IJAAR PUBLISHING®

Scholarly Journal of Social Sciences Research | ISSN: 2955-0785
Vol. 3, Issue 4 (April, 2024) | www.ijaar.org/sjssr

# PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON REPRODUCTION AS A UNIVERSAL FUNCTION IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF THE FAMILY: A CASE OF SELECTED STATES IN NORTH CENTRAL NIGERIA

**Edward Dauda Ibrahim Anzaku, PhD**
Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences: Federal University of Lafia
edwardanzaku@gmail.com +2348036567234

**Gimba Hezekiah Dikop, PhD**
Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Jos, Nigeria.
dikopg@gmail.com +2348036125895

**Kuje Emmanuel Amevey**
Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences: Federal University of Lafia
Emmanuelamevey@gmail.com
+2347053263419

## Abstract

*The contemporary family structure that accepts same sex marriage and decline in having children has implicated the function of reproduction. This paper intends to ascertain the perception of the public on the universality of reproduction. A cross sectional survey design was employed, where men and women across fifteen ethnic affiliations were considered. A multistage sampling technique was used to select clusters, while Taro Yamane sample size determination formula was used to select a total sample of 1200 respondents and administered questionnaire. Key informant interview was conducted on 30 selected personalities across three States: bringing the sample to 1230 respondents. Personalities selected for key informant interview were University lecturers, medical doctors, traditional rulers, religious leaders and the traditionalists. Data collected was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences software and content analysis. Statistical tools used were simple percentages and frequencies. A major question underlining the study was how the public perceived reproduction as a universal function. The result from statistical analysis revealed two divergent views. Majority of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with same sex marriage as it affects reproduction. However, a few others were indifferent as they contended that reproduction was a matter of choice. From content analysis, the two views were affirmed. When the result was compared using level of education, a few among the academia and medical personnel affirmed personal choice option. The paper recommends that Social Workers should educate the public on the implications of same sex marriage and having less interest in children even among married couples.*

**Key Words**: Public, perception, Reproduction, Function, Universal, Family and Global context.



Anzaku, I. D. E., Dikop, H. G. & Amevey, E. K. (2024). Public Perception on Reproduction as a Universal Function in the Global Context of the Family: A Case of Selected States in North Central Nigeria. *Scholarly Journal of Social Sciences Research. 3*(4), 23-34.

**Introduction**

Human society is a function of the family. This has to do with reproduction and socialisation of young ones to continue its existence. Among the universal functions of the family, reproduction is one. However, there is a sustained decline in fertility globally (Aassve, Mencarini, and Sartori 2015). According to the above authors, the changes in fertility in the 1950s and 1960s, has been one of the most important and profound demographic changes in recent human history. Today the decline in fertility and reproduction within the family institution as a social and demographic habitsis exacerbated by same sex marriage, and Globalisation (Caldwell, 2001' Gries & Grundmann, 2014; & Do, Levchenko, & Raddatz, 2016). It is argued today that people tend to have fewer children than what they considered as ideal because of barriers to fertility, including the high cost of children and the incompatibility between family and work responsibilities (Gauthier, 2001). The discrepancies in number of children have been attributed to failure in public policies to remove the obstacles to the realization of fertility desires (Chesnais, 1996). It is not very clear if efforts regard putting in place social polices targeting the removal of obstacles to realisation of fertility desires are in place. This is important to sustain the society.

**Problem statement**

Until recently, most sociological studies of the family have been dominated by functionalist definitions of what the family is and what 'needs' it fulfils in society. Reproduction has been one of the universal functionsof the family, through natural means or birth only. This functionalist definition of reproduction is being challenged by several gender scholars, especially those inclined to socio-scientific approaches to reproduction (Luna & Luker, 2013; Franklin, 2013). Today, a socio-biological conception definition is contemplated, using other means of reproduction such as, In-vitro Fertilisation (IVF), and Artificial Reproductive Technology (ART), surrogacy and even adaption in the case of infertility. However, it is noted with concern, cases of same sex marriage, decline in births and families with less interest in having children and the future human society (Inglehart, 2000; Caldwell, 2001' Gries & Grundmann, 2014; & Do, Levchenko, & Raddatz, 2016). During these arguments and discrepancies on ideal number of children, there seems to be less concern on the future of the society. For those relying on adoption may even face challenges as there may be no children to adopt. Families,in our contemporary society seem to be more interested in the here and now benefits due to failure in public policies to remove the obstacles to realization of fertility desires. The above concerns aroused the need to seek public perception on the universality of the reproduction function within the family institution in North central Nigeria and implications for the futuresociety and Social Work practice.

