

Socio-Economic Determinants of Marital Stability Among Married Couples In Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The paper assessed socio-economic determinant factors for marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis. The study adopted descriptive survey. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 13, 788 married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis. A sample of 300 married men and women was selected. The researcher utilized purposive sampling technique since the research requires the sample to satisfy the certain prerequisite to the research purpose. Socio-economic Status and Marital Stability Questionnaire (SSMSQ) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. A reliability coefficient of 0.88 (88%) was obtained using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. In other words, the reliability index of 0.88 shows that the instrument was 88 percent reliable. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that income level, couples level of education and occupational level of couples are determinant factors for marital stability among couples in the area. The study further found no significant influence of social class on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study concludes that socio-economic factors influence marital stability in the area. The study finally recommends among others that married couples should see themselves as one body in terms of their financial status as the income level one acquires is also the income of the other so as to bridge the gap between financial inequalities among them as this will promote marital harmony among couples.

Key Words: *Marriage, marital stability, socioeconomic determinants, divorce*

Date of Submission: 13-02-2022

Date of Acceptance: 28-02-2022

I. Introduction

In every society, marriage is an indispensable institution which has been described by many scholars as one of the important and fundamental human relationship. Establishment of marital institution ushers in a family that is socially, legally and culturally and sometimes religiously ordained based on regulated laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that stipulate the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their children. Marriage is a social institution, and thus both rates of marital stability and its determinants may vary across time and place (Killewald, 2016).

The universal institution of marriage which is found in every society and culture is associated with its importance in meeting some human basic needs and its all-important role in the advancement of human race. A healthy marriage provides couples with psychological, emotional, social, economic and spiritual support that promote quality of life an individual lives. Even though there are socio-cultural variations in marital institution in terms regulation of laws, rules, obligations, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that are observed in instituting and maintaining marriage in every society, there however, some universal expectations and purposes for establishing marriage such as sexual gratification and regulation, division of labour between the sexes, economic production and consumption, and satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status, and companionship. The institution of marriage is religiously, culturally, and socially recognized as a union normally between a man and a woman known as husband and wife. Even though marriage is no longer a requirement for social acceptance and advancement, in every society, marriage is one of the most important and sought after social contract by individuals mostly between the ages of 18-45 years. The union institutes expectations, rights and obligations between couple, their children and even between them and outsider. It is meant to be intimate and complementary. Marriage could be contracted by traditional law and customs, or according to statutory law,

with or without religious recognition. In many societies, it is regarded as a mandatory social responsibility which is meant for life. Osuafor (1990) maintained that marital relationship must be total.

Marriage is a universal social obligation practiced in line with regulated laws, rules, customs and beliefs of a particular land. Marital union was first instituted on earth in the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve and ordained by God for the purpose of procreation and expansion of human race. Since then, marriage has been one of the most important aspect of human culture in every society and almost every culture and religion on the planet has some sort of marital ceremony. Marriage in some cultures especially in Islamic societies involves one man and multiples wives while in Christian perspective, marriage involves one man and one woman. Even though most Christians believe in the notion of "one man one wife", in Rivers State men are culturally and socially allowed to take more than one wife as it is the case in other parts of the country today. There are many personal, social and economic benefits that come with marriage which make a satisfactory difference in one's life. The society is fashioned to make life happy and meaningful for married couples (Bradbury, 2000). Marriage provides financial stability besides companionship; it allows one to have someone who will share one's feelings and experiences. It gives the spouses social and religious acceptance. Bradbury et al. (2000) maintained that marriage brings about a better sex life that is socially sanctioned, good marital health, and companion to grow old with. The institution of marriage gives the children a positive, responsive and secured social life style; brings about commitment and responsiveness in life; true love and gives a happier life. The persistence of marriage makes sense considering that the intimate relationship enshrined by marriage continues to be vital to well-being (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). A healthy marriage is expected to provide physical, social, mental, economic and sexual benefits to the couple. When marriages are stable and fulfilling, spouses are healthier, happier and live longer. Conversely, when the relationship wavers, other pillars of well-being are also at risk (Holt-Lunstad et al. 2015). One major indices of a healthy marriage aside satisfaction is having stability in marital relationship. In fact, marital stability is a parameter for marital satisfaction.

