

A Study of Community Perception on Cultural Resistance and the Reconstruction of Masculinity in Non-Traditional Unions**Ademuson Adefolake Olusola**Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Oyo State,
Nigeriafolakeademuson@yahoo.com**Abstract**

Within the broader African context, age-disparate relationships possess a considerable historical pedigree. Yet, the intensity of public debate has increased regarding arrangements in which the woman is the older partner. This study examined marriages between young African men and considerably older white women within the University of Ibadan community, seeking to elucidate prevailing perceptions of such unions, the factors that precipitate them, and their broader implications for society. Anchored on the Social Exchange Theory, the study draws upon interviews with thirty participants, comprising students, lecturers, and technologists, with a view towards understanding how considerations of tradition, modernity, and economic exigency shape attitudes toward these marriages. The findings revealed a generally high level of awareness of such unions within the community, largely attributable to media exposure and the popularity of Nollywood films, such that these marriages have become an established subject of public discourse. Participants' attitudes toward these unions proved markedly ambivalent: some regard them as transgressive of prevailing cultural norms, while others consider them a rational response to prevailing socio-economic circumstances. The study further demonstrates that these marriages are widely construed as arrangements in which companionship and migration opportunities are exchanged for financial support, rather than as relationships grounded in romantic attachment. The study concludes that these marriages constitute a revealing index of the pressures that *globalisation* and economic inequality exert upon African cultural values. The study recommends increased scholarly engagement with non-traditional marital forms, culturally sensitive counselling services, and informed public discourse that moves beyond stereotypes.

Keywords: age-disparate marriage, cultural resistance, masculinity reconstruction, non-traditional unions, social exchange

INTRODUCTION

The global landscape of intimate relationships is undergoing considerable transformation, a development that challenges prevailing societal norms and expectations across diverse cultural contexts, as individuals increasingly pursue varied configurations of romantic partnership. The phenomenon of age-disparate and interracial marriage, particularly unions involving older Western women and younger African men, has emerged as a subject of growing academic and public interest, with scholars and the wider public alike seeking to understand both the underlying causes of these relationships and their broader social significance. This burgeoning interest spans several

fields of inquiry, including romance tourism, migration studies, and the critical examination of evolving gender norms (Olarinoye *et al.*, 2025).

Across the African continent, public discourse surrounding such relationships has intensified considerably with the proliferation of the internet and social media. Whereas societies have historically tended toward marital arrangements in which husbands are appreciably older than their wives, the advent of digital media has heightened public awareness of relationships in which the woman is the older partner. In South Africa, for instance, such arrangements are colloquially termed “Ben 10” relationships, denoting unions between older women and younger men. In West Africa, the corresponding pattern manifests as relationships between older Western women and younger African men. These relationships have prompted broader reflection on the constitution of masculinity and on the boundaries of socially sanctioned relational forms (Meiu, 2017; Kringelbach, 2016)

Within Nigeria, such relationships are frequently the subject of media and cultural commentary, most notably within Nollywood cinema, tabloid journalism, and a range of online platforms. These unions are variously depicted within public discourse as symbols of opportunity, indicators of moral decline, or manifestations of global modernity (Eghafona, 2021). Notwithstanding this pronounced public awareness and extensive media representation, existing Nigerian scholarship has predominantly examined relationships between older men and younger women, or has focused on intra-national intercultural marriages, thereby leaving the specific configuration of young African men and considerably older white women largely unexamined within scholarly discourse. This lacuna is especially pronounced in dynamic urban centres such as Ibadan, where young people are extensively exposed to global media narratives and increasingly shaped by aspirations toward migration.

