



## **E** DUCATIONAL BACKGROUND, INCOME LEVEL AND FAMILY SIZE AS FACTORS INFLUENCING MARITAL INSTABILITY AMONG WORKING-CLASS WOMEN IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS

### **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the educational background, income level and family size as factors influencing marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt Municipality of Rivers State. Three objectives, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted the ex post-facto design. The population consisted of 657 married women on the payroll of the Port Harcourt Local Government Council. The sample size consisted of 237 respondents using a

**\*MACLEAN, ONISOYA PhD; & \*\*CHIKEZIE VICTORIA CHINEME PhD**

\*Department of Educational Foundations, Rivers State University, PMB 5080, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. \*\*University Demonstration Primary School (UDPS), Uniport

### **INTRODUCTION**

**M**arriage is an institution that involves mutual attraction, an agreement between two people to live together for a lifetime, and a fair exchange of love and respect in return for living together in a mutually satisfactory manner. Ojukwu, Woko, and Onuoha (2016), marriage is an institution as old as man; it is the oldest social institution that requires a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife. As a result, Ojukwu (2013) defined marriage as being linked as a husband and wife with a person of the opposite sex for companionship, procreation, and the preservation of married life. The lack of love and respect between the husband and wife is an indicator of a marriage that is doomed to fail and may end in divorce. Thus, marital instability refers to the inability of a husband and wife to live together because there is no love, trust, or commitment between them. This implies that when there is no compatibility between a husband and wife, marital instability is inevitable. An assertion supported by Ojukwu et al. (2016), is that marriage requires compatibility, dedication, and understanding between married people. This is because all the behaviours, norms, roles, expectations, and values associated with a man and a woman's legal union are represented by the institution of marriage, which requires compatibility, dedication, and understanding between married people (Bell, 2001).



purposive sampling technique. Working Class Women Marital Instability Assessment Scale was used for data collection. The instrument had a reliability index of 0.89, determined through the Pearson's Product-moment Correlation. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question, while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings from this study revealed that there was a significant influence of educational background, income level and family size on the level of marital instability among working-class married women in Port Harcourt Municipality of Rivers State. The study recommended amongst others that married working-class women should seek higher educational attainment but not to the detriment of their marriages and couples should plan their family size based on their economic status and position in the society.

**Keywords:** Marital Instability, Educational Background, Income Level, Family Size.

An educational background is a person's lifetime educational experience and learning process, as well as formal education, received at a specific point in time (Nwokocho, 2002). Educational background and income level play an important role in marriage; they promote informed decision-making and a sense of responsibility. Education not only provides basic knowledge and skills to improve health and livelihood, it also empowers men and women to take their rightful place in their homes, society, and the development process. Education gives men and women the status and confidence to influence household decisions (Fehintola, 2009). While education is the key to breaking the cycle of poverty, the income level of the husband or wife remains a large factor in marriage and the maintenance of family harmony.

Family income involves all the income that comes to the family in terms of naira, coins or notes over a particular period, regular, weekly, or monthly, according to Adzido, et al. (2016). Poor marriage suffers from the husband's inability to financially support the family, which can have a devastating effect on the marriage. Therefore, it is very likely that when a woman begins to take on the responsibilities that ordinarily should be those of the man, there is a high likelihood that the marriage may become unworkable because the man, as the head of the family, ought to take responsibility for maintaining the home and family. Ojukwu et al. (2016) highlighted that when the man has a lower educational qualification than the wife and his financial standing is also lower, he may develop feelings of resentment, jealousy, and incapability at being able to have control over his household. The situation may lead to instability, eventual separation, or divorce in the marriage.

