

## ADJUSTMENT PATTERNS AND CHANGING LIFESTYLES AMONG RETIRED ADULTS IN OBUDU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NIGERIA

BETIANG, PETER A, Ph.D

ANIAH-BETIANG ELIZABETH

ENI .I. ENI, Ph.D

Federal College of Education, Obudu, Nigeria

[cestpiere@gmail.com](mailto:cestpiere@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

*Occupational disengagement, social disengagement and retirement have remained very interesting topics of discussion among different professionals; gerontologist, geriatricians, social workers and pension administrators in the developing world. No doubt, this period in life especially in this part of the world, comes (though gradually) with a plethora of physiological, economic and psycho-social challenges to both the ageing adults, relations, associates and other agencies involve with providing care and support for senior citizens. Whereas this period is supposed to be anticipated with longing and a healthy desire to go into a period of rest, the reverse is the case in the developing world where this period is that of anxiety and uncertainty, hence eliciting different reactions and behavior modification in the retiring adults. This paper sought to investigate the adjustment patterns among retired adults in Obudu LGA of Nigeria. Four parameters including, changing roles in the ageing family, husband wife relations, grand parenthood and alternative lifestyle were used to examine the adjustment patterns among a sample of senior citizens randomly selected to reflect the identified demographic characteristics. The findings revealed marked differences in the adjustment of men and women, urban and rural dwellers, highly educated and poorly educated retired citizens.*

**Keywords:** Occupational disengagement, social disengagement, senior citizens, demographic characteristics, adjustment patterns, changing lifestyle.

### Introduction

Adjustment pattern and changing lifestyle among retired adults in Obudu LGA of Nigeria.

Evidence from research and experience continues to indicate that the later part of the human life remains a complex and unpredictable stage, even as it varies between two individuals between gender. It is intriguing to note very quickly also that the pattern and manner of adjustment of older adults vary between one culture and the other, one region and another and from one society to the other.

In most societies, occupational disengagement is followed inevitably by social isolation and eventually disengagement. Although all through the human life, there is a constant demand to keep adjusting ones roles from one day to the other. However, such adjustments in earlier life are less stressful, less noticeable and often very seamless, owing perhaps to the fact that at that age, (from childhood to early adulthood) the individuals physiological composition is still elastic and as such allows greater capacity to cope with such changes, (Lowry, 1988).

Incidentally, the period of occupational disengagement coincides with a period which generally heralds a gradual decline in physiological functioning. This throws up the multi-facted problem of failing health, increasing social isolation, a decline in earned income, and a plethora of several other associated problems, which invariably precipitates the process of eventual breakdown, if improperly managed. The adjustments and family patterns that emerge following such changes as the last child is leaving home, the growing dependence of aging parents, the retirement of the husband, and the withdrawal of the family from previous levels of social involvement was the principal focus of this study. Specifically, the paper examined the adjustment patterns between male and female "retirees" highly educated and not too highly educated;

rural versus urban residents. The study measured their adjustment patterns on a four index continuum of changing roles and the ageing family, husband wife relations, intergenerational relations, and grandparenthood.

In a discussion on the changing roles in the ageing family, Cox (1988) drew attention to four possible topical areas that would likely task the decision-making ability of the retiring adult(s). These will likely include whether to remain in their current home with its history and memories, or move over to a new home; remain in the same community or move over to another community; remain active in current organizations, join new ones, or simply not be bothered by organized affiliations; finally try to locate near children and close friends, or simply seek activities satisfying to both husband and wife or participate independently.

Making these decisions is crucial to the manner and pattern of adjustment of the retiring adults. In the case where the retiree(s) are still in good health, it is assumed they can make such decisions for themselves, otherwise such decisions may become foisted on them by children, healthier spouses or even the government. However,, Orand, Henre Ha and Krecker (1992) reason that retirement as a life-course transition is only meaningful only when it is socially and temporarily situated in families, as well as in person's lives. Also Moen (1996) refers to it as the "dynamic interplay between family and personal events, retirement and well-being", hence placing retirement within the life-course framework of "an individual's prior occupational trajectory and ongoing situational and structural exigencies and opportunities".

On husband-wife relations, several studies have reflected a vibrant change as a couple progress down the human life path. Studies in the 70s and 80s, like Blood and Wolfe (1970), Pineo (1961), Feldman (1970) Feldman & Rollins (1970) all concluded that there was a gradual decrease in shared activity of husbands and wives from the beginning to the end, what Pineo calls, "marital disenchantment."

However, other more recent studies revealed that husbands seem to be much less affected by the state of the family life cycle in their subjective evaluation of marital satisfaction. Also that wives experience a general decrease in childbearing and child raring phase until the children leave home. Thirdly, it was found that for men, there is an apparent setback in marital satisfaction just before they retire. In other words, it appears that women experience more marital stress while child-bearing and raring, while the reverse seems to be the case with men.

Grand-parenting has emerged as a major issue in retirement studies and adjustment patterns, since most studies have revealed more retired people are becoming grandparents. Even a cross national survey revealed that from the United States, Denmark to Britain, greater percentages of older citizens were becoming grand parents (Townsend, 1988). In Africa, life-expectancy has gradually improved over the decades and coupled with the African traditional family style of communalism and early marriage, the presences of grand children comes a lot earlier in life, (mostly before the official retirement age in most countries, (65).