This study sought to ascertain the perceptions held by members of the University of Ibadan community regarding these relationships, together with the reasoning underlying such perceptions. The University of Ibadan was selected as the site of inquiry because it constitutes an environment receptive to novel ideas and substantially influenced by global developments; the students and staff affiliated with the institution are correspondingly likely to have formed considered views on these relationships. This paper is accordingly intended to illuminate the community's perceptions of these relationships and the rationale underpinning them. Nonetheless, the precise levels of

awareness, the range of perceptions and motivations, and the perceived social consequences associated with these relationships have not previously been systematically documented or rigorously assessed. Pivotal questions remain regarding whether such marriages are best understood as pragmatic strategies for economic survival, viable pathways to migration, authentic expressions of genuine affection, or profound threats to African values (Olarinoye *et al.*, 2025; Temilola & Mashau, 2024)

Objectives of the Study

This study is animated by a comprehensive set of objectives, each formulated to illuminate the diverse perceptions surrounding marriages between young African men and older white women within the University of Ibadan community. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Assess the level of awareness within the University of Ibadan community regarding non-traditional, age-disparate marriages between young African men and older white women.
- ii. Examine the prevailing perceptions and moral attitudes held by students, lecturers, and technologists toward these unions.
- iii. Investigate the perceived long-term social implications of these marriages for the individual men, their immediate families, and Nigerian society at large.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization

To ensure theoretical clarity and precision within this investigation, the following core foundational concepts are defined as follows:

Non-Traditional Unions

Partnerships that consciously depart from established cultural, generational, or socio-economic matrimonial configurations within a given society. In this context, it denotes inter-racial, transnational arrangements where the female partner is significantly older than the male partner.

Cultural Resistance

The explicit or implicit opposition to dominant societal expectations, values, and institutionalized marriage customs. It represents how individuals navigate or circumvent traditional boundaries to satisfy contemporary aspirations.

Reconstruction of Masculinity

The continuous socio-cultural process through which men reconfigure traditional definitions of manhood, authority, and the provider role, particularly when orthodox economic avenues are blocked by adapting to unconventional gender dynamics.

Empirical Review

Age-Disparate and Interracial Unions in Africa

Relationships of this nature have become increasingly prevalent across Africa, frequently construed as a means by which young men secure financial support while simultaneously posing a challenge to prevailing conceptions of masculinity. Research emerging from Europe and North America consistently documents a discernible upward trend in older women forming cross-border partnerships with younger men, a trend substantially facilitated by the proliferation of online dating platforms and the expansion of international tourism (Frohlick, 2013; Root, 2001). Within the coastal regions of East Africa, including Kenya and The Gambia, such relationships frequently blur the conventional boundaries separating romantic partnership, tourism, and informal economic exchange (Kibicho, 2016; Ball, 2013). These relationships challenge long-standing traditional expectations regarding age hierarchy, whereby men are conventionally expected to be older and economically dominant within the conjugal relationship, thereby raising substantive questions concerning gender roles, power dynamics, racial perception, and prevailing moral frameworks.

Within the broader African context, age-disparate relationships possess a considerable historical pedigree. Yet, the intensity of public debate has increased markedly in relation to arrangements in which the woman occupies the role of older partner. This pattern reflects an underlying tension between such unions' function as a perceived survival strategy and their perceived threat to the prevailing patriarchal gender order (Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.*, 2014). Correspondingly, within West Africa, the growing visibility of these relationships unsettles long-established cultural expectations about marriage, lineage, and masculine authority (Meiu, 2017; Kringelbach, 2016). A substantial proportion of the extant literature within the region continues to concentrate predominantly on “sugar daddy” relationships or on male-led romance tourism, leaving a considerable gap in the comprehensive understanding of relationships between young African men and older white women.

For the young men involved, such relationships may constitute a significant site for the reconstruction of masculinity. In societies where conventional markers of manhood, most notably,

the attainment of economic success through orthodox means, have become increasingly difficult to secure, certain young men may actively pursue alternative pathways through which to affirm their masculine identity (Aderemi, 2025). By entering into relationships with older, frequently more affluent, Western women, such men may gain access to resources and opportunities enabling them to fulfil aspects of the provider role, albeit through non-traditional means. This may manifest in the remittance of funds to family members, investment in business ventures, or the attainment of elevated social status within their communities. As Despres (2023) observes in a study of intimate relations between white women and local men in Zanzibar, such relationships may constitute a space within which local men negotiate their social and economic standing.