Family size is a very important factor in marriages that determines, to a large extent, how families grow, prosper, and survive. Family size or household size is the actual number of people occupying a home together, including any guests or foster children who may live there (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000). It can be argued that marriages fair better when the



family size is small because families have a higher chance of caring for and sharing the responsibilities of children, compared to households with large family sizes, where the family is stretched to its limit, and some simply do not have the time or money to properly care for their children. However, even though family size may have some form of influence in igniting instability in marriages, there is also the tendency that some families prefer having larger family sizes due to their strong bonds. These differing preferences are the ones that may push some to take a certain path in family formation and inevitably lead to divorce.

Working-class women are often regarded as women who spend some of their time at work rather than tending to the needs of their children at home all day, and the money earned through these working hours is, in some cases, used to support the household. Unfortunately, these ventures by some women in society have raised a lot of concerns and issues between them and their spouses. Some of these issues range from lack of sharing in household expenses, high standards of living as women, and child care issues, among other problems. However, when these challenges are not solved or tackled, they may lead to a lot of resentment and the breakdown of the marriage. This study was investigated to discover the influence of educational background, income level, and family size on marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Marital Instability**

Marriage is an institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family; it is an act of marrying or performing a rite by which the married status is effected (Gove, 2006). Marriage is considered to represent a lifelong commitment by two people to each other and it is signified by a contract sanctioned by the state. It thus, involves legal rights, responsibilities and duties that are enforced by both secular and sacred laws (Omoniyi-Oyafunke, Falola & Salau, 2014).

Marital instability in general term, means breakdown of orderliness. Brown (2004) added that marital instability is when couples are unable to resolve conflict, such that the same pattern of dispute occurs repeatedly and there are no ways of dealing with the problem. Marital instability simply means a marriage that is not stable due to certain factors. Li (2018) opined that marital instability is the process whereby marriage breaks down through separation, desertion or divorce. They also observed that this has become a thing of concern in this contemporary society. Marital stability reflected the partners' confidence and belief that their marriage will last (Ye & Xu, 1999). Marital instability on the other hand, means disorganization of marriage. In simple term, it means the existence of misunderstanding or disagreement between the husband and the wife and lack of harmony in the homes of married couples (Barikisu, 2007).

#### **Causes of Marital Instability**

Marital crises could originate from different sources some of which could be psychological and/or psychosomatic in nature. One partner could have a borderline personality disorder,



such as narcissist, antisocial, psychopathic personality disorders (Amadi & Amadi, 2014). The following are some of the causes of marital instability:

1. **Social incompatibility of marriage partners:** There is no doubt that in some marriages, the partners are socially incompatible. Marital instability is bound to ensue in such a situation. Many married people become disillusioned when they discover that their union is not all they had expected and that their spouse is not quite what they had envisioned him/her to be (Awake, 2008; Amadi & Amadi, 2014).
2. **Sexual incompatibility:** Sex-related matter is another cause of marital instability. Poor sexual-satisfaction on the part of a marital partner may spice up crises in the union which if not properly and timely detected and managed could lead to extra-marital sexual affairs – a situation that is on its own leads to disaffection and loss of trust (Ambakederemo & Ganagana, 2006; Amadi & Amadi, 2014).
3. **Extended family affairs/issues or parental relations influence:** Negative parental influence can contribute to marital instability in many ways. It could be interference from the wife or husband, parent's side, especially of mother in-law. The mother in-law often is being too protective of their children thereby causing troubles between the couples which can later lead to instability of the marriage. The mother of the wife on the other hand will make sure that their daughter gets all the respect due her without asking her if she gave enough respect to her husband's people. All these create tension leading to marital instability (Barikisu, 2007).
4. **Extreme sexual desire:** Extreme sexual orientation of one of a marriage partner is capable of endangering a marital union, such as oral sex, excessive sexual appetite, sodomy especially when the other partner is at the other extreme of the scale can generate crisis in the homes.
5. **Poor marital communication:** The inability of spouses to communicate effectively with each other is very unhealthy factor to the marriage union. Effective marital communication entails that couples discuss issues, respond to questions, call for explanations and accept same timely (when given), as any delay may send out a wrong signal which a partner is bound to interpret some way. Effective marital communication can in fact assuage many other marital disquiets before they could degenerate into crisis situations. Put differently, poor marital communication has been blamed for some other marital problems that have even culminated into divorce or separation of spouses (Amadi & Amadi, 2014).
6. **Unwholesome social behaviour:** Bickering, unnecessary criticisms, gossip or what may simply be tagged nagging has rocked some good homes. It is not an over statement that majority of the women take to nagging instead of politely confronting their husbands with issues.
7. **Impotency on either of the spouses:** Barikisu (2007) opined that impotency is one of the causes of marital instability. This is the situation where the husband cannot impregnate the wife because of lack of erection and which does not allow fertilization



