

Demographic Characteristics and Family Challenges Among Widows and Widowers in South-South Geo Political Zone, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This research study is about demographic characteristics and family challenges among widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. To carry on the study two research questions and two hypothesis was formulated for the study. The study employed survey research design. The study area were the six states of the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The population of the study was 630 widows and widowers in Federal Universities in South-South Geopolitical Zone of Nigeria based on information from the registrar, ASUU and widows and widowers. The sample of the study is 441 widows and widowers in the research area. The instrument used for data collection is titled "Widows and Widowers Demography and Family Challenges Questionnaire (WWDFCQ). Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was used to determine the instruments' reliability. Bar chart, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Independent t-test, were used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study unveiled that there is no significance difference in the characteristics of the widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria and there is a significant difference in the mean responses of widows and widowers on family challenges faced by them in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Among others it was recommended that Seminars and workshops should always be organized on behalf of widows and widowers in their different locations on issues that could help them get discernment on the alternative ways of coping with the family and cultural challenges.

KEYWORDS: Challenge, Characteristics, Demographic, Family, Widows, Widowers.

INTRODUCTION

A widow is a woman whose spouse has died and still has not remarried. Once she remarries, she stops being a widow. A widow can be any age; the defining factor is that a widow's spouse has died. Whether this unfortunate event occurs at age 20 or age 80 it does not matter. A *widower*, in contrast is a *man whose spouse has died and* once the man remarries, he is no longer a widower. The loss of a spouse means the loss of a partner. It is very impactful and brings about a total change in the world of the widow or widower attracting some challenges. Regardless of how short or long the marriage was or how close the relationship was or whether the death was anticipated or not, several major life changes will inevitably accompany such a loss; life may never be the same again. Usually, the major aspects significantly affected by widows and widowers as a result spousal loss are physical, social, mental, emotional, financial and spiritual life (Greally, 2017). As a result, the bereaved spouse has only one reasonable option which is adjusting to the new challenges the loss presents which could be psychological, social, cultural and family challenges.

The treatment of widows around the world varies, but unequal benefits and treatment generally received by widows compared to those received by widowers globally has an issue of concern for the society. Some of the major problems they face are responsibility of child-rearing, lack of companionship, sexual violence, hindrances in remarriage, control over sexuality and psycho-social adjustment with her own family and society (Ogweno, 2010; Dube, 2022; Hamond, 2022). In all the developing countries, millions of widows and their children live in the condition of acute insecurity, deprivation and violence (Ogweno, 2010). Even though there are Civil laws of inheritance, customary laws relating to marriage and inheritance, land ownership and child custody, there is a huge gap between theory and practice, the problem gets worse in case of a widow, especially if a woman loses her husband at a very young age (Ogweno, 2010). In that situation, the women are looked upon as a burden by the entire family and much worse she is forced to live a secluded life. Even the mourning of the death of a son or siblings lasts only a few days or a few months, the widow is condemned to mourn his death for life. Some strict social customs and rituals are imposed on widows and widowers claiming that it is carried out to wash the sins of being a widow at the end of the period of mourning (Ogweno, 2010; Soulsby & Bennett, 2015).

In South-South geographical zone of Nigeria, the widows/widower observed are very emotional, most times, you see them just staying on their own looking at the picture of their lost spouse, talking to the picture as if it is a life being, telling the picture about how people are treating them because of their status as widows/widowers recalling their times together the good memories they share which causes tears and sorrow to them. It has been noticed that some widows go about seeking for financial help to take care of their responsibilities, feeding of the children and paying their school fees because the family members have confiscated their properties or business ventures. Most of them that their partners were the breadwinners could likely be subjected to their children dropping out of school because of economic hardship. This study therefore cantered on demographic characteristics of widows and widowers in South-South geo political zone in Nigeria.

Age of the widow or widower is a strong determinant of adjustment. Some studies suggest that younger widowers find it more difficult to cope while others suggest that adjustment is much more difficult for older individuals (Gilbar & Hasida, 2002). Age is one the demographic characteristics of widows and widowers. Age of widows and widowers and the level of observance of widowhood rites helps to shed more light on whether the younger ones conform or observe stipulated widowhood rites more than the older ones (George, Omoniji, Uche & Anyaegdonum (2016). Additionally, other reports concerning age suggest, that older bereaved individuals experience less intense and fewer lasting negative consequences than younger ones (Bennett & Soulsby, 2012; Bonanno et al., 2004). This could be due to relating to the fact, as one gets older, bereavement is a more expected event than when one is younger.

