

## INFLUENCE OF LONG-DISTANCE MARRIAGE ON FAMILY LIFE PATTERN AMONG WORKING CLASS COUPLES IN OYO STATE.

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### ABSTRACT

*The study investigated the influence of long-distance marriage on family life pattern among the working-class couples in Oyo State. Three (3) research questions were raised and one (1) hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significances. Survey research design was adopted. The total population was two thousand nine hundred and twenty-five (2,925). A sample of 150 working class couple was selected from Oyo State Government Secretariat, Ibadan using proportionate sampling techniques Long Distance Marriage Family Life Questionnaire (LDMFLQ) was the instrument used for data collection. Research questions 1-3 were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean ( $\bar{x}$ ), and standard deviation (SD) while the hypothesis was tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that problems encountered in long distance marriage include loneliness ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.94) 72.6%, difficulty in achieving personal needs of the family ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.03) 78.7% among others. Result of the findings also revealed that long distance marriage influence family life pattern of working-class couples as they experience lack of warm and comfortable relationship ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.95) 71.3%, and inability to fulfil conjugal relationship ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.52) 51.4%. Majority (60.7%) claim they were able to maintain balanced diet even with an absent spouse. Long distance marriage significantly influences family life pattern of working-class couples ( $p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that Long distance marriage significantly influence family life pattern of working-class couples. Therefore, couples should be making out time to visit one another and practice open communication to avoid inability to fulfil conjugal relationships.*

**Keywords:** Long Distance Marriage, Working class, couples, Family, Family life Pattern, Marriage:

### INTRODUCTION

Human beings get married for varied reasons such as for companionship, emotional support, sexual fulfilment and child bearing. Sexual fulfilment has a crucial role in a couple's life as it cements a couple's relationship. Marriage is defined as an emotional and legal commitment between two people who share emotional and physical intimacy, undertake tasks together, create wealth and utilize available resources (Presser, 2000). A marriage is a demographic event that joins two families to form a social network (Kariuki, 2014).

It is also a legal contract between the couple and the state and an arena where sexual encounters occur and procreation takes place. According to Olson and De frain (2003) a long distance marriage can be described as a marriage where the spouses live in separate geographical locations in kilometres, state, country or continent for short or long durations. Women have a definite child bearing time frame (15-49 years) within which procreation must take place. Other individuals get married to acquire status in society and as proof of adherent to societal norms. Whereas the issues highlighted above were not necessarily unique to families in long distance marriages, the absence of a spouse created unique challenges to these families.

Life pattern is a way of living of individuals, families (households), and societies, which they manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social, and economic environment on a day-to-day basis. Life pattern is expressed in both work and leisure behaviour patterns and (on an individual basis) in activities, attitudes, interest, opinions, values, and allocation of income. It also reflects people's self-image or self-concept: the way they see themselves and believe they are seen by others. Life pattern is a composite of motivations, needs and wants and is influenced by factors such as family, culture, reference groups, and social class. Life pattern measures peoples' activities in terms of how they spend their time, interests, where they place importance in their immediate surroundings, and their views of themselves and the world which may differ according to socio-demographic factors (Plummer, 2001; Harcar, Kaynak, & Kucukemiroglu, 2004). Studies have shown that Long distance Marriage affects or changes the functions of the family and the function of the family is a factor that cannot be overlooked. According to Okojie, (2010) functions of the family include Satisfaction of Sex Needs, Reproduction, Sustenance Function, Provision of a Home, Socialization. Others are Religious Function, Educative Function, Recreational Function, and Wish Fulfilment: The family gives moral and emotional support for the individual member, providing defence against social isolation and loneliness and satisfying his need for personal happiness and love. The wife finds in the husband love, security, protection and strength, while the husband expects from her affection, tenderness, help and devotion and Property transformation. According to Fincham (2006), there are many factors that contribute to happy marriage because there does not seem one magic factor that guarantees happy marital bliss. A long distance marriage is one in which both partners see very little of each other. It might happen if one spouse is posted to another city or country and the other chooses to remain at home in order for their children to continue to finish schooling in a familiar environment or due to the family financial status. It could happen because one spouse is in the military or has been deployed overseas, or either the spouse might need to travel often, or might be employed in shift work meaning that he or she is out of the house at night; and needs to spend the day sleeping and so their waking times don't overlap with each other. Society perceives long distance marriages as a form of relationship where couples are happy and stable financially. Having an absentee parent or spouse is difficult for the family. If the family have young kids, it is doubly so as the stay-at-home spouse needs to be responsible for all the family's needs. In addition to the practical aspects of having only one parent, it is also hard to tread the line between making sure that their kids continue to remember and look forward to seeing the

