

Demographic Variables And Domestic Violence Among Married Couples In Ikwerre Local Government Area Of Rivers State

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Abstract

This study investigated demographic variables and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted by the researcher to carry out the research. Three research questions and three corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised 5,500 married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of three hundred (300) participants. The instrument for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled demographic Variables and Domestic Violence (DVDV), consisting of ten (10) items. The questionnaire was structured along four point modified likert scale. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data. The instrument for data collection was validated by two experts in Educational Psychology and one from Measurement and Evaluation Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the research hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found among others that, there is no significant difference between the mean response of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on educational background. Based on the findings, the study concludes that, couples who are highly educated are more prone to domestic violence than low educated couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study therefore, recommend among others; That couples who highly educated should undergo marital counselling and orientation to guide them on how to live together without their discipline or educational background influencing their marriage relationship.

Keywords: Demographic variables, Domestic Violence, Married couples

Introduction

Family is one of the most significant component of the society, and helps in the development of physical, social and psychological well-being of the members of the society. Family is a group of people knot together under common norms of marriage. Families are formed through marriage. Marriage is a union between two consenting adults especially between man and woman. Marriage can also be seen as a union between a man and woman ordained by God for the purpose of companionship, procreation and service to God. Marriage as an institution is found in all known human societies, though the norms that guides or influence the choice of spouse and marriage varies from culture to culture. Ponsetti (2013), in conjunction with Onidvaretal (2019), stated that marriage is the corner stone for the establishment of family.

Many definitions has been advanced for the concept of marriage, which is quite an old terminology, but the definition by Berne el al (1973) sited in Ordu 2020, though old but is concise enough and aptly captures the idea of marriage. He defined marriage as a reciprocal and complex relationship between two adult human being who have a fundamental role to play towards the fulfilment of man and woman's emotional, psychological and physiological needs. This definition implies that marriage is a mutual relationship between a man and a woman who took oath of allegiance and commitment to each other to consequently change themselves to sooth the desires and needs of each other. It is imperative that expectations of happiness and bliss are the more reason for many persons delving into marriage. In order words, mutual satisfaction seem to be the underling concept and the reason that represent the perceived happiness witnessed by individual partners in a marriage relationship and needed the strength of the marital affair.

Marital satisfaction could be viewed as the perception of the individual partners with regard to the level to which his/her needs in the marital affairs are met. Shahid and Kazin (2016), defined marital satisfaction as a mental state which shows the premeditated advantages and expedition of marriage for a specific person and manifests a complete appraisal of the current situation in an existing relationship. Similarly, Schoern, et al (2012), stated that marital relationship is a global evaluation of one's marriage and reflection of marital happiness and functioning. Other researchers have also found that marriage institution offers intimacy, affection, sexual fulfilment, companionship and opportunity for emotional/ behavioural growth as well as serving as a source of identity and self-esteem (Gardiner & Kosnitski, (2015), Mager, (2016).

The foregoing discussion has shown that one of the significant or yardstick for the measurement of success and stability of marital relationship by extension, fulfilment, and well-being of individual partners has been satisfaction in marriage. This consequently may lead to increased strength of the marriage through the mutual commitment of the couple and greatly shows the important roles played by marital commitment in ensuring stability of marital relationship as well as the prevention of conflict and domestic violence, which is an abnormal situation in many marriages that poses threat to the health, stability and success of such marriage. Dissatisfaction in any marriage relationship leads to domestic violence. Constant experience of dissatisfaction by a spouse in marriage relationship will no doubt leads to some changes in his/her behaviour, and this change in the behaviour may attract some

negative reactions by the other party. Such as misunderstanding that may result to domestic violence. Domestic violence is one of the significant variables that have been tackled by many researchers. For example, Callian and Sieivgeok (2009), stated that crisis in marriage stems from reaction to personal shortcomings like; anger, hostility as well as other forms of physical misbehaviours. Domestic violence emanates from negative change in behaviour. This could lead to the misuse of power by one partner over the other in the home.

