



Marital Conflict and Academic Performance of Married Undergraduate Students in Rivers State University

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ABSTRACT

The study examined marital conflict and academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher formulated three (3) objectives, research questions and hypotheses that guided the study. The research design used is descriptive survey design. The population of the study consists of all the married undergraduate students in year 3 and 4 in Faculty of Education, Rivers State University with a total population size of 23 students. The sample size of the study is 23 students which is the entire population. This is because of the manageable size of the entire population of the study. The sampling technique used was a census method of sampling. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistic, mean and standard deviation for the research questions while the null hypotheses were tested using SPSS. The findings of the study revealed that divorce, child bearing, external pressure, financial problem and communication breakdown have negative effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. However, the study recommends that government through the community town hall meeting should enlighten parents on the dangers of divorce, companies and Non-governmental organizations should always organize health education programme for the women on child bearing spacing and government and multinational companies should regularly organize orientation or awareness programme for the mothers based on external pressure from in-laws.

Key Words: Academic Performance, Child Bearing Divorce, Marital Conflict, Married, Undergraduate Students, External Pressure, Academic Performance, Marital conflict, Married Undergraduate Students of Rivers State University.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict is a state of disagreement between two parties. It is also a state of tension or anger that builds up as a result of disagreement or lack of understanding. Diez (2016) posits that conflict is a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values or goals. Conflict is not always characterized by violence, yet it might escalate and lead to destructive results. Marriage is a basic institution designed by God as a social agreement between two individuals to become husband and wife. Marriage is a unique commitment in the lives of a man and a woman for which they are expected to enjoy love, happiness, provision, protection, procreation and respect in the society. Binke and Weir (2017), noted that one of the most important relationships between a man and a woman is marriage. It involves emotional and legal commitment that is very important in adult life. Marriage involves joining in matrimony two individuals of different gender to become one flesh as husband and wife.

Okpechi (2012), opines that people marry for many reasons such as love, happiness, companionship and desire to have children, physical attraction or desire to escape from an unhappy situation. He further stated that marriage is a contract which spells out the reciprocal obligation between the spouse and future children with expectation. Though some of their expectations turned to be reality, while others are unrealistic due to the complex nature of marriage; and each individual is as complex as the universe. Sometimes where these marital expectations are not met, stress (frustration, anxiety, threat, conflict and tension) may occur. Accordingly, these variables work negatively to affect one's performance.

Conflict is defined as a struggle to resist or overcome a contest of opposing forces or powers, strife, battle; a state or condition of opposition, antagonism and discord. Argument arises from time to time and it is sometimes meant to settle disagreement in order to move forward towards better living. Conflict could result in positive impact in one's life. However, when conflict arises, for the wrong reasons and is not handled with care, it becomes more serious with negative impact on the victim and the in academic performance. Couples engage in conflicts more often due to economic, sexual and power control. Couples tend to quarrel over money more often than other things. For a marriage to last a long time, there should be love and a steady romantic relationship. While love is important, emotional maturity and shaved values also contribute to marital success. Conflict is not always characterized by violence, yet it might escape and lead to destructive result.

Marital conflict in the present day society is of huge concern as it is associated with separation, divorce, widowhood. Marital conflict most times leads to broken homes and most times has a lot of negative impact on the society as the family product (children) suffers both academically, financially and may bounce back to the society as nuisance. According to an adage, which says where two elephants fight, the grasses suffer. This means that there could be transfer of aggression in which the sins of the fathers may tamper with the future of the innocent children if not well handled. In present day, it is very hard to get a complete happy home. A well nurtured family today is a prosperous and clean world of tomorrow. It is also noted that a disturbed family has no peace, it is very unorganized to function effectively. The family as a valuable institution is today faced with multiple threats to its survival. It is one of the most dramatic and saddening trend in family survival of recent times. Uka (2013) asserts that marriage is the legalizing of a special relationship between a man and woman to which the society gives approval; and it places partners under legal social obligations to institution that gives legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction for legitimate children. Marriage involves joining in matrimony two individuals of different gender to become one flesh as husband and wife, given the need for companionship, procreation, continuing and sustaining themselves and the society.