absentee spouse; and missing their father or mother so much that it feels as though the family is going through a grieving process when one spouse is away. Parenting is a full time job that requires parenting inputs from both parents. The absence of a parent therefore leads to varied developmental gaps in children that include antisocial behaviour, truancy and delinquency. Lack of mentorship from a father, especially to teenagers results in identity crisis and poor negotiation of developmental milestones. Sigmund Freud as cited in Meier, Minirth, Wichern and Ratcliff (2004) states that child-parent relationship at the phallic stage (3-6years) is critical to the modification of a child's behaviour. Family is a group of people related either by blood or by marriage. These relations often form very meaningful social groups in which we feel comfortable and safe. The close bounds which we make usually last until they are broken by death or sometimes geographical distances. Anyakoha and Eluwa (2000) stated that family is important institution which passes on the culture to the children, channels sexual appetites and provides the means of satisfying human needs. According to Odigbo (2002) family is a social institution established by God from the beginning, when he created man and woman and command them to live together for the purpose of multiplying and filling the earth. By this proclamation, the family acquired an inherent and in amenable light to care for and educate the young members of the family. Married couples are said to be people strongly united for the purpose of feeding, procreating, companionship and security.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Long distance marriage is defined as a practice where couples are not located in the same geographic region and are physically unable to visit one another without great travel expenses, planning, or inconvenience to their schedule. (Ficara & Mongeau, 2000).

It was observed that today, some working class couples run long distance marriage due to their career advancement/fulfillment, academic pursuit and better employment (Arditti & Kauffman, 2004; Sahlstein, 2006; Stafford, 2005; 2016). Although long distance marriage are increasing, many researchers consider the topic to be greatly understudied especially regarding the influence of long distance marriage on the life pattern of the family within the working class couples' population in Nigeria. (Canary & Dainton, 2003; Ladd, 2007).

The researcher observed that key ingredients to a healthy marriage such as companionship, friendship, emotional support, sexual fulfillment, good communication, family investment, good family relationship, welfare, good parenting and decisions regarding place of residence suffers as a result of long distance marriage. Maintaining two homes makes families in long distance marriages spend more on telephone calls, travels and accommodation. Long distance marriage may result in fewer family meals as eating together is dictated by parents' working hours and a scarcity of time (Wills, Backett-Milburn, Roberts & Lawton, 2011).

Kariuki (2014) observed that long distance marriage could leads to problems like estrangement of spouses from each other and parents from children, suspicion, mistrust, infidelity and dishonesty. These problems may weaken the couple's relationship, family cohesion and create emotional distance among members. Children in a long distance marriage experience a form of

single parenthood since they are left under the care of one parent for many months/years which could lead to developmental gaps in children like antisocial behavior, truancy and delinquency. She reiterated that lack of mentorship from the absentee parent, especially to teenagers, could result in identity crisis and poor negotiation of developmental milestones. Parents left behind with children could get overwhelmed by the children's demands that range from provision of basic needs, school matters and their emotional needs (Neumark-Sztainer, Hannan, Story, Croll, & Perry, 2003; Cawley & Liu, 2012). Hence, the problem of this study is to investigate the influence of long distance marriage on family life pattern among the working class couples in Oyo State.

The findings of this study are expected to be of immense significance to the married couples, children, families, researchers, marriage counselors, and the society.

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The main objective of the study is to investigate the Influence of long distance marriage on family life pattern among working class couples

Specifically, the study:

- i. highlight the problems that are involved in long distance marriage among the working-class couple in Oyo State;
- ii. determine the influence of long-distance marriage on the family life pattern of working-class couple;
- iii. investigate the influence of long-distance marriage on the dietary pattern of working-class couple;
- iv. determine the difference in the life pattern of working-class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart;

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The following research questions were raised to provide guidance for the study.

- i. What are the problems involved in long distance marriage among the working class couple in Oyo State?
- ii. How does long distance marriage influence the family life pattern of working class couple?
- iii. How does long distance marriage influence the dietary pattern of working class couple?
- iv. Is there any difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart?

