



The Impact of Children Education and Marital Adjustment in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study is an examination of how parent's marital adjustment can influence children education (be it upbringing and performance in examinations). It observed that the relationship between the spouses' occupation status, children presence and growth with parents, husband's participation in domestic affairs and the wife's career and her attitude in domestic affairs are the factors that can influence children mental behavior in schools. Our findings are that where these factors are lacking or absent, children will experience poor performance in their respective examinations. The study concludes that parents play key role in the upbringing of their children and that they should ensure to avoid any negative marital attitudes, so as not to influence their children educational performance.*

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1. Introduction

At local and international conferences, the low performance of children at various examinations (be it at Junior and Secondary School's Examinations, Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board Examinations and so forth), has been an issue of serious concern in Nigeria. This study will delve into the issue of marital adjustment as the main factors influencing children's ability and stability in their educational development or performance. We will see the views of different scholars on this issue and to throw our searchlight on how such factors has adversely affected our children educational development. Such marital adjustment can be viewed on the following sub-headings:

- (a) The Relationship between the Spouses' Occupation Status
- (b) Presence of Children
- (c) Husband Participation in Domestic Chores
- (d) Attitude of Wives Towards Domestic Chores and Careers

2. The Relationship between the Spouses' Occupation Status

Hillman (1962) has noted that there is an inverse relationship between the educational adjustment and marriage stability. There is also some evidence from Komarovsky's work (1967) which suggests first, that the higher the husband's educational qualification or level, with its connotations of increased verbal communication skills, the more self-disclosure, empathy and sympathy, there is likely to be between him and his wife, and second that the husband in higher occupational level is apparently less rigid in his role playing within marriage. He has more confidence within himself, and is able to swap roles when necessary for instance in respect to childcare, domestic chores or in enabling his wife to pursue her own career. Along similar lines, Barry (1970) in a review of factors associated with marital breakdown, noted that a pattern does seem to be emerging from the research literature on marriage, which indicates that those characteristics generally considered to lead to a stable male identity are also associated with marital stability, and he cites a high educational level as one of these characteristics. Another interesting finding regarding the relationship between educational level and marital stability is that of Bumpass et al (1972) who noted that the effect of education on marital disruption is minimal when age at marriage is controlled.

Theories based upon status competition, status incompatibility, complementary needs, and threat to gender identity all posit that stress is created in marriages when the wife's occupational achievements exceed the husband. The parsonian position (Pearson 1942, Barber 1956), focusing upon status competition is based on the premises that families form a single status unit based upon the husband's occupation in order to avoid competition with each other. If the wife is in labour force, her occupation is expected to be lower status than his. When the wife's attainment exceeds her husband she loses status when others insist upon evaluating her by her husband's achievements and not her own. Pearlious (1975) found inequality in spouses, background status to be a source of marital trouble, and Hormung and McCullough (1977) found discrepancies in occupational achievements to be a predictor of marital and life dissatisfaction. Santos (1975) assumed that the higher occupational achievements of wives would threaten to complementarily of the relationship. The wife would gain little from the relationships since she could provide for her own economic needs while the husband would be unable to reciprocate for his gains. Rothschild (1975:65) claims that "the gender identifies both spouses and threatens his masculinism, her apparent dominance lessens her feminism".

Occupations structure people's experiences of their own abilities, responsibilities, and autonomy, people's experiences of their own abilities, responsibilities, and autonomy, people's social contracts and the nature of their interactions with others, people's knowledge of a particular segment of social endeavour, and people's acquisition of resources and access to income. Thus, Aldous (1969) argued that occupations exerts formative effects on incumbents marital attitudes and behaviour by shaping their interests, their social perspective, their values, attitudes and behaviour Patterns in General.

Hurnung and McCullough (1977) operationalized normative combination of occupational status by regressing the occupation of one spouse against the other. Incompatibility was predicted to results if the wife's occupation was higher than expected

given her husband's occupation or if the wife's occupation was higher than expected given her husband's occupation or if the husband's occupation was lower than expected given his wife's occupation. Their analysis demonstrated that both occupations with status higher than the occupation their husbands hold, the wives are often employed in occupation typically held by women. A woman with higher occupation status than her husband, but in an occupational sex-typed female, may not be perceived as having higher occupational status because the dominant feature of her occupation is not its status but its feminine identification. The sex-segregated labour force may provide a buffer preventing status comparisons between sources from being made. If both husband and wife are employed in occupation typically held by men and women, then their relative status are probably directly compared. An immense relationship would be expected between the amounts that the husband occupational status exceeds the wife's and marital stress. That is more stress should occur in status equal marriages than in marriages in which the wife has the lower status, and more stress should occur in marriage in which the wife has the higher status than in status equal marriages.

