

FACTORS INFLUENCING MARITAL STABILITY AMONG STAFF OF UNIVERSITIES IN EDO STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated factors influencing marital stability among staff of universities, in Edo State, Nigeria. Three (3) research questions were brought up in the investigation. Two (2) were hypothesized and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample for the study comprised One Thousand Nine hundred and Two (1,092) University staff selected through the multi-stage sampling technique. In any case, only Nine Hundred and Forty-Nine (949) of the questionnaires dispersed were recovered which indicated 86.9% return rate. The analyses were therefore based on 949 respondents. The instrument utilized for information gathering was a questionnaire titled 'Factors Influencing Marital Stability Questionnaire' (FIMSQ). The instrument had a reliability coefficient of 0.88. Information gathered was examined utilizing descriptive statistics as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The findings revealed that 5.3% of respondents had low marital stability, 69.8% had moderate marital stability and 25.0% had high marital stability. The findings revealed that respondents had good marital relationships with their spouses ($x = 2.86$). Results of hypotheses revealed a significant relationship between family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State ($p < 0.05$) and .the result equally shows that a significant relationship exists between economic security and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State ($p < 0.05$). In the light of the findings of the investigation, it was suggested that Government, private organizations, counselors and curriculum planners should give specific consideration to family life education, since ignorance or illiteracy is no doubt one of the impediments to marital stability to orient the general public on the effect of unhealthy/poor communication

Key words: *Mate Selection Factors, Marital Stability, Family Background, Economic Security.*

INTRODUCTION

Mate Selection is a procedure which more often than not, goes before marriage regardless of culture, tribe or nationality (Animasahun & Femi-Fatile, 2011). It is one of the most significant choices people make during their lifetime. In a culture where happiness is the primary goal of marriage and marital choice is primarily the individuals' responsibility, mate selection assumes special importance for family life educators and couples themselves. There is a typical saying that "if you fail to plan, you plan to fail" This is also applicable to the mate selection factors. Mate Selection is a procedure when intending couples tend to make choices of marriage mates/partners. In choosing a mate, numerous components are placed into thought by various people. A portion of these elements can be family background, level of education, economic status, and age at marriage, ethnicity, and religion of the intending couples among others. Some proposing couples even accept that living together or time spent dating are better indicators of marital stability (Wayas, 2011). However, mate selection could go a long way in determining the stability or instability of a marriage.

Marital stability is a state of marital orderliness, a process of orderliness and steadiness in marriage (Wayas, 2011). It is an element of the measure of genuine romance that is shown by a couple and is a component of the procedure that impacts how they met (Kepler, 2015). Marital stability happens to be an index of the nature of mutual identification and sharing of responsibilities and commitments of the post-marital period of husband and wife. Marital stability is an indication of the continuity of nuclear relations of mutual dependence, trust, and friendship and remains a measure of prediction of a happy marriage (Wayas, 2011). High marital stability shows low levels of anxiety and more security and self-esteem (Kepler, (2015). Some schools of thought revealed an association between marital disturbance and emotional disorders in children. Kepler, (2015) reiterated that marital discord leads to distress, depression and negative affections in the parents, which in turn affects their parenting style or interaction with their children. Aryee, Field, and Luk (1999) clarified that a peaceful relationship is accomplished when couples comprehend their jobs and work together towards it. He further distinguished certain elements that guarantee marital stability such as economic wellbeing, responsiveness among others. In any case, the most grounded factor of marital stability is considered to be economic satisfaction and inadequate provision of essential needs for spouses and children within the family is capable of creating tension, and instability. A home situation that is described by quarreling, annoying has negative effects on the two guardians and children. Mate selection has important implications not only for the immediate marital satisfaction of the couple but also for the psychological development of their children.

Universities are expected to contribute to the economic, academic and social needs of the country These expectations pose a great deal of challenge to both academic and non-academic staff of Universities, that may likely have a significant impact on their family life. Two principal divisions exist inside the University, academics and non- academics, male and female staff; these two groups are to work towards the realization of the set goals and objectives.