to take place. This problem also arises from the wife, if she is unable to bear children. Childlessness is a very great problem in marriage, especially in most parts of Rivers State where traditionally some people's aim of getting into marriage is to raise children who will bear their names in future. As a result of that, any marriage that does not bear children does not mostly survive. In most cases, the man may be forced to marry another wife.

8. **Poverty and economic problem:** Victor in Barikisu (2007) argued that when marriage lacks material needs for sustenance, it becomes a problem. In some homes, the maintenance of the wife and children becomes so difficult that the wife have no option than to seek those things needed outside their homes which has led many women in having extra marital affairs in trying to meet up with their family needs. This can result to disagreement thereby leading to marital instability.
9. **Lack of trust and personal lapses:** Trust is an important factor in the building of a strong relationship especially marital relationship. Therefore, one of the commonest causes of marital instability is lack of trust. When there is no genuine mutual understanding between the husband and wife, accusation and counter accusation becomes the order of the day. Some wives are fund of accusing their husbands falsely for returning late from work; such accusation has resulted to sudden changes in the character of the husband about the care and welfare of the wife. The final result of this is marital instability (Barikisu, 2007).

### **Working Class Women**

In the traditional African society, marriage is an institution where the wife is seen as the dependant and subordinate of the husband. The woman (wife) is seen in the traditional role of childbearing/rearing and prowess at the domestic front (Osiruemu in Jamabo & Ordu, 2012). In those days, a woman needed a husband to support her, provide shelter, clothing, food and have children, and to be protected from societal harm. On the other hand, men needed a wife to fulfill sexual gratification, support him, cook his food, take care of his children and clean his house.

Jamabo and Ordu (2012) asserted that in the contemporary society, these traditional roles or setup of the family has changed, which has led to a change in the administration of the family. Women are now involved in paid employment which form a vital part of their self-image. They are no longer just "housewives" or "mothers" alone but attached to some specific economic activities which give them security and autonomy. These changes have created new economic opportunities for women, thus the status of women have been affected and is now increasingly receiving attention globally (Ordu & Igbude, 2006).

Adegoke in Jamabo and Ordu (2012) reported that education has led to the acquisition of new values and ideas, which in turn led to a change in both the family structure and social system, hence, enables the women to be gainfully employed and subsequently become income earners thereby assisting their husband financially, participating in various endeavours



outside the home. Working class women is a socio-economic term used to describe women who through education have developed certain skills and are gainfully employed, who by class boundaries are different from other women who are not working in any paid employment. McGinn and Oh (2017) opined that social class reflects individuals' mental representation of who they are and how they should relate to others.

The unique experiences of working class women have placed certain amount of stress on their marriages. This is because certain occupations or jobs do separate the married women from their families and therefore leave their husbands behind, by implication, they are married but separated. Li (2018) opined that working class women have changed the traditional division of gender roles and earning potential, this altering the relationship and expectations between husbands and wives. He further argued that the change in the traditional roles of women may create marital dissatisfaction.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In many families and communities around the world, marital instability has become one of the most widespread and endemic social concern. The fragility of the marriage relationship is a significant element of today's environment, and it can be found at all levels of society (Omoniyi-Oyafunke, Falola, & Salau, 2014; Musau, Kisovi, & Otor, 2015). The fragility of marriages stems from the fact that couples that have different interests, values, and aspirations are most likely to become incompatible and live in a hostile marriage (Ogunrinde, 2020). These differences in marital outcomes result from the fact that individuals with dissimilar worldviews do not engage in reciprocal relationships, and because marriages are fragile, individuals who want different things are more likely to end their marriages.

