

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARITAL INSTABILITY AND SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND FACTORS OF PARENTS FROM SOUTH EASTERN STATES OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was on the relationship between marital instability and socio-economic background factors of parents from south eastern states of Nigeria. Correlation survey design was used to carry out the study. The population of the study was all the registered family under 10 years of civil marriage in south eastern state of Nigeria consisting of 10,000 families. The sample size was 2000 couples selected using multi-stage sampling technique. The research instrument was a researcher developed instrument consisting of four clusters which examined the relationship between marital instability and socioeconomic background factors of parents from south eastern states of Nigeria. Four research questions guided the study and the data collected were analyzed using Parsons Product moment of correlation coefficient. The results revealed a positive correlation between marital instability and socioeconomic background factors (Education level, family level of expenditure, job/occupation and social standing) of parents. The following recommendations among others were made: proper marriage formation/instructions should be encouraged among intending couples and religious leaders should intensify post marriage instructional classes devoting much attention to conflict resolution in marriages. Government should endeavor to improve on the quality standard of living for the citizens.

Keywords: Relationship, Parents, Socioeconomic Factors, Marital Instability, Southeast Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The aroma and taste of married life among the contemporary families is nothing to write home about. This is because some of these families and marriages live in constant conflicts, distances, working out, separations and divorce. These came about due to the bitter and soar tastes of marriages and family life caused by factors such as conflicts poverty, infidelity, childlessness, and other crises prone oriented family problems including socio-economic factors. (Onyia&Amuche, 2012), (Kumuyi, 2014).

According to Obumnse and Okudo (2022), socio-economic background factors of an individual are the social status weird by that individual in the society. Simpson and Earls (1995) and Santrock (2021) defined it as the grouping of people with similar occupational, social, educational and economic characteristic. This view was collaborated by Amadi (2018) who noted that these factors namely, education, job, income and social class are the determining factors of an individual socioeconomic background factor and it disposes the individual to the capital input in the family (parents).

The term parent, according to Ifejiolor (2019) refers to the father and mother of an offspring. The father, who is man and the mother, who is the woman begets the child and constitute the parental family along with their children whereas the man and woman constitute the conjugal family. Essentially the conjugal family is majorly geared towards the well-being of the spouses. However, as pointed out, a lot of factors often constitute hindrances toward the actualization of the spouses' wellbeing. Such hindrances include factors mentioned above such as infidelity, childlessness and socio-economic background factors. etc. The presence of such factors and poor socio-economic background factors has been linked to conflicts in marriages (Linus, 2012). These conflicts very often results to instability in marriage.

Marital instability is defined by Robert (2012) as the process whereby marriages breakdown as a result of separation, divorce or abandonment. This view was collaborated by Lesmin and Sarker (2018) who also noted that marital instability in the family occurs due to total crack in marital conjugal bond and fidelity. The crack has been associated to finances, Job (Occupation), Education, class and social groups. The above mentioned also loosely represents the factors of social economic statues which Kumuyi (2014), Onyia and Aniche (2014). Ambakederemo and Ganagana (2015) viewed as causing instability in the home when they are not sufficiently provided. On that note, Danso (2018) Boakye and Ardayfio (2015) all noted that one of the greatest pressures on married life is caused by economic factors and this is related to the finances of the home which depends on the wages or take home. Lesmin and Sarker (2018) found out that inadequate provision of essential needs for wives and children within the family is capable of creating tension and conflict consequently resulting to instability. This could happen when family daily provisions are lacking. Such daily provisions include, basic needs such as shelter, feeding, clothing, payment of bills, financing excursions and travelling expenses, purchase of personal needs, prompt provision of family upkeep token, provisions of adequate upkeep token and good feeding etc. Lesmin and Sarker (2018)

further noted that when appropriate attention is not given to the family financial needs, such could lead to marital instability.

Furthermore, the education level of parents has been noted to be a strong factor which could lead to instability at home. Sarker (2017) noted that the home environment is a strong pointer to academic adjustment of the children. The inability to achieve this objective according to Bumpass (2015) and Castro-martin & Bumpass (2015) could create family problem and cause instability in marriage. Uka (2013) noted that it could affect parental support provisions such as parental involvement in school work, punctuality to school, regular attendance to school, less supervision outside the home, disengagement from school, closely supervising and directing out of school program, payment of required school fees, purchase of textbooks, provisions of pocket money, participation in P.T.A, encouraging visitations to counsellors etc. Bumpas (2015), Uka (2013) and Castro-matin and Bumpass (2015) noted that that ability to satisfy such needs could lead to family problems. This view was supported by Danso (2018), Boateng (2011) and Boakye and Ardayfio (2015) who noted that highly educated women tend to mount strong pressures on their husbands who may be less educated or nonchalant over the academic outcome of their children.

