

Full Length Research

Influence of Marital Conflict on the Academic Performance of Student's in Ikot Ekpene Local Government, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

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Marriage is the united platform between man and woman. Moreover it fetches an intimacy and the colour of evergreen relationship. The research on influence of marital conflict on the academic performance of students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, which is aimed at scamming the issue of marital conflict on the academic performance of students. A survey design was adopted for the study. The population for the study were Senior Secondary Schools two (SS2) students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government with a total sample space of two hundred (200) students. A random sampling method was applied; the likert 5- point rating scale was used. Three hypotheses and three research question where stated to guide the study. Pearson (*r*) product moment correlation coefficient; Pearson (*r*) ranking coefficient and Chi-square (χ^2) were used for the data analysis and the results obtained revealed that marital conflict has an adverse effect on student's academics performances.

KEY WORD: Marital conflict, Academic Performance, Students and Parental Violence

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the union of a man and a woman from different backgrounds to become husband and wife and spent most of their life together. Marriage brings about intimate relationship between the couple. One major factor that plays a large role in child development is the witnessing of marital conflict (Cummings, M. and Davies, P. 1994); research has shown that children who witness higher level of marital conflict are more likely to internalize stress resulting in a multitude of negative somatic symptoms including frequent illness,

physiological indications of chronic stress, high levels of blood pressure, heart rate reaction (Cohen, S; *et. al.* 1997). Marital conflicts happen when one or both persons are self- centred. One selfishly wants what he wants without consideration for the capabilities, plans, or goals of his spouse. This research on influence of marital conflict on the academic performance of students in Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. These problems that bring about marital conflict is attributed to lack of understanding among couples,

poverty, background, social influence, early marriage etc. all these have their consequences which are fighting, quarrelling, maltreatment, emotional stress, neglect, lack of family affection, being away from home which has resulted to a great number of divorces and separation. Increase in marital conflicts also makes children more susceptible to feelings of frequent and intense interpersonal conflict, which research has shown to be a greater predictor of childhood adjustment problems from divorce alone (Cummings, M. and Davies, P. 1994). Children who experience relatively high level of marital conflict were associated with having less secure attachments with parents and peers (Lindsey, S. *et. al.* 2009). These factors are the most common emotional support structures among these individuals.

Research Questions

This study shall provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the influence of parental violence on academic performance of students?
2. How does parental separation influence the academic performance of students?
3. To what extent does child-parent attachment influence academic performance of students?

Research Hypotheses

To make decisions on the answers to the research questions, the following hypotheses will be tested to guide this study at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Whether parental violence has significant influence on the academic performance of students.
2. If there is any significant influence of parental separation on the academic performance of students.
3. Whether child-parent attachment has any influence on student's academic performance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Children from violent homes manifested significantly more internalizing problems compared to children from non-violent homes (Zimiles, H; and Lee, E.; 1991). Results from study showed that marital difficulties and adolescents internalizing and externalizing problems were interrelated with each other (Cui, M *et. al.* 2007). Marital conflicts influenced children and had predicted delinquency and depressive symptoms in adolescents, likewise adolescent children's maladaptive behaviours appears to place a strain on their parents marriage. Studies show that lack of resolution of parental conflict has been related as problematic for children's

psychological well being (Cummings, M. and Davies, P. 1994). Silent conflict results in feeling of confusion and helplessness (Pryor, J. and Patterson, R. 2007). Due to the absence of explicit resolution, children misread their parent's behaviour and detected conflict when there was none (Grych, J. *et. al.* 2003).

Effect of Parental Conflict on Physical Development

Research showed that women who reported inter parental violence were less likely to report having a regular primary pediatric provider for their child (Bair-Merritt, M. *et. al.* 2009). Marital conflicts were examined as a predictor of the quantity and quality of sleep in a sample of 8 – 9 years old (El-Sheikh, M. *et. al.* 2006). Results showed that exposure to marital conflict is related with a reduced amount of sleep and poorer quality of sleep, increased sleep fragmentation, higher level of subjective sleepiness (Davies, P. *et. al.* 2002) explained that marital conflict may be more disruptive of sleep in children if they perceive it as destructive or if they are very anxious or fearful about their own safety. Girls slept longer and had less activity during the night when compared with boys.

