

DETERMINANTS OF MARITAL INSTABILITY AMONG MARRIED COUPLES IN
EZINIHITTE MBAISE IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

The marital institution is witnessing instability globally. This study investigated determinants of marital instability among married couples in Ezinihitte in Imo State, Nigeria. The population of this study consists of all literate married couples in the Imo State. A total of 337 respondents were selected using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument titled "Determinants of Marital Stability Questionnaire" (DMSQ) was used in collecting the relevant data, with Pearson reliability (r) of 0.78. Mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze the main research question; the t-test statistics were used to test five null hypotheses generated for the study. The findings showed that in order of ranking, lack of intimacy, difficulty in conversation, parental financial pressure, toxic atmosphere addictive bondage, and immoral entanglement are the determinants of marital stability. It further showed that there were no significant differences among the respondents in their perception of determinants influencing marital stability based on gender. Thus, it was recommended that Married couples should see themselves as one body in terms of intimacy, and learn to talk to each other by focusing on their feelings, wants, and desires not on the faults. This will promote marital harmony among couples.

Keywords: Marital instability, Marital conflicts, Cohabitation, Intimacy, Communication

Introduction

The universally accepted and approved beginning of the family is marriage. Marriage is a socially or culturally approved relation between and among members within the legitimate sex that is guaranteed with or without the expectation of children. It is also a socially approved union of often opposite sexes mostly to establish families. It is a universal mechanism for the distribution of the sexual capacities of members to satisfy the needs of members and society. Those in marriage may do so to satisfy their sexual needs or produce children for reasons best known to them. Anikpo & Atemie (1999).

Marriage is defined in different ways by different people. Marriage could be described

as the approved social pattern whereby two persons (male and female) establish a family. It is seen as an arrangement for recognizing legitimate sex partners in the society. It is talked of as a union permanent, at least with the intention of a man and a woman, for procreation, mutual companionship and assistance, and for providing responsible parents to raise children. Horton and Hunt, Goldthrope, Grunlan in Okujagu (1998). From a Christian perspective, marriage can be seen as a commitment between a man and a woman to each other and God. Marriage, also known as matrimony or wedlock, is a socially and frequently legally recognized union between individuals, commonly referred to as spouses. This union establishes rights and obligations

among the partners, their children, and their in-laws. Marriage is considered a culturally universal, but its definition varies across cultures, religions, and time. Typically, it is an institution where interpersonal relationships, often sexual in nature, are acknowledged or sanctioned. In some cultures, marriage is recommended or deemed compulsory before engaging in any sexual activity.

According to Wikipedia (2022), marriage is a social and legal contract that provides a sense of reliance, fosters intimacy, and offers emotional security. It is a legally and socially sanctioned union, often between a man and a woman, regulated by laws, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that define the rights and duties of the partners and confer status to their offspring (if any). The universality of marriage across different societies and cultures can be attributed to the numerous basic social and personal functions it fulfills, such as sexual gratification and regulation, division of labor between the sexes, economic production and consumption, and the fulfillment of personal needs for affection, status, and companionship. One of its most significant functions pertains to procreation, the care of children, their education and socialization, and the regulation of lines of descent. Throughout history, marriages have taken on various forms. However, marital stability can be defined as remaining legally married without divorce, physical separation, or legal separation. Marital stability is related to but distinct from marital adjustment, marital quality, marital satisfaction, and marital success. The factors that contribute to a decline in marital stability encompass financial strain, low income, limited educational attainment, unemployment, early marriage age, and parental divorce, disparities with one's spouse, religious differences, and serial premarital cohabitation. Marital stability is typically linked to favorable outcomes for adults and children. Marital stability can be understood as the longevity of a marriage, resulting from the mutual cooperation of both spouses. It is viewed as a comparison between one's optimal marital alternative and one's actual marital outcome (Lenthal, 2009). Onoyase (2017) suggests that Marriage Stability is a state in a marriage where couples enjoy healthy marital relationships, founded on effective

communication that promotes amicable conflict resolution in areas such as sex, procreation, finance, and cultural background. Some of the variables that may contribute to marriage stability include communication, sexual satisfaction, procreation, cultural background, and finance. A marriage without effective communication is highly susceptible to failure.