Factors Influencing African Men's Decisions

Several considerations are understood to underlie young African men's entry into relationships with older white women. In certain instances, such decisions are motivated by a desire to escape conditions of poverty and to secure an improved standard of living, predicated upon the expectation that the relationship will furnish the resources necessary for personal advancement. Some young men are drawn toward older women based on a perceived maturity and capacity for self-sufficiency, preferring relationships in which they are not solely responsible for the woman's material support, and in certain instances expressing genuine affection for their partner independent of considerations of age or financial means.

Relationships of this nature, formed between men and older white women, exert a discernible influence on prevailing conceptions of gender. Some observers regard these relationships as a threat to the established social order, while others view them favourably as evidence that men and women may relate to one another as equals and exercise autonomous choice. Smith (2016) observes that migration constitutes a key strategy for economic advancement and social mobility within contemporary Nigeria, a finding that situates these marital decisions within a broader socio-economic context.

Social Implications of Marriages

The social consequences of these marriages are multifaceted, generating effects that range from the individual to the societal level. At the level of the individual, young men engaged in such relationships frequently encounter social stigma, moral judgment, and challenges to their sense of identity. Notwithstanding the potential benefits of improved economic circumstances and personal development, the psychological burden imposed by societal disapproval may be considerable.

Families, for their part, may experience pronounced internal conflict, with certain members welcoming the economic benefits that such a union may confer, while others express strong disapproval on the grounds of perceived violations of cultural norms and a sense of compromised family honour.

Such marriages challenge established norms governing masculinity, age hierarchy, and marital power relations, thereby contributing to broader, and frequently contentious, debates concerning the evolution of gender roles and the very definition of cultural value. Whereas some regard these unions as modern, individualistic expressions of personal liberty, others perceive them as a direct threat to traditional African values, a perception frequently amplified by media portrayals that draw upon stereotypes or that incite moral panic.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was premised on the Social Exchange Theory, which posits that individuals make relational choices based on a calculus of costs and benefits. First introduced by Homans (1958) and subsequently elaborated by Blau (1964), the theory affords insight into the motivations underlying entry into such relationships, which participants pursue in pursuit of benefits such as financial security, affection, or social status, while seeking concomitantly to avoid costs such as social censure or personal sacrifice. Social Exchange Theory has been widely employed by researchers examining age-disparate and interracial relationships across the African continent. Studies conducted in East and West Africa demonstrate that relationships between local men and Western women frequently combine elements of romance, tourism, and commercial exchange, functioning in effect as an exchange of resources for affection or companionship. Within South Africa, scholars examining relationships in which older women partner with younger men have characterised such unions as a challenge to established gender roles and, simultaneously, as a means by which young men may affirm their masculinity in contexts of limited employment and constrained self-sufficiency.

Social Exchange Theory, in conjunction with the findings of prior scholarship, furnishes the analytical framework for this study. The theory illuminates the rationale underlying entry into these relationships, positing that individuals make relational choices on the basis of anticipated costs and benefits. This section additionally draws upon existing scholarship concerning constructions of masculinity and the social judgments directed at such relationships, with a view

to elucidating the underlying dynamics of these unions, the motivations driving their formation, the benefits participants derive from them, and the broader societal perceptions they engender.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an exploratory and cross-sectional research design with a view to comprehensively exploring the nuanced perceptions held by the University of Ibadan community regarding marriages between young African men and older white women. By engaging with the subjective meanings and social realities constructed by individual participants, this design facilitates a holistic understanding of the complex social phenomenon under investigation. A qualitative method was employed to furnish an in-depth, contextually grounded understanding of participants' perceptions rather than a mere measure of their prevalence. The research was conducted within the vibrant and intellectually diverse University of Ibadan community, an academic environment of considerable significance within Nigeria. Furthermore, students, lecturers, and the community know the phenomenon under study and have witnessed the occurrences of the phenomenon. To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the community's perceptions, a purposive sampling strategy was adopted. This non-probability sampling technique permitted the selection of participants capable of furnishing rich and pertinent information by virtue of their experience, knowledge, or exposure to the phenomenon of age-disparate and interracial marriage. The inclusion criteria of the sample comprised individuals drawn from various faculties and departments within the University of Ibadan who had witnessed people involved in this phenomenon.