## Literature

Studies emphasized massive family planning programmeas a turning point in respect of fertility decline, thereby spurring sustained fertility decline in developing countries. Yet other studies reconcile the global drop in fertility with the diffusion of new social and cultural values (Inglehart, 2000). However, other studies by McDonald, (2013) and Esping-Andersen and Billari, (2015), affirmed that sustained fertility decline is caused by the inability of women to develop a successful and satisfactory professional career.Empirical analysis by several authorssuch as, Autor et al. (2013; 2014; 2016), Dauth, Findeisen, and Suedekum, (2014) and Bloom, Draca, and Van Reenen, (2016), showed the effect of globalization and trade, individual labour market outcomes such as unemployment, labour-force participation and job vacancies in the past decades as responsible factors for decline in fertility and birth.

Pfeffer (2012 & 2017) in his studies added a new dimension to decline in fertility and reproduction. According to Pfeffer (2012 & 2017) pay – gay or straight, gender conforming or gender queer parents-in waiting; buy eggs, locate surrogates and surf their way to meet their reproductive desires to join in on one of the most enduring social identities and human practices. Academics are increasingly joining writers and activists to theorize and document these new family forms, shaped with or without ART. Recent guidelines of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH, 2011) include a section on reproductive health, not only acknowledging that 'many transgender, transsexual, and gender nonconforming people will want to have children', but also recommending appropriate healthcare practices and consumer information.

Part of the biomedical guideline of transitioning by WPATH recommends early decisions about reproduction because of the fertility-limiting (or sterilizing) effects of feminizing/masculinizing hormone therapy. Reproductive labours are today part of the global biopolitics of increasing privatization and limited resource availability to enable support and care for oneself and loved ones. Reproductive labour is bought and sold across a global marketplace demanding attention from reproductive rights and justice movements as well as queer social justice movements. Franklin (2013) on his part argued that as advanced, high-tech biomedical options were becoming routine, standard practices. According to Franklin (2013), it is possible for one to make babiesbyachieving pregnancy through biomedicine and sociotechnical. In a study conducted by Furstenberg (2019), on Family Change in Global Perspective: how and why Family Systems Change; revealed that throughout the world, the passage to adulthood is generally becoming more protracted and more discretionary. Furstenberg (2019) also voiced out that, education and advancement by youngmen and females is in the increase in developing world and has undermined family authority. However, it has been established that in the early stages, families are likely to continue to exert influence over mate selection in many nations where parental influence on marriage choice has been strong. This left some pertinent questions to be answered.

With all these changes and happenings in the contemporary society, arise some fundamental questions such as: whether the functional perspective of reproduction still remains a universal function of the family in the global context? What is the stand of same sex marriage and the scientific methods of reproduction in this respect? Are families now to commercialize reproduction? These questions raised concerns on the functional definition of reproduction as a universal function of the family, and its implications on the society.

**Conceptual definition**

**Public perception:** This has to do with general view of people within a specified environment concerning a phenomenon. It has to do with interpretation of objects, behaviour using sensory organs. It is simply information drawn from the public opinion survey. According to Terzioglu (2023), refers to public opinion or belief often held by many people, based on how things seem. Davidson (2023) defines public opinion or perception as "an aggregate of the individual views attitude and beliefs about a particular topic, expressed by a significant proportion of a community. For Cooley (1966), public opinion is a process of interaction and mutual influence rather than a State of broad agreement.