Statement of the Problem

Negative attitudes foster marital instability and influence subsequent actions. Empirical evidence demonstrates that marital disharmony, characterized by conflicts, mistrust, resentment, and lack of forgiveness, is prevalent among married couples in Rivers State and elsewhere, often leading to separation or divorce. This instability stems from an inability to navigate the challenges that arise in the initial stages of marriage. Factors contributing to marital instability include conflict avoidance, emotional withdrawal, differing interests, communication difficulties, financial stress from parental influences, lack of intimacy, toxic environments, substance abuse, and extramarital affairs. When marriages are plagued by these issues, couples endure rather than thrive, increasing the likelihood of marital breakdown. The research question of this study is: What factors contribute to marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State?

Aim/Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate determinants of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State. Specifically, the objective of the study is:

1. To ascertain whether lack of intimacy is a determinant influence of marital stability among married couples in Rivers State
2. To determine the influence of parental financial pressure on marital stability among married couples in Rivers State
3. To ascertain whether difficult conversation influences marital stability among married couples in Rivers State
4. To investigate whether addictive bondage and immoral entanglement influence marital stability among couples in Rivers State
5. To determine whether outsiders influence on the home and create an atmosphere of

marital instability among married couples in Rivers State

Research questions

1. To what extent does lack of intimacy a determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does parental financial pressur a determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State?
- 3 . To what extent does difficulty in conversation a determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State?
4. To what extent are addictive bondage and immoral entanglement determinants of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State?
5. To what extent do influence of outsiders a determinant of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

- 1) There is no significant influence of lack of intimacy as a determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State
- 2) There is no significant influence of parental financial pressure as a determinant of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State
- 3) There is no significant influence of difficult conversations as a determinant of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State.
- 4) There is no significant influence of addictive bondage and immoral entanglement as determinants of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State.
- 5) There is no significant influence of outsiders influencing the home and toxic atmosphere as determinants of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State

2.0. Literature Review

Factors Influencing Marital Durability among Couples:

Absence of Intimacy

Smith (2021) emphasizes the importance of intimacy in marriage, stating that when sexual

and emotional intimacy diminishes, it can lead to concerns about attractiveness and infidelity. Lack of intimacy can result in serious relationship issues such as anger, infidelity, communication breakdown, low self-esteem, and isolation, which may ultimately lead to divorce. Beasley (2022) defines intimacy as not just sex, but also includes acts like kissing, holding hands, spontaneous hugs, and cuddling or spooning at night. While a decrease in sexual intimacy is natural in long-term relationships, it can still contribute to marital instability.

Parental Financial Pressure

Onoyase (2017) highlights financial issues that are common sources of conflict in marriages, with 80% of marital conflicts being about money. Financial matters are interconnected with other aspects of a relationship, including communication, sex, spirituality, and health. Economic challenges like unemployment, housing market crises, and credit constraints can exacerbate financial stress in a marriage. In both cases, addressing these issues proactively and seeking professional help when necessary can contribute to maintaining marital stability. Mcwhinney (2021) says that financial stress is one of the leading causes of divorce. What you may not know is that the challenges can start even before you say "I do". Onoyase (2013) stated that a woman may decide to break her marriage when she discovers that the man cannot meet up financially. From observation, when a man is unable to meet up with his financial obligation in a marriage (due to unemployment or illness), he not only loses his status as the head, but he also has no say in vital decisions made in the marriage and this may bring a feeling of inferiority which can seriously hamper marital stability.