Conflicts can also be defined as a struggle to resist or overcome; contest of opposing forces or powers; strife; battle; a state or condition of opposition; antagonism; discord. A painful tension set up by a clash between opposed and contradictory impulses. No matter how one tries to avoid it, conflict periodically enters people lives. Conflicts occur among, spouses and family members. Argument arises from time to time and is sometimes meant to settle disagreements in order to move forward towards better living. Marriage is a relationship that functions on many levels. Marriage is an intricate tapestry, which comprises of many strands woven and intermingled in a special kind of way. That the function of the family which is the primary group in the society is entrusted to parents for care and training of its future citizens. A well nurtured family today, is a prosperous and clean world of tomorrow. It is also noted that a disturbed family has no peace; is unorganized and cannot perform its function effectively. Since the family is a group of individual set to achieve certain function such as procreation, regulation of sexual behavior, economic support, and socialization, the family should then be an agency for transmitting this cultural heritage from one generation to another.

Academic performance can be referred to as achievement demonstrated, using scores and grades on examination, test or assignments in an academic setting. The results are used to determine the competence of students in a course over the semesters. Anene (2015) viewed students' academic performance as an assessment of students learning progress in task that is required of them. They are expected to engage in activities which may include, manipulation of materials, problems solving, demonstration of practical skills and participating in theoretical work. Watson (2017) stated that assessment of academic performance has three dimensions meant for placement, planning and evaluation. The grade obtained from the assessment also helps in evaluating the progress of the instructors and the instructional programme to verify whether there is progress on the entire program. The researcher viewed marital conflict as inevitable aspect of life experience. Understanding how it escalates goes a long way towards knowing how to use it as an advantage over the other person. Conflict occurs between two or more people who disagree on certain issues that threaten the respective goal, values or needs. How they participate in a disagreement determines to a great extent how heated the conflict can become. The researcher opined that if there are many resources and opportunities available within any social setting, it is not always common for conflict to arise.

Concept of conflict

Conflicts usually occur when two people believe that their desires, aspirations, and interests can no longer be simultaneously achieved. It is a common occurrence in life and arises within and among people, including friends, couples, family members or community members, and even political cabals. Conflict involves apparent, but not always actual opposition between two or more people. Many writers understood conflict in different ways. Webster Dictionary (2015) defined conflict as a fight, battle, struggle, sharp disagreement, clash, the opposition of interest, idea, etc. in other words, conflict connotes warfare, crisis, violence, and stress. Omojola (2018) noted that conflict is a clash of interest and personality. Ezegebe (2017) says that conflict is the mutual hostility at inter-personal, inter-human, inter-actions levels.

This mutual hostility can be verbal, physical, or emotional depending on the nature of the conflict. Within the marital setting verbal hostility could be expressed in form of rebukes, insults, name-calling, etc. while physical hostility is expressed in the form of fighting, inflicting injuries, termination of the relationship, etc. In his own, Goldberg and Goldberg (2010) connote conflict to mean the collision, clash, or to be in opposition or at variance with somebody. They narrate conflict to mean strife, controversy, and discord of action or any other action related to hostility. Furthermore, Ogunna (2013) sees conflict as a situation in which persons or groups disagree over means or ends and try to establish their views in preference to others. It is also a behavior by a person or group that is purposefully designed to block the attainment of goals by another person or group.

Conflict is said to emerge whenever two or more persons or groups seek to possess the same object, occupy the same space of the exclusive position, play incompatible roles, maintain goals or undertake mutually incompatible means for achieving their purposes. In discussing conflict, Robbins (2018) viewed conflict from an administrative lens and defined it as all kinds of opposition or antagonistic interaction. Because of the scarcity of resources, power, or social position conflict may connote animalistic, violence, destruction, barbarism, and loss of civilized control and rationality. It may also connote adventure, novelty, clarification, growth, and dialectical rationality. In conflicts, the disputants are usually aggressive toward one another to achieve preconceived objectives. Thus, conflicts are sometimes seen as clashes in opinion.

