to each other out of sheer ignorance of their relationship is very remote. The requirement as to the soundness of physical stock also tends to be insisted upon in the country at large even though there is greater laxity in cosmopolitan cities.

Related to the above is the idea of giving a periodical gift to the bride during courtship (Akinleye, 1946, Fadipe, 1978), most especially during Esther and Christmas. These presents generally consist of expensive articles of dress or the money with which to procure them. Some of the poorer and less respecting families tend to look toward the finance of their daughters to provide their sweetheart with the greater part of what they need, such as clothes and jewellery before marriage.

The young man has to place his services at the disposal of the parents of the fiancée on such occasions as funerals and weddings when booths have to be erected, guests served and other forms of assistance given. Despite this new development, there is a pocket of resistance to these changes. In practically every community are to be found the conservative element of the population who are still governed in their practice by the old ideas in while others welcome changes which fit into a practical situation. This study, therefore, aimed to examine the extent to which the western culture had impacted the wedding events in the Southwestern society, the enclave of the Yoruba race, to develop a theoretical orientation that will link the past with the present to predict future travels.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on contingency theory, a postulate that posited that no single component of culture influence wedding events as classical, behavioural and quantitative approaches would want us to believe. Burns and Stalker (1961), Woodward (1965); Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), showed that success was not correlated with a single set of factors; instead, the effectiveness of a particular culture or sequence of actions is contingent upon or depends upon several factors. The theory states that success will be secured when securing a good match between the situation and its strategies and structures. According to convergent theorists the most important of these contingency factors are usually held to be: the environment, technology, education, urbanization, women emancipation, industrialization, religion and belief system, and ideology. Therefore, contingency theory is essentially about the need to achieve a fit between the cultural elements and their influence on wedding events.

The influence of western culture on wedding events in the African's event industry cannot be overemphasized. The phenomenon of change that has permeated every aspect of our lives in developing countries is attributed to the influence of western culture through the activities of missionaries; trading, migration, education, industrialization, urbanization and globalization. Misumi

(1985), is one of the rare researchers who tackle this problem of conceptualizing 'culture' head-on. According to him, it is technically possible to devise research tools and to design questions that are sensitive to local cultures and reflect an understanding of the meaning that different peoples assign to various 'act' and 'words'. There is no denying that this is difficult. This study is an attempt in that direction. These major elements of culture that are singly and collectively influenced by wedding events in developing African society are education, urbanization, industrialization, and migration.

Urbanization the consequence of western culture, restructuring of economic activities resulting in rapid industrialization and growth of other social institutions such as schools, churches, market centres, administrative units and infrastructural development impacted significantly on marriage institutions in African society (Coker, 1958). In somewhat cosmopolitan societies of Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Osogbo, Ondo, Akure among others, boys and girls sometimes have already reached an agreement to marry each other before the parent of the girls point out to her how useless it is to entertain the idea of marriage with him, since she is related, however distantly to him. But such an objection is almost invariably overruled, by the expressed determination of both boys and girls to be married despite their respective mentors.

One of the influential western cultural factors that have impacted deeply our marital system is education. The modern system of education introduced by the British government affected wedding events in developing countries including Nigeria. It has brought about a change in the attitudes, beliefs, values and ideologies of the people. Education which is even spread even amongst the females has created or aroused individualistic feelings. The increasing education not only brings changes in the Philosophy of life of men and women but also provides new avenues of employment to the latter. After becoming economically independent, couples demand more freedom in their affairs (including weddings). They refuse to accept dominance over them. Education in this way brings changes in relations in the family. As the level of education rises, so the complexity of wedding events. Related to this are increasing female education; identified freedom and employment opportunities for women created awareness among women particularly in the middle and upper class. They also sought the chance of becoming "free" from the authoritarian hold of the family.

The factory system of production, a new system of organization and management and a new style of life have also affected wedding events. It has

made young men and women leave their immediate families to faraway places in search of better prospects and employment. It has resulted in the breakdown of the link between kinship and wedding events in the area of planning and financing. Many of the traditional skills, crafts and household industries associated with wedding events have declined because of the onslaught of the factory system of production. Factory employment has freed young adults from direct dependence upon their families. This financial independence of the youngsters has weakened the authority of the need of the household over those earning members. In many cities, even women too joined men in working outside the families on a salary basis, a clear departure from traditional practices when women were restricted to non-salary jobs.

Industrialization seems usually to be accompanied, he argues, by a trend towards a conjugal family system – relatively isolated nuclear which retain links to grandparents and grandchildren – and greater equality of status between husband and wives (Goode, 1963). The development of free labour markets (where there are few constraints preventing individuals from selling their labour to a particular employer), he suggests, makes it possible for individuals to earn their living without the consent or co-operation of their kin. In Goode’s analysis, industrial capitalism resulted in greater individual freedom – by which he means primarily freedom from the authority of parents or of more inclusive kin groups. Supporting the influence of industrialization, Parsons (1950) argued that economic differentiation which is so characteristic of industrial societies (the multiplicity of different occupations, with different incomes, and lifestyles attached) remove the ties of the children to their parents promoting the value of individualism. Industrial economies “require” their labour force a higher degree of geographical mobility than other types of society.