3. Presence of Children

Several recent studies have indicated that presence of children is associated with relatively low marital happiness or adjustment. Feld (1971), Rosenbiat (1974) suggest that any negative effects of children on marital happiness grown to a large extent out of interference with the companionship and intimate interaction of the spouses. Taking care of children requires time and energy which the husband and wife could otherwise use to sustain their own relationship. The presence of children may keep some persons in unhappy marriages which otherwise would terminated.

Axelson (1963) collected by means of a questionnaire mailed to randomly selected 67 Negro males and 565 white males sample from a small western town, data relative to marital happiness and the employed wife. The analysis of their responses supported previous research findings of poorer marital adjustment when the wife works full-time rather than part time. Husbands of working wives indicates a significantly greater amount of poor marital adjustment suggesting that the working wife may be perceived as a threat to the husband's culturally defined dominance and that the male believes the children will suffer from the wife's absence.

Adegoke (1987) in his study using 200 married women to determine the effect of female labour force participation on marital happiness. His findings show that such participation negatively affects marital adjustment of married working women. His findings revealed that married non-working women are better on the affectional intimacy and satisfaction components of the marital adjustment employment has significant effect on affectional intimacy.

Not only are women more inclined to permit their career plans to influence their decision to have children, they also are less likely with their job. In a panel survey of young married couples in Chicago, Decatur and Peoria, it was found that only 37% of working women and 55% of housewives claimed that children had a great influence on their decision whether to work; moreover, fully 30% of the former and 20% of the later claimed

children had no influence on their decision at all. It was also found that 80% of the working wives in Decatur and Peoria had young children. It may be concluded, therefore, that the association of fewer children and working mothers now must be ascribed largely to the decision of some women not to have children. Furthermore, a substantial number of those who do have children do not permit them to interfere with their work.

Booth and Edwards (1980) reports that women spend far more time with their children than men. The more the mother works, the less likely she is to dominate the child's time. This would suggest working mothers face a real threat of a loss of influence, relative to the fathers, over young children. While the working mother may lose a dominant position in terms of the amount of time she spends with her children, she may also gain respect from her children for the expertise she has in the world outside of family life. The tradeoff between loss of time with the child and gain of expert knowledge may be increasingly important with older children. For instance, Smith (1970) found a strong relationship between an adolescent's perception of parental expert knowledge and measures of parental influence. Thus working mothers might loss influence relative to the fathers, over younger children but gain influence over older children.

Many studies have shown that daughters of working mothers want to work when they are mothers. Rallings and Wye (1970) add that maternal employment raises a child's evaluation of female competence. This study suggests that the wife's work status may serve as a valuable resources, particularly for daughters and older children, and actually increases her influence over the child. If this reasoning is correct, working mothers have increased instrumental influence as the child ages.

The research concerning associational and effective solidarity in regard to father is even more limited. Vogel et al (1970) reported sons of middle class working mothers saw their fathers as more expressive and nutrient. What implications this may have for the influence remain uncertain. Other research, Pleck et al (1979) show husbands of employed wives spend more time with their children.

Hurley and Palonen (1967) adds that the number of children in the family can influence marital adjustment. Arderner (1975) in his study discovers that childless marriages are blamed on women as men are never admitted to be sterile or infertile. A childless women is considered a monstasty as is unmarried women, spinster or divorce. She becomes the built of jokes scandal and the query of any passing men, married or unmarried she is often seen by males in the society as an unclaimed and degenerating commodity to be freely exploited in all ways, emotionally, sexually and financially among others. Denga (1982:798) "there was a higher level of marital adjustment among mothers than among involuntarily childless women in Northern Nigeria". The absence of children in the family especially when it is due to biological problems rather than a choice to remain childless threatens marital adjustment among Africans.

Although the precise reason for any couple having children, may vary, there appears to be a prevailing generalized belief that children are essential to married life, to the extent that in a study conducted by Paldon (1977), he discovered that having children emerged as the major, if not the only reason for getting married. In the light of such normative pressures towards parenthood, the vast majority of any decisions about it would seems more likely to be concerned with the timing of the births of children rather than with

advantages and disadvantages of having children at all. Notwithstanding the benefits which both parenthood and parenting may bring to a couple, the marital relationship will inevitably be affected by the arrival of children, and in particular by the arrival of the first child. There is consistent evidence from Burr (1970) which indicates that couples with children in the home have higher marital happiness levels than those living alone, they also have greater financial burdens and more interpersonal stress. Deranzo (1970) has shown that employment of women has effect on fertility and that the presence of children in the home have been known to have very serious implications for marital adjustment. He also indicated that the birth of children reduces the average number of years a married woman can be expected to spend in the workforce by about ten years. The birth of each additional child appears to reduce further the work life expectancy from two to three years for each. Hawthorne (1970), Reed et al (1973) conclude that foregoing employment is an indirect cost considered by the working wife and thus have a negative effects on the decision to bear children.