### **HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

These hypotheses were formulated for the study

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Long distance marriage will not significantly influence family life pattern of working-class couples.

**H0:** There is no significant difference in the life pattern of working-class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart.

## METHODOLOGY

**Design of the study:** The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The total population for the study comprises 2925 workers from of Oyo State Government Secretariat, Ibadan. The spread is as follows: 1325 workers from the Ministry of Health, 800 workers from the Executive Governor office, 653 workers from the ministry of works and transport and 147 workers from the ministry of justice.

**Sample and sampling techniques:** Proportionate sampling techniques was used to select sample for the study. 150 respondents were selected from Oyo State Government Secretariat using proportionate sampling techniques. This makes 5.1% of the total population. Researchers suggested that 5-30% of the population making up the sample is reasonably adequate and representative of the population. (Ali, 2006).

**Instrument for data collection:** The instrument used for data collection is Questionnaire tagged ‘Long Distance Marriage and Family Life Questionnaire’ LDMFLQ’. The Questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the objectives, research question and research hypothesis. Responses of each item was rated on a “4-point” scale ranging from (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree) scaled 4 to 1, respectively. The instrument had reliability co-efficient of **.797**. This agrees with Cooper and Schindler (2008) who indicated that 0.7 is acceptable for reliable co-efficient.

**Data analysis:** Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and mean (x), standard deviation (SD) were used for analysis of the research questions. The null hypotheses formulated in the study were tested with Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### Interpretation of Demographic Data of Respondents.

**Table I: Distribution of respondents according to their socio-demographic information.**

**N=150**

Variables	Frequency	Percent %
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	79	52.7
Female	71	47.3
<b>Age:</b>		
20-24	21	14.0
25-29	33	22.0
30-34	50	33.3
35 years and above	46	30.7

Table I presents the demographic distribution of the respondents by gender and age. The table shows that 79 (52.7%) male and 71 (47.3%) females participated in the study. The age range of the respondents, indicated that 21 (14.0%) 20-24 years, 33 (22.0%) were between the age range of 25-29 years, 50 (33.3%) were between the age range of 30-34 years, and 46 (30.7%) were above 35 years. This shows that the majority age range of respondents were between 30-34 years.

**Research Questions 1:** What are the problems involved in long distance marriage among the working class couple in Oyo State?

**Table II: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondent on problems involved in long distance marriage among the working class couples**

S/N	STATEMENT	A	D	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
<b>Problems Faced by Families with Long Distance Marriage</b>						
1	I and my spouse are faced with the problem of Loneliness	109 (72.6)	41 (27.4)	2.94	.89	Agree
2	I and my spouse are not united in managing our finances	69 (46)	81 (54)	2.39	.940	Disagree
3	Friends and relatives are suspicious of our relationship	53 (35.3)	97 (64.7)	2.07	1.01	Disagree
4	Conflicts occur frequently between myself and my spouse	96 (64)	54 (36)	2.75	.86	Agree
5	The distance makes us loose ties with our family	61 (40.6)	89 (59.4)	2.21	1.09	Disagree
6	The distance makes it difficult for us to have children	47 (30.4)	103 (69.6)	2.10	.93	Disagree
7	The distance reduce my feelings for my spouse	51 (34.1)	99 (65.9)	2.31	1.26	Disagree
8	We find it difficult to discuss important issues when we are apart	118 (78.7)	32 (21.3)	3.03	.89	Agree
9	Personal needs of the family are difficult to achieve when we are apart	105 (70)	45 (30)	3.03	1.00	Agree
10	My spouse and I find it difficult to communicate	104 (69.4)	46 (30.6)	2.83	.92	Agree
11	I have often seriously considered ending my relationship with my partner due to his/her absent	45 (30)	105 (70)	2.12	.92	Disagree
12	I feel alone managing our family when my spouse is not around	95 (63.4)	55 (36.6)	2.81	.929	Agree

**Figures in parenthesis are in percentages**

The mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) of 2.50 was used for the decision. A mean rating of any item by the respondents equal to or above 2.50 was accepted and taken as Agree while any mean rating lower than 2.50 was taken as disagree.