This indicates therefore a need to examine how the retirees will adjust to full-time grand parenting at retirement.

Among the issues that are likely to joggle for attention of the retired adults, and hence warrant the need for changing lifestyles are issues connected with loss of spouse, loss of children, contemplation of a second marriage (polygamy or polygyny) as the case may be. At the same time most social psychologists like Kassel (1988), Mckain (1969) argue that with the attendant occupational and social disengagement, the family becomes the single most important factor in the life satisfaction of the individual. This makes it imperative to examine this variable in the context of our present discussion.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the adjustment patterns and changing lifestyle among retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area, Nigeria.

The study specifically investigated:

- i. The influence of gender on the adjustment pattern of retired adults.
- ii. The influence of geographical location on the adjustment patterns of retired adults.
- iii. The influence of educational level on the adjustment patterns of retired adults.

## Hypotheses

- i. There is no significance influence of gender on the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu L.G.A, Nigeria.
- ii. Geographical location does not significantly influence the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu L.G.A, Nigeria.
- iii. Educational level of retirees does not significantly influence the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu L.G.A, Nigeria.

## Methodology

### Design and Sample

The research design adopted for this study was survey research design. The population of the study consisted of all the retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was adopted in the sampling of 200 retired adults comprising of 100 male and 100 female drawn from the Local Government Area. This sampling technique was adopted because the retired adults could not be met in cluster and the instrument was administered to the adults just as they were found.

### Data Analysis

Independence t-test analysis was adopted for data analysis. Results of data analysis in respect of the three hypotheses are presented in tables 1, 2 and 3.

## Result and Discussion

### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant influence of gender on the adjustment pattern of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area

To test this hypothesis, independent test was applied to the data. The result is presented on table 1.

Table 1

*Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.*

N=200

Gender	N	X	—	SD	t
Male	100	14.76		2.91	2.25
Female	100	13.87		2.67	

Significant at 0.05, df = 198, critical t = 1.976

Results in table 1 indicate that a calculated t-value of 2.25 was obtained. This value was found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.976 at 0.05 level of significant and 198 degrees of freedom. On the basis of this observation, there is a significant influence of gender on the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.

### Hypothesis 2

Geographical location does not significantly influence the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area, Nigeria.

To test this hypothesis, independent t-test was applied to the data. The result is presented on table 2.

**Table 2**

*Independent t-test analysis of the influence of Geographical location on the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.*

N=200

<b>Geographical Location</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
Urban	126	19.36	1.60	5.044
Female	74	17.64	2.66	

Significant at 0.05, df = 198, critical t = 1.976

Results in table 2 indicate that a calculated t-value of 5.044 was obtained. This value was found to be higher than the critical t-value of 1.976 at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degrees of freedom. On the basis of this observation, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that geographical location significantly influence the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.

### **Hypothesis 3**

Educational level of retirees does not significantly influence the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.

To test this hypothesis, independent t-test was applied to the data. The result is presented on table 3.

**Table 3**

*Independent t-test analysis of the influence of educational level of retirees on their adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.*

N=200

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t</b>
Educated	142	17.83	2.86	2.61
Uneducated	58	16.64	2.96	

Significant at 0.05, df = 198, critical t = 1.976

Results in table 3 indicate that a calculated t-value of 2.61 was obtained. This value was found to be higher than the critical value of 1.976 at 0.05 level of significance and 198 degrees of freedom. On the basis of this observation, the null hypothesis is rejected meaning that educational level of retirees significantly influence the adjustment patterns of retired adults in Obudu Local Government Area.

### **Discussion**

It can be observed from the results of the analysis of the data collected in relation to the variable on the pattern and manner of adjustment between genders that males differ significantly from female in their adjustment patterns. It was found that males adjust more readily to retirement than females, and were seen to find alternative lifestyles a lot more easily than females.

Similarly, there was seen to be a significant difference in adjustment patterns between urban and rural dwellers while the urban dwellers tended to have more opportunities, and hence their rural counterparts had more limited opportunities for

alternative lifestyles even though they found it easier to integrate into farming and other agro-allied activities as a result of greater access to land.

The educational level of retirees was also found to have a significant influence on their adjustment patterns as those who were classified as highly educated differed significantly from those who were not so educated. This could be explained by the fact of a correlation between a good education, and better life chances.

The implication of these findings can be viewed from various angles. For the planners of post retirement education programmes, social service workers governments and non-governmental organizations concerned with post-retirement issues and even for pre-retirement adults, there is a lesson to be learnt from this study, a lesson that could enhance the capacity of all stakeholders to deal appropriately with post-retirement concerns.

## Conclusion

Ageing and retirement are often discussed with some level of detached concern, hence making the subjects not a favorite for heated academic or political debates. However, the fact remains that the older citizens of today were the agile working population of yesterday, hence the need for governments and individuals to take more interest in issues of ageing and retirement, since invariably, such plans are made for one's own future and old age.

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