Educational Background, Gender and Duration of Marriage as Predictors of Marital Adjustment among Married Teachers in Delta State

Obanyedo, Oghenemase

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Delta State University, Abraka

ABSTRACT

This study examined educational background, gender and duration of marriage as predictors of marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State. The study was a correlational design targeting married teachers of public secondary schools. The multi-stage and stratified sampling technique was utilized in study. A self-structured questionnaire was face, content and construct validated using factor analysis. The construct validity was estimated using the rotated factor loading matrixes while marital adjustment had factor loading matrixes that ranged between 0.54 – 0.89. The Cronbach Coefficient Alpha was used in estimating the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded an alpha of 0.94 for the marital adjustment instrument. In answering the research questions for the study, correlation and coefficient determination was used while in testing the null hypotheses, F-test (ANOVA) statistic associated with linear regression statistics were used at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, it was found that: there was no significant relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers; that there was no significant relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State and that there was significant relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended among others that workshops should be organized by school counsellors for married teachers as this will help enhance their understanding of the effect of educational background and their marital adjustment

Keywords: Educational Background, Duration of Marriage, Gender, Marital Adjustment, Married Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Marriage plays a significant role in an individual's personal and social development and is recognized as a fundamental social unit. Various factors contribute to the stability and strength of a marriage (Anyamene et al., 2021). According to Girgis et al. (2012), marriage is a lifelong and exclusive commitment between two partners (male and female), fulfilled through the shared experience of parenting and reinforced by reproductive behavior. Animasahun (2015) defines it as a permanent relationship based on two agreements (primary and secondary), supported by legal frameworks for companionship and procreation. It emphasizes a lifelong promise that encompasses legal rights and responsibilities, upheld by both secular and religious laws.

The complexities of love and its connections can bring profound joy and sorrow, with marriage historically serving as the primary context for these experiences (Falegan, 2024). It begins with a commitment to remain faithful and support one another throughout life. As an institution, marriage addresses individuals' biological and physical needs in a legally and culturally recognized manner, facilitating family formation and outlining the rights and responsibilities of offspring born from the union (Babalola et al., 2020).

The concept of marriage serves multiple purposes, including the fulfillment of biological, social, psychological, and motivational needs. It fosters love, ensures safety and protection, establishes social status, and supports healthy sexual relationships (Falegan, 2024). However, marriage is often challenging and prone to instability due to various social, psychological, economic, and motivational factors that may wane over time.

Research identifies several contributors to marital instability, including trust issues, infidelity, domestic violence, communication breakdowns, financial difficulties, lack of commitment, substance abuse, intimacy problems, frequent arguments, and incompatibility. A report by Taiwo (2025) highlights that Nigeria ranked 11th in divorce rates among 26 countries, with a 2023 divorce rate of 2.9%, equivalent to 1.8 divorces per 1,000 individuals. This indicates a significant level of marital instability in Nigeria, including among those who married during secondary school.

For a harmonious marriage to thrive, couples must make deliberate adjustments to sustain the institution. When each partner meets the other's needs, their bond is likely to strengthen, thereby improving compatibility and facilitating marital adjustment. This adjustment requires maturity in recognizing and supporting each other's growth. Therefore, this study aims to explore how educational background, sex, and duration of marriage predict marital stability in Delta State.

Adjustment is seen as a process that allows individuals to lead fulfilling lives while balancing their own needs with those of their families. It enables them to adapt to various life demands and empowers them to initiate positive changes both within the family and in their personal lives. Marital adjustment, as defined by Anand (2021), is a situation in which "couples feel overall happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other." The primary aim of a marital union is to achieve happiness in some form. The success of a marriage largely depends on how well spouses adjust to each other. When marital adjustment fails, conflicts and tensions tend to rise, often resulting in divorce.

Regardless of differing ideologies regarding marital stability, the educational levels of spouses have gained prominence as a factor in the sustainability of homes. This supports the view of Maciver and Dimkpa (2015), who emphasized that education is a vital tool in influencing marital stability. Educational background is a key factor in shaping an individual's professional identity, career prospects, and overall life trajectory. Diener et al. (2017) argue that individuals with higher levels of education often exhibit greater self-esteem and life satisfaction, both of which positively influence marital adjustment.