Marital Conflict and Students Academic Performance

Conflict influences family characteristics and processes like economic position and parental responsiveness which in turn is associated with children's cognitive performance (Clarke - Stewart, K. *et. al.* 2000). A longitudinal study on 340 families found that children in separated or divorced families performed more poorly on tests of cognitive ability at the age of 15 and 24 months than that of children from continuously married and intact families. Marital conflicts affect children continuously (Sun, Y and Li, Y. 2002). Parental conflict places youth at risk for difficulties in academic achievement (Unger, D. *et. al.* 2000). Result showed that the connection of parental conflict and academic achievement operated at least two ways; mediated by family support and directly. High levels of parental conflict and family discord may relate to lower motivation by parents to be involved with their adolescents in schools related activities. It is commonly believed that divorce has a negative impact on children's cognitive performance. Deficits of cognitive performance have been found when children in divorced or father-absent families are compared with children from intact families particularly in the area of quantitative performance (Allison, P. and Furstenberg, F. 1989). But the findings are actually rather mixed and depends on a variety of factors such as gender and age of the child, length of time since the divorce and the type of cognitive skills tested.

Marital Conflict and Parent-Child Relationship

A study on children from birth to age 16 showed that children who experienced parental separation when they were young felt less closely attached to their parents than children who experienced parental separation at older age. The influences of parental conflict on children attachment to parent also depend on the sex of the child. Studies have shown that girls in late adolescent are most sensitive to parent’s marital problems when compared to boys and to younger girls (Zimiles, H; and Lee, E. 1991). Research also shows that parents who engage in continuous conflict have less time for effective parenting and thereby tends to be harsh and conflict prone in their interactions with children (Cummings, E. *et. al.*1991).

METHODOLOGY

Population of the Study

A total of two hundred (200) Senior Secondary two (SS2) students were drawn from eight (8) Secondary Schools in Ikot Ekepe local government, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Research Design

The design used in this study was the descriptive survey design as it involves the collection of data to accurately and objectively describe existing phenomena, between 200 students that were assess on the influence of marital conflict on the academic performance of students.

Direct visitation to some selected schools in Ikot Ekepe Local Government Area by the researcher who interact with the students from the permission of the school’s Principal and the class teachers. A questionnaire titled “Marital Conflict and student Academic performance” (MCOSAP) was used for data collection with five likert 5-point rating scale.

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected for this study were analyzed using: the Chi-square (χ^2) test: Chi-square is a measure of relationship, association or independence.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O_{ij} - E_{ij})^2}{E_{ij}} \text{ ----- (1)}$$

Where O_{ij} is the observed frequency and E_{ij} is the expected frequency respectively. To determine the degree of freedom; the formula for the degree of freedom (df) is as follows:

$$Df = (C-1)*(R-1) \text{ ----- (2)}$$

Where C is the Column and R is the Row respective; it was tested at 0.05 degree level of significance and the null hypothesis will be accepted or rejected based on the weight of critical and calculated value of Chi- square (χ^2).

From table 1, we consider two variables Strongly Agreed ‘SA’ and Strongly Disagreed ‘SD’ which has 100% level of acceptability / unacceptability respectively by students under study. In table 2, we which to test the level of correlation and the significant different in the believed of two hundred (200) students that was selected at random to comment on the influence of marital conflict on the academic performance of student’s in Ikot Ekepe local government, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

By using Pearson (r) product moment correlation coefficient for the analysis, the research hypotheses, were used to make decisions on the answers to the research questions about the study at 0.05, level of significance for both the SA and SD.