4. Husband's Participation in Domestic Chores

Blood and Wolfe (1960) found an increase in husband's performance in family roles when their wives were employed. Walker's (1970) time budget data indicate that husbands contribute the same time to the family whether their wives work or not. There is a small increase in the husband's helping when there are small children present, but otherwise the independence of husband family time from wife employment status hold true when age, class, number of children, and other variables are controlled for. Venek (1973) found that husbands do minimal amounts of work around the house even when the wife is employed. Pleck (1975) found that while wife time in family tasks decreases with increased time paid employment, overall reduction in working wives' household time is not fully commensurable to their increase time in paid employment; that is, the total time burden in work and family roles combined is greater for the employed than the unemployed. He presumes the excess as coming out of the working wife's leisure or free time.

The majority of studies indicate that in Anglo-American families, the division of labour in house-hold chores remains sex-segregated with the wife primarily responsible. Further study on Chicago families, however, revealed that while decision making was shared in most families with employed wives. Wives labour force status, therefore contributed to a greater egalitarianism in decision making and in the division of household tasks.

Pre-arranged marriage produce couples who share a house out of conveniences rather than mutual understanding. As a result, many women end up frustrated, demoralized and unhappy. This leads to lack of concentration, inefficiency and less production at work. According to Lota (1990), the bride price which was a sign of appreciation to the wife's parents from the man is commercialized. This reduces a woman to the status of an object of a commodity with no right of mind of her own. A woman's only aspiration in life was supposed to be to get married and raise a family. A girl was under her father's control until she is married when the controlled passes to her husband. Husbands

regarded it as proper to have a son and would keep on trying for a boy even if they ended up with many children.

Leslie (1985) indicated in her study that men tend to be less trusting of wives than they are of their own mothers and sisters, a situation which often alienates the wife throughout her marriage and makes her a stranger in enemy territory all her life. Infact, men here lean emotionally more on their mothers, sisters and aunts of their own lineage than on their own wives. This situation gives some emotional power to women. Thus, often women take consolation from this fact that and help to oppress other women who came into their own lineages as wives. It is generally known that women in their own lineages from the emotional support of the men to the extent that the men cannot function without them. Yet such men will express in acts and words the most blatant notions of male dominance, such emotional power often satisfied women to the point of preventing them from wanting to take other more public action or to resist the subordination they suffer within their own marriages. In addition to the power of female relatives within marriage, there exists the pressure and power of peer group values on the husband.

Leslie (1985) also observes that the subordination of women within marriage takes the various traditional forms through pollinated by women's right to work. But the reality of this is that women are overworked. Generally, men do not do housework of any sort or care for children so the women struggles on two fronts-the home and working place. As a result, women of the middle class find that the most important problem they confront now is the problem of house-help in the home. The working class women are more frequently now marooned in her home and therefore struggling with her job and house-keeping.

Although the husband's economy performance has important natural consequences, it also has important consequences for the organization of marital roles. Beginning with Drkheim (1933), sociologist have theorized that a division of labour which encouraged interdependence was the sine qua non of a stable family system. This theme often expressed in the form of an institution expressive dichotomy has been echoed by modern theorists most notably Parson (1940). Basing their view on a combination of system and exchange theory. This theorists suggest that marriage may be seen as a set of reciprocal roles. Although the specific roles attached to husbands and wives vary somewhat, the primary role of husband is uniformly argued to be the provision of material support for the family. This support is then exchanged for the wife's provision of various services, most often including childcare and housework. According to this view marriage, while it has important effective supports, rests significantly on these reciprocal role exchange. When these exchange break down through either partners failure to assume his or her obligations, then the marriage losses significant force for cohesion.

Burke and Weir (1976) in their investigation on the psychological well-being of husbands of employed wives found that husbands working wives were less satisfied and performed less effectively than husbands of non-working wives. In effect, the adjustment for the husbands is more than is it for the wives. Axelson (1963) in this study also provided similar findings.

Traditionally, marriage in any society prescribes definite roles for each spouse. Such roles required that the husband provides financial means for the necessities and material comfort while the wife fulfilled the emotional needs of children and husband, maintained a

pleasant domestic environment and when necessary, made sacrifices to enhance her husband's career.