Kourosh et al. (2020) maintained that stability of the family structure is dependent on the couple's relationship quality. Dysfunctional marital relationships or unsuccessful marriages according to them not only threaten couples' mental health but also endanger the survival of the family unit. Uwe (2000) viewed marital stability as the blending of all the efforts of marriage, culminating into the bond of love and oneness. This process of unity the author stated, involves the blending of spouse's mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical differences into a harmonious relationship within the marital bond. Marital unity has to do with the process whereby couples engage in emotional, spiritual, financial, social, mental, sexual, physical, and educational adjustment to themselves and their children (Nwoye in Okorodudu, 2010). Marital stability is the likelihood that the marriage will stay intact, without dissolution or divorce. Included in this definition are the cognitions or thoughts about the marriage, affective states or feelings pertaining to the marriage, and behaviors taken to maintain stability or move toward separation. Mitchell and Plauche (2016) defined marital stability as remaining legally married without divorce, physical separation, or legal separation. According to them, marital stability is related to but different from other elements of a healthy marriage such as marital adjustment, marital quality, marital satisfaction, and marital success. Stability in marriages can be affected by different socio-economic factors such as financial stress, low income, low educational attainment, and unemployment, young age at marriage, parental divorce, and dissimilarity to spouse, religiosity, and serial premarital cohabitation.

Socioeconomic status plays a vital role in helping couples pursue and maintain intimacy and healthy marital relationship. Socio-economic status provides couples with necessary social and economic elements that determine the quality of social and economic life of couples. Some of the socio-economic factors that affects the quality of marriage with regards to marital stability or harmonious relationship between couples include: Income level of couples, occupational status, educational qualification and social status of couples. Social-economic status of a family may determine the level of harmony in a given home. For instance, when a family is in abject poverty; where they barely feed, or have little or no resources to foot their bills, there may be conflict. Socioeconomic status affects in many ways the stability of couples in marriage.

Similarly, the level of couple's education could also affect the stability of the home. Ojukwu et al notes that education does not only provide basic knowledge and skills to improve health and livelihood, but it empowers men and women to take their rightful place in their homes, society and development process. Education offers men and women the social standing and buoyancy to influence decisions in the family. Educating young men and women is very crucial in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty in the family (Fehintola, 2009). Couple's level of education plays a roles in their understanding of marital responsibilities and obligations also determines their approach to partner's idiosyncrasies. It is on this premise that most men become weary to marrying women who have acquired higher education. Most men believe that it is easier for them to be able to have control over women who do not have more than a school certificate education or those who did not attend school at all regardless of their own educational background. This is with the belief that such women will not see them as equals and as such give them enough respect and thereby enabling them master of the home (Ojukwu, 2014). In this part of the world, the man is the chief executive of the family with wife and children taking the position of subordinates. This assertion has been supported by many authors such as Asana

(2000) who notes that the role of the man in the Nigerian culture is that of a master and controller of home. He further stated that he wants to maintain this role all the time and does not want a situation that will militate against it lest society sees him as a weakling. On this assumption, most men find it difficult to go into marriage contract with women who possess higher educational, economic and social status than them.

However, when a man has a disproportionate educational advantage over his wife it could create interpersonal imbalance between them. For instance, a graduate marrying a primary school certificate holder, will soon realize that their varying social status could create gap between himself and the wife especially when relating to other people belonging to their varying social groups with varying societal values that cannot match. This could be a source of conflict and possible failure of their marriage (Kumuyi, 2004). It may be presumed that such gap could be filled by time when the couple must have grown to understand themselves better with time. Nwokocha (2002) noted that a woman with primary school certificate who did not bother to know how to relate to people in her graduate husband's social class will with time learn more about her in her marriage if she has to succeed, and this also applies to the man. Some men, due to the exposure in higher institutions of learning believe that they will be more compatible with women who are also well educated like themselves (Eze, 2002). They believe they will be able to effectively communicate with such women and be easily understood by them. Many at times they may discover that their wives are hardly at home due to demands of jobs that are as time consuming as those of their husbands (Becker et al. in Ojukwu et al., 2016).

Socio-economic variables cannot be overlooked when considering factors that can affect stability in marriages. In a poor home for instance, there are many problematic things that happen. The issue of infidelity, chaos and lack of love and affection in the home may likely occur. And in any home where there is no love, no affection, no trust, no fidelity, the foundation of the marriage will collapse and crumble like a pack of cards. In families going through financial difficulty, in most cases there is so much misunderstanding among the couples which in turn may lead to divorce or separation among the couples. In families today, the researcher observed that socioeconomic status affects marital stability in many ways. There has been a drop in the notion of marital quality and stability which lessens people's commitments, sacrifices and investment of energy, time and lost opportunity that are essential to making marriages succeed. It is against the backdrop that this study was birthed.