In the light of the prior, there is a need to explore the variables affecting marital stability among staff of universities in Edo State Nigeria to determine the relationship that may occur among family background, economic security among others.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mate selection goes through a series of steps, processes, and factors if marital stability is to be achieved. These steps, processes, and factors include dating/courtship, engagement, and betrothal. There are fundamental impacts to these means, procedures and factors, for example, love, ethnicity/geological partition, socio-financial matters, class, wellbeing status, religion, moral values as well as premium placed on marriage itself, among others. It is regularly expected that basic adherence to mate selection supported with significant impacts may at last decide the stability of marriage. Numerous reasons have been progressed to be in charge of the decrease in marital stability. These include economy, well-being, and responsiveness, among others. It does anyway give the idea that the most powerful factor may for sure not be right mate selection. It likewise gives the idea that this pattern cuts across persons of all ages, with different job types and ethnic inclination. It has for the most part been seen that inconsistency of marriage mates might be in charge of the decrease in marital stability, but what may not have been researched are factors influencing marital stability. The investigation in this way, tried to discover components affecting marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

It appears that there is no statistical evidence on matters relating to factors influencing marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria. The study therefore becomes relevant.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the factors influencing marital stability among staff of Universities, in Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of marital stability among staff of University in Edo State, Nigeria;
2. Determine the influence of family background on marital stability among staff of University in Edo State, Nigeria;
3. Determine the influence of economic security on marital stability among staff of University in Edo State, Nigeria.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria?
2. Does family background influence marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria?
3. Does economic security influence marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria?

HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05% level of significance:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria,

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between economic security and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study when published in journals, conference proceedings, look into related reports and presented in conference will be of immense benefit to University staff/married couples, students / young ones contemplating marriage, parents, marriage counselors, Home Economists, curriculum planners and the society at large. University staff / married couples will most likely roll out viable positive improvements such as communication and more commitment to their marriages to ensure marital stability. The students / young ones will be presented to factors that are significant for the mate selection process in other to have a well-characterized and stable marriage in their planned homes. The findings will help parents to embrace parenting styles that will help in guiding their children to successful mate selection process and achieve marital stability. The findings of this study will help marriage counselors to be more effective as they adopt some of the findings and recommendations in this study. The findings may help curriculum planners in implementing courses such as marriage and family relationship as a general course in tertiary institutions in Nigeria thereby sustaining /promoting marital stability in our various homes.

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study covered the elements impacting marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria. The investigation centers on marital stability, family background, and economic security. The study was delimited to a married staff of four Universities in Edo State that comprised of one Federal University, one State University and two Private Universities in Edo State.

METHODOLOGY

Design of the study: The study adopted a descriptive survey design as data were collected from representative samples of university staff in Edo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was used because the researcher collected information from a large population using a sample to generalize. This design is relevant when the researcher is required to undertake a systematic collection, analysis and presentation of data to give account of characteristics of particular individuals, groups, or the state of events without the manipulation of data (Akpabio & Ebong, 2009).

Area of the study: The investigation was delimited to staff of four Universities in Edo State, Nigeria. Edo State is in South-South Nigeria and has eighteen Local Governments Area as well as three Senatorial Districts. Its capital is Benin City.

Population of the study: The target population for this study was ten thousand nine hundred and nineteen staff (10,919), which consisted of all staff of six Universities in Edo State, Nigeria. Three thousand and five (3,005) were academic staff and seven thousand nine hundred and fourteen (7,914) non-academic staff.

Sample and sampling technique: The sample for the investigation involved One Thousand Nine hundred and Two (1,092) Universities married staff constituting ten percent (10%) of the study population. Multistage sampling technique was used in the study as follows:

Stage 1 Involved stratifying the Universities into Private and Public universities and selecting two public and two private universities in the state,

Stage 2: This involved purposively choosing five faculties from Benson Idahosa University Benin City, out of the existing six (6), five (5) faculties from Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State, out of the existing six (6), six (6) faculties from Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Edo State, out of the existing twelve (12) and, twenty (20) faculties from University of Benin out of existing twenty five (25). A predetermined criterion used in this selection was based on the researcher's judgment and consideration of what constitutes a representative sample concerning the research purpose (Omorogiuwa, 2006).

