

Full Length Research Paper

Socio – economic status and personality type as correlates of spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers state

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This study investigated socio-economic status and personality type as correlates of spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers State. The purpose of the study was to determine the degree and nature of association among Socio-Economic Status, gender and religion, as well as predict spouse behaviour. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were examined in the study. The correlational design was adopted in the study. Data collected from 500 subjects with the aid of a 43-item spouse abuse behaviour questionnaire were analyzed with multiple regression and path analytic models. It was found that there was no significant correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. The moderating impact of the secondary independent variables, gender, religion, were not significantly correlated among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse behaviour in the study respectively. On the basis of these findings, counsellors and psychologists should not rely on the level of socio-economic status and personality type to predict the spouse abuse behaviour since socio-economic status and personality type did not correlate significantly with spouse abuse behaviour. Counsellors, teachers and psychologists should not rely on the basis of religion and gender to predict spouse abuse behaviour since they did not significantly moderate the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. Since this study has actually established that socio-economic status, personality type, gender and region were not significantly predictors of spouse abuse behaviour among couples in Rivers state, it was recommended that the State Government should without further delay come up with a policy statements under the urgent need for the introduction of premarital education and counseling programme in the state school in order to facilitate preventive counseling against spouse abuse behaviour. It was also recommended that marriage seminars and workshops which could help minimize disunity in families should be organized and couples of various level should be encouraged to attend.

Key words: Socio-economic status, personality type, gender and religion, spouse behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the coming together of man and woman for procreation. It has different meanings for different people and societies. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1989: 642) defined marriage as “the union of a man and a woman by a legal ceremony” marriage has been described as the legalizing of a special relations hip between a man a woman to which the society gives its consent (Ordu, 2004). It places each of the partners under legal and social obligations to the other and to the social obligation to the other and to the society at large. Mirowsky and Ross (1985) view marriage as a close long-term relationship in which the psychological benefits of personal control may be limited by a need for reciprocity and mutual control. Nwoye (1991: 29) in reacting

to several definitions of the term marriage proposed that:

Marriage in itself is a sacred and permanent contract, which is assumed to be enacted when two people (usually man and woman) decided on their own accord and in the presence of at least two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live a life of vocation of love and sharing for each other, for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare as persons, in their journey together through life.

It is said that through this permanent union of two persons that society, including the church itself, expects up

bringing of children. It is believed that marriage was originated from God almighty right from creation. Thus, it is written in the Holy Bible (The New King James Version, p.875).

But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. So then they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate (Mark 10, pp. 6-9).

God gave directions to husbands and wives when He said in Ephesians 5:22, 25. "Wives submit yourself unto your own husbands as unto the Lord... husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it".

Traditionally, the dominance of men in both economic and political situations was supported by social philosophy. This philosophy justifies the husbands' position as the head of the family. His responsibility for the wife and the children legitimizes his authority over them. In this regard, the decisions that affect the entire family are considered part of his rightful and obligatory domain as a provider for the family (Fadipe, 1992). Schafer and Wolfe (1990) contended that more equitable sharing patterns within families and households is both means and an end. They further stated that if the husband makes more decision that is equitable, he is an exploiter and his wife is a victim. If the husband makes fewer decisions than is equitable, he is a victim and his wife is an exploiter. The division of decision making in the average couple is between the husband and wife equally. Spouses feel bothered, tensed, worried, neglected, unhappy and frustrated if their partner expect more than they are willing to give, act like only important person in the family and demand more compliance than they are willing to give (Pealing, 1995)

Spouses' relationship is the balance of influence between husband and wife in the major decision which both of them must take. The balance of spouse power and relationship is an exchange of rewards and costs. Each spouse feels some degree of influence over the actions of the other and pays for it with some degree of submission to the desires and preference of the other. This agrees with the distributive theory in marriage which says that the power division is fair if the major decision does not manipulate housewives, hence the responsibilities are shared equally. Whereas, the relative equality applies according to the rule, the exchange is fair if a ratio of one partner's inputs to outcomes equal a ratio of the other partner's reap benefits that are equal relative to their individual contributions. However, by talking partial equity into account, wives are expected to be more victimized than husbands (Mirowsky and Ross, 1985). This is so because Rivers State has long depended on wives acquiescence in the roles assigned to than without questioning. For success

in marriage, proper adjustment is necessary.