Data collection was conducted principally through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, with a total of thirty (30) participants interviewed. This method afforded a flexible yet guided conversational format, enabling participants to elaborate upon their views and experiences while ensuring that the key research questions were systematically addressed. The sample size peaked at 30 when it was discovered that the researcher was getting more or less the same responses from the participants, meaning the saturation point was reached. Thematic analysis, as articulated by Braun and Clarke (2006), was employed in the analysis of the qualitative data. This systematic process encompassed several distinct stages: familiarisation with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts, generation of initial codes, identification of candidate themes, review and refinement of themes, the definition and naming of final themes, and the production of the analytic

report. The analysis sought to identify patterns, commonalities, and points of divergence within participants' perceptions, motivations, and experiences, with particular attention directed toward the manifestation of Social Exchange Theory within participants' narratives and toward the manner in which cultural resistance and the reconstruction of masculinity were articulated. Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides a comprehensive and insightful framework for analysing marriages between young African men and aged white women, particularly in understanding how members of the University of Ibadan community perceive such unions. Originating from the foundational works of Homans (1958), Blau (1964), and Emerson (1976), the theory posits that human relationships operate through rational evaluations of rewards, costs, alternatives, and power dynamics. Within this conceptual lens, individuals enter relationships when they believe that the benefits outweigh the disadvantages, and they sustain relationships when the balance of exchange remains favourable. SET therefore offers a powerful interpretive structure for understanding both the motivations that drive such marriages and the social interpretations that shape community perceptions.

Ethical Considerations

All participants were furnished with a detailed informed consent form, setting out the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously maintained throughout the study, with all identifying information removed from transcripts and from the resultant reports.

RESULTS

The qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews and informal discussions within the University of Ibadan community yielded rich insight into prevailing perceptions of marriages between young African men and older white women. The findings are organised in accordance with the study's principal objectives, revealing a complex interplay of awareness, attitudes, motivations, and perceived social implications.

Awareness of the Phenomenon

The study revealed a generally high and pervasive level of awareness within the University of Ibadan community regarding marriages between young African men and older white women. This awareness is attributable in substantial part to ubiquitous exposure through a range of contemporary media channels, including the pervasive influence of social media platforms, the

widespread popularity of Nollywood cinema, the reach of international media outlets, and frequent informal discussion among peers and colleagues.

“I think social media plays a very big role in shaping this relationship because it gives us access to people that are not even in our country.”

Male, Student

“I’ve seen it on Instagram and TikTok online. That’s where most people get to know about things like this.”

Female, Student

Beyond general exposure to social media, participants identified dating platforms and online interaction as critical facilitators of contact between young African men and older white women. One participant explained:

“Social media and dating platforms make it very easy. You can meet someone from another country without ever leaving your room.”

Female, Student

Another participant described the global reach of such online platforms:

“It has a network of people from different continents and cultures, and Western culture is what is mostly portrayed.”

Female, Student

Awareness of marriages between young African men and older white women is markedly high within the University of Ibadan community. This awareness derives substantially from media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, as well as from Nollywood cinema, a pattern consistent with existing scholarship on the role of the internet and social media in rendering non-traditional relationships more visible within society, as observed by Boshoff (2021) and Olarinoye *et al.*, (2025). The visibility of these relationships within media and cinematic representation prompts participants to reflect upon their broader significance; Eghafona (2021) similarly observes that Nigerian media and film play a substantial role in shaping perceptions of these marriages. The significance of dating platforms in facilitating cross-cultural contact corresponds with observations advanced by Frohlick (2013) and Root (2001), while the predominance of Western cultural portrayals within these digital spaces aligns with the findings of Kringelbach (2016) and Meiu (2017). It bears emphasis, however, that awareness of these relationships does not equate to their acceptance.