Hypothesis:

Emanating from the specific objectives and research questions is the under the listed hypothesis that will further explain the nexus between western culture and wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria. The hypothesis is stated as follows:

Ho: There is no significant relationship between western culture and wedding trends in Southwestern Nigeria.

Methodology

The study was carried out in the Southwest geo-political zone of Nigeria. Southwestern Nigeria is made up of six States; Ekiti, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Osun and Lagos. The study was conducted in all the State capitals of Akure, Osogbo,

Ado-Ekiti, Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta, because events activities are more predominant in these States capitals compared with other towns in the area. The South-west geo-political zone is bounded in the west by the Republic of Benin; in the south by the Gulf of Guinea; in the east by Edo and Delta state; and in the north by Kwara and Kogi states. The area lies between longitude 20421 and 60031 east of Greenwich and latitude 50 491 and 90 171 north of the equators. The area accounted for 21% of the total population of Nigeria (NPC, 2006) and the most urbanized area in Nigeria (Kareem, 2016). The area is occupied by the Yoruba speaking ethnic group with a sizeable number of immigrants from other parts of Nigeria. Farming, lumbering, fishing, trading and agro-allied businesses are predominant economic activities of the people.

The study used a descriptive survey design. Both primary and secondary data were collected and used for the study. Primary data were collected using the quantitative method. A questionnaire purposively designed for this study was administered on the 200 respondents (Wedding event planners) selected for the study from the six States capitals of Akure, Osogbo, Ekiti, Lagos, Ibadan and Abeokuta while secondary data were gathered from relevant books, academic journals, magazines, dailies and internet. The target population for the study were the events planners in the area of study. The distribution of questionnaires in each of the states, based on the population and level of development, were Ondo state (30), Osun state (30), Ekiti state (30), Ogun state (30), Lagos state (40) and Oyo state (40). Data gathered from the questionnaire were analyzed with the aid of descriptive statistical techniques, such as frequency distribution, simple percentages and inferential statistics, such as chi-square ANOVA, t-test and multiple regression analyses.

Findings

The study investigated the influence of western culture on wedding events in southwestern Nigeria, respondents were asked of their opinion on whether western culture has become increasingly important and has greatly influenced wedding planning in Nigeria, Table 1 showed that eighty-seven (45.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed, fifty-three (28.0%) somewhat agreed, fifteen of the respondents (8.0%) neither agreed nor disagreed, while thirty (15.7%) of the respondents somewhat disagreed and the remaining five (2.6%) strongly disagreed.

Respondents were further asked to state reasons why they chose their answer to the question. Table 2 revealed the various reasons which informed their decisions such as western media influence (36.4%), globalization (19.3%),

technology (18.6%) and migration (25.7%). All these factors singly and collectively influence the wedding events in the area of study.

The study further attempted to investigate the extent to which western culture had influenced wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria, Table 3: showed that the majority of the respondents⁷⁷ (40.5%) believed that western culture affected wedding events to a great extent, 38 (20.0%) said just to some extent, 43 (22.6%) mentioned moderate extent, 21 (11.0%) said to a low extent while the remaining 11 (5.8%) did not perceive the effect at all. These findings revealed that western culture influenced wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria.

Test of Hypothesis:

Emanating from the specific objectives and research questions was the hypothesis that further explained the extent to which western culture influence wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria. The hypothesis was stated as follows:
Ho: There was no significant relationship between western culture and wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria.

Hypothesis Interpretation

To explain the in-depth of the table, the following terms should be noted:

Multiple R. This is the correlation coefficient. It shows strongly the linear relationship is.

R squared. This is r^2 , the Coefficient of Determination. It shows how many points fall on the regression line.

Adjusted R square. The adjusted R Square adjusts for the number of terms in a model.

Standard Error of the regression: An estimate of the standard deviation of the error μ . This is *not* the same as the standard error in descriptive statistics! The standard error of the regression is the precision that the regression coefficient is measured; If the coefficient is large compared to the standard error, then the coefficient is probably different from 0. Having explained the key point, the result of the regression analysis in the table shows that Adjusted R^2 0.644, adjusted R^2 was used because of the numbers of variables which is more than one.