**Reproduction:** Historians point to the eighteenth century as the source of the term "reproduction," which had a more biological tint than the religious word "generation" that it eventually replaced (Jordanova 1995). Duden (1991) argues that prior to the emergence of this new word, "there was simply no term in which insemination, conception, pregnancy, and

birth could have been subsumed." Throughout the nineteenth century, reproduction became increasingly associated with political economy and demography (Franklin 2013). For its use in contemporary social science research, we return to Ginsburg & Rapp's (1991) influential article "The Politics of Reproduction," which offers one of the few explicit definitions in the literature. While noting the "complexity" of the term reproduction, Ginsburg & Rapp (1991) define their "working focus" as the specific subject of human reproduction, which encompasses events throughout the human and especially female life cycle related to ideas and practices surrounding fertility, birth, and childcare, including the ways these figures into understandings of social and cultural renewal. Murphy (2012) defines reproduction in terms of what it is and is not: Reproduction was not a biological thing with clear bounds, but a multifaceted and distributed effect in time and space, a problem both material and political to which questions of state, race, freedom, individuality, and economic prosperity were bound in ways that connected the micrological with the transnational via embodiment. Like Ginsburg & Rapp, Murphy is focused on women's experiences of reproduction in that she studies how women's groups used medical implements like the speculum to learn about their bodies

**Family: -** Murdock, for instance, defined the family as a 'social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation, and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults. The four basic functions of the family, therefore, are seen as: common residence; economic co-operation; reproduction; sexuality. Functionalists' theories of the family are treated elsewhere at length (Morgan, 1975; Gittins, 1982), but it is worth examining some of their main assumptions briefly. Generally, functionalists have argued that the family is a universal institution which performs certain specific functions essential to society's survival. Margaret Mead (1971) showed how Samoan children chose the household where they wanted to reside, and often changed their residence again later. Sibling households - or Frenches -were common in parts of Europe and are a dominant form of household among the Ashanti (Bender, 1979). Idyorough (2001) defines the family as "A small group of individuals who are brought together by blood ties, affection, affinity, and adoption and who share common residential, social and economic relationship and the adult members are responsible for bringing up children or are expected to do so." There are numerous examples in contemporary society of families who do not form households, or only form households for periods of time. Families where the husband is in the armed services, is a travelling salesman or travels frequently abroad may only have the husband/father resident for short periods of time. Families where partners have jobs some distance away from one another may maintain a second household where one of them lives during the week. Children who are sent to boarding school may spend little more than a third of the year residing with their parent(s).

**Universal Family:** Universal Family is perceived to be a nuclear family considered as a universal human grouping, emphasizing the universality in terms of certain functions such as reproduction, sexual relationship economic support socialisation of the younger ones among others across different culture and societies (Murdock, 1949)**.** According to Gittins **(**1993), Universal Family is conceived as an idea that the family is a universal institution that performs specific functions essential forthe survival of society.

**Global context:** is same as universal. It refers to family as global concept, recognized in every human society.

**Methodology**

The paper adopts Cross Sectional Survey Design. This design enables the researcher collect data from a large pool of subjects and compare differences between groups. It describes the happening now. Participants in this type of study are selected based on variables of interest. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to determine the cluster for the study. The first stage was the selection of three state out of six States from the north central Nigeria. Three selected were Benue, Nasarawa and Plateau through fishbowl technique.The second stage was the selection of threeLGAs each of the three States using fishbowl technique. LGAs selected were, Lafia, Akwanga and Keffi from Nasarawa State; Bokkos, Jos North and Jos South from Plateau and Buruku, Makurdi and Uturkpo from Benue State. The third stage was the selection of three electoral wards from each of the three LGAs. The fourth stage was the selection of respondents from the wards. A sample of 1200 was selected from the three States through Taro Yamane (1967) and was distributed proportionately (at 34.35% for Plateau; 44.5% for Benue and 21.2% for Nasarawa States) and administeredquestionnaire. The projected population of the three selected States as of 2022 were as follows: Plateau State; 4.7m; Benue State: 6.1m; and Nasarawa State: 2.9m. Accordingly, each of the three States had 412; 534; and 254 respondents respectively. Key Informant Interview (KII) was conducted on 30 respondents who were purposefullyselected basedon specialties and social statuses occupied. Those selected were the University lecturers, medical doctors, traditional rulers, religious leaders and the traditionalists. Data collected was analysed using SPSS software version 26 and contents analysis. Mathematical tools used were frequency and per centages. ANOVA was used to compare level of education and perception of the respondents.