Concept of Marital Conflict

Marital conflicts refer to difficult relationships experienced by husband and wife in their marriage. It is the disagreement or squabble between husband and wife in their marriage relationship. No particular marriage could be ascribed a perfect one; conflicts are bound to emanate from marriages and can arise when the misunderstanding is the order of the day between spouses. In some families, especially the illiterate and poor ones, who do not understand the basic concept of marriage, but sees it as an avenue for baby-making, the pre-requisites of a peaceful home through happiness may not be a vital condition to be met. Such marriages may spring out conflicts where relationships such as parent-child, spouse-spouse, and spouse-in-law relationships

lack peace and harmony. Marital conflict has constituted a serious threat to the social and economic stability of Nigeria. The ill has partly been blamed on marriage with biases for wealth, unemployment, and lack of pre-marital counseling. According to Nwoye (2011), conflict in marriage refers to dissensions between marital partners over values, beliefs, goals, mores, and behaviours that make up the structure of the nuclear unit. In other words, marital conflict is a negative interaction in marriage, which can be verbal, or non-verbal, or both in which the husband and the wife aim to neutralize, injure, and disgrace each other. A marital conflict could be viewed as the failure of husband and wife to perform their role obligations in marriage.

Causes of Marital Conflict

Several situations can account for conflict in a marriage relationship among couples. In a marriage relationship, love for one another is sometimes a function of contribution, though there is a general knowledge that love satisfies our emotional and psychological needs. In light of this, verbal expression of love may not be enough to sustain the marriage relationship especially, when children began to come and when responsibility began to pile up on the couples. According to Sasse (2017) conflict is a disagreement/struggle between two or more people. Conflict is bound to be worse between people with stronger emotional intimacy. Many people engage in conflict mainly because they do not employ good decision making procedures. Fighting is a matter of power-sharing, that is, everyone would like to get his or her way and no one likes to lose. Many couples neglect consideration of how they are going to make decisions and consequently often end up fighting about how the decision was made, even though they have little difficulty with the decision itself. Anger in the family could result in avoiding responsibility, neglect, thoughtlessness, unfaithfulness, and rejection. According to Kithaka (2016), marital conflict is still about differences. Without trust between two people, conflicts cannot be resolved. Negative feelings will prevail. Marital conflict can be divided into rational, irrational, overt, covert, acute, chronic, basic, non-basic, personal, and interpersonal. Gitaari identified the following as predominant causes of marital conflicts: unrealistic expectations, external pressure, children, economic problems, and communication breakdown.

External Pressure

In line with the social learning theory, Gitaari (2012) observed that the following factors affect the couple and can sometimes if not well handled, create marital conflict. The extended family can create sources of conflict for a couple. Their demands and expectations can be a strain. The conflicts among family members can create struggles. The physical distance between families can be a source of problems for a couple, not to mention the free advice that can be given. Having in-laws living with them and who might want to exercise right over their brother or sister. And when the man or woman chose to listen to his/her mother or father or let loose to them to help them run their home.

Career: The man or woman may engage in very busy careers that they do not have time for their families. This means that the couple has no time for each other and for their family which may lead them to listen to friends or follow friend's advice in running their home. Also, there could be a situation whereby the husband and wife are working in different parts of the country for a long period. This long separation makes adjusting to each other very difficult. Thus, when they are able to live together again, none is ready to submit to the other because each person is used to making their own decision.

Problem of Childbearing

This problem is predominant in Nigerian society, especially, in Igbo land. The Igbo custom demands that a man should have someone who would continue his lineage, especially, a boy. When a woman is not able to give birth to a baby boy, let alone not give birth at all, there is bound to be external pressure which may ignite internal pressure in the marriage relationship. In the parlance of Gitaari, lack of a girl means no wealth while lack of a boy means no future. Also, when children are present in the marriage, there is the tendency that the woman may be giving more attention to the children thus causing divided attention in the family. Other problems that childbearing may bring are birth control methods. There could arise a conflicting opinion between the husband and the wife on the use of family planning or the number of children to have. These issues could lead to conflict in the marriage. According to Watson (2017), no one is ever a mistake or a problem, yet children are something that couples fight about within marriage quite often. He noted that couples usually fight over the following topics; when to have children, how many to have, how to discipline them, and how to educate them. Also, if one couple had children from another relationship, those issues are magnified. Kids can be a great source of blessing and fulfillment or they can be a great source of conflict. Cowan and Cowan (2010) demonstrated that the birth of a baby marks a decline in marital quality and an increase in marital distress.