Marriage is considered very important in the life of a couple. However, it seems that acquiring education, earning income, or having a small or large family size have different implications and are more likely to put the marriage in jeopardy (Ojukwu, et al., 2016). While the attainment of high educational levels may bring about the acquisition of honour in society, good jobs, and increased financial standing, which will enable married people to assist each other in alleviating financial problems in their home, it is also likely to militate against the marital success of the woman, especially if there is a disparity in her level of education and that of her spouse, the woman spending most of her time outside the home due to work, and not being able to take adequate care of the family due to its size. This is the situation for most Nigerian women, often leading to instability within the home. Thus, the implication of this type of arrangement often erodes the foundation of an enduring marriage and may produce irreconcilable feelings that may in turn make divorce an option.

Unfortunately, the increase in divorce rates is one of the most visible changes in contemporary family life. The increasing prevalence of instability in today's marriages calls for a deep analysis of the new phenomenon to understand the factors associated with the increase in the rate of marital instability. Regrettably, there has been a decline in the ideal of marital quality and stability, which has made people less willing and less able to make the commitments,



sacrifices, and investments of energy, time, and opportunity that are necessary to make marriages succeed. As such, the resultant effect extends to the kind of children raised by such parents. A situation that is likely to produce unwholesome children, who are likely to cause social unrest in society as a whole; no surprise that armed robbery and kidnapping cases have recently increased in Port Harcourt Metropolis. There is hardly a day that passes that the mass media will not carry news about robbery or kidnapping cases in Port Harcourt Metropolis. On that note, this study investigated educational background, income level and family size as factors influencing marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study investigated educational background, income level and family size as factors influencing marital instability among working class women in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine how educational background influences marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. Examine how income level influences marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. Determine how family size affects marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt.

### **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does educational background influence marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis?
2. What is the influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. How does family size influence marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. The influence of educational background on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant.
2. The influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant.
3. The influence of family size on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted an ex post-facto research design. The design was adopted since the study, is concerned with the description of events as they are. Nwankwo (2013) added that it involves



the researcher gathering data from a sample of items considered to be representative of the entire group, which describes certain features of the sample.

The population of the study consisted of 657 married women on the payroll of the Port Harcourt Local Government Council (**Source:** Payroll, Port Harcourt City Local Government Council). The sample size consisted of 237 respondents based on the derivation of the Taro Yemen Sampling formula. In selecting the respondents, purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents who were mainly working-class women in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

A Working Class Women Marital Instability Assessment Scale (WCWMIAS) was used for the data collection for the study. The instrument was an 18-item questionnaire scale on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, with a 2.5 criterion mean. The instrument was tested for reliability through a test-retest method, with a reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.89$ , ascertained through the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. The copies of the questionnaire were administered to and retrieved from the respondents at their working place in the Local Government Council Secretariat. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Ver. 22). Mean score and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

## RESULTS

**Research Question 1:** How does educational background influence marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 1: Mean score and standard deviation of how educational background influences marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis**

SN	Educational Background	n = 237		
		Mean	SD	Decision
	With an NCE/OND educational background, it is likely to lead to a more stable marriage.	2.52	0.92	Agreed
	With a B.Ed/B.Sc/HND educational background, it is less likely to lead to a more stable marriage than those with an NCE/OND educational background.	2.79	0.81	Agreed
	Working-class women with a PGDE educational background are likely to have some sort of marriage problem due to commitments.	2.81	1.03	Agreed
	Working-class women with M.Ed, M.Sc, or MA degrees are likely to have more marital problems because the more education, the more commitment might lead to an unstable marriage.	3.42	0.60	Agreed



	Working-class women with PhDs are more likely to have marital instability due to professional commitments they might have to their work and career.	3.66	0.65	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, February 2022.