**Theoretical framework**

The paper adopts Gibson's Direct Theory of Perceptionand the functionalist theory of perception. These two complemented the deficiencies of each other to give a more robust understanding of public perception. Gibson's Direct theory of perception was developed by Gibson in 1966. The theory explains that our perception of the world around us is the reflection of information we receive and interpret through our senses. Gibson argues that the real world is three-dimensional and that where we stand and move about within it is as much a part of real-world perception as shape and colour. The theory believes that perception evolves to help us deal with our environment.

The functionalist theory of perception on the other hand, was founded by William James in the 19$^{th}$ century. James was heavily influenced by the work of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Other noticeable personalities within the theory include George Herbert Mead, Archibald L. Moore among others. The father of them all is Emile Durkheim.The functionalist theory of perception sees the society as a complex whole, which consist of the family, education. Law, economic, religion and politics. Each of these social institutions carry certain functions for the maintenance and continuity of the society. According to the functionalist theory, the family is responsible for the regulations of reproduction and sexual activities in the society. The family is responsible as a social institution through which all forms of reproduction occur (Bandy, Andrews & Moore, 2012; Lystra, 1989). The family helps society through reproducing new members to replace the old and dying members. Additionally, the family functions to biologically reproduce individual through procreation and socialization of children in the society (Bongaarts, 1992).

The applicability of these theories to this research is that Gibson's theory of perception influences our personality by the environment. On the other hand, functional theory

influences individuals to perceive reproduction as one of the main functions of the family through birth and socialisation, to guarantee the survival and development of the society.

**Presentation of findings**

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents**

| **1** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| 18-28 | 329 | 28.4% |
| 29-38 | 464 | 40.0% |
| 39-48 | 319 | 27.5% |
| 49-above | 47 | 4.1% |
| **Total** | **1159** | **100%** |
| **Sex** | | |
| Male | 472 | 40.7% |
| Female | 687 | 59.3% |
| **Total** | **1159** | **100%** |
| **Level of Education** | | |
| Non-formal | 140 | 12.1 |
| Primary | 223 | 19.2 |
| Secondary | 451 | 38.9 |
| Tertiary | 345 | 29.8 |
| **Total** | **1159** | **100%** |
| **Religion** | | |
| Christianity | 536 | 46.2 |
| Islam | 412 | 35.5 |
| African traditional religion | 211 | 18.2 |
| **Total** | **1159** | **100%** |
| **Level of Income Per annum** | | |
| 360,000-450,000 | 363 | 31.3 |
| 450,000—500,000 | 450 | 38.8 |
| 500,000-above | 346 | 29.9 |
| **Total** | **1159** | **100%** |

**Source: Field work 2023**

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The age brackets 28-38 years was the highest, while age brackets 49-above were the lowest. This is explained by the fact that most respondents n=464(40%) were of active ages in reproduction. Female were more in number to men; n=687 (59.3%). Most of the respondents n-451 (38.9%) were of secondary school level, while Christians constituted the majority. The level of income of respondents was dominated by income range of N450,000-N500, 000 per annum, indicated a low socio-economic status of most of the respondents as compared to the staggering exchange rate of N1135-$1 as of 20$^{th}$ November 2023. Today exchange rate has gone above N1,500--$1 as of 20$^{th}$February 2024

**Table 2: Respondents' understanding on the concept ofuniversality of reproduction function**

| S/N | Questions | Yes | No | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Reproduction is one of the main functions of the family globally | 730 (63%) | 429 (37%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 2 | It is the production of young one of our kind through the biological process of pregnancy and birth by husband and wife | 825 (71.2%) | 334 (28.2%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 3 | Reproduction can also be through artificial means like IVF, ART | 340 (29.3) | 819 (70.7%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 4 | It can be achieved through a union between man and woman | 901 (77.7) | 258 (22.3%) | 1159 (100%) |