Furthermore, Ojukwu et al. (2016) highlight that education equips individuals with essential knowledge and skills that contribute to improved health and livelihoods. It empowers both partners in a marriage to assume their rightful roles within the home and society. Thus, education provides the confidence and status necessary to influence household decisions of particular importance is Tucker and O'Grady's (2001) position on whether differences in education levels can predict marital dissatisfaction. This question formed the focus of the present study, which aimed to ascertain the correlation between the educational level of spouses and marital stability. In addition to education, the gender of couples can also significantly influence marital adjustment, as it plays a crucial role in life adaptation, especially within the context of family dynamics.

Typically, male children are perceived to adapt better than female children. In situations where a man struggles to provide for his family, it can be particularly challenging for the woman to cope, although this varies among individuals (Egbule, 2009). Traditionally, men are considered the primary breadwinners; when they fail to meet this expectation, families may face hardship, including food scarcity. Moreover, men often prioritize investments, such as property acquisition, while women may tend to allocate resources toward clothing and personal care, sometimes to the detriment of broader family needs.

Partnership in gender roles contributes to harmonious family life by ensuring that both domestic and social responsibilities are fulfilled. The roles played by both husband and wife significantly influence marital satisfaction and overall quality of life (Tazkiya & Puspitawati, 2022). According to Moser (2023), marital stability is best achieved when gender roles are divided into three categories—domestic, public, and social—commonly referred to as the "Triple Role Model." For successful and enduring marital adjustment, clear communication regarding the roles and responsibilities of each partner is essential in fostering satisfaction.

Marital duration, as noted by Jalovaara (2002), refers to the "time elapsed since the day of marriage" and is used as a measure of life course. The longevity of a marriage, also termed the duration of marriage, has been observed to potentially influence marital adjustment and satisfaction. Bookwala et al. (2005) found that the length of marriage is positively associated with marital adjustment.

Research on educational background, gender, and marital duration as predictors of marital stability has evolved over time. Several studies have shown that educational background can significantly predict a couple's marital stability. In this regard, Edagobo et al. (2024) examined the impact of educational status on the relationship between family income and marital adjustment among married persons in Delta State, using a correlational research design. Their findings indicated that educational status significantly moderates the relationship between family income and marital adjustment.

In contrast, Jamabo and Ordu (2012) found no significant difference in marital adjustment between working and non-working women and noted that education had no significant influence on the marital adjustment of married women. This finding suggests that women's educational attainment does not necessarily affect their marital adjustment. Similarly, Aneeta and Sonali (2022) reported that gender and educational level had a non-significant impact on marital adjustment.

Further, Ayoola (2019) found no significant association between the length of marriage and Christian couples' marital adjustment in Lagos, concluding that marital duration did not influence marital outcomes. However, Farhana et al. (2023) argued that the length of marriage significantly affects marital adjustment, with women married for 15 years showing better adjustment than those married for only five years. Supporting this, Manasa and Akhila (2022) found a significant relationship between marital adjustment and job satisfaction among women married for more than ten years. Their study also revealed a notable difference in marital adjustment between newly married working women and those married for over ten years.

Manoj (2024) reported a significant difference ($p < .001$) in marital adjustment between older and younger couples, indicating that older couples are generally better able to manage conflicts within marriage. Similarly, Hatice-Kumcağız (2017) found that gender, age, duration of marriage, income level, housework division, childcare responsibilities, and marriage type all significantly predicted marital adjustment among nurses. However, Okesina (2022) reported no significant relationship between marital adjustment and communication styles among married adults in Kwara State, based on age, gender, educational status, and duration of marriage.".

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in the study.

What is the extent of relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta state?

What is the extent of relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta state?

What is the extent of relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

There is no significant relationship between educational background and   marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

There is no significant relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

There is no significant relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

METHOD

Correlational research design was used in the study. A sample of 389 married teachers in public secondary schools in Delta State was used from a population of 12,426 married teachers. The sample was selected from nine (9) local government area, three each in the 3 senatorial district. Multi-stage and stratified sampling technique was used. The instrument for this study was a self-developed questionnaire.

Factor analysis was used in determining the content and construct validity of the instrument. Cronbach Coefficient Alpha was used in computing reliability of the instrument which yielded an alpha of 0.94 for the marital adjustment. The questionnaire was administered with the aid of five research assistants. Correlation and Coefficient Determination was used in answering the research questions while F-test (ANOVA) Statistic associated with linear regression statistics were used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All statistical analysis was computed using SPSS.