Difficulty Conversation

Olson and Defrain in Suleyiman & Zewdu (2018) have considered communication as the heart of intimate human relationships and the foundation on which all other relationships are built; they also assert that it is the key to a successful couple relationship. The ability and the willingness to communicate are among the most significant factors in maintaining a relationship (Ekot & Usoro, Anyakoha &

James, in Suleyiman & Zewdu). More and more marital failures are blamed on the inability of couples to communicate effectively (Orthner in Suleyiman & Zewdu, 2018). Effective communication is vital in marriage relationships and ineffective communication can lead to numerous family problems, including excessive family conflict, ineffective problem-solving skills, lack of intimacy, weak emotional bonding, and so on (Esere, in Suleyiman & Zewdu). Likewise, poor communication style is also associated with an increased risk of divorce and marital separation (Esere in Suleyiman & Zewdu). The trend of divorce is getting worse in Ethiopia. For instance, Tilson and Larsen's (2000) study in Ethiopia shows that forty-five percent of all first marriages end in divorce or separation within thirty years, 28% of first marriages within the first five years, 34% within ten years, and 40% within twenty years. Lewis and Spanier in Suleyiman & Zewdu (2018) in a review of the literature found that communication skills such as self-disclosure, the accuracy of nonverbal communication, the frequency of successful communication, understanding between spouses, and empathy were positively related to relationship quality and stability. Conversely, destructive communication such as criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling were all found to be significantly and negatively correlated with marital firmness and set a couple on a course toward divorce (Gottman & Levenson, in Suleyiman & Zewdu). In Suleyiman & Zewdu's (2018) study, Karney & Bradbury found that effective communication contributes to relationship stability, while inadequate communication leads to poor satisfaction and instability.

Toxic Marriage

A toxic marriage, however, is more than just occasional disagreements; it involves unhealthy mental, physical, and emotional issues caused by one or both partners, as described by Orshan & Fernandez-Mesa (2020). These issues can escalate and extinguish the relationship's spark. While a toxic marriage may initially appear healthy, subtle signs will eventually surface, such as physical abuse, substance abuse, adultery, and desertion. The consequences of a toxic marriage can be severe, leading to

anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and increased susceptibility to illnesses. Moreover, it can turn individuals into bitter, pessimistic people, negatively impacting their mental health.

Sexual immoralities and addictions

Sexual immoralities and addictions are prevalent due to the diminished view of sex as a sacred aspect of marriage. Sexual addiction can be a debilitating force, making it difficult to break free from its hold. According to Azuka (2021), sexual immorality invites spiritual consequences, including misfortunes and hardships. Immorality can lead to the loss of birthright, resulting in suffering and curses. Sexual immorality destroys dreams and destinies, leaving individuals with regret and emptiness. Adultery brings negative consequences upon families and relationships. Immorality undermines spiritual well-being, depleting energy and hindering spiritual growth. Samson's tragic experience exemplifies the dangers of sexual immorality, leading to the loss of power, vision, and destiny.

Maciver and Dimpa (2012) carried out a study on the factors influencing marital stability in Bayelsa State, Nigeria with a sample of 600 respondents (300 male and 300 female spouses). Other strata used were religion, educational level, age, and length of marriage. They found out that there is no significant difference between male and female literate spouses in their perception of factors that influence marital stability, there is no significant difference between Christians and non-Christian literate spouses in their perception of factors influencing marital stability, there is no significant difference among literate couples on factors influencing marital stability, and finally, there is no significant difference between young and old literate spouses in their perception of factors that influence marital stability.

Suleyiman and Zewdu (2018) conducted a study in Ethiopia's Oromia Region to identify factors influencing couple communication and marital stability. The research design employed a community-based cross-sectional survey. Proportionately stratified sampling and simple random sampling were utilized to select 390 respondents from Assela Town's 8 kebeles. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics

(percentages, means, and standard deviations), independent sample t-tests, ANOVAs, and Pearson correlation coefficients. The independent sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in marital communication based on respondents' sex.

Onoyase (2017) examined factors associated with marital stability among married couples in North Central Nigeria. Four hypotheses were developed for the study. The 'Determinants of Marriage Stability Questionnaire (DOMSQ)' was developed and used for data collection. The instrument had established content and facial validity, with a reliability coefficient of 0.87.- Nine hundred and ninety copies of the questionnaire were administered to respondents in Kogi and Benue States by eight research assistants. Nine hundred and eighty-three copies were returned, yielding a 99.3% response rate. Hypothesis testing using Z statistics at a 0.05 significance level indicated no significant gender difference in identifying childlessness as a determinant of marital stability. There was no significant difference between old and young married couples in their identification of cultural background as determinant of marriage stability, there was no significant difference between married couples from Kogi and Benue States in their identification of communication as determinant of marriage stability. One of the recommendations is that couples who are faced with the problem of childlessness should seek medical assistance and also be positive about such an outcome.