Domestic violence can be described as the misuse of power by one adult in a relationship to control another. It is the establishment of control and fear in a relationship through violence and other forms of abuse. This violence can take the form of physical assault, social abuse, sexual abuse or assault and economic deprivation Ezem-Amadi Glory (2019). Domestic violence is not simply an argument, it is a pattern of coercive control that one person exercises over another. Abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, emotional torture and economic deprivation as a way to dominate their victims and get their way

Domestic violence is perpetrated by and on both men and women. However, the most common victims of domestic violence are women, especially in Nigeria. In the United States, it has been reported that 85% of all violent crimes experienced by women are cases of intimate partner violence, compare to 3% of violent crimes experienced by men. Currently there are several cases of domestic violence in Nigeria. Notable among all, is the case of Nigerian Gospel artist; Late Mrs.OsinachiNwachukwu, who was subjected to both psychological, emotional, physiological abuse and economic deprivation and eventually died in the process as a result of domestic violence from her spouse against her.

There are several causes of domestic violence among couples, which ranging from infidelity and suspicion, lack of mutual satisfaction, poor communication, low self-esteem, incompatibility, poverty and unemployment, childlessness, religious believe, unforgiveness etc. The success of any marriage depends on how well couple handles and respond to these challenges when eventually it come in a marriage relationship. Nonetheless, these factor have been there from time immemorial as a strong opposing factors or threat in marriage relationships. This paper therefore, investigated the mean response of couples on domestic violence based on educational background, years of experience in marriage and couple's socio-economic status in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at investigating demographic variables and how it account for domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government of Rivers State. Specifically, the study set out to;

1. Determine the difference in the mean response of educational background and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. Investigate the difference in the mean response of years of experience in marriage and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre LGA Local Government Area of Rivers State.

3. Find out the difference in the mean response of socio-economic status and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. To what extent does educational background influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. To what extent does years of experience in marriage influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State?
3. To what extent does socio economic status influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the mean response of couples of high/low on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on educational background.
2. There is no significant between the mean response of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on years of experience in marriage.
3. There is no significant difference between couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on couple's socio economic status.

Methodology

The study investigated demographic variables and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprises comprised 5,500 married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 300 participants. The instrument for data collection for the study was a self-structured questionnaire titled Demographic Variables and domestic Violence (DVDV), consisting of 10 items. The questionnaire was structured along four point modified likert scale. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data. The instrument for data collection was validated by two experts in educational psychology and one from Measurement and evaluation Faculty of Education, Ignatius Ajuru University Education. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0. 05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Research Question one: To what extent does couple's educational background influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state.

Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics on the extent couple's educational background account for domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state

S/N	ITEMS	SSCE below (n=139) Mean	and SD	HND/First Degree (n=102) Mean	SD	Masters and PhD (n=59) Mean	SD	Mean Set	Remark
1	Poor communication among couples	2.08	0.85	3.10	0.83	3.03	0.85	2.74	High
2	Lack of trust among couples	2.30	0.61	3.27	0.60	3.29	0.62	2.95	High
3	Infidelity and suspicion	2.09	1.03	2.07	1.00	2.85	1.16	2.34	High
4	Lack of mutual satisfaction in marriage	2.06	0.86	3.07	0.84	2.88	0.97	2.67	High
5	Poverty and unemployment	2.19	0.93	3.20	0.91	3.07	1.05	2.82	High
6	Religious background of couples	2.27	0.82	3.24	0.85	3.14	0.88	2.88	High
7	Childlessness	1.55	0.63	2.46	0.68	3.49	0.65	2.50	High
8	Low self-esteem of spouse	1.46	0.65	3.44	0.67	3.51	0.65	2.80	High
9	Cultural belief of any party	2.29	0.66	3.27	0.66	3.20	0.71	2.92	High
10	Unforgiveness	2.16	0.74	3.16	0.73	3.15	0.71	2.82	High
	Grand mean	2.05	0.78	3.03	0.78	3.16	0.83	2.74	High

The data on the table above shows the extent couple's educational background influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state. The table indicated that highly educated (Master/PhD) couples often express domestic violence (Mean=3.16, SD=0.83), then couples with HND/First Degree (Mean=3.03, SD=0.78) while less educated couple (with SSCE and below) experience less domestic violence (Mean=2.05, SD=0.78).