Uche (2015) sought to determine the extent of adjustment among widows in Bayelsa State. The ex-post facto design was used and a sample size of 200 was derived through probability sampling technique. Two hypotheses were formulated and data collected using questionnaire were analyzed using independent t-test. Results revealed that widowhood adjustment significantly differed on the bases of Spirituality and Age. It was concluded that adjustment tend to be easier for widows of higher spiritual level and those who are older. It was recommended for counsellors to be aware of the spiritual and other issues in their widow clients' lives and assist them to capitalize on these areas of strengths.

Mathias, Jacob and Shivakumara (2014) investigated the psycho-social adjustments faced by young widows. Descriptive survey design with 100 widows was selected from Mangalore district through purposive sampling. A 3-point scale to assess the Psycho-social adjustments was developed with 35 items. The tool was given to seven experts for the content validation. Reliability of the tool was established by using Cronbach Alpha ($r = 0.75$). The tool was translated into Kannada. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings showed that 69% of the young widows have average adjustment and 31% have poor adjustments. Occupation and living with children had significant association with psycho-social problems among young widows. In conclusion, it was recommended that assessing the psycho-social problems among young widows will help to develop strategic welfare schemes to young widows, an area totally neglected by our society.

Education is another important characteristic in the study. In the study "Partner loss in later life: gender differences in coping shortly after bereavement", Van Baarsen and van Groenou (2001) assessed the influence of educational level on adjustment to spousal loss and suggested that for widows, higher education is negatively associated with coping with loss. In line with is finding, Furthermore, Ha and Ingersoll-Dayton (2011) noted that education seems not to be protective for adaptation, since depressive symptoms after bereavement are similar across all educational levels.

George, Omonijo, Uche, Anyaegdonum (2012) and Shaibu (2016) that socio-demographic characteristic are very crucial independent variables in carrying research on widowhood. To support this finding further, George and Amusan posited that the various ethnic groups in Nigeria have their peculiar religions and modes of worship, similarly religion varies from one widow to another. The author continues by saying that while some widows are adherent of the traditional religion, others belong to Christianity, Muslim and others. Omonijo, Uche, Rotimi and Nwadiolor (2014) research work agrees with the findings of this study on education as one of the characteristics of widowhood by stating that education presents a good indicator of the quality of life of widows and widowers (Salaimon, 2021). Bennett and Soulsby (2012) stated that when widows and widowers are compared with their married counterparts, they display more depressive symptoms, elevated levels of loneliness, lower life satisfaction, fewer positive emotions, higher global stress. To support the findings of this study Ogwen (2010) noted that the loss of a husband causes unimaginable suffering and, in some cases, the trauma is worsened by the members of the widows' immediate family who are only interested in the deceased's assets.

Afterlife beliefs are conceptually and statistically distinct from (although correlated with) other religiosity measures such as attendance and affiliation so they may affect bereavement outcomes independent of other religiosity measures. A lot of authors have debated that afterlife belief may help bereaved people cope with the sadness of their loss and with anxiety over one's own eventual death (Benore & Park, 2004). Afterlife beliefs may protect the bereaved by providing a sense of meaning in times of hopelessness and fostering continued emotional attachments with the deceased. Further research has revealed that among older adults, religion provides a system of beliefs that aids them cope with acute and chronic stressors, and a group of fellow believers who may provide instrumental and emotional support (Kaneez, 2015).

When afterlife beliefs imply that well deserving people receive goodly rewards and reunite with their loved ones, bereaved spouses tend to interpret the demise in a positive light and accept the inevitability of their own death. This interpretation may cushion a range of post loss psychological outcomes. For example, if the belief is that a dead spouse still exists in the spirit world and will someday be reunited with the surviving spouse the despair and sad feelings associated with the loss may be reduced. The concept that "good" people receive rewards in an afterlife may reinstate a person's beliefs in a just world or may reduce feelings of anger associated with the death, especially anger at God if a death is considered unjust.