Perceptions and Attitudes

Perceptions of these marriages within the University of Ibadan community proved deeply ambivalent and frequently contradictory, an ambivalence reflecting a complex interplay of deeply embedded traditional values, pressing economic realities, diverse religious convictions, and the inexorable forces of global influence.

A dominant theme across the interviews concerned the perception that marriages between young African men and older white women conflict with African cultural norms. One participant stated unequivocally:

“It is not acceptable in our society.”

Female, Student

Another participant escalated the cultural basis for this rejection:

“Africans believe the man should be older or at least in the same age group as the woman.”

Female, Student

Members of academic staff voiced comparable views, underscoring the role of tradition in shaping marital expectations:

“Such marriages are looked down upon in our society because we place a lot of importance on cultural values.”

Male, Lecturer

Beyond cultural disapproval, participants articulated forceful moral judgements concerning the intentions underlying such marriages. One participant observed:

“Most people feel the young African men are deceiving the white women, and it is morally wrong.”

Female, Student

Another participant characterised such marriages as follows:

“Abuse and some kind of business arrangement, not a real marriage.”

Male, Student

A particularly forceful moral condemnation was advanced by a lecturer, who described such unions as deeply unethical:

“It is slavery. It is dirty, and it is not good.”

Male, Lecturer

Notwithstanding this widespread cultural and moral rejection, a minority of participants adopted a more pragmatic or permissive stance. One participant stated:

“There is no law against it, so it is acceptable.”

Female, Student

Another participant emphasised individual autonomy:

“If they truly love each other, then it should be their decision.”

Male, Student

Religious considerations surfaced implicitly within participants' moral evaluations. One lecturer remarked:

“You don't go into marriage for pecuniary reasons.”

Male, Lecturer

Another participant contended that traditional marital structures exist precisely to furnish a system of checks and balances:

“African marriages have values and norms that lead to stability in homes.”

Male, Lecturer

Perceived Motivations of Young African Men

The study identified several key factors that members of the University of Ibadan community believe contribute to young African men's decisions to enter into such marriages.

Economic Hardship, Poverty, and Unemployment

One of the most pronounced themes to emerge is the perception that economic hardship and poverty function as primary drivers of these unions. One participant stated plainly:

“Sometimes I think it's just for them to escape Nigeria's problems.”

Female, Student

Another participant attributed the phenomenon directly to financial desperation:

“Most of the reasons are financial. People are broke.”

Female, Student

Correspondingly, a long-serving member of the university community remarked:

“Money, money, money. That is the reason.”

Male, Technologist

Several participants framed these marriages explicitly as survival strategies:

“Some people don't want to commit a crime, so they indulge in this kind of thing because there is no job and no money.”

Female, Student

The motivations attributed to African men who enter into such marriages are predominantly economic in character, with participants widely perceiving these men as driven by desperation and by a desire to escape adverse circumstances. This finding accords with the tenets of Social Exchange Theory, which holds that individuals enter relationships based on anticipated benefit. Smith (2016) similarly observes that migration and transnational connection constitute important avenues for economic advancement within Nigeria, while the characterization of these marriages as exchange-based arrangements in which men derive material benefit, and women receive companionship, corresponds with the framework advanced by Thibaut and Kelley (1959). Nonetheless, certain participants also acknowledged that emotional considerations, including loneliness and the desire for companionship, may play a contributory role, a dimension similarly addressed by Despres (2023). The association of these marriages with experiences of cultural dislocation and the attenuation of traditional constraints is likewise a theme explored by Aderemi (2025).

