

EDUCATIONAL STATUS DIFFERENTIALS ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND MARITAL INSTABILITY IN OGUN CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Abstract

The increase in divorce rates is one of the most visible challenges in contemporary family life and it calls for deeper analysis in order to understand their causes and consequences on the well-being of divorced partners. Therefore, this study investigated educational status differentials differences on domestic violence and marital instability in Ogun Central District. The study adopted a causal comparative research design. The population for the study comprised married couples in Ogun Central Senatorial District, while a sample of 40 respondents was selected each from six (6) Local Government Area under Ogun Central Senatorial District, using a random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire titled Educational Diverse Couple, Domestic Violence and Marital Instability Questionnaire (EDCDVMIQ) was used for data collection. Data were analysed with descriptive statistics, simple percentage and T-test were used to test the research questions at 0.05 level of significance. The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling, and its reliability was established using appropriate reliability methods. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, and mean scores. However within the population of the highly educated and the less educated couples the prevalent violence was physical violence (76.7% and 72.7%) respectively; showing that the highly educated had more physical violence while both had sexual violence (7.4% and 4.5%) respectively as the least occurring marital violence. It was also revealed that there exist no significant differences between in domestic violence among the highly educated and less educated couples ($t=0.325$; $p>0.05$). Likewise, there is no significant differences in marital instability between highly and less educated couples ($t=0.088$; $p>0.05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that marriage counsellors and family life educators should provide premarital counselling on educational status, compatibility and conflict management strategies to reduce domestic violence and promote marital stability.

Keywords: Educational Status Differential, Domestic Violence, Marital Instability.

Introduction

Traditionally in Yorubaland, as in other places in Nigeria, beating of wives and children is widely condemned as a form of discipline. Ogun Central is not alienated from this perspective even though education has been a veritable tool in ameliorating this disgusting belief. People belief discipline could be instilled on children through beating, much the same way as in husbands beating their wives, who are regarded like children to be prone to indiscipline which must be curbed. Cases of domestic violence against women have been on the increase in Ogun state with Abeokuta taking the centre stage. For instance, there have been reports of cases of husbands maiming and killing their wives in the media especially during the COVID-19 enforced lockdown. The statistics presented by This Day (2020) newspaper were daunting. About 20% of women have been battered by their husbands. Shockingly, more educated women (65%) are in this terrible situation as compared with their low income counterparts (55%). Most endure, believing they have nowhere to go and in any case, believing, for good reason, that the law will not protect them. Staggering 97.2% of them are not prepared to report to the Nigeria Police.

Domestic violence is a pattern of abusive behaviour in any relationship that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner. The definition adds that domestic violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender, and can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, economic and psychological abuse (Office of Violence Against Women, 2024). Domestic violence is also known as domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence and intimate partner violence. It is a pattern of abusive behaviours by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family or cohabitation. Domestic violence, so defined, has many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/covert abuse otherwise known as neglect; and economic deprivation. It is however not uncommon to state that educational attainment of couples is a factor of domestic violence and marital stability among couples.

A graduate marrying a primary school certificate holder, will soon realize that their varying social status could create gap between himself and the wife especially when relating to other people belonging to their varying social groups with varying societal values that cannot match. This could be a source of conflict and possible failure of their marriage (Kumuiyi, 2024). It may be assumed that such gap could be bridged by time when the couple must have grown to understand themselves better with time. Nwokocha (2023) noted that a woman with primary school certificate who did not bother to know how to relate to people in her graduate husband's social class will with time learn more about her in her marriage if she has to succeed, and this also applies to the man. Some men, due to the exposure in higher institutions of learning believe that they will be more compatible with women who are also well educated like themselves (Eze, 2024). They believe they will be able to communicate effectively with such women and be easily understood by them.

Many at times they may discover that their wives are hardly at home due to demands of jobs that are as time consuming as those of their husbands. This may lead to feelings of being neglected and uncared for the man who is usually left to the mercy of house helps who take the place of their wives at home (Ojukwu, 2023).

Also, the man at times develops the feeling of inadequacy especially if the wife works with men who are more successful than himself and due to the wife's sense of dressing and sophistication, infidelity is often suspected and this can lead to marital failures (Agbo and Choji, 2024). In some situations, women find themselves attaining high levels of education than their husband. Men who have acquired wealth without adequate education to back it up may want their wives to acquire more education than themselves so they become asset in the running of the family's business and could give some degree of prestige to the man and family. When the man has a lower educational qualification than the wife and his financial standing is also lower, he may develop feeling of resentment, jealousy and incapability at being able to have a control over his household, especially if the man did not approve of such educational attainment. The situation may lead to instability, eventual separation or divorce in the marriage.