By putting the above values in table 2 into equation 3 where, $n = 15$.

$$\gamma = \frac{n \sum SASD - \sum SA \sum SD}{\sqrt{[n \sum SA^2 - (\sum SA)^2] [n \sum SD^2 - (\sum SD)^2]} \text{ ----- (3)}$$

By using equation 3, (Modify from, Samuel T. Ebong, 2015) we have;

$$\begin{aligned} \gamma &= \frac{15 \sum 32848 - \sum 679 \sum 814}{\sqrt{[15 \sum 32531^2 - (\sum 679)^2] [15 \sum 56804^2 - (\sum 814)^2]} \\ \gamma &= \frac{492720 - 552706}{\sqrt{[487965 - 461041] [852060 - 662596]} \\ \gamma &= \frac{-59986}{\sqrt{[26924] [189464]} \\ \gamma &= \frac{-59986}{\sqrt{5101128736}} = \frac{-59986}{7142218658} \\ \gamma &= -0.839879075 \\ \gamma &= -0.8398 \\ \gamma &\approx -0.839 \end{aligned}$$

By using the values, $\gamma_{table} = 0.441$ and $\gamma_{cal} = -0.839$ at $\alpha = 0.05$, 95%, $n = 15$ were used to test the hypothesis. The result shows that there is significance difference between SA and SD students; but there is no correlation between SA and SD students, the parental violence and child-parent attachment has a significant influence on the student’s academic performance in Ikot Ekepe local government.

Also, by using the Pearson’s (γ) ranking, to test the research hypotheses, by make decisions on the research questions, of the study at 0.05 level of significance as shown in table 3.

$$\text{Let, } \sum XY = \sum SASD \text{ ----- (4)}$$

That is, equation (4) is given as; the value of strongly

Table 1: These indicate the summary of data collected from the field.

ITEMS	A	SA	D	SD	N	TOTAL
1	40	40	80	25	15	200
2	30	23	87	40	20	200
3	56	50	45	25	24	200
4	40	40	60	50	10	200
5	39	30	50	65	16	200
6	0	30	50	150	15	200
7	50	60	28	50	12	200
8	45	52	45	48	10	200
9	60	56	40	40	4	200
10	43	40	60	52	5	200
11	40	50	40	60	10	200
12	40	50	45	80	5	200
13	50	43	40	50	17	200
14	52	57	45	40	10	200
15	50	58	40	39	5	200
TOTAL	635	679	755	814	178	3061

Table 2: Showing Pearson correlation coefficient items for SA and SD Argument.

ITEMS	SA	SD	SASD	SA ²	SD ²
1	40	25	1000	1600	625
2	23	40	920	529	1600
3	50	25	1250	2500	625
4	40	50	2000	1600	2500
5	30	65	1950	900	4225
6	30	150	4500	900	22500
7	60	50	3000	3600	2500
8	52	48	2496	2704	2304
9	56	40	2240	3136	1600
10	40	52	2080	1600	2704
11	50	60	3000	2500	3600
12	50	80	4000	2500	6400
13	43	50	2150	1849	2500
14	57	40	2280	3249	1600
15	58	39	2262	3364	1521
TOTAL	Σ679	Σ814	Σ32848	Σ32531	Σ56804

agreed students (SA) and strongly disagreed students (SD).

$$\therefore \sum XY = \sum SASD = \frac{1}{2} \left\{ \frac{n(n^2-1)}{6} - \sum d^2 \right\} = \frac{1}{12} n (n^2 - 1) - \frac{1}{2} \sum d^2 \dots\dots\dots (*)$$

The computation of the coefficient is based on ranks of the sample used for the Pearson's γ , between two variables $X = SA$ and $Y = SD$ is defined by the relations.

$$\gamma = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{(\sum X^2)(\sum Y^2)}} = \frac{\rho}{6 \times 6y} = \frac{\text{covariance } (x,y)}{\sqrt{\text{variance } x} \sqrt{\text{variance } y}} \dots\dots (5)$$

But, $X^2 = SA^2$ and $Y^2 = SD^2$; by putting (*) into (5) we have;

$$\gamma = \frac{\frac{1}{2} n(n^2-1) - \frac{1}{2} \sum d^2}{\frac{n(n^2-1)}{12}} = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)} \dots\dots\dots (6)$$

Where n = 15 (number of items) d = SA_R - SD_R; d²; SA_R

Table 3: Showing result the calculated values of; SA_R, SD_R, d and d².