**Criterion Mean** = 2.5:  $\bar{x}$  - 1.00-2.49 = Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - 2.5-4.00 = Agree

Table 1 shows the summary of mean ratings on how the level of education influences marital instability among working-class women as measured by their mean score in Port Harcourt municipality. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over their level of education was 3.04, with SD = 0.80. The respondents agreed with items 1–5, with their mean score greater than the criterion mean (2.5), while just a few of the respondents disagreed with the items. The implication of the findings is that the educational level that was more influential was PhD, where working-class women with PhDs are more likely to have marital instability due to professional commitments they might have to their work and career. In summary, the respondents strongly agreed that marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt was influenced by their level of education.

**Research Question 2:** What is the influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 2: Mean score and standard deviation of the influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis**

		n=237		
SN	Income Level	Mean	SD	Decision
	Working-class women who earn between N30,000 and N50,000 are more likely to be committed to their family.	2.99	0.93	Agreed
	Working-class women who earn between N51,000 and N80,000 are likely to be committed to their families as well.	3.02	0.62	Agreed
	Working-class women who earn between N81,000 and N110,000 are likely to be engaged in jobs that are more demanding.	3.20	0.65	Agreed
	Working-class women who earn between N111,000 and N140,000 are more likely to be engaged in jobs that are more demanding, which is likely to result in marital instability.	3.49	0.73	Agreed
	Working-class women who earn between N141,000 and above are more likely to be engaged	3.26	1.04	Agreed



	in jobs that are more demanding, which is likely to result in marital instability.			
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.19</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, February 2022.

**Criterion Mean** = 2.5:  $\bar{x}$  - 1.00-2.49 = Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - 2.5-4.00 = Agree

Table 2 shows the summary of the mean rating on how the level of income influences the marital instability of working-class women as measured by their mean score in Port Harcourt municipality. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over their level of education was 3.19, with SD = 0.79. The respondents agreed with items 6–10, with their mean score greater than the criterion mean (2.5), while just a few of the respondents disagreed with the items. The implication of the findings is that the level of income that was more influential was that of earners of N150,000 and above, where working-class women are more likely to be engaged in jobs that are more demanding, which is likely to result in marital instability. In summary, the respondents strongly agreed that marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt was influenced by their level of income.

**Research Question 3:** How does family size influence marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis?

**Table 3: Mean score and standard deviation of how family size influences marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis**

		n =237		
SN	Family Size	Mean	SD	Decision
	Working-class women with 1-2 children tend to cope better with their job and family.	2.53	1.08	Agreed
	Working-class women with 3–4 children tend to cope considerably better with their job and family.	2.97	0.89	Agreed
	Working-class women with 5–6 children tend to struggle with their jobs and families, which consequently results in marital instability.	3.08	0.93	Agreed
	Working-class women with 7-8 children find it difficult to manage their children, their job, and their family, which consequently results in marital instability.	3.18	0.67	Agreed
	Working-class women with 9 children or more find it difficult to manage their children, their job, and their family, which consequently results in marital instability.	3.23	0.60	Agreed
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.00</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

**Source:** Researcher's Field Survey, February 2022.



**Criterion Mean** = 2.5:  $\bar{x}$  - 1.00-2.49 = Disagree,  $\bar{x}$  - 2.5-4.00 = Agree

Table 3 shows the summary of the mean rating on the extent to which family size influences marital instability of working-class women as measured by their mean score in Port Harcourt municipality. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents across their level of education was 3.00, with an SD of 0.83. The respondents agreed with items 11–15, with their mean score greater than the criterion mean (2.5), while just a few of the respondents disagreed with the items. The implication of the findings is that the family size that was more influential was 9 children and more, where they find it difficult to manage their children, their job, and their family, which consequently results in marital instability. In summary, the respondents strongly agreed that marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt was influenced by family size.

