

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION, ICT AND THE DYNAMICS OF MATE SELECTION AMONG NIGERIAN YOUTH

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Abstract

The youths today need to learn and live within reproductive health knowledge prisms but they appear to have been left behind and unreached through original knowledge and are sometimes lured to embracing precarious knowledge systems. Through primary data, collected through quantitative and qualitative methods, and Secondary data, mate selection that is a common reproductive health issue among the Nigerian youths was adopted among in-school university post-graduate students. Findings showed that while the preponderance of ICTs is definitive among the youths across the world, ICTs are not very popular among the youths even graduate students as tools for mate selection and reproductive health knowledge acquisition. Hence, the possibility of the youths further propagating correct reproductive health knowledge is very low necessitating greater deployment of ICTs. ICTs are a way to better reach the youths for better reproductive health information management and deployment in Africa.

Key Words: ICTs, Indigenous Knowledge, Knowledge Acquisition Dynamics, the Youths, Nigeria

Introduction

Culture is a whole way of life of a group of people. Culture gives patterns to group relationships and how individuals relate with selves- in-group, out-group and across space and time. Since the slave trade, colonialism and globalization accentuation, many African cultures and people have been forcefully and subtly evacuated and dislocated from their indigenous knowledge roots making African knowledge frameworks precarious and fragile in the 21st century and beyond. African cultures and indigenous knowledge thus get dislocated, transient vulnerable and insufficiently transferred across generations and internationally.

Current cultural knowledge that are originally African now operate within complex formations that affect the safeguarding and promotion of African indigenous knowledge. The youths, against these backdrops, become the most vulnerable especially with the use of ICTs that has exposed them to foreign knowledge as the most popular.

Unfortunately, the youths are the most populous relative to the African socio-demographics (African youth bulge). They are the future of Africa, they are the barometer of culture and they are the future of African indigenous knowledge. They youths today need to learn and live African

culture within indigenous knowledge prism but they appear to have been left behind and unreached through African indigenous knowledge and are sometimes lured to embrace foreign knowledge which are more accessible to them especially based on popularity of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). While the preponderance of ICTs are definitive among the youths across the world, ICTs are weakly adopted for indigenous knowledge propagation among many Africans. Most Africans today still depend on orthodox and traditional means of knowledge acquisition for many issues despite the fact that the traditional means and the indigenous knowledge are not deeply rooted and ineffective in many instances thereby limiting the capacity of the Africans to propagate the indigenous knowledge systems even when they are endangered.

African cultures have not reached the youths sufficiently in manners that can safeguard and promote them as ICTs have not been targetedly deployed for indigenous knowledge promotion. This becomes critically important as African youths on the continent and those in the Diaspora traverse international space through globalization and uncritically embrace outlandish cultural consumerism. This suggests the need to further explore the interface of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in safeguarding and promoting African indigenous knowledge among the youths. The roles of the ICTs in this indigenous knowledge system are very strategic and this article explored the trajectories in pragmatic ways. Questions these article engaged are;?. What are the methods of mate selection commonly deployed by the youth? Is mate selection a problem among the youth? What are the contours of appropriateness of mate selection? What is the nexus of ICTs, youth's knowledge acquisition

processes and mate selection? Common ICTs among the youths and how they can be used for African cultural safeguarding and promotion of indigenous knowledge among the youths of Africa must also of necessity become a concern.

Mate selection is an inevitable process that precedes marriage. It is vital to marital union in that individual must accomplish this stage before the commencement of the married life. Human beings always live in group that men and women needs are most effectively satisfied. The concept of mate selection is somewhat ambiguous and therefore has been variously defined. These descriptions are often based on romance. Scholars have also tried to explain the concept from different perspectives. However, the concept of mate selection could be viewed as a means through which one gets to look at certain qualities that will necessitate his or her choosing a partner (Broude, 1994).

Choosing a mate is a problem that humans share with most other animals because successful reproduction is central to natural selection as popularized by Charles Darwin in 1859. Animals do also have mate selection problems. Peahens choose among the most attractive peacocks, female elephant seals pick males who have already attracted large harems, and even promiscuous chimpanzees exercise choice about the other chimps with which they will be promiscuous (Geary, 2000). Among mammals, however, humans are in a small minority in one important way: for over 95 percent of other mammals, family arrangements involving male care of offspring are nonexistent according to Geary.