ITEMS	SA	SD	SA _R	SD _R	d = SA _R - SD _R	d ²
1	40	25	8.00	10.00	-2.00	4.00
2	23	40	10.00	8.00	2.00	4.00
3	50	25	6.00	10.00	-4.00	16.00
4	40	50	8.00	6.00	2.00	4.00
5	30	65	9.00	3.00	6.00	36.00
6	30	150	9.00	1.00	8.00	64.00
7	60	50	1.00	6.00	-5.00	25.00
8	52	48	5.00	7.00	-2.00	4.00
9	56	40	4.00	8.00	-4.00	16.00
10	40	52	8.00	5.00	3.00	9.00
11	50	60	6.00	4.00	2.00	4.00
12	50	80	6.00	2.00	4.00	16.00
13	43	50	7.00	6.00	1.00	1.00
14	57	40	3.00	8.00	-5.00	25.00
15	58	39	2.00	9.00	-7.00	49.00
						Σd² = 277

Table 4: Indicating the Observed and Expected frequencies to item 1 to 5.

ITEMS	A	SA	D	SD	N	TOTAL
1	40 (41)	40 (36.6)	80 (64.4)	25 (41)	15 (17)	200
2	30 (41)	23 (36.6)	87 (64.4)	40 (41)	20 (17)	200
3	56 (41)	50 (36.6)	45 (64.4)	15 (41)	24 (17)	200
4	40 (41)	40 (36.6)	60 (64.4)	50 (41)	10 (17)	200
5	39 (41)	30 (36.6)	50 (64.4)	65 (41)	16 (17)	200
TOTAL	200	183	322	195	85	1000

and AS_R are correlation coefficient for the strongly agreed students 'SA' and strongly disagreed students 'SD'; (Dass, H. K; 2006), (Samuel T. EBONG *et. al.*, 2014)

By using equation (6), the results obtained is given as below,

$$\gamma = 1 - \frac{6\sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)} \text{----- (6)}$$

$$\gamma = 1 - \frac{6\sum 227}{15(15^2 - 1)}$$

$$\gamma = 1 - \frac{1362}{15 (225 - 1)} = 1 - \frac{1362}{15(224)}$$

$$= 1 - \frac{1362}{3360} = 1 - 0.405357142$$

$$\gamma = 0.59462858$$

$$\gamma = 0.59462$$

By comparing the values, $\gamma_{table} = 0.441$ and $\gamma_{cal} = 0.594$ at $\alpha = 0.05$, 95%, $n = 15$ were used to test the

hypothesis. The result shows that there is significance difference between SA and SD students; but there is a correlation between SA and SD students but parental violence and child-parent attachment has a significant influence on the student's academic performance in Ikot Ekpenen local government.

By using equation (1), with solution in table 4; the Chi-square $\chi^2_{Cal} = 73.548$ and the Chi-square $\chi^2_{tab} = 26.2962$ at 0.05 degree of confident with $df = 16$. The calculated value for Chi-square (χ^2) is greater than the critical value; hence the Null hypothesis which states that "parental violence has no significant influence on the academic performance of students" is rejected.

By considering the solution in table 5, also, from equation (1), the Chi-square $\chi^2_{Cal} = 249.268$ and the Chi-square $\chi^2_{tab} = 26.2962$ at 0.05 degree of confident with $df = 16$. The calculated value for Chi-square (χ^2) is greater than the critical value; hence, the Null hypothesis which states that "there is no significant influence of parental

Table 5: showing the observed and expected frequencies from 6 to 10.