Result of the findings on problems faced by families with long distance marriage in the above table revealed that the respondent agreed with items 6, 9, 13-15 and 17 and disagree with items

7, 8, 10-12 and 16. The mean of the items ranged from 2.07-3.03. Respondents agreed that Problems faced by their families due to long distance marriage include loneliness as a result of absent spouse ( $\bar{x} = 2.94$ ) 72.6% and that personal needs of the family are difficult to achieve when apart ( $\bar{x} = 3.03$ ) 78.7%. They also agree that conflicts occur frequently between them and their spouse ( $\bar{x} = 2.75$ ) 64%. They however disagree that the distance reduce feelings for their spouse ( $\bar{x} = 2.31$ ) 65.9% or make them loose ties ( $\bar{x} = 2.21$ ) 59.4%

**Research Questions 2:** How does long distance marriage influence the family life pattern of working-class couple?

**Table III: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondent on influence of long distance marriage on the family life pattern of working class couple**

S/N	STATEMENT	A	D	Mean $\bar{x}$	SD	Remark
<b>Influence of Long-Distance Marriage on family life pattern</b>						
13	The absence of my spouse makes me gain confidence about individual ability and learn new skills such as cooking, doing laundry, household maintenance etc.	83 (55.3)	67 (44.7)	2.65	.87	Agree
14	I and my spouse did not usually go on vacations together with our children	94 (62.6)	56 (37.4)	2.80	.96	Agree
15	Being apart from my spouse makes me devote longer hours to work	60 (40)	90 (60)	2.40	.96	Disagree
16	I spend more of my time on watching Television and Social Media when my spouse is absent	66 (44)	84 (56)	2.45	.95	Disagree
17	The distance does not allow us to fulfil the Conjugal Relationship of our marriage	77 (51.4)	73 (48.6)	2.52	.91	Agree
18	Long distance marriage creates emotional distance between me and my spouse	107 (71.3)	43 (28.7)	2.84	.78	Agree
19	The distance creates infidelity in our marriage	62 (41.3)	88 (58.7)	2.25	1.04	Disagree
20	I'm happy with the way I spend my time when my spouse is not around	62 (41.3)	88 (58.7)	2.41	.86	Disagree
21	I didn't have warm and comfortable relationship with my partner because of his/her absent	107 (71.3)	43 (28.7)	2.95	.92	Agree
22	I do not have any restriction when I want to go out when my spouse is not around	95 (63.4)	55 (36.6)	2.79	.91	Agree
23	Long distance marriage makes our children to lack role model of the absent parent	60 (40)	90 (60)	2.36	.94	Disagree
24	The children did not received balanced love, care and affections from the absent parent	82 (54.7)	68 (35.3)	2.51	.96	Agree
25	My spouse absence makes our children delinquent	47 (31.4)	103 (68.6)	2.02	1.02	Disagree

**Figures in parenthesis are in percentages**

Results on influence of long distance marriage on family life pattern in the above table revealed that the respondent agreed with items 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 27 and 29. They disagree with items 20, 21, 24, 25, 28 and 30

The mean of the items ranged from 2.02 - 2.95. Respondents agreed they didn't have warm and comfortable relationship with their partner because of his/her absent ( $\bar{x} = 2.95$ ) 71.3% and that the distance does not allow them to fulfil Conjugal Relationship of marriage ( $\bar{x} = 2.52$ ) 51.4% They also agree the children did not received balanced love, care and affections from the absent parent ( $\bar{x} = 2.51$ ) 54.7% and no time for vacations ( $\bar{x} = 2.80$ ) 62.6% They however disagree that the distance creates infidelity in the marriage ( $\bar{x} = 2.25$ ) 58.7% or being happy with the way they spend their time when their spouse is not around ( $\bar{x} = 2.41$ ) 58.7%. This means they are not happy when spouse is absent but they are not being unfaithful.

**Research Questions 3:** How does long distance marriage influence the dietary pattern of working class couple?

**Table IV: Mean ratings and standard deviation of respondent on influence of long distance marriage on the dietary pattern of working class couple**

S/N	STATEMENT	A	D	Mean ( $\bar{x}$ )	SD	Remark
<b>Influence on Long Distance Marriage on Couple's Dietary Pattern</b>						
26	I don't sometimes cook food because my spouse is not around	70 (46.7)	80 (53.3)	2.53	1.02	Agree
27	Sometimes I lose my appetite due to the absent of my spouse	42 (28)	108 (72)	1.95	.95	Disagree
28	I consume snacks and drinks a lot when am not with my spouse	59 (39.3)	91 (60.7)	2.38	.98	Disagree
29	The family is devoid of the balanced diet because of the absence of a spouse	47 (31.3)	103 (60.7)	2.01	1.07	Disagree