Material Exchange and Instrumental Relationships

A further recurring theme concerns the perception of these marriages as fundamentally exchange-based arrangements. One participant expressed this view forcefully:

“In most cases, it's not love. The guy wants to gain something from the woman.”

Male, Lecturer

Correspondingly, another participant observed:

“It is more like business. The young man is looking for money and comfort.”

Male, Student

Certain participants characterised these relationships as mutually instrumental in nature:

“The woman probably wants companionship or to feel useful again, while the young man wants financial gain.”

Male, Lecturer

Loneliness, Companionship, and Emotional Needs

Notwithstanding the predominance of narratives centred on material motivation, a minority of participants acknowledged the relevance of emotional factors. One participant observed:

“Some of the women are lonely and just want companionship.”

Female, Student

Another participant elaborated:

“It may not always be about money; sometimes people just want someone to be with.”

Female, Student

Perceived Social Implications

The perceived social implications of these marriages prove diverse and far-reaching, bearing upon individuals, families, and the wider society.

Implications for the Young African Man

Participants consistently emphasised the personal and psychological consequences attending these marriages, with the perceived loss of autonomy and diminished masculinity emerging as a dominant concern. One participant stated:

“The young man may not be able to speak up or take his position as a man.”

Female, Student

Another participant characterised the experience in markedly severe terms:

“It is slavery, real slavery.”

Male, Lecturer

Participants also suggested that such marriages may adversely affect self-esteem:

“Sometimes they don’t get what they thought they would gain, and it leads to depression and frustration.”

Male, Lecturer

In addition, participants observed that cultural displacement may ensue:

“It affects their sense of cultural value and appreciation.”

Male, Professor

The social implications for African men who enter into these marriages are considerable. Participants expressed concern regarding the psychological consequences of attending such unions, including the loss of autonomy and diminished masculinity, a finding consonant with Mojola's (2014) observation that age-disparate relationships may challenge established gender hierarchies. Participants further expressed concern regarding the effects of these unions on self-esteem, including depression arising when anticipated benefits fail to materialize, a dynamic

explored by Despres (2023). The potential for these marriages to engender displacement, whereby men become disconnected from their cultural values, is likewise addressed by Kringelbach (2016).

Implications for the Family of the Young African Man

At the level of the family, such marriages frequently generate tension and conflict. One participant explained:

“Most African families will not like it at first.”

Male, Student

Another participant observed:

“Families are usually not comfortable with it.”

Male, Lecturer

Nonetheless, the financial benefits associated with such marriages frequently engendered a reluctant acceptance:

“If money starts coming, some families forget whether it is appropriate or not.”

Male, Lecturer

Participants further observed that such marriages may disrupt broader family cohesion:

“Some of their family and friendship connections are usually disturbed.”

Male, Student

The social implications for the family are similarly complex. Participants perceive that families are initially disinclined to welcome these marriages, yet may eventually accept them where financial benefit accrues, a pattern consistent with the observations of Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.* (2014). The tendency of families to engage in a cost-benefit calculus when evaluating these unions corresponds, moreover, with the predictions of Social Exchange Theory as articulated by Emerson (1976). Participants nonetheless expressed concern that these marriages may disrupt family and friendship ties, a concern similarly addressed by Kringelbach (2016). On the whole, the dynamics observed at the family level reflect the broader societal ambivalence toward these marriages.

Implications for African Society at Large

Beyond the individual and familial levels, participants placed considerable emphasis on the broader implications of these marriages for African society. Several participants contended that such marriages serve to reinforce negative stereotypes. One participant stated:

“People outside will believe the young man is just doing it to get ahead in life.”

Male, Technologist

Another participant added:

“They see us as people without principles or culture.”

Male, Lecturer

Participants expressed concern that the visibility of these marriages contributes to the misrepresentation of African values:

“Our culture is gradually eroding, and people now think anything is acceptable because of money.”