Across human societies, though, men and women bond together in marriage. It is however noteworthy that human mating

sometimes transcend networks bond across time and space as determined by the modal cultures, norms and values subsisting within such domains. Thus, two fundamental premises subsist when that trajectories of mate selection in human societies. These are; variations and universalities across cultures, and differences and distinctions relative to motive of relationship formations. The social structures and culture to which an individual belongs to have strong influence on ability and skills acquired to meet its needs including those he/she needs to interface with the opposite sex. Factors that influence mate selections are myriad. These include socio-cultural domains such as; physical attractiveness, religion, socio-cultural factors, personality factors, parental and peer-group influence among others. Neither men nor women prefer all members of the opposite sex equally.

It is interesting to note that while mate selection operates within knowledge systems and it is within this that it could be well appreciated, not much is known about the place and dynamics of indigenous knowledge relative to mate selection among the youths in Nigeria¹. For most of the societies, especially the traditional ones, the processes of mate selection was largely controlled and moderated by parents and kin in the early days. Parents usually had direct control through strong community and kinship networks that exerted pressure on youth to conform to traditional norms. Thus, only few societies, on rare occasions allow young people to choose mates and eventual spouse independent of the

approval of parents and other relatives. The situation has however changed in contemporary times and terms as youths now have more and increased influence on even the parents and the society at large.

In this age of globalization, young people select their spouses and only seek parental approval which is most of the time expected to be granted without problem. The young people see themselves as *new school* with more useful knowledge relative to mate selection in contradistinction from their *old school parents* who they consider living based on old irrelevant knowledge to modern times. In terms of contemporary mate selection, parents and adults are sometimes considered as *old school* not too conversant with the 21st century dynamics of mate selection unlike before now. It is thus possible to distil common methods of mate selection in the contemporary Nigeria. These are; The Arranged Method: (Selection by Parents), Self Selection Method and selection through friends. Generally however, mate selection is mostly culturally determined².

The Research Methodology

This study was conducted in Nigeria among youths/post-graduate students of University of Ibadan, Ibadan. The University is Nigeria's premier university and at the fore front of university of education in Nigeria particularly postgraduate studies. It was created in 1948. The choice of the research group was informed by scientific and practical as well as pragmatic considerations. The social life on campus among different sexes could be said to be the way student interact with each other and

¹ For insightful discourse on mate selection please see Murstein, 1970, Buss and Barnes, 1986, Buss, 1999, Buss, 1989, Kenrick and Keefe, 1996, Balogun, 1994, Harris, 1969 and Rothman, 1984.

² See Fadipe (1070) for a fine work on this method among the Yoruba of South Western Nigeria, Otite and Ogionwo (2005) for the situation among the Urhobo and Oke (1984).

with their immediate environment. The social life on campus is very different to that in high school and communities. Most campus students live away from home experiencing an unsupervised lifestyle and independence even though has been socialized into indigenous knowledge primarily. They are even still being socialized into indigenous African knowledge one way or the other. They however traverse the between the modern knowledge base and the indigenous ones on campus. They meander between the indigenous knowledge dictates and expectations of kin at home and peer pressure on campus. How to make friends or socialize on campus for most first year campus goers is not always easy, worrying about fitting in and making new friends. Meeting new people may seem hard at first, almost every first year student is new and effectively no one knows anyone else. The amazing thing about campus is that there are so many different types of people, and students are bound to meet a bunch of people they can connect with even within different knowledge environments that are sometimes contradictory and conflicting needing incisive knowledge choice making.

Campus offers a great opportunity for students to form new relationships. There are lots of ways to socialize on campus. Social life can revolve around the football team. Students go to every game and have huge parties when their team wins big. At other schools, sports are less significant and most students couldn't care less whether the football team is winning or losing. Socialization might revolve around study group or some student could form their own study group or join an existing study group. New friends could be made and learn better at the same time]. Hostels and class rooms are great places to meet new people, introduce yourself to your neighbors and you get to know them better, by attending social gatherings and sports events. Also student throw party and invite many of their colleagues, this is one of several ways in which socialization occur on campus. The study population covers only postgraduate students currently enrolled on programs and resident on-campus. A total of 300 (Three hundred) respondents were used for the survey component while a total of 13 post-graduate students was selected for in-depth interviews (IDIs) and FGDs (focus group discussions) were also conducted to guarantee robust and compressive data.