**Figures in parenthesis are in percentages**

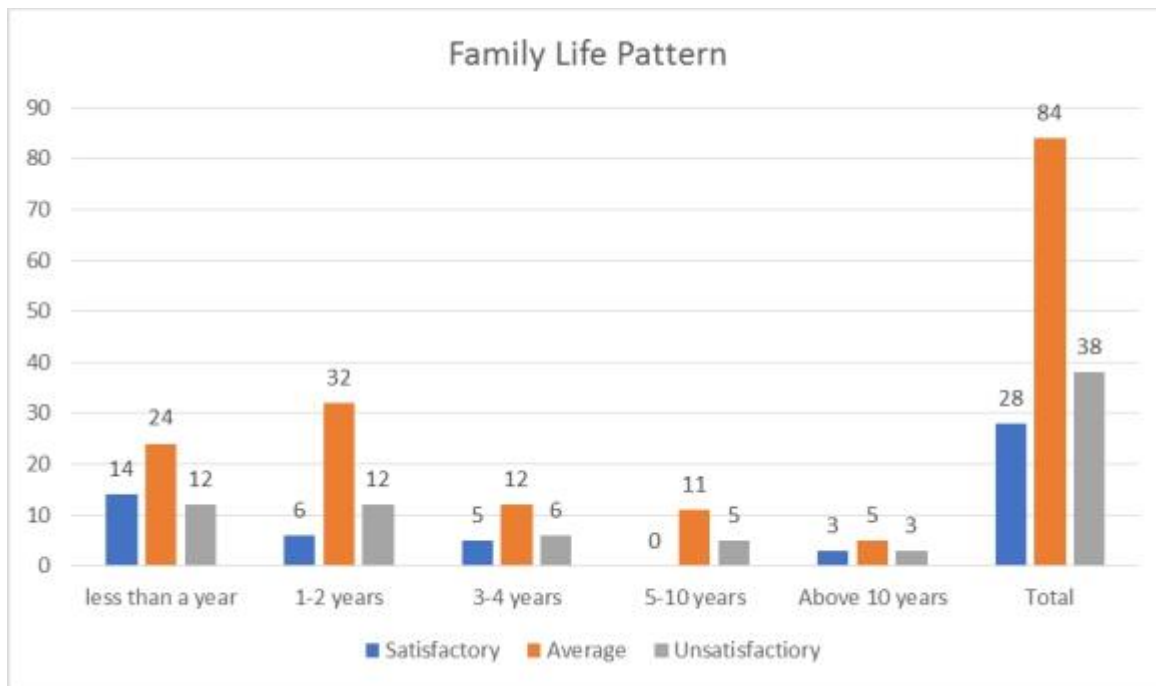
**Table V: Food Frequency Table**

S/N	Statement List of Foods	Number of times taken weekly				
		0 Never	1-3	4-6	6-9	10-12
30	Rice, Semovita, Amala, Pounded Yam or Beans	6 (4.0)	56 (37.3)	75 (50.0)	11 (7.3)	02 (1.3)
31	Meat, Fish, or Eggs	11 (7.3)	42 (28)	52 (34.7)	37 (24.7)	8 (5.3)
32	Fruits and Vegetables	21 (14)	62 (41.3)	40 (26.7)	18 (12)	9 (6)
33	Fried Foods	40 (26.7)	61 (40.7)	32 (21.3)	13 (8.7)	4 (2.7)
34	Bread, Tea and Butter	8 (5.3)	34 (22.7)	59 (39.3)	44 (29.3)	5 (3.3)
35	Snacks and Fast Foods from Restaurants	26 (17.3)	52 (34.7)	28 (18.7)	27 (18)	17 (11.3)