Adjustment in marriage is the process and condition of spouse being in harmony with the physical and social environment in which they live, indicated by the absence of symptoms of stress and the ability to maintain good personal relationship with each other. It could also bring into agreement the behaviours of the person with the expectation of another accompanied by a feeling of acceptance of the modified behaviour by the one making the adjustment.

A visit to some homes, the customary courts and welfare offices in Rivers State testifies to the unprecedented rising rate of family conflicts, divorce, marital dissatisfaction, loss of affection between couples and cases of marital violence. Reports from the above conflicts indicate maltreatment, desertion, ejection, negligence, lack of maintenance, child abuse, child neglect, abscondment malicious beating family dispute, property acquisition, adultery, threats, cruelty, starvation, abandonment, rejection, parental interference, childlessness, assaults, wandering of wife, disobedience, damage of property, request for separation, dowry refund, lack of sexual satisfaction. These various complaints come from either of the spouse or/and their parents, specifically, when one looks at the divorce statistics in Rivers state, the impression is clear that the human family or marriage is in a serious trouble. A lot of social, emotional, psychological, financial and physical/biological factors contributed to these problems. It is estimated that divorce increase from 500 in 1995 to 2,500 in 2008.

It was also discovered that violent abuse acts towards spouses, physically, emotionally, psycho-social increased from 55% in 1995 to 83% in 2008 (Source: Rivers state social welfare Department, Port Harcourt, 2003). The incidence of spouses abuse in River state is traceable to extramarital affairs. Whereas some men in all Rivers state ethnic communities adopt monogamous marriage style in principle, in practice they keep and maintain some women and children outside their homes. Polygamous husbands are not faring better, either. Polygamy is having more than one wife at the same time by a man. A polygamist, who is supposed to be satisfied with his various wives by the Rivers state culture, stretches out to keep some sex – partners outside his family. Some of them still bring some children outside marriage into their marital home, even when they cannot feed or maintain the numerous ones at home. In some cases, an unknown oldest son may be brought from outside into a family that already had a recognized oldest son and this creates a lot of friction and tension if not death in the family.

Other factors that heightened spouses abuse in the ethnic communities are keeping girl friends outside the home, indulging in sexual affairs with sister –in –laws or step daughter or house maids. There is also marriage by arrangement in which some parents withdraw their school aged children from school to give them out in marriage to some older men who give them much money. This practice is common in ikwerre, Etches and Ogoni ethnic

communities. When –a small girl is given out in marriage without her consent, this is an abuse of modern arrangement. The act of encouraging and enforcing a marriage between the brother of the deceased and the deceased wife is also very wrong. This is also common to Etches, Kalabari and Ogoni ethnic community. This is an abuse of the marriage institution and it creates problems for both parties (Obot, 1997). The culture of most ethnic communities in Rivers state condone most of all these practices. Evidence from the above factors has shown that the incidence of spouse abuse is on the increase in Rivers state and the society needs efficient and effective professional counselors to handle these problems before they can get out of hand (Nwobi, 1995). Spouse abuse can be referred to as the degree to which tensions such as nagging, suspicion, fighting unfaithfulness, causes the withdrawal of marital stability amongst couples. Okobiah and Okorodudu (2003: 114) defined spouse's abuse in their study as,

“All manner of persistent negligence of marital roles or acts of verbal or non-verbal aggressive behaviour causing serious discomfort, anxiety and injurious pains physically, emotionally, psychologically and economically to the wife and husband living together in a marriage relationship.”

Spouse abuse affects the children socially, morally, physically and emotionally. No marriage is a bed of roses, some couples try to tolerate one another hence they are able to adjust to marital issues and problems.

Different churches, men, women organizations and other bodies are holding conferences, seminars and workshops on the essence of good family living. Husband and wife who do not support each other in terms of reasoning together may likely to have problem in their marriage.