ITEMS	A	SA	D	SD	N	TOTAL
1	0 (39.6)	30 (47.6)	5 (35.6)	150 (68)	15 (9.2)	200
2	50 (39.6)	60 (47.6)	28 (35.6)	50 (68)	12 (9.2)	200
3	45 (39.6)	52 (47.6)	45 (35.6)	48 (68)	10 (9.2)	200
4	60 (39.6)	56 (47.6)	40 (35.6)	40 (68)	4 (9.2)	200
5	43 (39.6)	40 (47.6)	60 (35.6)	52 (68)	5 (9.2)	200
TOTAL	198	238	178	205	46	1000

Table 6: showing the observed and expected frequencies for item 11 to 15.

ITEM	A	SA	D	SD	N	TOTAL
1	40 (46.4)	50 (47.6)	40 (42.8)	60 (53.8)	10 (9.4)	200
2	40 (46.4)	30 (47.6)	45 (42.8)	80 (53.8)	5 (9.4)	200
3	50 (64.4)	43 (47.6)	40 (42.8)	50 (53.8)	17 (9.4)	200
4	52 (46.4)	57 (47.6)	41 (42.8)	40 (53.8)	10 (9.4)	200
5	50 (46.4)	58 (47.6)	48 (42.8)	39 (53.8)	5 (9.4)	200
TOTAL	232	238	214	269	47	1000

separation on the academic performance of students" is rejected.

From the value obtained in table 6, by using equation (1) the Chi-square $\chi^2_{cal} = 47.096$ and the Chi-square $\chi^2_{tab} = 26.2962$ at 0.05 degree of confidence with $df = 16$. The calculated value for Chi-square (χ^2) is greater than the critical value; hence, the Null hypothesis which states that "child parent attachment has no significant influence on the academic performance of students" is rejected.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The principle of Likert 5- point rating scale of: Agreed, Strongly Agreed, Disagreed, Strongly Disagreed and Neutral. The Chi-square (χ^2) was used, since it involved a measure of reliability by comparing observed and expected frequency distribution; Pearson (r) product moment correlation coefficient and Pearson (r) ranking coefficient were used for the data analysis and the results obtained revealed that marital conflict has an adverse effect on student's academics performances.

It was tested at 0.05 level of significance which show that parental violence has a significant influence on the academic performance of student, there is a significant influence of parental separation on the academic performance of students and child- parent attachment has a significant influence on students academic performance which conform with other researchers on this field (Sun, Y; and Li, Y. 2002); threat, personal insult, verbal and non- verbal hostility, marital withdrawal and physical distress were associated with negative emotions which affect cognitive ability.

From the analysis of data in table 4, the calculated value 73.548 is greater than the critical value 26.296;

hence, the null hypothesis, which states that parental violence has no significant influence on the academic performance of the students, is rejected. This means that, there is a significant influence of parental violence on the academic performance of students. In table 5, the calculated value of 249.268 is greater than the critical value, therefore the null hypothesis which state that, there is no significant influence of parental separation on academic performance of students is rejected. Therefore, they exists a significant influence of parental separation on the academic performance of students. Also, using table 6, the calculated value of 47.096 is greater than the critical value of 26.296, therefore the null hypothesis which states that child parent attachment has no influence on students academic performance is rejected.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Teachers should be trained on how to detect a child who is going through emotional stress as a result of parental conflict.
2. The services of a counsellor / psychologist should be employed to provide the necessary support for such a child.
3. Marital conflict should be avoided among married couple due to the hazardous effect it may have on the academic performance of their wards.
4. Parents should make effort to resolve marital conflict before it escalates into hostilities and violence.
5. Child-parent attachment should be encouraged in families, which will influence the academic performance of their wards.

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