Table 1 shows the distribution Questionnaires administered

Halls of Residence	Blocks Selected	Total Population	Percentage sampled
A	A,B,C & D	700	70%
B	A, B,C, D& E	192	19.2%
C	A, B, C & I	400	40%

The methods of data collection for this study were; combined strategy of questionnaires, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. Focus Group Discussions involved married and unmarried youths.

Qualitative instruments complemented questionnaires and this enabled us to probe further into the subject matter of the research. The combination of these methods broadened the horizon of the study. In the

analysis of data, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Data collected from the questionnaires edited, coded and analyzed through a popular and reliable statistical. Frequency table was constructed for the quantitative analyses.

Moreover, the statistical tools that were used included frequency counts and percentages for easy computation and interpretation. While qualitative data analyses were done through content analysis and ethnographic summaries.

Data presentation and Discussion of Findings

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21 – 35	14	4.7
	26 – 30	190	63.3
	31 – 35	73	24.3
	36 – 40	23	7.7
	Total	300	100.0%
Sex	Male	190	63.3
	Female	110	36.7
	Total	300	100.0%
Religion	Christianity	180	60.0
	Islam	105	35.0
	Others	15	5.0
	Total	300	100.0%
Marital status	Single	228	76.0
	Married	72	24.0
	Total	300	100.0%
Ethnic Group	Yoruba	147	49.0
	Hausa	7	2.3

	Igbo	87	29.0
	Others; specify	57	19.7
	Total	300	100.0%
Educational Qualification	M.Sc Academic	148	49.3
	M.Sc Professional	86	28.7
	M.Phil/P.hD	21	7.0
	Others	45	15.0
	Total	300	100.0%

Mate selection as a necessity and a problem

Mate selection is an inevitable process that precedes marriage. It is a vital stage of marital union, upon which an individual must accomplish before the commencement of marital life. Its inevitability thus suggests the need for appropriate knowledge acquisition and usage by the youths. Lack of proper knowledge that is necessary within the local contexts can spell doom for the union. It is however important to note that the propensity of the youths to acquire knowledge will ultimately depend on whether they perceive the issue as a problem needing solution or not. Interestingly, it was found that their perceptions about mate selection varied from one person to another. Many of the respondents interviewed maintained that mate selection is a way of choosing partner. That it involves interaction, interrelationship and friendship which could later graduate into courtship and eventually marriage. As observed by a youth who maintained that:

Mate selection is necessary at the right age; it is a fundamental process that reveals individual weakness and strongest qualities and useful means of overcoming those weaknesses, without infringing on the right or happiness of individual.
(Single male student/IDI/26 years/2011)

Another respondent opined that male selection is a form of planning upon which an individual want to build his/her marital home. He expressed that:

Mate selection is an individual task, it relatively an individual affairs, although there might be some other influencing factors, but an individual must be able to know what exactly he/she wants. (Single male student/IDI/27 years/ 2011)

Further probe into the question also reveals that, male selection could be a problem if not managed properly through appropriate information gathering and management. According to a youth:

Mate selection is an act of choosing a life partner whether you are a male or female, you need someone that must be your help mate, because anyone that is not married or lived in isolation will be regarded irresponsible by the society.

He maintained further that:

The issue of mate selection could be a problem depending on knowledge already acquired. The type and source of information about mate selection is very key. (Single male student /IDI/27 years/2011)

However, in his own response, a youth maintained that the perception of individual about mate selection is a combination of different factors, such as experience, cognitive and other factor that might come up individually or personally. He expressed further that:

Male selection is rather a challenge and not a problem. This is because you need to observe a lot of parameters and attributes in individual and this is why it is a challenge. (Married man student /IDI/35 years/2011)

Similarly, according to another respondent:

When your perception is wrong about particular things, then you may tend to have problem most especially those that deal with marriage. For my own relationship, I do not have any problem, because we know each other very well. We do things together and we bring good memories to each other. This is however based on the knowledge we have acquired about each other and our society (Single male student /IDI/26 years/2011)

Other respondents were of the opinion that selecting a mate is a problem. In a focus group discussion with single female youths, they maintained that there are some underlining factors that makes individual decides on what he/she want and this might pose a problem when it comes to issue of mate selection in this contemporary society. According to a female respondent she maintained that:

Nowadays, men do not want o get married, once you are asking then about when they will take (females) to the alter or parent (female parent) they will start retrieving their level of curing. Most of them think that getting married will hook them down and they will not have time to flirt around

again. This alone is a problem most especially among men. (Single female student/ FGD/2011).