Presentation of Result

Research Question 1

What is the extent of relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State?

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination of educational background and married teachers' marital adjustment

Variable	N	r	r^2	r^2%	Decision
Educational Background		. 080	.006	6.0	Low positive relationship
Marital Adjustment	388				

*Significance: P≤ 0.05

Table 1 revealed the r-value of 0.80 as the extent of relationship between educational background and marital adjustment. The coefficient of determination (r^2) was 0.006 and the amount of contribution of educational background to marital adjustment was 0.6%. This shows a low positive relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

Research Question 2

What is the extent of relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State?

Table 2: Pearson r and coefficient of determination of gender and married teachers' marital adjustment.

Variable	N	r	r^2	r^2%	Decision
Gender		0.036	0.001	0.1	Low Positive Relationship
Marital Adjustment	388				

*Significance: P≤ 0.05

Table 2 show the r-value of 0.047 as the extent of relationship between gender and married teachers' marital adjustment. The r^2 was 0.002 and the amount of contribution of gender to marital adjustment was 0.2%. The result showed a low positive relationship between gender and married teachers' marital adjustment in Delta State.

Research question 3

What is the extent of relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State?

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and coefficient of determination of duration of marriage and married teachers' marital adjustment.

Variable	N	r	r^2	r^2%	Decision
Duration of marriage		0.067	0.005	0.5	Low Positive Relationship
Marital Adjustment	388				

*Significance: P≤ 0.05

Table 3 show the r-value of 0.067 as the extent of relationship between duration of marriage and married teachers' marital relationship. The r^2 was 0.005 which implies that the amount of contribution of duration of marriage to married teachers' marital adjustment was 0.5%. The result showed a low positive relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

Table 4: F-test Analysis of Educational Background and Married Teachers' Marital Adjustment

	ANOVA				
Model 1	SS	Df	MS	F	P
Regression	23.614	1	25630.802	2.502	.115[b]
Residual	3653.137	386	21.077		
Total	3676.751	387			
	Unstandardized Coefficient		standardized Coefficient		
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-Ratio	P
(Constant)	52.594	.504		104.338	.000
Educational Background	.292	.184	.080	1.582	.115

Dependent variable: marital adjustment

Table 4 shows the linear regression output of educational background and married teachers' marital relationship in Delta State with the F-value of 2.502 and p-value of .115. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of .115 is greater than the alpha level. Hence, the acceptance of the null hypothesis, implying no significant relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers.

The r^2-value of 0.006 indicates 0.6% variance in marital adjustment among married teachers was accounted for by educational background. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for predicting marital adjustment among married teachers from educational background was 292. The standardized coefficient (B) for educational background was 0. 080, t= 1.582 hence, educational background was not significant at an alpha level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

Table 5: F-Test Analysis of the Relationship Between Gender and Marital Adjustment Among Married Teachers

ANOVA					
Model 1	**SS**	**Df**	**MS**	**F**	**P**
Regression	8.036	1	8.036	.848	.358[b]
Residual	3668.714	386	9.480		
Total	3676.750	387			
Variables in the Equation					
	Unstandardized Coefficient		**standardized Coefficient**		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t-Ratio**	**P**
(Constant)	52.194	1.267		41.187	.000
Gender	.597	.649	.036	.921	.358

Dependent variable: Marital Stability

Table 5, shows the F-test associated with linear regression output of gender and marital adjustment among married teachers with F-value of .848 and a P-value of .358. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the P-value of 0.358 was greater than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. That is there is no significant relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

The r-square value of .002 indicates 0.2% variance of marital adjustment among married teachers was account for by gender. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for predicting marital adjustment from gender was .597. The standardized coefficient (B) for gender was .047, t = .921. However, gender was not significant at an alpha level of 0.05.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

Table 6: F-Test analysis of the relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teacher

ANOVA					
Model 1	**SS**	**Df**	**MS**	**F**	**P**
Regression	16.603	1	16.603	1.755	.006[b]
Residual	3660.148	386	9.458		
Total	3676.751	387			
	Unstandardized Coefficient		**standardized Coefficient**		
Model	**B**	**Std. Error**	**Beta**	**t-Ratio**	**P**
(Constant)	52.424	.718		73.015	.000
Duration of Marriage	.418	.316	.067	1.325	.006