**Hypothesis 1:** The influence of educational background on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant.

**Table 4: Summary of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the influence of educational background on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis**

ANOVA					
Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	40112.04	4	10028.01	9.83	0.00
Within Groups	236647.92	232	1020.03		
Total	276759.96	236			

Table 4 shows that there is a significant influence of educational background on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis ( $F_{4, 232} = 9.83, P = 0.00 < 0.05$ ), hence null hypothesis one is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 2:** The influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant.

**Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on the influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis**

ANOVA					
Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	80168.66	4	20042.17	23.65	0.00
Within Groups	196591.30	232	847.38		
Total	276759.96	236			



Table 5 shows that there is a significant influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis ( $F_{4, 232} = 23.65, P = 0.00 < 0.05$ ), hence null hypothesis two is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 3:** The influence of family size on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant.

**Table 6: Summary of ANOVA on the influence of family size on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis is not significant**

ANOVA					
Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	33629.46	4	8407.37	8.02	0.00
Within Groups	243130.49	232	1047.98		
Total	276759.96	236			

Table 6 shows that there is a significant influence of family size on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis ( $F_{4, 232} = 8.02, P = 0.00 < 0.05$ ), hence null hypothesis three is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance.

### Discussion

The study investigated educational background, income level, and family size as factors influencing marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis. The results in table one revealed that the respondents strongly agreed that marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt was influenced by their level of education. Furthermore, the results of table four revealed that there is a significant influence of educational background on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis. The implication of these findings is that the benefits of formal education extend beyond earning a better income and gaining access to better jobs, but also influence marital stability among working-class women. The present finding supports the findings of Steidl and Raley (2016), who found a mean difference in relationship quality by educational level. They also found an educational gradient in relationship quality between married couples. The study, however, observed that the differences in mean values in educational attainment stemmed more from the process of learning than just degree attainment.

Table two revealed that the respondents agreed that marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt was influenced by their level of income. Furthermore, the results of table five revealed that there is a significant influence of income level on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis. The implication of these findings is that marriage instability is closely related to income level among working-class women in Port Harcourt, and as such, policies and strategies for marriage support and prevention must be directed to women of different income levels within the Port Harcourt metropolis. In line with the present study, the findings of Amadi and Amadi (2014) revealed



that the emergence of crises in marital homes is occasioned by these factors: lack of marital confidence; incompatibility in sexual life; emotional and physical abuse; a threat to the life of partners; poor health condition of couples; economic issues; and third-party syndrome; and influenced by educational background, socio-economic background, and household size of the family.

Table three revealed that the respondents opined that, to a very high extent, marital instability among working-class women in Port Harcourt was influenced by their family size. Furthermore, the results of table six revealed that there is a significant influence of family size on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis. The implication of these findings is that to check the influence of family size on marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis, it is necessary that family planning services be provided in order to improve the living conditions of such women. The present findings are corroborated by Marini (2008), who revealed that the number of children in the family hurts parental satisfaction. The result was further supported by the findings of Amadi and Amadi (2014). They revealed that the emergence of crises in marital homes is occasioned by these factors: lack of marital confidence; incompatibility in sexual life; emotional and physical abuse; a threat to the life of partners; poor health condition of couples; third-party syndrome; and influences by educational background, socio-economic background, and household size of the family.

### **Conclusion**

The study investigated educational background, income level, and family size as factors influencing marital instability among working-class women in the Port Harcourt Metropolis. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that marital instability was strongly associated with educational background, income level, and family size. These findings were adduced to the fact that even though educated women tend to have comparatively higher income levels, it appears that while educational background, which in most cases enhances the level of financial stability among working-class women, does not appear to be a protective factor against marital instability. Also, the family size was found to be a factor influencing marital instability as women in larger families tended to have higher levels of frustration and, consequently, tended to be more open to alternatives of separation and divorce.