Stage 3 Involved stratifying staff of the Universities into academic staff sample (ASS) and non-academic staff sample (NASS) with 300 and 792 respectively and Stage 4 Involved stratifying staff of Universities into males and females with 670 and 422 respondents respectively.

Instrument for data collection: Questionnaire titled 'Factors Influencing Marital Stability Questionnaire' (FIMSQ) was the instrument that was used for data collection for this study. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the purposes and research questions of the study. The instrument was divided into three sections – A, B, and C

Section A: Socio-demographic information: such as gender, age, job description, marital status, religion, and ethnicity.

Section B: This elicits information on marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State.

Section C: This was on economic Security among staff of Universities in Edo State.

Section D: This elicits information on family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State. These were scored on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 which indicates strongly disagree to 4 which indicates strongly agree

Method of data collection: The questionnaires were conveyed by the analyst with the assistance of three (3) briefed research assistants from each of the Universities. The research assistants were briefed on the reason for the investigation, questionnaire distribution and collection. Completed copies of the questionnaires were checked to ensure their level of completeness by the participants. One Thousand Nine Hundred and Two (1,092) Questionnaires were distributed to

University staff selected but the researcher was able to retrieve only Nine Hundred and Forty-Nine (949) of the questionnaires distributed which indicated 86.9% return rate. The Nine Hundred and Forty-Nine (949) collected questionnaires was therefore used to generate data for the analysis.

Method of data analysis: Data collected were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Research Questions 1-3 were replied and investigated utilizing descriptive statistics: mean (\bar{x}), standard deviation (SD), frequency counts and percentages. Hypotheses 1 & 2 were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, all hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS PRESENTATION

Research question one: What are the levels of marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table I: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Levels of Marital Stability (N=949).

S/N	Item Statements	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation	Remark
1.	My marriage is a stable one making my home a safe and peaceful haven because of the mating selection choice it went through	3.39	.78	Agree
2.	I sometimes feel like breaking up from the marriage because of lack of good communication in the home	1.90	.86	Disagree
3.	I sometimes wonder if there is someone else out there for me because I find it difficult to trust my spouse	1.79	.90	Disagree
4.	My relationship with my spouse makes me happy because no power struggle in the home and no sexual deprivation making my marriage stable	3.43	.76	Agree
5.	Satisfaction comes from an individual, ie husband or wife, no particular form of mate choice can promote unity at home	3.30	.87	Agree
6.	I enjoy my partner's company all the time	2.67	1.05	Agree
7.	My relationship with my husband/wife has met my original expectations to a great extent	2.86	1.12	Agree
8.	I still feel a strong connection with my partner even after many years of marriage	2.69	1.09	Agree

Result presented in Table I demonstrates that the mean of the items ranged from 1.79 to 3.43. All of the items had their means above the cut-off point of 2.50, except items 2 and 3 with a mean of ($\bar{x}=1.90$) and ($\bar{x}=1.79$) respectively. This indicates that respondents do not feel like breaking off from their marriages and do not find it difficult to trust their spouses. The result revealed in items 1, 2 to 8 with means above 2.50 indicate that respondents have good marital stability with their spouse. They also agreed to the statement that they enjoy their partner's company and were not disappointed in their original expectations in the relationship with their husband/wife ($\bar{x}=2.86$). The standard deviation of the items ranged from 0.76 to 1.09 which indicates that the respondents were close in their responses.

Research question two: Does family background influence marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State?

Table II: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Influence of Family Background on Marital Stability (N=949).