Also, afterlife beliefs may be protective against intrusive thinking. Intrusive thoughts are unprovoked painful thoughts about the deceased and the death which consistently trouble or preoccupy the survivor. Conceptually, intrusive thought is similar to posttraumatic stress disorder). The thought of a rewarding after life and reunification of spouses in the spirit realm reduces the susceptibility to intrusive thinking. Afterlife beliefs may also shield the bereaved from anxious thoughts. Anxiety about an individual's death may be particularly acute amongst surviving older spouses who lack details about life after Rosenblatt, Greenberg, death.

Furthermore, afterlife beliefs may contribute to adjustment for the bereaved by strengthening continuous emotional attachment to their dead spouse. Continued attachment or "continuing bonds" refers to a survivor's belief in an active, ongoing/continuing relationship with the dead spouse (Benore and Park, 2004). Attachment theories submit that when secure attachments are broken, individuals may experience painful feelings of loss and separation. Thus, it is expected that yearning or the painful longing to be with one's late spouse, will be less acute for those who believe in an afterlife because such beliefs may foster feelings of continued attachment to the decedent.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In South-South region of Nigeria, the researcher observed that most widowed persons go through very difficult times due to their loss which causes many psychological problems, such as withdrawal from relatives and friends, they don't interact with people, they do not know how to relate with people, they feel intimidated, even their children also withdraw from friends too, they are absent minded and also depressed.

The researcher also observed that the widows/widower are very emotional, most times, you see them just staying on their own looking at the picture of their lost spouse, talking to the picture as if it is a life being, telling the picture about how people are treating them because of their status as widows/widowers recalling their times together the good memories they share which causes tears and sorrow to them. It has been noticed that some widows go about seeking for financial help to take care of their responsibilities, feeding of the children and paying their school fees because the family members have confiscated their properties or business ventures. Most of them that their partners were the breadwinners could likely be subjected to their children dropping out of school because of economic hardship.

Based on these observations, this study was conceived to investigate the demographic characteristics and family challenges in South-South geo-political zone of Nigeria

- **The concept of demographic characteristics of widows and widowers**

Spousal widowhood is the state of having lost a spouse to death. The death could be sudden or not anticipated. Spousal loss has been classified as one of the most devastating, traumatic and life-changing events anyone can experience (Clark & Georgellis, 2013). Widowhood is caused by death and death on its part is as a result of some factors such as diseases, illnesses, accidents, old age, afflictions or attacks, all of which finally result in death (Ogweno,2010). But the major factor that leads to death among the older people is old age.

Age tends to make older people more susceptible to disease and disease tends to make people age faster. The circle is a vicious one. The processes work together and result in the loss of health and finally in death. (Ogweno,2010). Widowhood is a tragedy that befalls a married person as a result of the timely or untimely death of the spouse, either the husband or the wife, making the survivor a widow or a widower. Widowhood practices are observed by almost all the ethnic groups in Nigeria. The culture of widowhood has been in existence from time immemorial and transmitted from generation to generation. The issue of widowhood, particularly in Nigeria, appears to have gender implication as there are certain cultural imbalances in the practices of widowhood by widows and widowers. Traditions are particularly hard on widows because widowhood involves varying degrees of physical hardship, deprivation, ritual contaminations, emotional instability, socio-economic and psychological trauma. This condition subjects one to become a widow or a widower.

A widow is a woman whose spouse has died and still has not remarried (Ogweno, 2010). Once she remarries, she stops being a widow and the effect of wars has resulted to having many widows. Mathais, (2015) defines a widow as any female person married under native law and custom or under the marriage act or any other law recognized in Nigeria whose husband has died and has not remarried while the widower on the other hand is a man who has lost the wife by death and has not remarried. A widow can be any age; the defining factor is that a widow's spouse has died. Whether this unfortunate event occurs at age 20 or age 80 it does not matter. The dead person's gender is also irrelevant and the cause of death also does not matter—a woman who poisons her husband to death and a woman whose husband asphyxiates while pulling orphaned children from a burning building are regarded same as a widow. A *widower*, in contrast, is *a man whose spouse has died and* once the man remarries, he is no longer a widower (Hamond,2022). The state of having lost one's spouse to death is termed widowhood.