Dependent variable: Marital Stability

Table 6 presents the regression output examining the relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers. The analysis yielded an F-value of 1.755 with a p-value of .186. Since the p-value (.186) is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This indicates that there is no statistically significant relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

The R-square value of .005 implies that only 0.5% of the variance in marital adjustment is explained by the duration of marriage. The unstandardized coefficient (B) for duration of marriage was .148, while the standardized beta coefficient was .067, with a t-value of 1.325. These results suggest that although there is a slight positive association, it is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from Hypothesis 1 revealed that there was no significant relationship between educational background and marital adjustment among married teachers. This suggests that whether a married teacher has a low or high level of education, it does not significantly impact their ability to adjust in marriage. This finding supports the study by Jamabo and Ordu (2012), who found that the educational attainment of women does not affect their marital adjustment. According to their findings, women with low income status exhibit the same degree of marital adjustment as those with high income status. However, this finding contradicts that of Edagobo et al. (2024), who reported a significant moderating effect of educational status on the relationship between family income and marital adjustment among married individuals in Delta State.

The findings from Hypothesis 2 showed that there was no significant relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State. This aligns with the findings of Okesina (2022), who reported no significant relationship between gender and marital adjustment among married adults in Kwara State. Similarly, Nadar (2018) concluded that the gender of couples had no effect on marital adjustment. The implication of these findings is that gender—whether male or female—does not influence how individuals adjust within a marital relationship. In contrast, Tazkiya and Puspitawati (2016) found that gender is a significant predictor of marital adjustment. Their findings suggest that differences in gender roles may affect how couples adapt to marital responsibilities, which contradicts the results of the present study.

The result from Hypothesis 3 indicated a significant relationship between the duration of marriage and marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State. This finding is consistent with that of Okesina (2022), whose study revealed a significant relationship between marital duration and marital adjustment among married adults in Kwara State. It also aligns with the findings of Hatice-Kumcağız (2017), who reported that the duration of marriage significantly predicted marital adjustment. Furthermore, Farhana et al. (2023) noted that the length of marriage significantly impacted marital adjustment, with women married for 15 years demonstrating better adjustment compared to those married for only five years. This implies that successful marital adjustment is, in part, influenced by the number of years spent in marriage. Over time, couples tend to develop a deeper understanding of each other and more effective strategies for resolving marital issues. However, this finding contradicts that of Ayoola (2019), who found no significant association between the length of marriage and the marital adjustment of Christian couples in Lagos.

CONCLUSION

In line with findings, it was concluded that educational background had no impact on marital adjustment among couples and that gender has no significant impact on marital adjustment among married teachers in Delta State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With regard to the finding, the following recommendations were made:

Workshops should be organized by school counsellors for married teachers as this will help enhance their understanding of the effect of educational background and their marital adjustment.

School counsellors should encourage the participation of other professionals such as marriage counsellors and mental health professionals in giving professional counselling to married couples who may face marital problems/challenges.

Counsellors should encourage school administrators and leaders to create a positive and school culture that prioritizes the wellbeing of married teachers.