Another female respondent also opined that, the issue of mate selection is a major problem that needed to be solved.

Some guys are very cunning, complex and difficult to understand. They have qualities, that looks real but in actual sense, it is deceptive. Although, you may not be able to get a perfect man because even me (respondent) is not perfect and thus if this issue is not properly manage it could lead of a problem in relationship (Single Female Student" (FGD/24 years/2011).

Other respondent at the FGD session concluded that, mate selection nowadays is a problem.

She expressed thus:

Due to the liberty we have within this contemporary society, our problem during mate selection tends to be high. In the olden days, it is the parent that chooses for their children, having studied the attributes that the other family portrays. But nowadays, even though parent can choose for their children, but some children does not even inform their parent about their partner. All they tell them is, we want to marry. (Married female/IDI/29 years/2011)

Other respondents expressed that depending on cultural variation, knowledge and differences, getting a partner could be a problem, these problems may however emanate from parent (preference for a nativity partner) religious difference or individualistic qualities (such as preference for a working class or a more educated person. Thus in considering how and why people chooses mates, therefore, two points are observed (Salawu, 2005)

variations as well as Universalities across cultures and distinction between selection of mates for short-term relationships and long term relationship. What Salawu (2005) failed to observe however the importance of information and knowledge base was available to mate selectors as connection rods of variations and universalities. In other words, what the extant studies and literatures have not sufficiently shown however is the place of knowledge processes as they affect the subject of mate selection among the youths in the age of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Appropriateness of Mate Selection Processes

According to the views of the respondents, they maintained that education, maturity and physical development are the major appropriate criteria for mate selection. Once again, these operate within a knowledge base only available and given through socialization in society. Society this time however transcends immediate socio-cultural environment to interconnect with the world through information superhighway-the internet and other ICTs. A lady opined that:

I don't expect an 18 years old to be thinking of mate selection, even though, it is legally recognized. But getting a mate will depend on how a person is matured in mind, character, and even in physical development. This is because relationship or courtship includes a lot of sacrifices. (Married female student/30 years/2011).

Another respondent also maintained that:

Legally, you can decide to have a mate by 19+, but for a student that know what

he/she is doing, seeking for partner or entering into a relationship should starts from 200 level or 300 level when the CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average) must have increased. But economically, it is rather good to start idea of mate selection in 400 level or during service. (Single male/IDI/26 years/2011)

Quoting from Freudian theory law of repression and suppression a student opined thus:

When the time comes, the physiological adoption of the body system will tell you, that you are ripe for marriage. Even nowadays at age 20 years guys are psychologically nature and at age 18+ a lady is also matured according to Biological prescription. But in the present day society Biological and psychological advances is not a criteria for mate selection, because those traits will be suppressed or repressed later. (Single male/IDI/27 year/2011)

Similarly, a youth maintained that:

Everybody needs a mate, for a person to live successfully in the society, everybody need a companion, friendship, network and acquaintance for us to achieve our objectives. Males selection starts from childhood, but for that of marriage, one needs a define guidance. (Married male/IDI/35 years/2011)

Other respondents maintained that there is no appropriate time for mate selection, but it must be done in a way that those that are involved will not regret. As submitted by Eweoya (2008) level and quantity of time spent during courtship will chance the sustainability of such marriage. Once again, a major gap in the Eweoya (2008) study was the place of dynamics of information acquisition and management in mate selection

Table 3: Appropriate Time for mate Selection

Appropriate time for mate Selection	Frequency	Percentage
When one is emotional and financially stable.	88	29.3
After graduation of 2 nd degree	66	22.0
During undergraduate	40	13.3
Waiting for God's time	39	13.0
Anytime one have money	29	9.7
Others	38	12.7
Total	300	100.0