### **Recommendations**

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Married working-class women should seek higher educational attainment but not to the detriment of their marriages.
2. Married working-class women must manage their income level in such a way that they do not affect their marriage stability.



- Both couples should plan their family size with the understanding of their economic status in relation to their marital instability.

## References

- Amadi, U.P.N., & Amadi, F.N. (2014). Marital crisis in the Nigerian Society: Causes, consequences and management strategies. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(26), 133-143.
- Ambakederemo, A., & Ganagana, K. (2006). Causes of marital instability in the Port Harcourt municipality, Nigeria: Solutions and counselling implications. *Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 11(1), 32-38.
- Awake, (2008). Marriage in Distress. How can you make your marriage a Success? *The Watch Tower Magazine* (July Edition). Pennsylvania: The Watch Tower and Traet Society.
- Barikisu, S.O. (2007). Marital instability in Nigeria: Implication on growing up children. A Term Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Course GS104, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Bell, D. (2001). Defining marriage and legitimacy. *Current Anthropology*, 38(2), 237-54.
- Bradbury, T. N., Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S.R.H. (2000). Research on the nature and determinants of marital satisfactory. A Decade in Review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62, 964 – 980.
- Fehintola, J. O. (2009). The effect of family background and environmental factors on academic achievement of secondary school students: A study of selected secondary school students in Saki West Local Government Area. *International Journal of Distance Education*, 4, 51 – 64
- Gove, B. (2001). *Webster's third new international dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*. Marrian-Webster Inc.
- 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 Counselling*, 4(10), 123-126.
- Li, W. (2018). Migration and marital instability among migrant workers in China: A gender perspective. *Chinese Journal of Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057150x18757673>.
- Marini, M.M. (2008). Effects of the number and spacing of children on marital and parental satisfaction. *Demography*, 17, 225-242.
- McGinn, K.L. & Oh, E. (2017). Gender, social class and women's employment: Current opinion in psychology. Retrieved on February 28, 2020 from <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.copsy/>
- Musau, J. M., Kisovi, L. M., & Otor, S. C. J. (2015). Marital instability and its impact on female-headed household livelihoods in Machakos county, Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 5(8), 145-153.
- Nwankwo, O. C. (2013). *A practiced guide to research writing for students of research enterprise* (5th ed.). University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Nwokocha, C. E. (2002). *Marital relationship*, Prompt Enterprises
- Ogunrinde, M. E. (2020b). Social factors and marital instability among married women in SouthWest, Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business, Arts and Science*, 2(4), 96-107. <https://www.ijarbas.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/14-2020-10-Social-Factor->
- Ojukwu, M. O. (2013). The influence of mate selection preferences on marital stability of Abia Married Persons. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture and the Environment*, 14(1/2), 178-194.
- Ojukwu, M. O. (2014). The influence of length of marriage and mate selection preferences on marital stability. *Journal of Sustainable Agriculture and the Environment*, 15(2), 399-411.
- 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 and Literacy Studies*, 4(3), 88-96.
- Omoniyi-Oyafunke, C., Falola, H. O., & Salau, O. P. (2014). Effect of marital instability on children in Abeokuta Metropolis. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research*, 2(3), 68-77.
- Ordu, S.N., & Igbude, M.A. (2006). Family stability of working class and non-working class women in Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers State: Implication for counselling. *The Counsellor*, 22, 67-74.
- Ozean, B., & Breen, R. (2012). Marital instability and female labour supply. *Annual Review on Sociology*, 38, 463-481.
- Steidl, E.A., & Raley, K. (2016). Premarital cohabitation and marital dissolution: An examination of recent marriage. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science: Its Interdisciplinary*, 8(2), 89-103.
- Ye, W.Z., & Xu, A.Q. (1999). The chinese marital stability and its determinants. *Chinese Journal of Population Science*, 7, 7-12.