**Figures in parenthesis are in percentages**

Results on Influence on Long Distance Marriage on Couple's Dietary Pattern in the above table revealed that the respondent agreed with all items except item 1. The mean of the items ranged from 1.95-2.52. Respondents agreed they don't sometimes cook food when their spouse is not around ( $\bar{x} = 2.53$ ) 53.3% they disagree the family is devoid of the balanced diet because of long distance marriage ( $\bar{x} = 2.01$ ) 60.7%. Food Frequency Table revealed that 75 (50%) of the respondents consume Rice, Semovita, Amala, Pounded Yam or Beans 4-6 times weekly, 52 (34.7%) of the respondents consume Meat, Fish, or Eggs 4-6 times weekly, 62 (41.3%) of the respondents consume Fruits and Vegetables 1-3 times weekly, 61(40.7%) of the respondents consume Fried Foods 1-3 times weekly, 59(39.3%) of the respondents consume Bread, Tea and Butter 4-6 times weekly, and 52(34.7%) of the respondents consume Snacks and Fast Foods from Restaurants 1-3 times weekly. The results implied that Long Distance Marriage does not have significant effect on Couple's Dietary Pattern as they are able to maintain balanced diet even with an absent spouse.

**Research Question 4: Is there any difference in the life pattern of working-class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart?**



**Figure 1: Difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart.**

Of the **50** couples that have been living apart for Less than a Year 14(8%) have Satisfactory family life, 24(48.0%) have average satisfactory family life, and 12(24.0%) have Unsatisfactory family life, Of the 50 couples that have been living apart for 1-2 Years 6(12%) have Satisfactory family life, 32(64.0%) have average Satisfactory family life, and 12(24.0%) have Unsatisfactory family life, Of the 23 couples that have been living apart for 3-4 Years 5(21.7%) have Satisfactory family life, 12(52.2%) have average Satisfactory family life, and 6(26.1%) have Unsatisfactory family life, Of the **16** couples that have been living apart for 5-10 Years 0(0%) have Satisfactory family life, 11(68.8%) have average Satisfactory family life, and 5(31.2%) have Unsatisfactory family life, Of the **11** couples that have been living apart for Above 10 Years 3(27.3%) have Satisfactory family life, 5(45.5%) have average Satisfactory family life, and 3(27.3%) have Unsatisfactory family life. This findings proved that majority 84(56%) have average satisfactory family life followed by those who had unsatisfactory family life 38(25.3%) and lastly 28(18.7%) have satisfactory family life. This proved that long distance marriage have little effect on life pattern of working class couples as a result of periods/years of living apart as majority 56% have average satisfactory family life.

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis 1:** Long distance marriage will not significantly influence family life pattern of working class couple

**Table VI: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on influence of Long-distance marriage on family life pattern of working class couple**

Variable	Mean ( $\bar{xx}$ )	SD	N	Pearson r	Sig.(2-tailed)
Influence long distance marriage	32.9400	7.09687	150	.728**	.000
Family life pattern	30.4362	5.78829			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table VI shows a Pearson r of .728\*\* and a p value of .000, testing at an alpha level of .05. ( $p < 0.05$ ) The Pearson r of .728\*\* shows high influence of long distance marriage on family life pattern of couples. The hypothesis which states that long distance marriage will not significantly influence family life pattern of working class couple is therefore rejected. Consequently, Long distance marriage significantly influence family life pattern of working class couple.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart

**Table VII: ANOVA of differences on life pattern of working-class couples in long distance marriage by period/years of living apart**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig(2-tailed)
Between groups	455.099	4	113.775	2.340	.058
Within groups	7049.361	145	48.616		
Total	7504.460	149			

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table VII shows an F-value of 2.340 and a p-value of .058, testing at an alpha level of 0.05, since the p-value is greater than the alpha level, ( $P > 0.05$ ) the null hypothesis which states that 'There is no significant difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart is accepted. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by years of living apart. This confirmed the report of the findings in research question 4.

## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The study investigated the Influence of Long Distance Marriage on Family Life Pattern among working class couple in Oyo State. The demographic distribution shows that 79 (52.7%) male and 71 (47.3%) females participated in the study. The majority age range of respondents were between 30-34 years. This agree with Austen (2014 ) who discovered that individual got married between ages 20-30 years and this age bracket corresponds with Erickson's concepts of intimacy verses isolation (Meier et al, 2004), a stage when a couple concentrates their energies towards each other and a time when they start families. This means that majority of these individuals got married while quite young.