Male, Technologist

The social implications for society at large prove similarly significant, with participants expressing concern regarding the reinforcement of stereotypes and the erosion of African cultural values. This finding corresponds with Meiu's (2017) observation that transnational intimate relationships may become sites within which racialised and cultural stereotypes are enacted and reinforced. The perception that these marriages contribute to cultural erosion, with individuals abandoning tradition “because of money,” is similarly addressed by Eghafona (2021). The association of these unions with “the failure of the system” is likewise a theme explored by Aderemi (2025), suggesting that such marriages constitute not merely individual choices but also reflections of broader structural economic conditions. The capacity of these marriages to function as a “barometer” registering the pressures of economic globalisation upon cultural tradition is similarly discussed by Kringelbach (2016).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The University of Ibadan community demonstrates a marked degree of awareness regarding marriages between African men and older white women. Participants reported encountering such relationships across media platforms, including Instagram and TikTok, as well as through Nollywood cinema and international media, a development attributable to the proliferation of the internet and social media, which has rendered visible phenomena that might otherwise have remained largely unseen. Participants' capacity to name specific platforms and content illustrates the extent to which such narratives have become embedded within the fabric of everyday life in Nigeria.

The study further established that dating platforms play a significant role in facilitating cross-cultural contact, a finding consistent with the scholarship of Frohlick (2013) and Root (2001), who

similarly observe that the internet has transformed the manner in which individuals meet and form romantic attachments. One participant's observation that social media affords access to individuals across different countries illustrates the extent to which the internet has enabled novel forms of interpersonal connection. It must nonetheless be emphasised that awareness of these relationships does not equate to their acceptance, a distinction that frames the subsequent discussion of participants' attitudes toward such marriages.

The second objective of the study concerned the attitudes held by members of the University of Ibadan community toward these marriages. Participants' responses revealed considerable ambivalence, reflecting an underlying tension between deeply held traditional cultural values and the realities engendered by globalisation. Many participants indicated that such relationships contravene cultural norms, according to which men are conventionally expected to be older than, and to occupy positions of authority relative to, their partners, a finding consistent with the work of Phaswana-Mafuya *et al.* (2014), who similarly observe that relationships in which the woman is the older partner may be perceived as a threat to established gender roles. While certain participants expressed firm opposition to these marriages, characterising them variously as “business arrangements” or even as “slavery,” others adopted more open-minded positions, contending that individuals ought to be free to exercise autonomous choice in matters of marriage. This divergence illustrates the considerable range of opinion concerning what constitutes acceptable marital practice.

The third objective of the study concerned the perceived implications of these marriages. Participants expressed concern regarding the impact on the men involved, who may experience a diminished sense of autonomy and masculinity, as well as concern regarding the impact on families, who must navigate competing cultural and economic considerations. At the societal level, participants expressed concern regarding the implications for collective identity and cultural preservation, apprehending that these marriages may reinforce stereotypes concerning African men and contribute to broader cultural erosion an apprehension consistent with the observations of Meiu (2017) and Eghafona (2021), who similarly note that transnational intimate relationships may shape external perceptions of African communities and may contribute to shifts in prevailing values (Meiu, 2017). The study thus demonstrates that these marriages constitute an issue bearing simultaneously upon individuals, families, and society as a whole.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that awareness of marriages between young African boys and aged white women is generally high within the University of Ibadan community, primarily driven by exposure to digital and social media. However, despite this high level of awareness, the community's perceptions remain largely unfavourable. The phenomenon is viewed as inconsistent with the moral, cultural, and religious expectations that shape traditional African marriage systems. Furthermore, these marriages reflect the pressures exerted by *globalisation* upon cultural traditions. It indicated that such relationships are frequently regarded as a means by which young men may achieve a measure of stability, while simultaneously raising concerns regarding cultural identity and preservation, a finding consistent with Kringelbach's (2016) characterization of such relationships as a “barometer” registering the impact of *globalisation* upon cultural tradition. The study therefore recommends that there should be increased scholarly engagement with non-traditional marital forms, culturally sensitive counselling services, and informed public discourse that moves beyond stereotypes.

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