Nwamadi (2022) assessed a paper on socio-economic determinant factors for marital stability among couples in the Port-Harcourt metropolis. The study adopted a descriptive survey. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 13, 788 married couples in the Port-Harcourt metropolis. A sample of 300 married men and women was used. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. A reliability coefficient of 0.88 (88%) was obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to answer the research questions while an independent t-test was used to test the

null hypotheses at a 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 the Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study concludes that socioeconomic factors influence marital stability in the area.

3.0. Methodology

The study is a survey and adopted an Ex-Post Facto design. The population of this study consists of all literate married couples in Rivers State. A total of 337 respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Egbule and Okobia (2012, p. 128) maintained that the purposive sampling method allows the researcher to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population under study. The instrument titled "Determinants of Marital Stability Questionnaire" (DMSQ) was used in collecting the relevant data from the respondents with a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The instrument is a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points, Agree (A), 3 points, Disagree (D), 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point. The instrument had facial and content validity. Mean scores were used to analyze the main research question, t-test statistics were used to test five research questions, and null hypotheses were generated for the study. The findings showed that in order of ranking, lack of intimacy, difficulty in conversation, parental financial pressure, toxic atmosphere addictive bondage, and immoral entanglement are the determinants of marital instability. It further showed that there were no significant differences among the respondents in their perception of factors influencing marital stability based on gender. Thus, some recommendations were made in line with the findings.

4.0. Presentation of Results

Research Question One: To what extent does lack of intimacy a determinant influence marital instability among married couples in Rivers State?

Table 4.1: Analysis of Data on the lack of intimacy as a determinant of marital stability among couples in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	Male couple Mean	SD	Female couple Mean	SD
1	Partner have no time for sex	337	3.06	0.4	3.63	0.64
2	Lack of non-physical intimacy	337	2.57	1.01	2.83	1.35
3	Lack of emotional connection	337	2.51	1.09	2.69	0.90
4	Relationship dissatisfaction	337	2.97	0.92	3.08	0.92
5	Stress leads to lack of intimacy	337	3.47	0.7	3.51	0.50
6	Low self esteem can affect couple's relationship	337	3.83	1.11	3.88	1.11
7	Marital conflict	337	3.43	0.12	3.75	0.40
8	Rejection can result in a marriage without intimacy	337	3.88	1.01	3.73	1.12
9	Resentment can result in a marriage without money	337	2.08	1.36	2.69	1.08
10	Not cultivating the habit of complimentary & appreciation	337	3.51	0.49	3.66	0.41
Grand total		31.31	8.21	37.08	8.43	

Table 1 shows the responses of male and female lack of intimacy as determinants of marriage stability among married couples. The result indicated that both male and female married couples lack intimacy such as the Partner having no time for sex, Lack of non-physical intimacy, Lack of emotional connection, relationship dissatisfaction, Stress leads to lack of intimacy, marital conflict, and rejection can result in a marriage without intimacy, resentment can result in a marriage without money, not cultivating the habit of

complimentary & appreciation. From the result, Low self-esteem can affect a couple's relationship and Rejection can result in a marriage without intimacy has the highest mean.

Research Question Two: To what extent does parental financial pressure an influence on marital instability among married couples in Rivers State

Table 4.2: Analysis of Data on parental financial pressure as a determinant of marital instability among couples in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Couples does not prioritize together	337	2.85	0.79	3.16	0.4
2	Expectations each spouse has regarding extended family can be tricky	337	2.55	0.78	3.47	0.7
3	They do not consider family goals first	337	2.25	0.73	3.88	1.01
4	Health problems	337	2.66	0.92	2.08	1.36
5	An unexpected death	337	2.65	0.89	2.57	1.01
6	Financial disagreements	337	3.14	0.95	2.51	1.09
7	Extravagant spending on parents	337	2.64	0.75	3.83	1.11
8	Financial anxieties	337	2.97	0.92	3.32	0.83
9	Financial infidelity	337	2.57	1.01	2.64	0.75
10	Differences in money personality	337	3.88	1.01	3.01	0.99
Grand total		28.16	8.75	30.37	8.85	

Table 2 shows the responses of male and female lack of intimacy as determinants of marriage

stability and parental financial pressure among married couples. The result indicated that both

male and female married couples influence parental financial pressure such as couples not prioritizing together, expectations each spouse has regarding extended family can be tricky, they do not consider family goals first, health problems, an unexpected death, financial disagreements, extravagant spending on parents, financial anxieties, financial infidelity, differences in money personality. From the

result, they do not consider family goals first and differences in money personality have the highest mean.