Statement of the Problem

The prevalence of divorce in our contemporary society is increasing every day as a result of myriads of factors ranging from personal-social to economic. Gradually, marital separation, divorce and remarriage are becoming common phenomena in Nigeria and elsewhere in the world as people move in and out of marriage like customers' visit to supermarkets for shopping. Some of the reasons for these social anomalies in families are socio-economic related which are basic ingredients for a healthy and stable family.

Marital crisis and instability give birth to unstable family which has been severally associated with objectionable and maladaptive behaviour among youths who cause social unrest to the society. No wonder most of the culprits of drug abuse, rape, cultism, armed robbery and kidnapping have common history of unstable and low income family. The high rate of crime and criminality in most societies in both developed and developing countries is not unconnected with quest for socio-economic advancement as a result of unsatisfactory state of affairs in homes such as marital disharmony. In this contemporary society, there is hardly any day that passes without reports of armed robbery, kidnapping, pipeline vandalism, sexual abuse and other illicit and antisocial behaviours from mass media. This ugly trend has become a source of concern to government, counsellors, opinion leaders, researchers and stakeholders in the education industry as questions arise on the role of parents in producing well-adjusted individuals who are assets rather than liability to the society. One major family related ill that has been mostly pinpointed as a factor responsible for behavioural problems among family offspring is marital instability.

Consequently, marital stability has been subjected to series of exploratory analysis to ascertain factors that promote or affect it. Ojukwu (2013) noted that home economics and home makers marriage counselors, ministers of various churches and perhaps even family social scientists and social welfare officers may possess a great wisdom about how to achieve and maintain happy, satisfying and stable marriage, but such knowledge is hardly based on any systematic research. Theoretical and empirical literatures abound on marital stability with evidences on the influence of personal and social factors on marital stability but truly scientific evidence about the impact of socio-economic variable on marital stability has been so little and limited. It is on this note that this study sought to investigate whether socio-economic variables could be determinant factors of marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt Metropolis. Additionally, because of the limited attention given to this area of research, this study focused on addressing the problems raised so as to fill the gap in knowledge using married couples in Port-Harcourt Metropolis.

Aim/Objectives of the Study

The study was aimed to investigate socio-economic determinants of marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis. Specifically, the objective of the study are:

1. To ascertain whether income level influences marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State
2. To determine the influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State
3. To ascertain whether level of education influences marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State
4. To investigate whether social class influences marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

Research questions

1. To what extent does income level influence marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?
2. To what extent does occupational status influence marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?
3. To what extent does level of education influence marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?
4. To what extent does social class influence marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State
2. There is no significant influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State
3. There is no significant influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State
4. There is no significant influence of social status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

II. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 13, 788 married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis. A sample of 300 married men and women was selected. The researcher utilized purposive sampling technique since the research requires the sample to satisfy the certain prerequisite to the research purpose. Socio-economic Status and Marital Stability Questionnaire (SSMSQ) was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. A reliability coefficient of 0.88 (88%) was obtained using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. In other words, the reliability index of 0.88 shows that the instrument was 88 percent reliable. The Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, respectively was used in scoring the items in the questionnaire. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally to the respondents. This was done to ensure the return of the instrument. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while independent t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

III. Results and Discussion

Research Question One

To what extent does financial status influences marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 4.1: Analysis of Data on the influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

S/N	Statements/Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	Couples from affluent families are more stable in their marriages than couples from poor homes	300	2.78	0.88	A
2	Income level of couples determines the extent of marital harmony	300	3.17	0.94	A

Socio-Economic Determinants Of Marital Stability Among Married Couples In Port-..