As shown in table above, out of the 300 respondents interviewed, 88 (29.3%) of the respondents gave when one is emotional and financially stable as the most appropriate time for mate selection, 66 (22.0%) of them said it is after graduation of second degree, while 40 (13.3%) 'Indicated it is during undergraduate days in school, that is appropriate to elect a partner. Only 39 (10.3%) and 29 (9.7%) gave tier views on appropriate time for mate selection is either view on appropriate time for mate selection is either waiting for God's time, or anytime one have money. The remaining respondents 38 (12.7%) gave their opinion that appropriate time for mate selection is based on other reasons such as readiness of the partner, maturity likeness for each others could also be considered when individuals want to select or choose a partner.. This was linked with the Processes and factors of mate selection among the youths. Many of the respondents interviewed maintained that economic buoyancy was not a criterion for mate selection. As reported by a respondent, she maintained thus:

Any woman that is looking for a high status man to marry, either by virtue of family background or personality man will wait for a longtime before she has a suitor. When I met my husband, we are even in the same class and I never know he will become what he is today. Although we are of the some

religion and ethnicity, but when get me attracted to him is that, he is God fearing and Good Looking. He is presentable among friends and family. (Married female/IDI/28 years/2011).

Other respondents views on the processes and choice of mate selection is extracted as follows:

Every mate selection, starts from friendship, then intimacy will set in and later, it may develop into marriage. You can love someone in a day that would be a fantasy. Ideally a woman must be physically I appreciated, and be acceptable by your family. This is where your parent comes in. Because any marriage that does not have the blessing of parents will eventually crash (Married male/IDI/35 years/2011).

I would want the man I wish to marry to be attractive, God fearing, caring and trustworthy, the guy I am dating right now is very attractive and handsome and that is what made me date him in the first place. I have not dated someone who is not physically attractive. Because it ahs implication for public acceptance. (Single female/FGD) 25 years/2011).

As a man, I would select a mate who shares the same faith with me, but above all, a lady must be physically and sexually attractive. It must be a good girl who knows how to cook, and manage home more than the husband. I would not like to marry a career minded person such as the banker. (Single married male/FGD/26 years/2011).

ICTs, the youth's knowledge acquisition processes and mate selection

In recent times the dominant practice in most western countries and even other parts of the world is for potential partners to select mates on the basis of their personal preferences, with little or no resort to indigenous knowledge systems. Yet, this free choice situation should not imply that the mate selection process is immune to such external influences as parents, friends, kin, social class and community norms, values and ethos that moderate such issues as mate selection. In fact, such indigenous knowledge base and processes are often seen as *old school*, useless and irrelevant among the youths in Nigeria in the final analysis and in practical terms. Most of the respondents maintained that the family is the first means through which individuals acquire knowledge about mate selection although to some extent parents are not meant to be the sole deciders and sole knowledge providers, when it comes to marital issue. According to a respondent:

I have been dating my wife right... from secondary school, and while she got admission to UNAD (University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria), I got admission to U.I (University of Ibadan, Nigeria) it was during the serviceⁱ I showed her to my parent and they accepted her, I would say that my parent does not in any form influence the choice of who I married to. But as for me, I will have to advice and monitor my children very well, before they finally choose their mate because the society has change. (Married male/IDI/39 years/2011).

Another respondent explained that the changing norms of society have nearly neglected parents as the major player in

acquisition of knowledge about mate selection. She maintained that:

Although many parents always want their children to marry the rich person while some parents always has a reservation for a particular culture or town such as Ijebu, Ijesha or Kogi. Such an attitude could serve as a major problem in mate selection. Parents need to be umpire and indifferent in influencing the decision of their children (married female/IDI/30 years/2011).

Other respondents maintained that although, some parents may not influence siblings' choice of partners to marry, but their advice in form of pleading, gesticulation and overtime experiences, is very important for a successful mate selection. According to a respondent:

Most time my mum usually says this proverb: *Remember the daughter of whom you areⁱⁱ*, you don't use a rush to eat the soup of marriage. All this warnings sometimes makes me reason very well one a lot of people ask me out. My mother knows about my fiancée and everything about my marital life. I think our parent knows the best though sometimes they speak out of sentiment.

(Single female/IDI/27 years/2011)

This finding showed that the family especially the parents are important gateways on mate selection and information super gateways to the youths regardless of their level of education and sophistication. The parents play crucial role in behavior of their children regardless of age and education and reproductive health and mate selection will not be an exception as shown in this article. This is why Aderinkola (2009) maintained that parent role in the rural and socio-economical development of a child is culturally motivated. Knowledge about reproduction, child care and home

management are linked to maternal role while paternal role is that of economic responsibility and discipline of the children. All these training acquired through parents are essential attributes during mate selection processes.