Research Question Three : To what extent does difficulty in conversation a determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State

Table 4.3: Analysis of Data on the difficult conversation as a determinant of marital stability among couples in Rivers State

S/N	Items		Male couple		Female couple	
		N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Avoidance of conversation because efforts to communicate end in arguments	337	2.51	0.92	2.97	0.87
2	Lack of one –on –one time together when you can talk and listen	337	2.64	0.75	3.18	0.92
3	Unwillingness of one partner to consider the other's point of view	337	2.81	0.71	3.76	0.88
4	Breach of trust	337	2.95	0.95	2.83	0.92
5	Built –up resentment	337	2.84	0.74	2.65	0.76
6	Difficulty in vulnerability	337	2.93	0.83	2.63	0.87
7	Emotional invalidation	337	3.01	0.99	2.50	0.76
8	High expectation that one partner or the other should just know what the other is thinking.	337	2.82	0.78	3.19	0.81
9	Parental or childlike communication	337	2.62	0.89	2.89	0.94
10	Contradictory non-verbal communication	337	3.16	0.82	3.51	0.78
Grand total			28.56	8.3	30.11	8.51

Table 3 shows the responses of male and female difficulty conversation as determinants of marriage stability among married couples. The result indicated that both male and female married couples influence difficult conversations such as avoidance of conversation because efforts to communicate end in arguments, Lack of one–on–one time together when you can talk and listen, the unwillingness of one partner to consider the other's point of view, breach of trust, built –up resentment, difficulty in vulnerability, emotional invalidation, High expectation that

one partner or the other should just know what the other is thinking, Parental or childlike communication, Contradictory non-verbal communication. From the result, the unwillingness of one partner to consider the other's point of view has the highest mean.

Research Question Four: To what extent are addictive bondage and immoral entanglement determinants of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State?

Table 4.4: Analysis of Data on the influence of addictive bondage and immoral entanglement as determinants of marital stability among couples in Rivers State

S/N	Item	N	Female couple Mean	SD	Male couple Mean	SD
1	I lost my self-worth	337	3.47	0.7	3.78	0.88
2	Masturbation has caused me to make a new friend	337	3.43	0.12	3.18	0.92
3	I am anxious about my environment	337	3.32	0.83	2.89	0.94
4	I am flirted with suicidal thoughts	337	2.62	0.89	2.65	0.76
5	Always get bitter and anger	337	3.01	0.80	2.82	0.60
6	Easily get depressed	337	2.81	0.71	2.83	1.35
7	Mixed up idea of married love	337	2.99	0.80	3.75	0.40
Grand total			21.65	4.85	21.9	5.85

Table 4 shows the responses of male and female addictive bondage and immoral entanglement as determinants of marriage stability among married couples. The result indicated that both male and female married couples influence addictive bondage and immoral entanglement such as losing my self-worth, Masturbation caused me to make a new friend, I am anxious about my environment, flirting with suicidal

thoughts, Always getting bitter and angry, Easily getting depressed, Mixed up idea of married love. From the result, I lost my self-worth has the highest mean.

Research Question Five: To what extent do outsiders and toxic atmosphere are determinants of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State?