**Source: Field work 2023**

Table 2 was the expression of respondents regarding their knowledge of the universality of reproduction function. A good percentage of the respondents acknowledged that reproduction is one of the main functions of the family globally, through the natural means of childbirth. This is confirmed by points 1, 2 and 4 on the table. The other view on point 3 n=340 out of 1159 (29.3%) however, understood that reproduction is not limited to the natural process alone. This view saw possibilities in other means of reproduction such as IVF, ART. Respondents from key informant interview also affirmed natural means of reproducing children to continue societal existence. However, most of them n-23 (77%) accepted reproduction through other scientific methods than just the natural process of birth. When they were asked about same sex marriage and its implications on the society, majority expressed indifference as they believed it depends on cultural difference and individual consideration. A respondent reacted by this comment:

> The issue of same sex is an individual matter and societal norm. For instance, in Nigeria, our culture may frown at it as a taboo, but elsewhere, like the USA, it is normal because, such has been legalised". Whatever, the case may be, it is the societal norms that decide what constitute right or wrong and this could have implication on the society **(A medical Doctor, October 2023).**

Today the issue of same sex marriage is gaining ground across western and European societies and is likely to reach Nigeria. Another respondent was of the view that, reproduction of children should remain a function of the familyto maintain the future of the society. When asked if children produced through scientific methods have beenabnormal?Most respondents within the academia saw nothing wrong with children delivered through scientific methods; but were quick to add that, it is appropriate in case of infertility and bareness. On the issue of fertility decline and less desire for birth by couples, a respondent expressed his opinion thus:

> Children were assets in the olden days, but today, what determine the willingness and desire for children is ability to care and maintain them. Resources to do so are scares and the quest for children is a function of needed resources to sustain those children. However, this may not be the sole explanation to the choice of having more children or less, because there are cases of well to do couples, who despite their wealth or socioeconomic status, choose to have fewer children (**A University lecturer October, 2023).**

The above perception of the university don agrees with Adsera (2005), where developed nations of the world patronize low fertility rates due to high unemployment. The fact is being experienced in the case of even the developing nations like Nigeria, where unemployment may be said to be the determinant of number of children. The statement also went to confirm Matysiak, Mencarini and Vignoli (2016) who contended that, Work-family conflict moderates the relationship between childbearing and subjective well-being. A young academician from one of the University expressed his interest in favour of fewer children. The respondent gave the number of children if married to be two (2). When asked reason for such a number, he attributed same to resources to maintain those children. These were his comments:

> With the current hardship of living condition, large number of children is undesirable. If I happen to have a family, it will be sizeable and of not more than two children. Preferably a boy and a girl to balance the gender. He went further to state that; economic challenge remains a determining factor as to the choice of family size (A young university lecturer, 2023).

**Table 3: Respondents Perception on reproduction as a universal function in contemporary society**

| S/N | Questions | Yes | No | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Reproduction remains the primary function of the family globally | 855 (73.8%) | 304 (26.2%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 2 | Reproduction is mandatory for me | 786 (67.8%) | 373 (32.2%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 3 | Reproduction as a function influences the dynamics of the family | 803 (69.3%) | 356 (30.7%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 4 | I am in marriage to produce children to continue our lineage | 798 (68.9%) | 361 (31.1%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 5 | Marriage is all about companionship with or without children | 303 (26.1%) | 856 (73.9%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 6 | Same sex marriage poses a serious threat to human existence | 1012 (87.3%) | 147 (12.7%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 7 | Children could be adopted or through scientific methods; not necessarily through birth | 167 (14.4%) | 992 (85.6%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 8 | I need one or two children not more | 634 (54.7%) | 525 (45.3%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 9 | Children are a choice not mandatory | 234 (20.2%) | 925 (79.8%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 10 | I do not care about having children or not, it all depends on the situation I find myself | 301 (26%) | 858 (74%) | 1159 (100%) |
| 11 | Reproduction determines the overall wellbeing of the family | 875 (75.5%) | 284 (24.5%) | 1159 (100%) |