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on educational background.

Table 2: Summary of ANOVA on the difference between the mean responses of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on educational background

		Sum Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
item1	Between Groups	14.374	2	7.187	10.109	.006
	Within Groups	211.081	297	.711		
	Total	211.237	299			

The table above showed that that there is no significant difference between the mean response of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on educational background ($F_{2,297}=10.109$) at Sig.<0.05 level of significance. Hence, the opinion of married couples on domestic violence based on based on educational background are heterogeneous and differs significantly.

Research question two: To what extent does couple's years of experience in marriage influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics on the extent couple's years of experience in marriage account for domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state

S/N	ITEMS	1-6 years (n=99)		7-14 years (n=127)		15 years and above (n=74)		Mean Set	Remark
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Poor communication among couples	3.09	0.83	3.04	0.87	2.12	0.81	2.75	High
2	Lack of trust among couples	3.28	0.61	3.27	0.61	2.34	0.60	2.96	High
3	Infidelity and suspicion	3.08	1.01	3.02	1.05	2.01	1.12	2.70	High
4	Lack of mutual satisfaction in marriage	3.06	0.84	3.02	0.88	2.32	0.91	2.80	High
5	Poverty and unemployment	3.19	0.92	3.17	0.96	2.14	0.97	2.83	High
6	Religious background of couples	3.25	0.84	3.23	0.85	3.22	0.85	3.23	High
7	Childlessness	3.49	0.66	3.50	0.65	2.54	0.65	3.18	High
8	Low self-esteem of spouse	3.43	0.67	3.46	0.66	2.5	0.62	3.13	High
9	Cultural belief of any party	3.27	0.67	3.27	0.67	2.27	0.69	2.94	High
10	Unforgiveness	3.16	0.74	3.12	0.75	2.22	0.69	2.83	High
	Grand mean	3.23	0.78	3.21	0.79	2.37	0.79	2.94	High

The data on the table above shows the extent couple's years of experience in marriage influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state. The table indicated that couples with 1-6 years of experience in marriage often express domestic violence (Mean=3.23, SD=0.78), followed by couples with 7-14 years (Mean=3.21, SD=0.79) while couple 15 years and above of marriage experiences receive less domestic violence (Mean=2.37, SD=0.79).

Ho2: There is no significant between the mean responses on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on years of experience in marriage.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA on the difference between the mean responses of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on years of experience in marriage

	Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.786	2	12.893	9.622	.004
Within Groups	398.006	297	1.340		
Total	211.237	299			

The table above showed that that there is no significant difference between the mean response on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on years of experience in marriage ($F_{2,297}=9.622$) at

Sig.<0.05 level of significance. Hence, the opinion of married couples on domestic violence based on years of experience in marriage are heterogeneous and differs significantly.

Research Question three: To what extent does couples socio-economic status influence for domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State?