Results of the findings in research questions one revealed that Problems faced by families due to long distance marriage include - loneliness ( $\bar{x}x = 2.94$ ) 72.6% as a result of absent spouse, -difficulty in achieving personal needs of the family ( $\bar{x}x = 3.03$ )78.7%, -frequent conflicts between couple ( $\bar{x}x = 2.75$ ) 64%. 65.9% said distance does not reduce their feelings for their spouse. This agree with a study by Le and Agnew (2001) who found that proximally close partners were more successful at meeting the needs of one's partner regarding companionship, security, sexual activity, and emotional involvement than those in long distance marriage. The study of Kelmer, Rhoades, Stanley and Markman (2013) that long distance marriage have significantly higher levels of adjustment, love for partner, fun with partner, and conversational quality also support this findings.

Results on influence of long distance marriage on family life pattern in research questions two revealed -lack of warm and comfortable relationship ( $\bar{x}x = 2.95$ ) 71.3%,- inability to fulfil Conjugal Relationship of marriage( $\bar{x}x = 2.52$ ) 51.4%, and -lack of time for vacations ( $\bar{x}x = 2.80$ )62.6% and unhappiness ( $\bar{x}x = 2.41$ )58.7% and -lack of balanced love, care and affections for the children ( $\bar{x}x = 2.51$ )54.7%. This implied that long distance marriage influence the life pattern of the couples. This agreed with Sigmund Freud as cited in (Meier et al., 2004) who states that child-parent relationship at the phallic stage (3-6years) is critical to the modification of a child's behaviour and that lack of mentorship from a father, especially to teenagers, results in identity crisis and poor negotiation of developmental milestones. The statement of Crano and Aronoff (1998) that women tend to assume the expressive roles, which typically involve work inside of the family, provides emotional support and physical care for children also support this findings.

The findings disagree with a study conducted by Stafford (2004) who reported higher levels of overall happiness and freedom among long distance couples compared to geographically close couples, which was also correlated with higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

Results on Influence on Long Distance Marriage on Couple's Dietary Pattern in research questions three revealed that Long Distance Marriage does not have significant effect on Couple's Dietary Pattern as they are able to maintain balanced diet even with an absent spouse ( $\bar{x}x = 2.01$ )60.7% though .respondents agree they don't sometimes cook food when their spouse is not around( $\bar{x}x = 2.53$ ) 53.3%.. Food Frequency Table revealed that 75 (50%) of the respondents

consume Rice, Semovita, Amala, Pounded Yam or Beans and 52 (34.7%) of the respondents consume Meat, Fish, or Eggs 4-6 times weekly, while 62 (41.3%) of the respondents consume Fruits and Vegetables 1-3 times weekly. This agree with Bourdieu (2001) who discovered that tastes and dispositions are not conscious once they become habitual; they form part of family habitus and are embedded in the everyday taken for granted world in which lives are lived.

The findings disagree with Wills et al. (2011) who stated that some couples would not eat a meal outside apart from the homemade meal and would rather go for snacks. This disagree with Savoca & Miller (2001) and Stafford, (2016) who found that the female partner in long distance marriage may likely change their dietary pattern and subsequently gain weight .and some couples in long distance marriage no longer meet the required servings of fruit and vegetables on the food pyramid.

Results on difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart in research question 4 revealed that long distance marriage have little effect on life pattern of working class couples due to years of living apart.

Results of findings in hypothesis one revealed that Long distance marriage significantly influence family life pattern of working class couple ( $p < 0.05$ ). This agree with McFerran et al (2010) who discover that People are influenced by whom they are with and the environment they are when making food-related choices.

Results of findings in hypothesis two revealed that there is no significant difference in the life pattern of working class couples in long distance marriage by periods/years of living apart ( $p > 0.05$ ). This disagree with Stafford (2016) who discovered that the absence of a spouse impacted negatively on a couple's sexual relationship.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings the study concludes that Long distance marriage significantly influence family life pattern of working class couple ( $p > 0.05$ ) as they encounter lack of warm and comfortable relationship, inability to fulfil Conjugal relationship of marriage, lack of balanced love, care and affections for the children, lack of time for vacations and unhappiness and they encountered problems such as loneliness, difficulty in achieving personal needs of the family, and frequent conflicts between couple

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made, The Couple should always practise open communication to avoid/ reduce problems. Couple should develop trust and not being judgmental with each other in order to maintain stable relationship. Couples should be making out time to visit one another to reduce strain on family life pattern. Or The family should always plan for an unforgettable holiday or vacation to bring the family close together. The family should strive to reunite and live as a whole family. This would provide the much needed social support networks.

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