Other medium to which individual could acquire mate selection knowledge however are ICTs and these go beyond kin in mate selection and they have been proved to be very impactful in the age of globalization. It is often said in Nigeria, even among the illiterates, that *this is the age of computer*. Anthropologically, this is to demonstrate the social and cultural change that has occurred in knowledge sharing. That young people of today acquire information about anything fast and independent of the adults and the impacts and reach of such information is very wide making their knowledge influence and behavior sometimes beyond the control of the their parents and the significant adults. It is the acknowledgement of this that the adults refer to when they say *this is the age of computer*. This is sometimes used by adults derogatorily to refer to you youth. Among the Yorubas, a proverbial counterpart is *omo tayebi laye n pon* (it is the needs of today that determines response). In discussion with single female students they this came to the fore when they maintained that:

Churches are important medium to acquire knowledge about, mate selection, we had a convention in our church, and where they invited marriage counselor to enlighten single Adult about what qualities will be preferable in chosen someone's mate. This is what most churches do often in order to help their single select and marry well. (Single female students /FGD/25 years/2011)

Another female respondent during an FGD interview expressed thus:

Nowadays, extra –cool, midnight calls and happy hour linksⁱⁱⁱ. They have make life easier for most people to chat and this has enhance acquisition of more *modern* knowledge about individuals likes, many television and Radio programmes such as *lifted heart* on NTA (Nigerian Television Authourity), Ibadan, *straight from my heart* at BCOS, *Love affairs*^{iv} on Rhythn and Eko – FM etc are all important links and medium to which you can just acquire knowledge but also select a mate. (Single female/FGD/24 years/2011).

A married man also maintained that:

During my courtship days, anytime my fiancée (then) misbehave, I usually asked my younger sister what other strategies can I use to get her, she normally ask me some question which will enhance her to give me advice, which has finally worked for me. (Married male/36 years /IDI/2011)

This shows that ICTs play important roles in knowledge acquisition about reproductive health and mate selection among the youths. It is however important to note that the youths mostly acquire modern knowledge from the ICTs as against the indigenous knowledge. This becomes more precarious as they live away from home within modern settings of higher institutions. Their degree of education also empowers them with modern knowledge and sophistication to the extent that they begin to be seen even by their parents and older kin as more current with more modern and useful knowledge. Courtship takes many forms, depending on the points in history, nature of knowledge and the culture in which it exist in society. The youth's knowledge is mostly being acquired based on the dominant practice in most western countries.

Table 4: Acquisition of knowledge about mate selection

Acquisition of knowledge by Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Through friends	78	26.0
Through (ICTs) internet/mass media	56	12.4
By parents	110	36.7
Religious Organization	41	13.0
Other means	15	5.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 3 reveals the acquisition of knowledge on mate selection by respondents indicating more than 50% i.e. 36.7% and 26% accounted for respondents who acquired knowledge on mate selection through friends and parental training respectively. Next to this, are those who acquired knowledge from religious organization recorded (13%), while only 12.4% of the respondents acquired mate selection knowledge through the use of (ICTs). 5% of the respondents revealed that they gained knowledge on mate selection through *other* means. This result in Table 3 indicated that there is higher percentage of people who acquire knowledge on mate selection through parental and friends upbringing. Only very few proportion use the ICTs for knowledge acquisition in the final analysis.

However, an important flip side of the issue the efficacy of knowledge acquired. While most acquired knowledge through kin, the effectiveness of such knowledge is higher through ICTs. The youths relied more on knowledge they gained from the ICTs. They only acquired more knowledge from kin since the family is the first point of contact of knowledge through socialization.

Globalization, westernization and improvement in technology have affected social life and knowledge acquisitions in the world and the effect of this have been very definitive in Africa particularly among the youths. With the use of ICTs, many barriers

have been bridged and the issue of distant relationship is gradually becoming a relative alternative for proximity or intimacy. Among the popular media through which this is achieved are social media/platforms like *facebook*, *twitter* and *yahoo group*. In discussion with some male youths during FGD, they maintained that:

As a 21st century guy, the use of ICT is very important, I used my phone to chat, my laptop to browse call and surf the face book. I am presently dating a girl who I have not met for the past six month, but through the use of ICT. We have know everything about each other. We planned to see in December (Single male/FGD/26 years/2011).