Economic Problems

Finance is usually one of the major causes of marital conflict in modern society because money creates control, power, and trust. When one's partner does not know how much money he/she earns and spends, it can result in insecurity, competition, and tension. If a husband divides all the money as he deems fit without involving the wife in decision-making, there could arise major problems. Mistrust and suspicion will always come in. There could also be a problem of lack of enough money to cater to the needs of the family. It results in tension and disharmony between husband and wife. Loss of employment is another problem and so is impulse buying.

Marital conflict and Academic Development of Students

A family is a natural social system, with properties all on its own, one that has evolved a set of rules, is replete with assigned and ascribed roles for its members, has an organized power structure, has developed intricate overt and covert forms of communication and has elaborated ways of negotiating and problem-solving that permit various tasks to be performed effectively (Goldenberg, et al, 2010). In the process of growing up, family members develop individual identities but remain attached to the family group. These family members do not live in isolation, but rather are interdependent on one another not merely for money, food, and shelter but also love, affection, companionship, socialization, and other non-tangible needs. A well-functioning family encourages the realization of the individual potential of its members, allowing them freedom for exploration and self-discovery along with protection and instill a sense of security. This may not be the case for a family that experiences conflicts.

According to Grugni (2014), parents who have too many children and who are engrossed in the material problems of a large family are likely to neglect them; this will affect their growth negatively. The birth of a child means that the parent's attention, especially the mother's, will be shifted towards the new life. Children are supposed to bring parents together because they provide them with a common object for their love and concern. However, in some cases, they become a barrier between the parents. Parents need to assume responsibility for their children's eternal destiny, educate them, prepare them for life, and guide them in the right way. This cannot happen if there is no harmony in the family. Parents also need to recognize fully their duties towards God, their family, and society. Parents are equally responsible for the task of forming the child. Parent's presence in children's lives is of vital importance. Children need the influence of both parents to shape their personalities in a balanced way. Bringing up children is primarily the role of parents, however, when there is conflict in the family, these roles are shattered bringing adverse developmental effects on the children. Kiura (2019) says that a child's attitudes, standards, and values will slowly be formed by what he learns from his or her parent thus parents should lead by example. Parents should find time to listen to their children's problems and joys. Kiura (2019) also indicated that when children see that their parents love each other, they are assured that their parents love them.

Marital Conflict and Academic Performance of Students

The family is viewed as a primary source for adolescent's self-efficacy and well-being. Self-efficacy has been shown to greatly influence adolescent academic performance. A study by Sadock (2013) has shown that family social support has harmed adolescent depression and a direct correlation with adolescent social self-efficacy. Sadock suggest that marital conflict affects children's self-efficacy for conflict management and believes that it can control turbulent situations. Individuals with high self-efficacy has more positive strategies and tactics for managing conflict than those who have low self-efficacy beliefs.

Marital conflict has also been found by many researchers to have a direct effect on the academic performance of students. Roseby and Deutsch (2015), report that deterioration in school performance and behavior are among the most consistently reported outcomes associated with separation and divorce. School is an integral part of children's environment. Family variables of status, stability, and the provision of role models affect children's academic and social behavior at school. Roseby et al. report that results in divorce-related research are complicated by the finding that children who come from single-parent families lower their expectations of achievement at school. These children exhibit various learning difficulties, such as inability to concentrate, short attention span, and anxiety about learning. The large-scale study conducted by the National Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals aid the Kettering Foundation (Zakariya, 2012) reported a disproportionately high number of children from single-parent families in low achievement groups and a low proportion of these children in high achievement groups. Global school criteria such as grade point average, attendance, tardiness, suspension, student mobility, and referrals for behavioral problems of single-parent children were found to be more remarkable than those for children of intact homes. Mundek (2010) reported similar results; adolescent students from recently divorced families earned significantly lower grade point averages, more demerits, and were absent significantly more often than adolescents whose families remained intact.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the effort of government, non-governmental organization like religious organization on marriage counseling, the rate of marital conflicts and divorce is very high. The issue of child bearing, external pressure from in-laws, financial problem, communication breakdown are raising more dust now among the undergraduate students.