S/N	Item Statements	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation	Remark
9.	Parental family disruption can affect marital stability	2.64	1.06	Agree
10.	Orientations and experiences in one's family of origin influence decisions about marriage and attitudes toward marriage that in turn affect marital outcomes	2.31	1.04	Disagree
11.	Couples from polygamous family background make less stable homes than their counterparts from monogamous background	2.71	1.08	Agree
12.	Individuals raised in broken homes grow up with fewer opportunities to learn the interpersonal skills that are needed for a successful marriage	2.85	1.04	Agree

Table II demonstrates that the mean of the items ranged from 2.31 to 2.85. All of the items had their means above the cut-off point of 2.50 except items 10 with means of ($\bar{x}=2.31$). This indicates that the respondents agreed that problems or decisions in marital relations are a result of orientations and experiences in one's family of origin. The outcomes in items 9, 11 and 12 had their means above 2.50 indicating that respondents agreed that parental family disruption can affect marital stability. The outcome likewise revealed that respondents agreed that individuals raised in broken or polygamous homes grow up with fewer opportunities to learn the interpersonal skills that are needed for a successful marriage and this could be an influencing factor in marital stability ($\bar{x}= 2.85$). The standard deviation of the items ranged from 1.04 to 1.08 which indicates that the respondents were close in their responses.

Research question three: Does economic security influence marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria?

Table III: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of Respondents on Influence of Economic Security on Marital Stability.

S/N	Item Statements	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation	Remark
13.	Women with a higher earning potential have higher tendency to terminate their unions	2.66	.96	Agree
14.	Spouses with higher earning potential tend to have stable unions as more resources in the house hold imply a higher standard of living and alleviate marital tension associated with economic difficulties.	3.15	.91	Agree
15.	Smooth income flow and stabilize economic well-being are capable of promoting healthy relationship at home.	3.11	.75	Agree
16.	Male unemployment can promote chaos at home	2.56	1.11	Agree

Results presented in Table III shows that the mean of the items ranged from 2.56 to 3.15. All the items had their means above the cut-off point of 2.50 ($\bar{x} > 2.50$). This indicates that respondents agreed that spouses with higher earning potential tend to have stable unions. This means more resources in the household imply a higher standard of living that alleviate marital tension associated with economic difficulties ($\bar{x} = 3.15$). Item 13 reveals that women with a higher earning potential have higher tendency to terminate their unions ($\bar{x} = 2.66$). Result in items 16 reveals that the respondents agreed that male unemployment can promote chaos at home ($\bar{x} = 2.56$). This reflects a positive income/economic effect on marital stability. The standard deviation of the items ranged from .75 to 1.11 which indicates that the respondents were close in their responses.

Hypothesis one

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

Table IV: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between family background and marital stability of respondents.

Variable	N	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation	Pearson r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Marital Stability	949	22.04	3.46	.363	.000
Family Background		10.51	2.77		

$\alpha = 0.05$

Table IV shows a r-value of .363 and a P value of .000 testing at an alpha level of 0.05. The p-value is less than the alpha level, ($p < 0.05$) therefore, the null hypothesis stated that ‘There is no significant relationship between family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria was rejected. This implies that a significant correlation exists between family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between economic security and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State.

Table V: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between economic security and marital stability of respondents.

Variable	N	Mean \bar{x}	Standard Deviation	Pearson r	Sig.(2-tailed)
Marital Stability	949	22.0400	3.46448	.255	.000
Economic Security		11.4826	2.23724		

$\alpha=0.05$

Table V shows a r-value of .255 and a P value of .000 testing at an alpha level of 0.05. The p-value is less than the alpha level ($p < 0.05$), therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that ‘There is no significant relationship between economic security and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State was rejected. This implies that a significant correlation exists between economic security and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from research question one on the degree of marital stability among staff of Universities revealed that larger part of marriages of the University staff was moderately stable. From the finding, it could be derived that the respondents have good marital relationships with their spouses with moderate marital stability. The outcome likewise revealed that the respondents enjoyed their partner's company and were not disappointed in their original expectations in the relationship as husband/wife. The finding is in agreement with Skolnick (2009) who discovered that in Western societies, social rules have gradually changed to allow more freedom of choice for the couple and a bigger stress on love as the basis for wedding. This clarified the fact that university staff made their mate selection with emphasis on love, hence marital stability.

Findings from the second research question on family background and marital stability revealed that parental family interruption can influence marital stability. The respondents likewise attested that individuals raised in broken or polygamous homes grow up with fewer chances to learn the interpersonal skills that are required for a successful marriage and this could be an affecting variable in marital stability. This is in support of Fasoranti and Owagbemi, (2012) who discovered that orientations and experiences in one's family of origin influence

decisions about marriage and attitudes toward marriage that in turn influence marital outcomes. An investigation directed by Bumpass and Liu, (2000) likewise revealed that white women, whose mothers were separated, divorced, or never married have considerably higher paces of marital disintegration than women who were raised in intact families.