**Source: Field work 2023**

Table 3 is the perception of respondents on reproduction as a universal function in contemporary society. From the table, the overwhelming perception was in favour of reproduction as a universal function of the family globally. Natural means of reproduction was also affirmed, making relevant the functionalist definition or perspectives. This was buttressed in point 6 on the table concerning same sex marriage. For instance, only n=147 (12.7%) out of 1159 respondents supported same sex marriage without seeing any threat to human existence. In the same vein, point 9 and 10 received the least number of respondents n= 234 (20%) and n=301 (26%) in respect to “Children are a choice not mandatory” and “I

do not care about having children or not, it all depends on the situation I find myself". When the above view was triangulated with key informant interview, the result was slightly different. While traditional and religious rulers believed, reproduction through natural birth should remain function of the family globally, other respondents within the academia and medical personnel were of the opinion that, artificial means alongside natural process of childbirth should be encouraged. This view took into cognizance adoption in cases of infertility and other gynecological complications, which is in consonance with Gonzalez, and Jurado-Guerrero, (2006), that remaining childless in affluent economies is a function of environmental conditions. Gonzalez, and Jurado-Guerrero, (2006), carried a study in developed economies of West Germany, Italy and Spain, covering a period from1994-2001 and found out that such highly developed economies are comfortable with lesser children.

Same sex was unanimously rejected by respondents. This may be in response to societal norm that incriminates same sex in Nigeria, especially when it comes to its implication on the continuation of the society. All respondents except two frowned at same sex marriage. The two that were indifferent, declined to say anything concerning the issue as they stated that they choose not to, on personal grounds.

ONEWAY ANOVA

**Table 4. Level of education and perception**

| | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Between Groups | 202.249 | 3 | 67.416 | 1140.128 | .000 |
| Within Groups | 68.355 | 1156 | .059 | | |
| **Total** | 270.603 | 1159 | | | |

Table 4 explains relationship between level of education and people's perception. In this case, education is an influencer of critical thinking concerning the way individuals perceive issues in society.

**Discussion of findings**

The findings of this study revealed that reproduction function of the family as defined by the functionalist perspective is no longer as a universal concept**.**Despite contention by majority of the respondents to confirming its universality, few respondents attested to the contrary. Those on the contrary were those that saw reproduction through other scientific means, such as In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), and Artificial Reproductive Technology (ART). This group of respondents were some of the medical doctors and University lecturers. Their views support the Socio-biological conception and gender scholars who see reproduction within and outside the family. The implication of this is a challenge to the functionalist conception of reproduction. In as much as children could be gotten through surrogacy and IVF/ART, reproduction as a function of the family institution alone is questioned.

**In the case of Respondents' understanding of the concept of universality of reproduction function:** The study revealed over-whelming support in favour the biological process of birth, through the family against the artificial means of reproduction. Respondents were also of the opinion that one of the primary functions of the family is to produce and raise young ones to continue existence. It was however, established from the study that universality of the function of reproduction through the family is challenged, as a good

percentage of respondents especially those in academia and medical doctors supported other means of raising children through artificial means. This is a proof for policy or theoretical review.

**On Respondents' Perception on reproduction as a universal function in contemporary society,** the study revealed two divergent views. While majority of respondents still value natural birth through the family, a few others accepted that children can be gotten through other scientific process as well as adoption**.** From the study, factors such as Globalisation of the economic system, which determine the ability to care for the children and human development status, Socio-economic status may be a hinderance to acceptance of many children were responsible for fewer children and or none. However, that may not constitute the solely reason for small number of children, as even those of high social status may choose to have a smaller number of children than even those in low socio-economic status. The revelation from the study indicates serious environmental influence on societal desire for high or low number of children.

**Level of education and perception** was also compared in the study, using one-way ANOVA test. The result revealed a significant relationship between level of education and people's perception. From the table the mean of 67. 416 between groups has verified the influence of level of education as an influencer of perception. This was confirmed by those in the academia and medical profession, as most of respondents that viewed reproduction within outside the family; and even through surrogacy, were those with high level of education. This is in consonance with Cooley (1966), who sees public perception as a process of interaction and mutual influence rather than a State of broad agreement.