That said, it is worthy to note that the role of the man in the Nigerian culture is that of a master and controller of home. He wants to maintain this role all the time and does not want a situation that will militate against it, lest society sees him as a weakling. Some men are weary of marrying women who have acquired higher education. Men in this group will contend that

it will be easier for them to be able to have control over women who do not have more than a school certificate education or those who did not attend school at all regardless of their own educational background. This is with the belief that such will not see them as equals and as such give them enough respect and thereby enabling them master of the home.

Marriage is the oldest social institution ordained by God as a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife. Marriage, as ordained by God gives legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction for legitimate children. Marriage is the state of being united with the spouse of the opposite sex as husband and wife for the purpose of companionship, procreation and maintaining a family (Ojukwu, 2023). The above definitions require compatibility, commitment and understanding among married persons. The institution of marriage represents all the behaviour, norms, roles, expectations and values that are associated with legal union of a man and woman. The definition of marriage varies according to different cultures, but it's principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships usually intimate and sexual interaction are acknowledged (Bell, 2022). When defined broadly, marriage is considered a cultural and universal phenomenon and is usually formalized through a wedding ceremony in many cultures. Marriage, also called matrimony or wedlock, is a socially recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes right and obligation between them, their children and their in-laws as well as the society in general.

Marriage is based on the truth that men and women are complementary, the biological fact that reproduction depends on a man and a woman, and the reality that children need a mother and a father (Anderson, 2023). Anderson further stated that marriage is the society's least restrictive means of ensuring the well-being of children. By encouraging the norms of marriage monogamy, sexual exclusivity and performance, the state strengthens civil society and reduces its own role that is the reason why a peaceful home makes for a peaceful society and an unstable home subsequently brings about an unstable society. Marriage has been part of human culture for thousands of years and almost all culture and religion on the planet have some sort of partnership ceremony. In some cultures, men are allowed to have multiple wives, but in most places marriages are limited to one man and one woman. Marriage in Ogun State is never a union between a man and a man or woman and another woman as it may be in some cases in some countries today.

Marriage comes with many benefits which make a satisfactory difference in one's life. The society is crafted to make life happy for married couples. It provides financial stability besides companionship; it allows one to have someone who will share one's feelings and experiences. It gives the spouses social and religious acceptance. Marriage brings about better sex life, good marital health, and companion to grow old with. It gives the children a positive and secures life style, brings about commitment in life, true love and gives a happier life. Marriage is associated with utmost importance in the life of married persons. Empirical evidence has accumulated that married people have a healthier life-style (Wait and Galapher, 2019); live longer; have a satisfying sexual life relationship (Kim and McKenry, 2023); have more wealth and economic assets and that children generally do better when raised in a two-parent home. Stable marriages produce stable children and families which in turn gives rise to a stable society, and for the world to be at peace, marriages, homes, families must be at peace.

Upon all the aforementioned benefits of marriage and marital life, the institution of marriage has suffered a dramatic decline in patronage by young persons. However, marital instability

has become a thing of concern in our contemporary society and this is associated with separation, divorce and single parenthood. Meanwhile, the term marital instability is the process whereby there is marriage un-satisfaction which could lead to marriage breakdown, separation, desertion or divorce. Marriage institution is recently confronted with many devastating challenges and crisis. Some of the challenges include wife employment (Ogunsanmi, 2023) and absence of the traditional preparation for marriage (Onwuasonya, 2024). Other problems include identity problems, conflict in marital roles, betrayal of trust, erosion of structural interdependence, immaturity on the part of the spouses or married persons, faulty communication and influences of wrong models. The institution of marriage has suffered a dramatic decline partly due to increased divorce rates. However, the most disturbing problem is high rate of marital instability which results in marriage separation, divorce, single parenthood, positive response to couple cohabitation and same sex marriage. It is now not stigmatizing in Ogun State for women to request for dissolution of marriage and men to celebrate their egocentricity by frivolously requesting for a liberty from the shackles of matrimony with pride (Ebigbo, 2023).