A woman in Igbo culture is not accorded full social recognition no matter her status in life unless she is married and bears children or at least a child. Igbo women remain women of substance as long as their husbands are alive. If an Igbo woman loses her husband to death, her story changes. Automatically, she becomes a murder suspect in some places because death in most parts of Igbo land is never deemed a natural occurrence. The widow is seen as unclean and unholy, and as a result of people's perception of the widow, certain harmful widowhood practices are meted out to her. These practices arise from the culture of the particular Igbo community. Widowhood practices are therefore integral part of the funeral rites accorded the dead. These funeral rites are aimed at guaranteeing the admittance of the dead people into the abode of the ancestors, who, they believe, will ultimately reincarnate into the community of the living. Widowhood practices are not only prevalent in Igbo land; they are enforced in other tribes of Nigeria and also in most third world countries. UN Women (2021) noted that even in India, a widow becomes a focus of collective repudiation, seen as a bearer of bad luck, unclean, polluting and dangerous. She has to undergo rituals – many of them humiliating and some life threatening in these times of, HIV/AIDS – to symbolically 'cleanse' her in order to safeguard the community from her impurity. Omonijo, Uche, Rotimi and Nwadiakor (2014) research work agrees with the findings of this study on education as one of the characteristics of widowhood by stating that education presents a good indicator of the quality of life of widows and widowers.

The converse terms of 'widow' and 'widower' in reference to women and men respectively seem to belong to the set of such polar terms where one of the terms serve only nomenclatural functions. This is because widowers do not seem to experience the trauma their female counterparts are made to go through by societal norms and value systems, namely, financial, psychological, sexual and social insecurity (Wuraola,2016). The English word-order would normally place the male first, as in man-woman, hero heroine; but the female in the widow-widower pair comes first, evidence in support of the claim that discourse accords more prestige to males than females by the tendency to front females in non-prestige discourses. (Nordquist, 2019).

- **The concept of family challenges of widows and widowers**

Spousal loss brings about a lot of negative psychological, social, physical, financial and economic challenges. In today's world, modern nuclear families are expected to be socially and economically autonomous. As a result, spouses may have few alternative sources of social, emotional, or instrumental support. Therefore, when one loses a spouse, the bereaved will not only adjust to the loss, but also takes charge of the daily decisions and responsibilities that were once shared by both spouses and this presents a lot of challenges. The consequences of spousal loss (especially in later life) have been well documented in literature (Ogu, Obi, & Isidiho, 2020; Dube, 2020; Dube, 2021; Dave, 2020; and Li & Lin, 2019). Some experiences associated with spousal loss include altered identity, profound sadness, depression, loneliness, negative health outcomes, and the withdrawal of support networks. More so, literary evidence exists on considerable stress associated with the role changes that accompany

bereavement, especially those resulting from disruptions in life patterns and daily routine, taking on new unfamiliar tasks, and changes in social activities and relationships (Vitelli, 2015; Utz, Swenson, Caserta Lund & De Vries, 2014; Tseng, Petrieb & Leon-Gonzalez, 2014; and Salaimon, 2021)

Research objectives

Specifically, this study seeks to:

- 1 determined the characteristics of the widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.
- 2 identified the family challenges facing widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria?
2. What are the family challenges faced by widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the widows and widowers characteristics (gender, religion, age, years of experience, educational qualification, and occupation) in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

H0₂: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of widows and widowers on family challenges faced by them in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data was collected in phases. In the first phase, the researcher sought letter of introduction from the registrar of the universities to obtain the respondents that were involved in this study. The second phase the introduction of the researcher and the research assistants to the respondents in their various institutions. The third phase, the researcher administered the instrument with the help of six research assistants who are familiar with the research environment. They were selected from the six federal universities in the South South geo political zone. The research assistants were briefed on how to assist respondents for the purpose of the study. The sample size was four hundred and four one (441) which was seventy percent (70%) of the population. The seventy percent (70%) was a good representation of the population. Peretomode and Peretomode (2015) stated that the larger the sample the more accurate and smaller also the standard error. Exponential non-discriminative snow ball sampling technique and convenience sampling technique were used to select the respondents. Exponential non-discriminative snow ball sampling technique involves recruiting the first subject and then the subject provided multiple referrals. The researcher interacted with the participants by introducing the study and the essence of carrying out the research. They were all aware that the information obtained was for research work and are treated with high level of confidentiality. The researcher's identity was revealed to the participant as Dijeh, Ann Emani, a research student from Department of Home Science, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike. This was to ensure participants trust and security of the information for the study. The respondents cooperated with the researcher and produced the data which was subjected to statistical analysis.