3	Marital instability is more common in low income families	300	3.35	0.91	A
4	There is no relationship between socio-economic status and marital stability among couples	300	2.47	0.90	D
5	Divorce is more common among high income families	300	2.38	0.93	D
	Poor couples maintain stable marriages than rich couples				D
6		300	2.45	0.78	
Grand Mean			2.76		

The table above shows the data presentation and analysis for the influence of income of couples on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The data showed that item 1, 2, & 3 are well above the criterion mean of 2.50, while item 4, 5, & 6 are well below the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that respondents disagreed on the above items with mean scores less than 2.5. However, the grand mean of 2.76 which is greater than the criterion mean shows that majority of the respondents agreed on the influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Research Question Two

To what extent does occupational status influence marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 4.2: Analysis of Data on the influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

S/N	Statements/Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	The type of job my partner does is affecting our marital harmony	300	3.18	0.88	A
2	Couples who stay away from home due the nature of their job usually have unstable marriages	300	2.67	0.94	A
3	Most divorces are caused by poor communication occasioned by the nature of couples' occupation	300	3.35	0.91	A
4	There is no significant relationship between level of occupation and marital stability	300	2.27	0.90	D
5	Our occupation cannot be a source of conflict for separation and divorce	300	2.42	0.93	D
6	Marital instabilities are not caused by level of occupation	300	2.45	0.89	D
Grand Mean			2.72		

The table above shows the data presentation and analysis for the influence of level of occupation of couples on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The data showed that item 1, 2, & 3 are well above the criterion mean of 2.50, while item 4, 5, & 6 are well below the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that respondents disagreed on the above items with mean scores less than 2.5. However, the grand mean of 2.72 which is greater than the criterion mean shows that majority of the respondents agreed on the influence of level of occupation on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Research Question Three

To what extent does level of education influences marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 4.3: Analysis of Data on the influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State

S/N	Statements/Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	The prevalence of divorce is high among families that both partners acquired higher education	300	2.58	0.88	A

Socio-Economic Determinants Of Marital Stability Among Married Couples In Port-..

2	When an uneducated man marries a highly educated woman there is high likelihood of marital instability in the future	300	3.37	0.94	A
3	Clash of interest usually result to divorce among educated couples which is not the case among uneducated couples	300	3.41	0.94	A
4	When the two partners are not educated there is relative peace and stability in the marriage as it is not the case in educated partners	300	3.17	0.90	A
5	The incident of divorce among illiterate families is very infinitesimal Unstable marriage is a common phenomenon among uneducated families	300	3.45	0.93	A
6		300	2.28	0.80	D
Grand Mean			3.04		

The table above shows the data presentation and analysis on level of education as a determinant factor for marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The data showed that item 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 are well above the criterion mean of 2.50, while item 6 is well below the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that majority of the respondents disagreed on item 6 (unstable marriage is a common phenomenon among uneducated families) with mean score of 2.28 which is less than 2.50 criterion mean. However, the grand mean of 3.04 which is greater than the criterion mean shows that majority of the respondents agreed level of education is a determinant factor for marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Research Question Four

To what extent does social class influence marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 4.4: Analysis of Data on the influence of social class on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

S/N	Statements/Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remarks
1	Middle class couples enjoy stable marriage more than upper class	300	2.12	0.88	D
2	Middle class couples maintain more healthy communication between husband and wife than those in the upper class thereby enjoying more stable marriage	300	2.17	0.94	D
3	There is no relationship between social class and marital stability among couples	300	2.89	0.91	A
4	Divorce and separation is not determined by social class of couples	300	2.47	0.90	D
5	Middle class couples keep more stable marriage than lower class couples	300	2.38	0.93	D
6	Separation in marriage is more common among the lower class than the middle class	300	2.41	0.89	D
Grand Mean			2.40		

The table above shows the data presentation and analysis on social class as a determinant factor for marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. The data showed that item 1, 2, 4 & 6 are well below the criterion mean of 2.50, while item 3 is well above the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that majority of the respondents agreed on item 3 (there is no relationship between social class and marital stability among couples) with mean score of 2.89 which is greater than 2.50 criterion mean. However, the grand mean of 2.40 which is less than the criterion mean shows that majority of the respondents disagreed on the items raised which supports insignificant influence of social class on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

Summary of t-test on the mean rating of couples on the influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
HIGH	102	2.78	.63	299	82.86	.010	Significant
LOW	198	2.43	.99				

The data in table 5 above revealed that the mean rating and standard deviation of couples from high income level on the influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State are 2.78 and .63 respectively, while mean rating and standard deviation of couples from low income level on the influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State are 2.43 and .99 respectively, t-cal (82.86) $P < 0.05$. Hence the null hypothesis one that states that there is no significant influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is retained. There is significant influence of income level on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Summary of t-test on the mean rating of couples on the influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
High	125	3.28	.73	399	58.72	.030	Significant
Low	175	2.95	.87				