There are many factors that predispose domestic violence and marital instability among literate couples. These factors could be social or psychological. Social factors include general factors at the level of human society concerned with social structure and social processes that impinge on the individual. Psychological factors include individual-level processes and meanings that influence mental states. Sometimes, these words are combined as “psychosocial.” This is shorthand term for the combination of psychological and social, but it also implies that the effect of social processes is sometimes mediated through psychological understanding.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage is considered to be very important in the life of an individual. In modern times, acquiring education can be seen as one of the preparation young persons have to make towards marriage. Education helps individuals to adapt to a new environment. In Nigeria, education is seen as the only means of getting to the top hierarchy in any endeavour. The acquisition of good education and attainment of high educational levels brings about the acquisition of honour in the society, good jobs increases financial standing which will enable married persons to assist each other in alleviating financial problems in their home. The acquisition of education on the part of a woman can also militate against her marital success especially if there is disparity in her level of education and that of her spouse and vice versa.

The increase in divorce rate is one of the most visible changes in contemporary family life. The increase of the new forms of instability in today's marriages calls for a deep analysis of the new phenomena in order to understand their causes and consequences on the well-being of separated or divorced partners. Social unrest, delinquency, crime and sickness are frequently associated with marital discord and family fragmentation. There has been a decline in the ideal of marital quality and stability which made persons less willing and less able to make the commitments, sacrifices and investment of energy, time and lost opportunity that are necessary to make marriages succeed.

Unstable marriages give rise to unstable families which produce unwholesome children who subsequently cause social unrest to the society at large; no wonder armed robbery and kidnapping cases have been on the increase in Ogun State recently. There is hardly any day that passes that the mass media will not carry news about robbery or kidnapping cases in Ogun State. That is why the researchers seek to investigate whether educational status

differentials experiences marital instability and domestic violence. There are plethora of studies on influence of educational attainment on domestic violence and marital instability, but few have addressed educational attainment in Ogun Central Senatorial District of Ogun State. Most of these related studies have been largely inconsistent, contradictory and inconclusive. Therefore, this study is poised to investigate the prevalence of educational status differentials, in domestic violence and marital instability in Ogun Central Senatorial District of Ogun State.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives are to determine if:

- i. there is any significant difference in the rate of domestic violence between less educated couples and highly educated couples
- ii. there is any significant difference in the domestic violence between less educated and highly educated couples.
- iii. there is any significant difference in the marital instability between less educated and highly educated couples.

Research Questions

The following questions will be answered in the cause of this study

- i. What is the rate of domestic violence among less educated and highly educated couples?
- ii. Is there any significant difference in the domestic violence among less educated and highly educated couples?
- iii. Is there any significant difference in the marital instability among less educated and highly educated couples?

Methodology

This study adopted causal comparative research design because it deals with obtained data from the sample of the target population which can be used to establish a comparison of educational status differentials in domestic violence and marital instability in Ogun Central Senatorial District of Ogun State. The population of this study comprised of all married couples in Ogun Central Senatorial District of Ogun State. While a sample of 40 respondents was selected each from six (6) Local Government Area under Ogun Central Senatorial District, using a random sampling technique. A structured questionnaire titled Educational Diverse Couple, Domestic Violence and Marital Instability Questionnaire (EDCDVMIQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling, and its reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha technique. The Cronbach Alpha reliability of 0.73, 0.84 and 0.77 were obtained for DVS, MIS and EDCQ respectively. This indicated that the instruments are highly reliable. Data collected were analyzed using, Descriptive inferential statistics, which will be used to establish in comparison, the prevalence of educational status differentials in domestic violence and marital instability in Ogun Central Senatorial District of Ogun State. Frequency counts percentage and T-test was used for analysis of the research questions at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the rate of domestic violence among less educated and highly educated couples?

Table 1: Frequency Counts and Percentages of Rate of Domestic Violence Among Less Educated and Highly Educated Couples

	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Sexual</i>	<i>Mental/ Emotional</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Less Educated Couples</i>	16 (72.7%)	1 (4.5%)	5 (22.7%)	22 (100.0%)
<i>Highly Educated Couples</i>	165 (76.7%)	16 (7.4%)	34 (15.8%)	215 (100.0%)
<i>Total</i>	181 (76.4%)	17 (7.2%)	39 (16.5%)	237 (100.0%)

Results in Table 1 revealed that for less educated couples ($n = 22$), 16 (72.7%) had physical domestic violence; 1 (4.5%) had sexual domestic violence while 5 (22.7%) had mental/emotional domestic violence. Also, for highly educated couples ($n = 215$), 165 (76.7%) had physical domestic violence; 16 (7.4%) had sexual domestic violence; while 34 (15.8%) had mental/emotional domestic violence.