Table 4.5: Analysis of Data on the influence of outsiders and toxic atmosphere as determinants of marital stability among couples in Rivers State

S/N	Items	N	Female couple Mean	SD	Male couple Mean	SD
1	Your spouse alienates you from friends and family	337	2.88	0.99	2.45	0.92
2	Your spouse is indifferent when communicating	337	2.47	0.59	3.78	0.82
3	Does your spouse pay attention or listens to your concern?	337	2.85	0.79	2.91	0.96
4	Does your partner restrict you from having financial independence so that you have to lean on them?	337	2.66	0.92	2.85	0.82
5	Do you always feel emotionally, physical and mentally drained?	337	2.99	0.80	3.59	0.95
6	Does your spouse spent less time at home?	337	2.55	0.78	2.95	0.74
7	Saved emails, texts or other forms of communication shared between the offending spouse and their interest are proof of interference.	337	3.01	0.80	2.82	0.60
8	Withheld intimacy from their partner	337	2.25	0.73	2.38	0.72

9	Proof of a physical relationship like hotel receipts or compromising photography is usually enough	337	2.32	0.95	2.21	0.88
10	You have thoughts of cheating	337	1.12	0.83	1.01	0.71
Grand total			25.1	9.17	26.95	8.12

Table 5 shows the responses of male and female outsiders influencing the home and toxic atmosphere as determinants of marriage instability among married couples. The result indicates that both male and female married couples experienced outsiders influencing their home and also a toxic atmosphere such as a spouse alienating you from friends and family, a spouse being indifferent when communicating, your spouse paying attention or listening to your concerns, your partner restrict you from having financial independence so that you have to lean on them, do you always feel emotionally, physical and mentally drained, does your spouse spent less time at home, saved emails, texts or other forms of communication shared between the offending

spouse and their interest are proof of interference, withheld intimacy from their partner, Proof of a physical relationship like hotel receipts or compromising photography is usually enough You have thoughts of cheating. From the result, do you always feel emotionally, physically, and mentally drained and your spouse is indifferent when communicating has the highest mean?

4.2. Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of lack of intimacy as the determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State

Table 6: t-test statistics of the Mean Responses on lack of intimacy

Married couple	Number	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Male	36	31.31	8.21	335	11.2	0.00	Reject H0
Female	301	37.08	8.43				

The t-calculated was 11.2 against p-value of 0.00. The t-value was greater than the p-value; therefore the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected. This implied that both male and female married couples lack intimacy as a determinant of marital stability. This might be because they do not have love and time for sex.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of parental financial pressure as a determinant of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State

Table 7: t-test statistics of the Mean Responses on influence of financial pressure

Married couple	Number	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Male	36	30.37	8.85	335	7.89	0.00	Reject H0
Female	301	28.16	8.75				

The t-cal was 7.89 against p-value was 0.00. The t-calculated was greater than the p-

value; therefore the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected. This implied that both male and female married couples influence parental financial pressure as a determinant of marital stability. This might be because they do not prioritize together.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant influence of difficult conversations as a determinant of marriage stability among married couples in Rivers State.

Table 8: t-test statistics of the Mean Responses on influence of difficult conversations

Married couple	Number	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Male	36	28.56	8.30	335	1.03	0.00	Reject H0
Female	301	30.11	8.51				

The t-cal was 1.03 against the p-value of 0.00. The t-calculated was greater than p-value; therefore the null hypothesis of no significance was accepted. This implied that both male and female married couples influence difficult conversations as a determinant of marital

stability. This might be because they do not prioritize together.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant influence of addictive bondage and immoral entanglement as determinants of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State.

Table 9: t-test statistics of the Mean Responses on influence of addictive bondage and immoral entanglement

Married couple	Number	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Male	36	21.65	4.85	335	110.8	0.00	Reject H0
Female	301	21.9	5.85				

The t-cal was 110.8 against p-value of 0.00 The t-calculated was less than p-value; therefore the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected. This implied that both male and female married couples influence addictive bondage and immoral entanglement as a determinant of marital stability. This might be because they misunderstood the value of a stable marriage

Hypothesis Five: There is no significant influence of outsiders and toxic atmosphere as determinants of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State.

10: t-test statistics of the Mean Responses on influence of home and toxic atmosphere

Married couple	Number	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Decision
Male	36	25.1	9.17	335	3.65	0.00	Reject H0
Female	301	26.95	8.12				

The t-cal was 3.65 against p-value of 0.00. The t-calculated was greater than p-value; therefore the null hypothesis of no significance was rejected. This implied that both male and female married couples allowing an outsider to influence their home and toxic atmosphere is a determinant of marital stability. This might be because they are comfortable elsewhere.