Keith and Schafer (1990) did a study using 135 two job families to examine factors associated with work-family role strain and depression. The results in two separate interviews with husbands and wives indicate that, time demands both in the work place and home, and stages in the life cycle influenced the role strain of both sexes and factors affecting depression varied from men and women.

5. Attitude of Wives towards Domestic Chores and Careers

National survey for 1971 allows a more detailed examination of attitude towards housework and careers for both working women and housewives. In contrast to the common view, both consistent with Weiss and Samelson (1958), there is very little outright dislike for housework expressed by any of the women in the study, whether they work outside the home or not. Nearly half or more of all women expressed unqualified liking.

Employed women in the 1971 surveys conducted by the University of Michigan and the National Opinion Research Center were asked whether their housework or their outside work was more important to the personally. The response was that housework was the more important. The contrary opinion that outside work was personally more important was expressed to fewer than a third of the women in both classes. Of the housewives, only about a third say that they have ever wanted career; well over half say they have not. Finally, less than a third of the housewives think it is likely they will actually take an outside job in the future. Wright (1978) concludes that for a large proportions of housewives, full time housewifery is preferred to outside work, and moreover, that housework is a genuine source of satisfaction to their something they say they like to do.

Nye (1958) looked beyond the question of work and career and asked whether or not the marriages and family lives of working women suffer because of their conflicting loyalties and commitments. Working women according to him have less time to spend with spouse and children; it is thus as easy assumption that marital and familiar responsibilities would be more of a strain to them than to the women who can devote full time to such things. Both Garvin (1966) and Oakley (1974) have concluded that women typically dislike housework, sometimes with an intensive bordering on hatred, although both studies also acknowledges that at least somewhere find some aspects of housework rewarding.

The women accept the fact that she will have to contribute to the household budget by doing whatever work she confined. Above all, many women have been primarily responsible for the maintenance of their children, without the assurance of support from the father, who might be unemployed in irregular employment or simply unwilling to give a woman financial support.

Women's work history are often punctuated by periods of non-employment and/or unemployment. Particular career choices are often contained by family considerations. In addition, different definitions of achievement may be applied to women's work by others or by themselves.

A number of factors have been identified by Gole (1979) as having an important influence on women's work lives. First, women's marital status itself is assumed to be

important, with single women expected to have more time for, and less constraint on their careers than married women, second, the age at which a woman marries, and consequently the extent to which she has achieved some educational and occupational experiences and status prior to marriage. Third, a number of characteristics of women's marital partner have been identified as significant; his education, his occupation, his age relative to hers and his personal and social class background. Indeed, Jeosie Bernard (1974) has referred to the law of husband cooperation as the critical factor in women's career success. The number of children a woman has, and how old they are, are generally thought to influence her work activity in a simple way, with many and younger children inhibiting it.

Nigeria, in launching its women education programme in 1986 has by implication indicated its preparedness that women should have equal opportunities in their educational and vocational aspirations. Education has led to the acquisition of new values and ideas. This has also led to a change both in the family structure and the social system.

The ultimate goal of acquiring formal education is to be gainfully employed and subsequently to be able to meet one's responsibilities of feeding, clothing, housing, educating and training of family members. This research shares the views of Odugbesan (1983) that being in employment also serves several other purposes, such as:

- Satisfying one's basic needs and those of dependent;
- Satisfying one's interest in carrying out certain activities;
- Translating one's abilities into useful work;
- Helping one to take his/her rightful place in the community.
- Contributing to the development of the nation.

The value attached to achievement and recognition outside the home, a means of self-fulfillment, the desire to use special skills, all these include woman to work.

Gray (1980) in her research study shows that many women who seek to combine a demanding career and a family encounter a variety of problems and conflicts.

Spanier (1972) significantly increased her chances for marital disruption. Several other studies (Centre, 1975; Epstein, 1973) have also found that women professionals have a higher divorce rate than both male professionals and the general population. It is therefore clear that many women are having difficulty combining a profession and a family. According to these researchers, the psychological problem that women experience include: gaining the emotional support of significant others dealing with conflicting societal demands, and resolving conflicts that arise between roles.

6. Conclusion

In this study we have been able to observe how poor marital adjustment by parents can affect their children poor examination performance and upbringing. Both parties in marriage (whether husbands and wives) should exhibit good behaviors that can promote and build-up their marriages, especially when they have children. This is because children learn and copy from their behaviors at home. The husband should learn to participate and assist his wife in domestic chores. The wife (whether working class or not and not minding her occupation status) should learn to show deep respect to her husband and do her best to participate in domestic chores. The study concludes that balanced and improved marital

attitudes or adjustment will improve children good behavioural attitudes and also improved educational performance in their examinations.

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