Results from the third research question on economic security and marital stability reflected a positive income/economic effect on marital stability. The finding revealed that spouses with higher procuring potential will in general have stable unions. This implies that more resources in the household imply a higher standard of living that will in general lighten marital tension associated with economic difficulties. It was additionally revealed that male unemployment can advance chaos at home and that women with a higher earning potential tend to end their unions. The finding is by Lucas (2009) who expressed that economic hardship places strain on romantic relationship through an assortment of methods; and that individuals may fight over limited resources and may disagree about how to spend the money they have. Moreover, every person in the union may battle with disappointment and depression when financial related methods are meager. White and Rogers (2000) further support the fact that economic satisfaction can mitigate marital tension when he concurred that people's economic resources are related to positive relationship results, for example, more marriages, less divorce, and greater happiness. The investigation likewise revealed that male unemployment can advance chaos at home and that women with a higher earning potential tend to terminate their unions. This is in congruity with Alisa (2005) who opined that women's economic contributions can improve marital stability. Aryee, Field, and Luk (1999) likewise distinguished economy wellbeing and responsiveness as a variable that guarantees marital stability, among others.

Finding from hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between the family background and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected because the significant (p) value (2- tailed test) was less than the alpha value ($p < 0.05$) for family background and marital stability. The result demonstrated that a significant correlation exists between family background and marital stability. The findings concurred with the perspectives on Bumpass & Liu, (2000) that orientations and experiences in one's family of origin impact decisions about marriage that thusly influence marital stability.

Finding from hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between economic security and marital stability among staff of Universities in Edo State, Nigeria. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant relationship was rejected because the computed significant (p) value (2- tailed test) was less than the alpha value ($p < 0.05$) for economic security and marital stability. The finding is in concurrence with White and Rogers (2000) who recommended that men's and women's economic resources are related to positive relationship outcomes, for example, more marriage, less divorce and greater marital happiness. Sweeney (2002) additionally expressed that financial stability is regularly viewed as an essential for passage into committed relationship especially marriage. The findings additionally concur with Animasahun, (2015), whose review revealed that there was a significant relationship between socio-economic

status and marital stability. This means that socioeconomic status influences the level of couples' divorce. This is additionally steady with the investigations of Amato & Previti (2003), who found that socioeconomic status is fundamental to the formation and maintenance of intimate unions.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that respondents had good marital relationship with their spouses with moderate marital stability. It was additionally reasoned that some mate selection factors, for example, family background and economic security, collectively and independently influence marital stability. Family background can have a positive or negative effect on marital stability; hence, it was inferred that parents should set genuine models for their children/ wards.

More assets or stable economic security implies a higher standard of living and reduction in marital tensions associated with economic difficulties. Economic security can therefore impact marital stability emphatically. These and other components are important and should be taken into consideration during the process of mate selection as they may have a lasting influence on marital stability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings of this investigation, the following recommendations were made:

1. Family background is a solid determinant of marital stability; hence parents and guardians should endeavor to set genuine models for their children and wards to build on.
2. Individuals should choose their mates wisely to avert mate selection factors that collectively and independently influence marital instability
3. Government, private organizations, counselors and curriculum planners should give specific consideration to family life education, since ignorance is no uncertain one of the impediments to marital stability.
4. Spouses should be able to sustain good source of livelihood before entering into the union as economic security is no uncertain one of the factors that can emphatically impact marital stability.
5. Professionals, similar to Home Economist, Counselors, Psychologists and Social workers should be recruited to counsel proposing couples on their decision of mate and attend to their various needs.
6. There is earnest need like never before for the incorporation of mate selection factors/processes in our tertiary institution curriculum program as a general course (GST), so one and all regardless of the course of studies would assume an acknowledgement unit in the area. This will help to sustain marital stability when in marriage and consequently building a strong and vibrant nation.

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