Similarly another respondent maintained that:

The use of ICT has reduced the barriers pose by distance. They are not only useful in mate selection, but also in sustaining the relationship. There are a lot of programme on MTN, Glo, and Elisalat^v that automatically hook you up for friendship and this could lead to marriage. (Single male/FGD/27 years /2011).

Other respondents also maintained that, ICT could make or mar relationship, because it does not have cultural and parental central. A married man maintained that:

I grew up in a village and as at that time no internet. But nowadays, even my son a small kid is chatting with a girl on net through twitter. Internet is a good form of mate selection most especially in this dispensation. It connects people together and allows people throughout the world to interact.

(Married male/IDI/39 years/2011).

Early last year, I met an old friend of mine through facebook who claim we both went to the same senior secondary school, but unfortunately it was mix up. But later due to the fact that both of us have developed interest for each other, the guy decided to come all the way from South-Africa and now we have done our introduction, hoping to marry each other by November

(Single female/IDI/28 years/2011)

A respondent narrated an experience she had on facebook:

Table 5: ICTs services and mate selection

Services	Frequency	Percentage
Internet	105	35.0
Television/Radio	85	28.3
Text messages	47	15.7
Phone calls	33	11.0
(print media)	30	10.0
Total	300	100.0

Table 4: shows the services often used on ICTs by the youths. The analysis indicates 105 (35%) of the respondents using internet services in mate selection, 85 (28.3%) make use of television/radio in choosing their partners. 47 (15.7) of them use their phone to send text messages, while 33(11%) make phone calls to practice mate selection. The use of internet, radio /television, text messages and phone call which represent modes of information communication Technology make up 90% of the study. This implies that ICTs are essential in dispensation of knowledge. Other facilities used by the student indicated in this study accounted for 30 (10%) of the total population sampled. Thus, internet services is the most used facilities indicted by the post graduate students as their means of communication in mate selection. Furthermore, the study indicates that over seventy-six (76%) of the respondents said

information communication technology usage is relevant in mate selection while 24% of them said it is not relevant. Mate selection by way of the internet has become pretty routine for a variety of singles single people today are now looking for a match-made in cyberspace.

Conclusion

This article has explored Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), Indigenous Knowledge and Knowledge Acquisition Dynamics among the Youths in Nigeria. It was based on research conducted among postgraduate youths in Nigerian to explore the issue of indigenous knowledge and its interface with ICTs relative to mate selection within the reproductive health prisms. It was found that kin, especially parents, are important indigenous knowledge gateway but the effectiveness of the indigenous knowledge they give is suspect and

compromise. Although ICTs are becoming popular among the youths, its adoption is still limited. Effectiveness of ICTs among the young people that adopt them is however high and more appreciable. Efforts should therefore be made to improve ICTs usage among the youths of Nigeria to improve their knowledge and acceptance as tools for reproductive health information gathering. The youths mostly get exposure to foreign knowledge through the ICTs especially as they encounter peer influence and foreign knowledge in the 21st century.

While they get familiar with indigenous knowledge from home since childhood, impact of such indigenous knowledge wane over time as they leave home for educational institutions and confront

western/modern knowledge that are often contradictory to indigenous knowledge in the modern global era. ICTs should therefore be leveraged upon among the youths and the online social media/platforms must be annexed. Focus should be on African indigenous knowledge, culture and norms that anchor on unique cultural identities and specificities in line with modern knowledge within contemporary technology for sustainable reproductive health knowledge sharing and propagation. The time to leverage on ICTs for mate selection and effective reproductive health knowledge sharing for needed behavior change among the youths to safeguard the future of Africa and the world is thus now!

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End Notes

ⁱ Graduates in Nigeria are expected to give mandatory service to the nation before they start working. The is known as the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC)

ⁱⁱ *Ranti omo eni ti iwo n se*. Proverbs are primary forms of indigenous knowledge codification. It is always succinct and respected in African societies for indigenous knowledge impartation

ⁱⁱⁱ These are popular promotional services offered by telecommunications services providers in Nigeria.

^{iv} These are all dating programmes on the radios and televisions in the country

^v These are major telecommunication service providers in Nigeria