RESULTS

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis 1

There is no significance difference in the characteristics of the widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

Table 1: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of widow and widower on their characteristics in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

| Variables | N | Df | P-value | Dec. |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-------------|------|
| Religion | 433 | 431 | .295 | A |
| Age | 433 | 431 | .378 | A |
| Experience | 433 | 431 | .366 | A |
| Educational qualification | 433 | 431 | .398 | A |
| Occupation | 433 | 431 | .343 | A |
| Cluster Value | | | .356 | |

Table 8 showed that at .05 level of significance with 431 degrees of freedom, the P-value of .356 which was higher than the alpha level of .05 is obtained. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significance difference in the characteristics of the widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria is therefore not rejected.

4.2.2 Hypothesis 2

There is no significance difference on the family challenges facing widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria

Table 2: t-test analysis of the mean ratings of widows and widowers on family challenges facing them in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria.

| S/N | Items | Widows | | Widowers | | df | P-value @ .05 | Decision |
|-----|--|--------|-------|----------|------|-----|---------------|----------|
| | | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| 1 | Not easy relating with family people after my spouse death. | 3.35 | .780 | 3.19 | .908 | 431 | .050 | S |
| 2 | Having feeling of loneliness since the death of my spouse. | 3.25 | 1.03 | 2.60 | .750 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 3 | Easily offended at the provocation of my children since my spouse died | 3.25 | .684 | 2.05 | 1.02 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 4 | Always having loss appetite and sleeplessness. | 2.91 | .647 | 2.15 | 1.13 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 5 | Feeling moody at the sight of family couples talking together since the death of my spouse | 3.45 | .665 | 1.83 | 1.21 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 6 | Having fear for life threat and grief for my spousal loss. | 3.38 | .596 | 2.49 | .784 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 7 | I do have feeling of worthlessness and hopelessness. | 3.34 | .899 | 2.37 | 1.22 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 8 | Do not feel loved at all by people around me after my spouse's death. | 3.11 | .960 | 2.15 | 1.04 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 9 | Having feeling of low self-esteem and fear of responsibilities to face. | 3.05 | 1.01 | 2.50 | .669 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 10 | I feel depressed always. | 3.28 | .855 | 2.27 | .570 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 11 | I do have feeling of anxiety | 3.35 | .772 | 2.44 | .755 | 431 | .226 | NS |
| 12 | Am hostile sometimes | 3.49 | .635 | 2.21 | 1.29 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 13 | Am stressed with activities around me. | 3.36 | .822 | 2.15 | .766 | 431 | .005 | S |
| 14 | I do have feeling of physical aches and suicidal thought. | 3.08 | .793 | 2.83 | .847 | 431 | .677 | NS |
| 15 | I do feel and low life satisfaction. | 3.58 | 2.457 | 2.11 | 1.11 | 431 | .063 | NS |
| 16 | Reactivity to Good Events. | 3.11 | .777 | 2.25 | .561 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 17 | Having feeling of regret about my situation. | 3.07 | .939 | 2.12 | .535 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 18 | I do have interpersonal Sensitivity. | 3.29 | .701 | 2.59 | 1.23 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 19 | I do have paranoid ideation. | 3.31 | .759 | 2.53 | 1.13 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 20 | Life with my family members is not enjoyable, am seen as an object of mockery before some of them. | 3.04 | .841 | 1.99 | .529 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 21 | Hard to trust family members around me since the death of my spouse. | 3.07 | .843 | 2.44 | .755 | 431 | .674 | NS |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 22 | Being disturbed by the opposite sex for relationship. | 3.25 | .718 | 2.27 | .895 | 431 | .004 | S |
| 23 | Too busy caring for my family and running the household all by myself. | 2.87 | .787 | 2.22 | .593 | 431 | .001 | S |
| 24 | Am not able to engage in religious activities as usual. | 3.28 | .746 | 2.74 | 1.05 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 25 | Having conflict with family members. | 3.18 | .865 | 1.58 | .664 | 431 | .004 | S |
| 26 | Disturbance through phone calls by family and friends. | 3.29 | .607 | 2.19 | .689 | 431 | .957 | NS |
| 27 | I do withdraw from social interaction with friends. | 3.02 | .793 | 2.31 | .627 | 431 | .563 | NS |
| 28 | I encounter rejection, discrimination and isolation from some group of people. | 3.00 | .797 | 2.37 | .952 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 29 | I started taking alcohol and drug to forget my past. | 3.02 | .726 | 2.49 | .989 | 431 | .000 | S |
| 30 | I now have little or no support from family. | 3.25 | 1.95 | 2.69 | .912 | 431 | .930 | NS |
| 31 | Do not have time for leisure anymore. | 3.01 | .743 | 2.31 | .629 | 431 | .899 | NS |
| Cluster Value | | 3.20 | .877 | 2.34 | .865 | 431 | .163 | NS |