Research Question Two

Is there any significant difference in the domestic violence among less educated and highly educated couples?

Table 2: Independent T-Test Statistics Of Differences in Domestic Violence Among The Educated And Less Educated Couples

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig (p)
Less Educated Couples	22	7.455	.510	235	-.325	>.05
Highly Educated Couples	215	7.502	.669			

The results in Table 2 revealed that there is no significant differences in rate of domestic violence between less educated and highly educated couples ($t = -.325$; $df = 235$; $p > .05$). Less educated couples had a mean score of 7.455 and a standard deviation of .510 which is seen to be insignificantly different from highly educated couples with a mean score of 7.502 and standard deviation of .669.

Research Question Three

Is there any significant difference in the marital instability among less educated and highly educated couples?

Table 3: Independent T-Test Statistics Of Differences in Marital Instability Among Less Educated Couples and Highly Educated Couples

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	T	Sig (p)
Less Educated Couples	22	3.636	3.230	235	.088	>.05
Highly Educated Couples	215	3.679	2.040			

The results in Table 4.8 revealed that there is no significant differences in rate of marital instability between less educated and highly educated couples ($t = -.088$; $df = 235$; $p > .05$). Less educated couples had a mean score of 3.636 and a standard deviation of 3.230 which is seen to be insignificantly different from highly educated couple with a mean score of 3.679 and standard deviation of 2.040.

Discussion of Findings

Findings on the rate of marital stability among educated and less educated couples revealed that highly educated couples had physical domestic violence than less educated couples. In support of this findings, Kim and McKenry (2023) added that stable marriages is not necessarily significant to level of education of people and that when marriages are stable, it produces stable children and families which in turn gives rise to a stable society, and for the world to be at peace, marriages, homes, families must be at peace. In the same vein, Onwuasonya (2024) argued that unstable marriage is tantamount to identity problems, conflict in marital roles, betrayal of trust, erosion of structural interdependence, immaturity on the part of the spouses or married persons, faulty communication and influences of wrong models. The study reveals that less educated couples and highly educated couples are not significantly different when discussing marital stability.

It was also found that there is no significant difference in rate of domestic violence between less educated and highly educated couples. Shen (2023) corroborated the findings by noting that the female tend to hold the man who is educated in high esteem and as such she respects the man and such marriages tend to be stable. However, proper education accords the educated a sense of responsibility, self-control and a touch of decency and empathy (Obi, 2023).

Also, there is no significant difference in rate of marital instability between less educated and highly educated couples. According to Mital (2024) intellectual compatibility can influence the stability of a marriage. In a situation where one of the spouses is highly educated and the other is not educated or has little education, there may be tendencies for friction to arise in that sort of marriage because the couples will be operating at different levels of intellectual experience. Oljire (2023) found that there was no significant relationship between those with medium level of educational attainment and their marital stability. However, Shen (2023) also suggested that intellectual compatibility may not always be necessary in marriage and cites cultures where the male is the dominant figure in the society so the men are the ones who are educated while the ladies are trained to take care of the home.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is no significant difference between less educated and highly educated couples in the rate of physical domestic violence. Also, highly educated couples had physical domestic violence more than low educated couples.

Recommendations

Consequent upon the experience of the researcher in the field, the following recommendations are hereby made.

- i. Periodic awareness by NGOs, government and individual bodies can be carried on in order to reduce the occurrence of marital violence.
- ii. Another alternative for protecting victims of intimate partner violence is to provide safety alarms that can be installed in their homes or worn on their persons at all times. Stalking is “a form of intimate partner violence against women,” and

- many men stalk their ex-partners after separating from them. As a result, victims of stalking feel unsafe and fear escalated forms of violence
- iii. Women who separate from their partners may not have a place to go. Some women may take refuge in a shelter and others may go to their friends or relatives. Whatever the choice may be, there is often instability in such housing. Women who choose to go to the shelters may at first be happy to have a feeling of safety and get some respite from the violence
 - iv. Parents need to be re-educated as well. Councils should endeavor to conduct workshops for parents to help them understand the problems of marital violence, intimate partner violence, and their interconnection.

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