The data in table 6 above revealed that the mean rating and standard deviation of couples from high occupational status on the influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State are 3.28 and .73 respectively, while mean rating and standard deviation of couples from low occupational status on the influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State are 2.95 and .87 respectively, t-cal (58.72) $P < 0.05$. Hence the null hypothesis two that states that there is no significant influence of occupational status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is retained. This result means that occupational status influences marital stability among married couples.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

Summary of t-test on the mean rating of couples on the influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in metropolis, Rivers State

Variable	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Educated	130	3.31	.75	399	83.76	.011	Significant
Uneducated	170	2.98	.89				

The data in table 7 above revealed that the mean rating and standard deviation of educated couples on the influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State are 3.31 and .75 respectively, while mean rating and standard deviation of uneducated couples on the influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State are 2.98 and .89 respectively, t-cal (83.76) $P < 0.05$. Hence the null hypothesis three that states that there is no significant influence of level of education on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that level of education influences marital stability among married couples in metropolis, Rivers State.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant influence of social status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

Summary of t-test on the mean rating of married couples on the influence of social status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

STS	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
High	89	2.51	.79	399	78.81	1.06	Not Significant
Low	211	3.13	.88				

The data in table 8 above revealed that the mean rating and standard deviation of married couples from high social class on the influence of social status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State are 2.61 and .82 respectively, while mean rating and standard deviation of married couples from low social class on the influence of social status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State are 2.53 and .90 respectively, t-cal (78.81) $P > 0.05$. Hence the null hypothesis four that states that there is no significant influence of social status on marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State is accepted while the alternate hypothesis is rejected. This result implies that social class does not influence marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

4.2 Discussion of Results

The result of the study from research question/hypothesis one revealed that income level of couples influences marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, when the mean rating of the married couple on the influence Financial status on marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt City Local Government Area, Rivers State were subjected to SPSS analysis $P < 0.05$. This finding is in agreement with the study of Okhakhume et al. (2016) who observed that socioeconomic status influences and domestic violence among couples living in Nigeria.

The result of the study from research question/hypothesis two revealed that occupational status influences marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, when the mean responses of the married couples on the influence of occupational status on marital stability among married couples in were subjected to SPSS analysis the couples agreed that couples who are too busy with their job and do not spend quality time with their families usually have strained relationship with their spouses leading to marital instability. This finding of this study is in conflict with the study of Omolayo et al. (2013) whose study did not find any significant influence on both marital conflict and marital satisfaction rather they found employment status to have a significant influence on marital satisfaction.

The result of the study from research question/hypothesis three revealed that Level of education influences marital stability among married couples. When the mean responses of the married couples on the influence of Level of education on marital stability among married couples were subjected to SPSS analysis $P < 0.05$. This finding is in agreement with the study Ojukwu et al. (2016) found a positive relationship between married persons' educational attainment and marital stability while the relationship between those with medium level of educational attainment and their marital stability was not significant.

Finally, the result of the study from research/hypothesis four revealed that there is no significant influence of social status on marital stability among couples. When the means rating of the students were subjected to SPSS analysis the $P > 0.05$. This finding is in agreement with the study of Animasahun and Fatile (2011) who observed in their study on patterns of marital instability among married couples that there was no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different social status.

IV. Conclusion

Socio-economic variables is are fundamental needs that promote healthy social and economic life of a family. The study revealed socio-economic determinants of marital stability among married couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis. Some of the socioeconomic determinant factors of marital stability examined include: income level of couples, couple's level of education, occupational status of couples and social class. The study found a significant influence of three determinant factors investigated aside social class. Based on this, the study concludes that socioeconomic variables are determinant factors of marital stability among couples in Port-Harcourt metropolis.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings, the paper recommends as follows:

1. Married couples should see themselves as one body in terms of their financial status as the income level one acquires is also the income of the other so as bridge the unequal financial gap between them. This will promote marital harmony among couples
2. Husbands or wives who marry uneducated partners should encourage them to enroll in adult education programmes to enable them acquire formal education
3. Husbands or wives who have higher occupational demands than their partners are encouraged to try as much as possible to spend quality time with their partners at home.
4. couples should not hesitate to involve in socially acceptable activities that will boost the social status of the family

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