Shinn (2015) carried out a study on the effects of broken homes on students' academic achievement in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings revealed that broken home have negative effect on the students' academic achievement. However, this study was unable to address the issue of marital conflict or challenges on the undergraduate students' academic performance. Therefore, it is against this problems, that the researcher seeks to examine marital conflict and academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of marital conflict on academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To determine the extent to which divorce effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.
2. To determine the extent to which child bearing effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.
3. To determine the extent to which external pressure from in-laws effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does divorce affect academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University?

2. To what extent does child bearing effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University?
3. To what extent does external pressure from in-laws effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University?

Hypotheses

This study tested the following hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance

- 1 There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent to which divorce effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.
- 2 There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent to which child bearing effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.
- 3 There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent to which external pressure from in-laws effects academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University

METHODOLOGY

In carrying out this research, the researcher employed descriptive survey design. It attempts to describe or document current conditions or attitudes, that is, to explain what exists at the moment. Ezinwa and Okoye (2015), notes that descriptive survey design is a research method which focuses on a representative sample derived from the entire population. The population of the study consists of all the married undergraduate students in year 3 and 4 in Faculty of Education, Rivers State University with a total population size of 23 students. The sample size of the study was 23 married undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education, Rivers State University. This is because of the manageable size of the entire population of the study. The sampling technique used was a census method of sampling. Wimmer and Dominick (2011) assert that census method is that process of sampling or statistical list where all members of a population are analyzed or used. The instrument used for data collection was self-structured questionnaire titled, "Marital Conflict on the Academic Performance of Married Undergraduate Students Questionnaire" (MCAPMUSQ). The data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis, weighted mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The criterion decision rule is that any mean score that was from 2.50 and above is accepted, while the mean score that was less than 2.50 is rejected. The null hypotheses were tested using SPSS statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does divorce affect the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on the extent divorce affect the academic performance of married undergraduate students

S/ No.	Statement	Nulliparous Students			Primiparous Students		
		n ₁ = 11			n ₂ = 12		
		\bar{X}	SD	D	\bar{X}	SD	D
1	Students or children from separated homes have low grades at school thereby affecting their academic performance.	3.12	1.01	High Extent	3.08	0.93	High Extent
2	Single parenting affects students esteem and social life, especially self-esteem thereby affecting the academic performance.	3.04	0.81	High Extent	3.11	1.04	High Extent
3	Separated couples feel insecure about their future hence it affects their academic performance.	2.96	0.73	High Extent	3.10	0.91	High Extent
4	Learners or students from separated homes suffer emotional and psychological problem which in turn affects their academic performance.	3.25	0.67	High Extent	3.17	0.73	High Extent

5	Because of the separated parents, children are loose and lack proper attention which affects their academic performance.	2.89	1.12		2.90	0.82	
				High Extent			High Extent
Grand Mean		3.05			3.07		

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 1 presents that items 1 to 5 have means of 3.12, 3.04, 2.96, 3.25, 2.89 for Nulliparous Students with standard deviations ranging from 0.67 to 1.12; and means of 3.08, 3.11, 3.10, 3.17, 2.90 for Primiparous Students with standard deviations ranging from 0.73 to 1.04 which indicate “High Extent” on divorce affect on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. Also, the grand means for Nulliparous and Primiparous students are 3.05 and 3.07 respectively, further confirming a “High Extent” divorce affect the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. Thus, it is found that divorce affect the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University to a “High Extent”.

Research Question 2: To what extent does child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University?