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on the difference between the mean response of couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on socio-economic status

S/N	ITEMS	High SES (n=99)		Low SES (n=201)		Mean Set	Remark
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Poor communication among couples	3.07	0.84	3.08	0.84	3.08	High
2	Lack of trust among couples	3.29	0.61	3.29	0.60	3.29	High
3	Infidelity and suspicion	3.08	1.02	3.01	1.06	3.05	High
4	Lack of mutual satisfaction in marriage	3.05	0.85	3.01	0.88	3.03	High
5	Poverty and unemployment	3.20	0.92	3.16	0.96	3.18	High
6	Religious background of couples	3.26	0.85	3.22	0.84	3.24	High
7	Childlessness	3.50	0.66	3.51	0.65	3.50	High
8	Low self-esteem of spouse	3.45	0.68	3.47	0.65	3.46	High
9	Cultural belief of any party	3.29	0.66	3.26	0.68	3.28	High
10	Unforgiveness	3.16	0.73	3.16	0.73	3.16	High
	Grand mean	3.24	0.78	3.22	0.79	3.23	High

The data on the table above shows the extent couple's socio-economic status influence domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers state. The table indicated that couples with high socio-economic status often experience domestic violence (Mean=3.24, SD=0.78) than couples with low socio-economic status (Mean=3.22, SD=0.79).

Ho3: There is no significant difference between couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on couple's socio-economic status.

Table 6: Summary of t-test on the difference between couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on couple's socio-economic status

SES	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
High	99	3.24	0.78	298	0.404	0.686	NS
Low	201	3.22	0.79				

NS= Not Significant

The table above showed the difference between couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on couple's socio-economic status. The t-test calculated value is 0.404, the corresponded significance value is 0.686 showing > 0.05 at 298 degrees of freedom. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significance difference between couples on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State based on couple's socio-economic status. Therefore, the null hypothesis three is

retained at 0.05. Meaning that the opinion of married couples on domestic violence based on socio-economic status are homogeneous and does not differ significantly.

Discussion of Findings

The result in table 1 shows a positive response between high educational background and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. This shows that domestic violence is predominant among married couples. However, couples of low educational background showed a moderate result. This indicates that couples who are highly educated and exposed to western culture do not uphold the traditional beliefs, norm and values guiding marital relationship in our society. This makes it difficult for couples to handle most of their marital issues. While the less educated ones seems to handle their marital differences. This is because they still hold on to their societal norms and values guiding marital relationship. The finding of the study confirms the earlier findings of Beyer and Hamberger (2015), Bonomi et al (2014) and Renzetti et al (2017), who found that couples who are highly educated are more prone to domestic violence but contradicts the finding of Rami et al (2014) who reported that low educated couples are more prone to domestic violence due to low exposure to western education.

Result in Table 2 reveals that domestic violence is predominant on couples of 0-10 years of marriage. The early stage in marriage is seen as the most challenging period in a marital relationship, it is the adjustment into a new home. This study also reveals that couples who have lived together, are less prone to domestic violence. The finding of the study is in agreement with the findings of Watermarver et al (2020), Anaba et al (2021) and Biswas et al (2017) who found that significant relationship between years of marriage and domestic violence, but disagreed with the finding of Dickson et al (2020) who find no significant relationship between years of marriage and domestic violence.

Result in Table 3 reveals that couple's socio-economic status can also account domestic violence among couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The finding of the study disagreed with the early findings of Conroy (2014), Ahinkorah (2018) and Mann and Takyi (2019) who found significant relationship between socio-economic status and domestic violence. However, the result of the study collaborate with the early finding of Oglard et al (2014) who reported in their study that, there was significant relationship between socio-economic status and domestic violence.

Conclusion

The study investigate demographic variables and domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. Based on the result of the finding, it was concluded that couples that are highly educated are more prone to domestic violence than low educated couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. From the result of the finding, it was again deduced that the couples within the early years (0-10 years) of marriage are equally prone to domestic violence than couples who lived together for many years in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. It was also concluded that couple's socio-economic status have relationship on domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Recommendation of the Study

Based on the findings of study and its conclusions, the following recommendations are made;

1. That couples who highly educated should undergo marital counselling and orientation to guide them on how to live together without their discipline or educational background influencing their marriage among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. That should undergo marital counselling to be properly guided on the do and don't within the early period of marriage to avoid domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.
3. Couples should be guided by the marital counsellor on the need for effective management of their resources to avoid domestic violence among married couples in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

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