The findings of the study revealed that married couples often focus on the emotional and psychological connection between partners. Intimacy encompasses physical affection, emotional closeness, and sexual satisfaction, all of which are essential for maintaining healthy relationship. This is in line with Smith (2021) who reported that a lack of sex and intimacy in marriage can lead to serious relationship issues such as anger, infidelity, communication breakdown, lack of self-esteem, and isolation all of which can ultimately lead to irreparable damage to the relationship ending in divorce. He further stated that other intimacy missing is that partners will start withdrawing from each

5.0. Discussion of Findings

Lack of intimacy as a determinant influence of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State.

other and chances of cheating on their spouse increase manifold.

Parental financial pressure as a determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State.

The result of the study revealed that parental pressure can indeed be a significant determinant of marital stability among married couples. This pressure may lead to feeling of resentment, frustration, and a lack of autonomy within the marriage. This is in line with Wcwhinney (2021) who reported that arguments about money hamper many marriages. He further said money is a big source of conflict in marriage relationships and financial problems are a leading cause of divorce.

Difficulty in conversation as determinant of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State

The result of the study indicates that effective communication is fundamental to healthy relationship, allowing partners to express their needs, resolve conflicts, and deepen their emotional connection. This is in line with Esere, in Suleyiman & Zewdu (2018) who reported that ineffective communication can lead to numerous family problems, including excessive family conflict, ineffective problem-solving skills, lack of intimacy, weak emotional bonding, and so on. Likewise, poor communication style is also associated with an increased risk of divorce and marital separation. Moreover, Heritage (2019) says that lack of communication is a big factor in marriage failure

Addictive bondage and immoral entanglement as a determinants of marital instability among married couples in Rivers State

The result of the study shows that addiction, whether to substances like drugs or alcohol, or to behaviors like gambling or pornography can lead to neglect of the marital relationship, financial strain, and emotional distance between partners. Similarly, immoral entanglement such as infidelity or involvement in unethical activities can erode trust and intimacy within the marriage. This is in line with Azuka (2021) who reported that scripture considers a man or woman who commits immorality as a foolish person because of the

aftermath implications. Whoever commits adultery/fornication joins himself in infinity with the individual spiritually. At this point, destiny is stolen and destroyed without the knowledge of the sinful partners. He further warned that sex is only permitted between husband and wife and not singles. Married couples are not permitted to have sex outside their matrimonial home.

Outsiders influence on the home and toxic atmosphere as determinants of marriage instability among married couples in Rivers State.

The result of the study shows that external influences such as meddling family members, friends, or colleagues, interfere with the couples relationship dynamics or decision-making processes, it can lead to conflict, resentment and a breakdown in communication. This is in line with Orshan & Fernandez-Mesa (2020) who reported that a toxic marriage can affect one's mental, physical, and emotional health greatly. People in poor relationships often suffer from anxiety, depression, and low esteem and are susceptible to illnesses. He further said that a toxic marriage can turn little issues into big problems and take out the spark of the relationship.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the various outlined determinants can hamper couples' stable relationships. Note that there is a natural decrease in intimacy as a couple gets older, reaching middle age, or approaching the later years of life. But it can be built by communicating with the spouse openly, remembering the past before the wedding and those first few months or years of marriage, and always using love language. Difficult conversations can be reversed by learning how to listen to each other. However, parental financial pressure can be solved by putting the family goals first. In addition, a toxic atmosphere and outsiders influencing the home can be resolved by spending quality time with the spouse and setting up boundaries finally, addictive bondage and immoral entanglement can be handled by knowing the implications of sex outside marriage which could destroy and steal the destiny of the partner involved.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the paper recommends as follows:

1. Married couples should see themselves as one body in terms of intimacy, and learn to talk to each other by focusing on their feelings, wants, and desires not on the fault. This will promote marital harmony among couples
2. Married couples should listen to their partner during communication without anticipating their turn to speak.
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. Married couples should not hesitate to involve guidance and mentoring and avoid flippant counselor
5. Married couples should always speak openly and stop keeping secrets

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