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on the extent child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students

S/ No.	Statement	Nulliparous Students			Primiparous Students		
		n ₁ = 11			n ₂ = 12		
		\bar{X}	SD	D	\bar{X}	SD	D
6	Married students lose focus on academic due to inability to conceive for some period of time after being married thereby affecting their academic performance.	2.97	0.77	High Extent	3.03	1.00	High Extent
7	Child bearing pressure affects students regularly, punctuality to class thereby affecting their academic performance	2.87	0.85	High Extent	2.71	1.13	High Extent
8	Some students find it difficult to complete their assignments, projects or seminars due to pressure from child bearing which affects their academic performance.	3.02	1.21	High Extent	2.94	0.70	High Extent
9	Married students' attention are always divided while making babies thereby affecting their academic performance.	3.06	0.71	High Extent	2.88	0.81	High Extent
10	The inconvenient in child bearing or making babies affects the students' academic performance.	2.89	0.97	High Extent	3.01	0.75	High Extent
Grand Mean		2.96			2.91		

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The information in table 2 shows that items 6 to 10 have means of 2.97, 2.87, 3.02, 3.06, 2.89 for Nulliparous students with standard deviations ranging from 0.71 to 1.21; and means of 3.03, 2.71, 2.94, 2.88, 3.01 for Primiparous students with standard deviations ranging from 0.70 to 1.13 indicating a “High Extent” child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. The grand means for Nulliparous and Primiparous students are respectively, 3.15 and 3.12, which is a confirmation of high extent child bearing effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. The above results imply that child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University to a “High Extent”.

Research Question 3: To what extent does external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University?

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics on the extent external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students

S/ No.	Statement	Nulliparous Students			Primiparous Students		
		n ₁ = 11			n ₂ = 12		
		\bar{X}	SD	D	\bar{X}	SD	D
11	The pressure of mother-in-law causes tension among couples which affect their academic performance.	3.21	0.97	High Extent	3.19	0.79	High Extent
12	Married undergraduate students experience some level of betrayal due to external pressures from in-laws thereby affecting their academic performance.	3.29	0.88	High Extent	3.28	1.10	High Extent
13	Some married undergraduate students experience disappointment as a result of external pressure which affects their learning ability.	3.12	0.85	High Extent	3.10	0.91	High Extent
14	External pressure from in-laws causes emotional trauma among the married undergraduate students which affect their academic performance.	3.27	0.93	High Extent	3.25	0.71	High Extent
15	Unnecessary pressures from in-laws has psychological trauma on the married undergraduate students thereby affecting their academic performance.	3.00	1.10	High Extent	2.94	0.82	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.18			3.15		

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 3 presents that items 11 to 15 have means of 3.21, 3.29, 3.12, 3.27, 3.00 for Nulliparous students with standard deviations ranging from 0.85 to 1.10; and means of 3.19, 3.28, 3.10, 3.25, 2.94 for Primiparous students with standard deviations ranging from 0.71 to 1.10 which indicate "High Extent" on how external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. Also, the grand means for Nulliparous and Primiparous students are 3.18 and 3.15 respectively, further confirming a "High Extent" on how external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. Thus, it is found that external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University to a "High Extent".

Test of Hypotheses

In this section the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 was used for the test of hypotheses. The t-test (rather than the z-test) statistic was employed in the analysis despite the large sample size. This was so for three major reasons: 1. When the sample is sufficiently large, the t-value and the z-value coincide. 2. The SPSS does not contain the z-test as both z-test and t-test are treated as the same for sufficiently large samples. 3. Very importantly, the t-value is computed when the population mean and standard deviation are not known, but for z-value computation, the population mean and standard deviation must be known.

The symbols used here were as specified below:

F = Ratio of homogeneity between group variance to within group variance

(Levene's Test for Equality of Variances)

t = Value of t-statistic obtained from the SPSS analysis

df = Degrees of freedom

p-value = Sig. (2-tailed) obtained from the SPSS analysis to be compared with the α -value

α -value = Level of significance (0.050) fixed by Rivers State University

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent divorce has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Table 4: T-test Analysis of the extent divorce has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students.