In a similar manner, Sarker (2018) also remarked that family stability is affected by the social standing of the couples. This view was collaborated by Boateng (2011) who noted that most financial well to do women look down on their husbands and vice versa. According to them conjugal conflict is associated with a variety of indicators among which include social standing of the individual couples. Amato (2016) viewed it as one of the factors that mount very intense marital instability pressure. Factors such occupation, appearance of the couple (dressing), integrity of the couple, education level, comportment and social interaction, verbal expression/abilities of the couple, residence and location of the family, level of respect weird, influence in the community, interest in people, interaction with friends etc. According to them these factors can thrust a sharp knife in a home causing a divide among the parents thereby leading to instability.

Again the job/occupation of the parents is another strong factor which can lead/cause instability in marriage. Job/occupation could be viewed like a two edged sword that when not properly handled could cause damaging consequences to the owner. Danso (2018) noted a very high rate of divorce among highly educated women and perhaps, features such as unavailability, poor attention to home, lack of care, poor communication and among others as responsible for such high rate of divorce caused by family instability.

Given the aforementioned context of the socio-economic factors (Education level of parents, expenditure level, Job/occupation and social standing), the researcher has set out to study the relationship between marital instability and socioeconomic background factors of parents from south eastern states of Nigeria.

PROBLEM OF THE STUDY

The contemporary family is beclouded with too many crises, both inter and intra personal crises. These crises are seen reflected in so many worrisome moments lived out by married men and women among with is instability in home. The heat generated by instability in home

cuts boundary and reflect adversely on the general welfare of not only the couples involved but also the immediate family and extended family. Instability between couples had led to child maladjustments, family violence, separation, quarrels and fight which most times could lead to death of a conjugal partner.

Therefore the problem of this study is to determine the relationship between the socio-economic background factors of parents and marital instability.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact (relationship) between marital instability and socio-economic background factors (education level, level of expenditure, occupation/job and social standing) of parents from south eastern states of Nigeria. The study sought to specifically investigate the relationship between

- (i) Mental instability and education level of parents
- (ii) Marital instability and expenditure level of parents
- (iii) Marital instability and job/occupation of parents
- (iv) Marital instability and social standing of parents

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (i) What relationship exists between marital instability and education level of parents?
- (ii) What relationship exists between marital instability and expenditure level of parents?
- (iii) What relationship exists between marital instability and job/occupation of parents?
- (iv) What relationship exists between marital instability and social standing of parents?

METHOD

The design adopted a correlation survey method. The area of study was south eastern states of Nigeria and the population of the study consisted of families under 10 years of civil marriage in south eastern state of Nigeria totaling 10,000 (ministry of social welfare). The sample size consisted of 2000 parents drawn using multi stage sampling technique from four different Government ministries among the five states comprising the south eastern states of Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument was established using split half method and the result was analyzed using Pearson product moment (r) which yielded a reliability of (0.69). A total of 2000 questionnaires were distributed through a team of brief assistants carefully supervised by the researcher. All the questionnaires were returned and the questionnaire itself was a researcher developed profoma titled Relationship between marital instability and socioeconomic background factors of parents. (RMISEBP). The profoma consisted of four clusters which sought to determine which relationship existed between marital instability and education, expenditure level, job and social standing of parents. The data collected were analyzed using Pearsons product moment of correlations (PPMC) to answer the research questions.

RESULTS

The data collected from the field of study were analyzed and the findings were presented in table form as follows.

Research Question 1: What relationship exists between marital instability and education level of parents?

Table 1: Pearson on couples rating of the relationship between marital instability and education level of the family

Source of variation	N	Educational level of parents	Marital instability
Education level of parents	2000	1.00	0.69
Marital instability		0.69	1.00

The result from table one revealed that there was a high positive relationship of (0.69) existing between educational level of parents and marital instability.

Research Question 2: What relationship exists between marital instability and expenditure level of parents?

Table 2: Pearson on couples rating of the relationship existing between family level of expenditure and marital instability

Source of variation	N	Family expenditure level	Marital instability
Family expenditure level	2000	1.00	0.70
Marital instability		0.70	1.00

Table two revealed that a very high positive relationship of (0.70) exists between family level of expenditure and marital instability among parents from south eastern states of Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What relationship exists between marital instability and job/occupation of parents?