REFERENCES

1. Anand, S. (2021). Locked in love—the pandemic's impact on romantic relationships. India Today Insight. Delhi: India Today.
2. Aneeta, J. & Sonali, K. (2022). Marital Adjustment: In the Context of Gender, Education and Family Pattern. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 10(4),049-054. DIP:18.01.006.20221004, DOI:10.25215/1004.006
3. Animasahun, R. (2015). Predictive Potentials of some psycho-sociopersonal variables on divorce among Couples in Ibadan Nigeria. Psychology, 6,1711-1720. doi:10.4236/psvch.2015.613167.
4. Anyamene, A., Nwokolo, C., & Etewe, A.J. (2021). Relationship between self-efficacy and marital satisfaction of married teachers in public secondary school in Anambra State Nigeria. European Journal of Social Sciences Studies, 6(3), 40-60.
5. Ayoola, T. A. (2019). Length of Marriage and Marital Adjustment of Christian Couples in Lagos State. LASU Journal of African Studies, 7, 84 – 94
6. Babalola B.T. Olubiyi, O.A., Adigun K.A. Ibrahim O. Adewusi O.A. Akindure O.R. and Fadugba S.E. (2020) Statistical analysis of some socioeconomic factors that cause late marriage among men in Ekiti State. Global Scientific Journal (GSJ), 8(2), 2320 9185
7. Bookwala . J., Sobin . J. & Zdanillk . B. (2005). Gender and Aggression on Marital Relationship: A life –span perspective. Sex Role, 52(11), 797-806. http://dx.doi.org/o/1007/511/99-005-42001.
8. Diener, E., Oishi,S., &Tay, L.(2017). Advances in subjective well-being research. Nature Human Behaviour, 1(4), 1-6.
9. Edagobo, J. O., Ugoji, F.N., & Obiunu, J. (2024). The Moderating Impact of Educational Status on Family Income and Marital Adjustment of Married Persons in Delta State. International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews, 5(1), 483-488
10. Egbule, J. F. (2009). Psychology of Adjustment and Crisis Counselling. Goodnews Express Communications. Benin City, Edo State.
11. Falegan, T. (2024). The influence of age at marriage and year of marital experience on marital satisfaction and marital conflict among normal and shift schedule employees of Ekiti State. International Journal of Business and Management Invention, 13(1), 64-69
12. Farhana, E. N., Gogoi, S. & Manizia, L. (2023). Marital adjustment in relation to duration of marriage: A study in Nimona Tea Estate of District of Jorhat. The Pharma Innovation Journal,12(2), 3711-3714
13. Girgis, S., George, R., & Anderson, R. (2012). What is Marriage? Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, 34(1), 245-287 Available at https://ssrn.com/abstract=l 722155
14. Hatice-Kumcağız, Z. G. (2017). Analysis of various variables including social support and marital adjustment as predictors of job satisfaction for nurses. Journal of Human Sciences, 225–249.
15. Heaton, T.B. (2002). Factors Contributing to increasing Marital Stability in the United State. Journal of Family Issues, 23(3), 392-409.doi: 10.1177/0192513X02023003004.
16. Jalovaana, M. (2002).Socio-economic Differential in Divorce; Risk by Duration of Marriage. Demographic Research, 7(16),537-564http://dx:dio.org/DemRes2002.716.
17. Jamabo, T.& Ordu, S. N. (2012). Marital adjustment of working class and non-working class women in Port Harcourt metropolis, Nigeria. International Journal of Psychology and Counseling, 4(10), 123-126
18. Maciver, J.E. & Dimkpa, D. I. (2015). Factors influencing marital stability. Sociological Review, 37: 754 - 766.
19. Manasa, P. & Akhila, V., B. (2022). The Effect of the Length of the Marriage on Marital Adjustment and Job Satisfaction in Working Women. International Journal of Indian Psychology, 10(4), 187-200. DIP:18.01.021.20221004, DOI:10.25215/1004.021
20. Manoj, K. S. (2024). Marital adjustment and life satisfaction among young and old married couples. International Journal of Science and Research Archive, 11(01), 023–030
21. Ojukwu, M.O, Woko, S. I. & Onuoha R.C. (2016). Impact of Educational Attainment on Marital Stability among Married Persons in Imo State, Nigeria. International Journal of Education & Literacy Studies, 4(3), 88-96. http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.4n.3p.88
22. Okesina, F. A. (2022). Marital Adjustment and Communication Styles among Married Adults in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Canadian Journal of Family and Youth, 14(1), 162-179. http://ejournals,library,ualberta.ca/index/php/cjfy

23. Taiwo, K. (2025). The rising cases of divorce in Nigeria. Retrieved from https://dataphyte.com/editorial/senorrita/the-rising-cases-of-divorce-in-nigeria/
24. Tazkiya, D. A. & Puspitawati, H. P. (2022). Marital Adjustment, Gender Role Partnerships, and Marital Satisfaction during Covid-19. Journal of Child, Family, and Consumer Studies, 1(3). 196-208, DOI: https://doi.org/10.29244/jcfcs.1.3.196-208
25. Tucker, M.W & O'Grady, K. E (2001). Effects of Physical Attractiveness Intelligence, Age and Cohabitation on the Perception of Marital Satisfaction. The Journal of Social Psychology, 131(2), 253-269. retrieved from https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/198046.