F	Sig.	T	Df	p-value	α -value	Decision
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Nulliparous Students 85	70.709	.110	-2.577	178	.072	.050	Not Rejected
Primiparous Students 95			-2.577	728.206	.072	.050	

Table 4 presents that equal variances assumed has $t = -2.577$, $df = 798$, and 2-tailed $p = 0.072$. This implies that the null hypothesis that “There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent divorce has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Abia State” is not rejected as $t(798) = -2.577$, 2-tailed $p = 0.072 > \alpha = 0.05$. Thus, Nulliparous and Primiparous undergraduates are in accordance that divorce affects, to a high extent, the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Table 5: t-test Analysis of the extent child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students

	F	Sig.	T	Df	p-value	α -value	Decision
Nulliparous Students 85	67.311	.258	7.038	178	.071	.050	Not
Primiparous Students 95			7.038	675.913	.071	.050	Rejected

The information in table 5 shows that equal variances assumed has $t = 7.038$, $df = 798$, and 2-tailed $p = 0.71$. Thus, the null hypothesis that “There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University is not rejected as $t(798) = 7.038$, 2-tailed $p = 0.71 > \alpha = 0.05$. This implies that nulliparous and primiparous students are in a consensus that child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Table 6: T-test Analysis of the extent external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students

	F	Sig.	T	Df	p-value	α -value	Decision
Nulliparous Students 85	7.858	.286	3.194	178	.124	.050	Not Rejected
Primiparous Students 95			3.194	783.467	.124	.050	

Table 6 presents that equal variances assumed has $t = 3.194$, $df = 798$, and 2-tailed $p = 0.124$. Therefore, the null hypothesis that “There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of nulliparous and primiparous undergraduates on the extent external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University” is not rejected as $t(798) = 3.194$, 2-tailed $p = 0.124 > \alpha = 0.05$. Thus, nulliparous and primiparous students are in accordance that external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University.

Discussion of Findings

Extent divorce has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University

Based on the analysis of the data it was found that divorce has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. This finding is in line with the assertion of McCrae and Costa (2018) who asserted that Students or children from separated homes have low grades at school thereby affecting their academic performance. Single parenting affects students esteem and social life, especially self-esteem thereby affecting the academic performance. Steel (2017) found that learners or students from separated homes suffer emotional and psychological problem which in turn affects their academic performance. Steel argued that because of the separated parents, children are loose and lack proper attention which affects their academic performance.

Extent child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University

It was also found that child bearing has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. The finding is in collaboration with Poropat (2014) who believed that married students loose focus on academic due to inability to conceive for some period of time after being married thereby affecting their academic performance and that child bearing pressure affects students regularly, punctuality to class thereby affecting their academic performance. Poropat argued that some students find it difficult to complete their assignments, projects or seminars due to

pressure from child bearing which affects their academic performance. It was still noticed that married students attention are always divided while making babies thereby affecting their academic performance.

Extent external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University

The study also found that external pressure from in-laws has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. The study is in the same view with Kumari (2014) who state that The pressure of mother-in-law causes tension among couples which affect their academic performance and that married undergraduate students experience some level of betrayal due to external pressures from in-laws thereby affecting their academic performance. It is also observed that some married undergraduate students experience disappointment as a result of external pressure which affects their learning ability. Poropat (2019) asserts that external pressure from in-laws causes emotional trauma among the married undergraduate students which affect their academic performance and unnecessary pressures from in-laws has psychological trauma on the married undergraduate students thereby affecting their academic performance.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that divorce, child bearing, external pressure, financial problem and communication breakdown have effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students in Rivers State University. The study deduced that adult literacy programmes have the efforts of improving the provision and implementation of developing programmes which have a basic education or training component. The researcher also concluded that marital conflict has constituted a serious threat to the social and economic stability of Nigeria. The ill has partly been blamed on marriage with biases for wealth, unemployment, and lack of pre-marital counseling and that marital conflict is the dissensions between marital partners over values, beliefs, goals, mores, and behaviours that make up the structure of the nuclear unit. In other words, marital conflict is a negative interaction in marriage, which can be verbal, or non-verbal, or both in which the husband and the wife aim to neutralize, injure, and disgrace each other. A marital conflict could be viewed as the failure of husband and wife to perform their role obligations in marriage.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made to ensure that the study meets its objectives:

1. Government through the community town hall meeting should enlighten parents on the dangers of divorce on the academic performance of married undergraduate students.
2. Companies and Non-governmental organizations should always organize health education programme for the women child bearing spacing because of its effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students.
3. Government and multinational companies should regularly organize orientation or awareness programme for the mothers based on external pressure from in-laws hence it has effects on the academic performance of married undergraduate students.

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