Therefore, it connotes 64.4% of the coefficient determination exist between the dependent variable and independent variables, explaining further that Western culture is significantly related to the wedding events in Western Nigeria in a multidimensional way. The correlation coefficient further produces a

significance of 0.000 which is lesser than the α value explaining a strong relationship between both independent and dependent variables. The regression equation can further describe this change using the regression equation obtained from the value in the coefficient table, by applying a dependent-variable score for each independent-variable score. Each variable (X) value substituted into the equation and the 'y' value provides another pair that falls on the regression line.

$$\alpha = .024, \beta_1 = .905, \beta_2 = .027, \beta_3 = -.035, \beta_4 = .66,$$

So, the regression equation is the extent to which Western culture affect wedding events in Nigeria = $\alpha + \beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \beta_4 + \beta_5$

$$\text{Hence, AT} = (-) 0.024 + 0.905 + (-) 0.27 + (-) 0.35 + 0.066$$

Thus, any increased or decreased by 1 unit of each of the independent variables, “AT” is increased or decreased respectively by the same unit. The significant value for Western culture has become increasingly important and has greatly influenced wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria, to what extent has Westernization affected the cultural elements of wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria, to what extent has Western culture affect wedding events in Nigeria?, how has western culture impacted on wedding planning in Nigeria? “.000” “.067” “.052” “.056” and “.001” respectively which are lower than α (5%), this indicates that the variables are all significant towards how western culture impacted wedding events in Nigeria.

Therefore, there was a significant effect between the level of impact of western culture on wedding events in Nigeria and statistically correlated to the significant value for Western culture has become increasingly important and has greatly influenced wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria, to what extent has Westernization affected the cultural elements of wedding events in Nigeria, to what extent has Western culture affect wedding events in Nigeria?, how has western culture impacted on wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria?

Recommendations

The influence of western culture on the cost of wedding events in Africa cannot be overemphasized – expenses on wedding activities; cost of event centre; reception activities; expenses for the church or mosque; cost of food and drinks; music supply; honorariums for the wedding event managers; etc. It is been recommended that couples’ families should avoid extravagant spending because of the post-marriage responsibilities.

The government and cultural association should be engaging in ‘cultural rebirth’ to restore African lost values in wedding events. Efforts should be made by both the government and the society to inculcate African traditional and cultural values and practices which we had lost to the western culture through colonialism, missionaries’ activities, globalization and migration. Finally, couples are advised to reduce foreign contents of their wedding materials to reflect local content, this will not only reduce the cost of the wedding event but save the country from the depletion of foreign earnings.

Conclusion

Marriage as an institution is a universal phenomenon but the organisation and execution of the wedding event (marriage) vary from one society to another depends on the normative practice of the society concerned. However, the wedding event in Southwestern Nigeria had been observed to have been greatly transformed as a result of the diffusion process resulting from contact with western culture and values.

The transformation is propelled by agents of change such as colonization, education, globalization, urbanization, evangelization and industrialization. These agents of change had altered the previous practices which emphasized the importance of family in planning, organizing and extension of family events to the prominent role of the couples. The trending practices now feature change in time, clothing, involvement of churches, and mosques, the honeymoon period and modernization of the engagement process characterized by the master of ceremony sophisticated gift items and musical concert.

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Table 1: Respondents Opinion on influence of Culture on Wedding Planning

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	87	45.7
Somewhat agreed	53	28.0
Neither agree nor disagree	15	8.0
Somewhat disagree	30	15.7
Strongly disagree	5	2.6
Total	190	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Table 2: Respondents Reasons for their Opinion on western culture and Wedding Planning

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Media influence	51	36.4
Globalization	27	19.3
Technology	26	18.6
Migration	36	25.7
Total	140	100

Source: Field survey, 2020.

Table 3: Respondents Perception of the extent of Influence of Western Culture on Wedding Planning

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Great extent	77	40.5
Some extent	38	20.0
Moderate extent	43	22.6
Low extent	21	11.05
Not at all	11	5.8
Total	190	100

Source: Field survey, 2020.

Test of Hypothesis:

Ho: Western culture is not significantly related to the wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.803 ^a	.644	.635	.96415

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Western culture has become increasingly important and has greatly influenced wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	249.337	4	62.334	67.057	.000 ^b
	Residual	137.578	148	.930		
	Total	386.915	152			

- a. Dependent Variable: How significant is western culture on wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria?

- b. Predictors: (Constant), Predictors: (Constant), Western culture has become increasingly important and has greatly influenced wedding planning in Nigeria, to what extent has Westernization affected the cultural elements of wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.024	.399		-.061	.952
Western culture has become increasingly important and has greatly influenced wedding events in south western Nigeria	.905	.055	.803	16.352	.000
To what extent has Westernization affected the cultural elements of wedding events in Southwestern Nigeria	-.027	.058	-.023	-.473	.067
To what extent has Western culture affect wedding events in Nigeria?	-.035	.055	-.032	-.643	.052
How has western culture impacted on wedding events in Nigeria	.066	.058	.056	1.140	.056

Dependent Variable How significant is Western culture on wedding planning in Southwestern Nigeria?

Address Correspondence to:

*Alidu Olatunji Kareem,
 Department of Sociology,
 Federal University of Wukari,
 Taraba State, Nigeria
alidukareem@gmail.com,
alidukareem@yahoo.com*