Table 3: Pearson on couples ratings of the relationship existing between Job/occupation of parents and marital instability.

Source of variation	N	Job/Occupation	Marital instability
Job/Occupation of parents	2000	1.00	0.68
Marital instability		0.68	1.00

The analysis in table three revealed that a positive relationship of (0.68) exists between occupation/Job of couples and marital instability.

Research Question 4: What relationship exists between marital instability and social standing of the parents?

Table 4: Pearson on couples rating of the relationship existing between marital instability and social standing of parents.

Source of variation	N	Social standing of family	Marital instability
Social standing of family	2000	1.00	0.69
Marital instability		0.69	1.00

The table four revealed that a positive relationship of (0.69) exists between family social standing and marital instability.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study were discussed in line with the purpose of study which sought to determine the relationship between marital instability and socio-economic background factors (Education level, expenditure level, job/occupation and social standing) of the family. Concerning the education level of the family, the study revealed a high positive relationship of 0.69 existing between marital instability in the family and education level of the couples. The assessment was done using the following expected parental provisions that the inability to afford could lead to conflicts in the home and they include; support provisions such as parental involvement in child's academic pursuit, purchase of textbooks (2.69), encouraging punctuality (2.82), encouraging regular attendance of school (2.79), less supervision outside the home (2.68), payment of required school fees (2.40), provision of pocket money, directing out of school program (2.82) etc. Bumpas (2015), Damso (2018) and Boateng (2011) all noted that the inability to provide the above mentioned academic support needs could lead to family frictions, quarrels and breakdown. This view was collaborated by Bumpas and Castro (2015), Uka (2013) and Boakye and Ardayfio (2015) who noted that highly educated women tend to mount strong pressure on their husbands who may be less educated and nonchalant towards the academic pursuit of their children.

The expenditure level and instability was handled by research question two which revealed a high positive relationship of (0.70) between family level of expenditure and mental stability. The assessment was done using family support provisions such as shelter or residence (2.92), feeding (2.77) prompt provision of upkeep (3.26), provision of adequate up-keep (3.42) e.t.c. The items above were all rated above the acceptable mean mark of 2.50 indicating that they are factors contributing to instability at home. This view was supported by Sarker (2018), Lesmin and Sarker (2015). They all agreed that the inability to provide the above mentioned items in family can lead to unimaginable conflicts, quarrels and unstable homes.

Research question three examined the relationship between Job/occupation of couples and marital instability. The table revealed that a positive relationship of 0.68 exists between occupation of parents and marital instability. Danso (2018) noted a very high rate of divorce by instability among highly educated women and perhaps features such as unavailability (3.24), poor attention to home (3.32), lack of care, (3.01), poor communication (3.09), comes back tired always (3.46), travels on account of Job (3.29), pays more attention to Job (3.04) etc. were rated as factors prevalent among couples which can induce/cause instability in marriage. Concerning the social standing of the family, table four revealed that a positive relationship of (0.69) exists between social standing of the family and marital instability. Boateng (2011)

noted that most financial well to do men and women look down on the partners and vice versa. This could be attributed to the following social standing factors such as occupation/Job (3.42), Education level (2.96), appearance in public (dressing) (3.02), integrity of couples (2.98), verbal expression and ability (3.09), level of respect weird (2.98), influence in the community (3.02). Amato (2016), Boateng (2011) and Sarker (2018) all noted the above as factors which could hinder family stability.

CONCLUSION

The high rate of family instability cannot be farfetched from the social and economic characteristics of the family among others (Boakye & Ardayfio; 2015, Danto, 2018). The socioeconomic background factors of parents entail the grouping of people according to education, Job/occupation, social standing and family expenditure. The study carried out above revealed that a positive relationship of (0.69, 0.70, 0.68 and 0.6 for education level, expenditure level, job/occupation and social standing respectively) exists between socioeconomic background factor and marital instability implying that socioeconomic factors are among the factors that lead to instability in the family.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) Proper marriage formation/instructions should be encouraged among intending couples
- (ii) Religious leaders should intensify post marriage instructional classes devoting much attention to conflict resolution in marriages
- (iii) Satellite and continuous education programs should be encouraged
- (iv) The government should endeavor quality standards of living.
- (v) Other stakeholders should collaborate with both the government and religious leaders to facilitate and appreciate the importance of stability at home.

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