The result presented in Table 12 shows that at .05 level of significance with 431 degree of freedom, the P-value of .163 which was higher than the alpha level of .05 is obtained. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significance difference on the family challenges facing widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria is accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings in Table 1 revealed that there is no significant difference in the characteristics of the widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria ($p > .05$). This may be as a result of respondents being literates and working-class individuals. This finding is in support of the statement of George, Omonijo, Uche, Anyaegbunam (2012) and Shaibu (2016) that socio-demographic characteristics are very crucial independent variables in carrying research on widowhood. To support this finding further, George and Amusan posited that the various ethnic groups in Nigeria have their peculiar religions and modes of worship, similarly religion varies from one widow to another. The author continues by saying that while some widows are adherent of the traditional religion, others belong to Christianity, Muslim and others. Omonijo, Uche, Rotimi and Nwadiolor (2014) research work agrees with the findings of this study on education as one of the characteristics of widowhood by stating that education presents a good indicator of the quality of life of widows and widowers.

This study unveiled in Table 2 that there is no significance difference on the family challenges facing widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Therefore, they accepted all items as challenges facing them. However, widowers did not accept 23 items out of the 31 items as family challenges faced by them having the cluster mean 2.15. This is because they were below the cut-off mark of 2.50. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference on the family challenges facing widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria is retained as the P value is .163. Having no significant difference on the family challenges may be as a result of the respondents coming from one geopolitical zone and may have some similarities in their culture. Several studies are in agreement with this finding that widows and widowers face challenges (Salaimon, (2021). This is clearly seen in the words of Bennett and Soulsby (2012) that when widows and widowers are compared with their married counterparts, they display more depressive symptoms, elevated levels of loneliness, lower life

satisfaction, fewer positive emotions, higher global stress. To support the findings of this study Ogwen (2010) noted that the loss of a husband causes unimaginable suffering and, in some cases, the trauma is worsened by the members of the widows' immediate family who are only interested in the deceased's assets.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the strategies needed by widows and widowers in coping with family and cultural challenges in South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The research questions were adequately answered with the concluding that widows and widowers in South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria practice different religion like Christianity, Muslim, and tradition. Based on age some age falls between 20 – 25 years; 26 – 30 years; and 31 years and above. Based on years of experience, some fall between 1 – 5 years; some between 6 – 10 years; and others fall between 11 years – above. On educational qualification of the widows and widowers some possess FLSC/SSCE, ND/NCE, HND/BSC above. Therefore, it is also concluded that widows and widowers possess different characteristics. This finding will help agencies and researchers that work on widowhood to look beyond a specific characteristic when carrying out their research.

In South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, it is concluded widows face more family challenges and cultural than the widowers. This finding will help different agencies interested in the welfare of widows to look into possible solutions on how to help the widows overcome the challenges so as to be able to move on with their lives and take adequate care of their families.

Conclusion

Sequel to outcome of the investigation, it was concluded as follows that: There is a significant relationship between Local craft and tourism development. There is a significant relationship between Festival and tourism development and there is a significant relationship between activities of hospitality industry and tourism development in the research area

Recommendations

Based on the results of data analysis, the following recommendations were made by the researcher

1. Local government chapters should establish community-based intervention measures to assist widows and widowed persons in deprived settings notwithstanding their demographic characteristics.
2. Seminars and workshops should always be organized on behalf of widows and widowers in their different locations on issues that will help them get discernment on the alternative ways of coping with the family challenges. This will go a long way in curbing dangerous practices like sexual and drug abuse among widows and widowers.

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