**Implication for Social Work practice:**
Social Work aspractical and a helping profession, works to ensure the enhancement of the social functioning of families, individuals and societies, for optimum performance and for prevention of breakdown of law and order. In this study, Social Workers are informed on the contemporary changes and challenges of the family institution. Especially the changing roles of the family in respect to reproduction and the same sex marriage. It may be an insight for the need for Social Workers to review and adopt new strategies for greater and better service to humanity. As a social system, change is constant and the need to understand this and for improved service to the society is the crux of this paper.

## Conclusion

The functionalist perspective regards reproduction as a universal function of the family has been challenged by scientific means, such as invitrofertilisation (IVF), and Artificial Reproductive Technology (ART). Thougha good number of respondents still considered the functionalist perspective on reproduction as a universal function of the family institution, the changing nature of the society and scientific innovation have permitted children to be gotten through other means. It has also been established that, modernisation is a factor in the desire for families to have fewer children or non at all. This must be a point of concern for all; except if robots are to replace human beings soon.

## Recommendation.

1. Social Workers should identify areas of interest and engage the public in continuous education on same sex marriage and its implications on society
2. Governments in Nigeria (Federal, State and Local)may wish to encourage childbirth by providing supportive welfare packages for mothers and newborn babies.

3. The Nigerian law against same sex signed by the then president Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, should be upheld for the sustenance of the society

**References**

Aassve A.,MencariniL., and SartoriM. (2015). Institutional change, happiness, and fertility. *European Sociological Review*, 31(6).749-765.

Adsera, A. (2005). Vanishing children: From high unemployment to low fertility in developed countries. *American Economic Review*, 95(2), 189-193.

Bandy, T., Andrews, K. M., & Moore, K. A. (2012). *Disadvantaged families and child outcomes: the importance of emotional support for mothers*. Washington, DC: Child trends.

Bongaarts, J. (1992). Do reproductive intentions matter? International Family Planning Perspective. 18(3); 102-108.

Bloom, N., Draca, M., & Van Reenen, J. (2016). Trade induced technical change. The impact of Chinese imports on innovation, and productivity. *The review of economicsstudies*. 83(1). 87-117.

Cooley, C. H. (1966). Social process.*Editors of encyclopedia Britannica/Article History*

Davidson, W. P. (2023). Public opinion. Fact-checked by the *Editors of encyclopedia Britannica/ Article History*

Esping-Andersen, G. (2015). Re-theorizing family demographics. *Population and Development Review. 41(1), 1-31*

Furstenberg, F. F. (2019). Family Change in Global Perspective: How and Why Family Systems Change. *HHS Public Access/ available in PMC* 68(3): 326–341. doi:10.1111/fare.12361.

Gauthier, A. H. (2001). The Impact of Public Policies on Families and Demographic Behaviour: A Paper presented at the ESF/EURESCO conference 'The second demographic transition in Europe' Bad Herentals, Germany

Gittins, D. (1993). What is the family? Is it Universal? In: the family in question. Women in society. *Palgrave*, London.

Gonzalez, M. J., & Jurado-Guerrero, T. (2006). Remaining childless in affluent economies: a comparison of France, West Germany, Italy and Spain, 1994-2001. European Journal of Population/Revvueeuropeenne de demographie, 22(4), 317-352/

Idyorough, A. E. (2001). *Techniques and principles of social casework practice*. Abuja: IBV and Associate Publishers.

Lystra, K. (1964). Searching the heart: women, men, and romantic love in the nineteenth century America. New York, NY: Oxford University Press

Matysiak, A., Mencarini, L., &Vignoli, D. (2016). Work-family conflict moderates the relationship between childbearing and subjective well-being. *European Journal of Population.* 32(3), 355-379.

Murdock, G. P. (1949). *Social Structure*. London: Macmillan

Terzioglu, E. (2023). Maintaining international relations through digital public diplomacy, policies and discourses/D01:10.4018/978-1-6684-5822-.ch005