In view of the overwhelming evidence of spouse abuse behaviour in River State communities as highlighted above, this research study was embarked upon to see if there is a relationship between socio-economic status, personality type and of spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers State. In addition to socio-economic status and personality type there are also other variables such as gender and region, which were also be considered to see how they moderate the relationship among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse. The essence is to provide counselors with a better knowledge of how to prevent cases of spouse abuse incidence with a view to eliminating it entirely from our society.

Statement of the problem

Spouse abuse behaviour as has been observed by there searcher is a problem in the marriage relationship. It threatens the very essence of marriage relationship and its effects are felt in every facts of the society especially Rivers State. Measures adopted by the spouse, families,

christians and non-christians have not succeeded in wiping out all these cankerworm called spouse abuse behaviour among couples in marriage relationship. It continues to gather momentum and permeating all levels of family relationship. Spouse abuse behaviour is also rampant among christians and non-christians, rich and poor, male and female, quiet and aggressive individual, young and old, high income group and lower income group, personality traits and a host of others in marital relationship. A conducive home environment is considered to be one of the determinant factors for a good socio economic and personality trait development of any society. Given the varied consequences of observed incidence of spouse abuse in Rivers State, such as husbands beating their wives or wife beating their husbands, nagging, separation, rejection, ejection, desertion, abandonment, lack of maintenance, destruction, of properties, denial of sexual relationship, divorce and a host of others, the home environment has become distorted, thereby inhibiting good cordial relationship among couples in marriage. It is worthy to note that the effect of this distortion in the society such as social upheavals, increasing crime wave, immorality, violence, youth restiveness and a host of others, threatens the development of Rivers state and therefore call for an investigation. A correlation study of these factors, socio-economic status, personality type, gender and religion that could predispose spouses to abused behaviour is necessary. Therefore, the problem this study sought to investigate is: what is the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type, gender and religion and spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers State?

Research questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of this study:

1. What is the correlation among couples' socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour?
2. Does gender moderate the correlation among couples' social – economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour?
3. Does religion moderate the correlation among couples' socio-economic status, personality type and their spouse abuse behaviour?

Research hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study at the 0.05 level of significance:

- HO₁: There is no significant correlation among couples' socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.
 HO₂: There is no significant correlation among couples,

socio-economic status, personality type, gender and spouse abuse behavior

H₀₃: There is no significant correlation among couples' socio-economic status, personality type, religion and spouse abuse behaviors

METHODOLOGY

The sample comprised 500 subjects selected from 5 Local Government Areas randomly selected in the state. Out of the 5 Local Government Areas, 25 towns were randomly selected, 5 towns from each of the Local Government Area. In each town, 20 spouses (10 couples) were selected, that is, (250) men and (250) women were selected and used for the study. The multi-stage random sampling procedure was adopted. In this multi-stage sampling procedure, there was one sampling frame per stage. The researcher divided the population into strata, sampled the strata, then stratified the samples and then re-sampled, repeating the process until the ultimate sampling units were selected at the last of the hierarchical levels. The multi-stage sampling is the most prevalent form for large surveys.

It is worthy to note that the researcher randomly selected respondents for the study from each town of the selected five Local Government Areas of the state. In each town visited, the researcher administered the questionnaires at such places as: schools, colleges, universities, hospitals, government secretariats, market places, hairdressing salons, homes, fashion houses and so on.

Research instrument

The research instrument for the study was the "Spouse Abuse Questionnaire" (SABQ), developed by Okobia and Okorodudu in (2003). It was adapted and used for this study to elicit information from couples in respect of incidence of spouse abuse behaviour. It contained three sections; A, B and C. The Section A contained information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as sex, ethnic group, qualification, religion, age, marital experience, type of marriage, marital satisfaction and social-economic status which was measured as a composite score of respondent, education and family income, (Smith, Brooks-Gunn and Klebanov, 1997; McCoach, O'Conoell, Reis and Levitt, 2006). The Section B of the instrument measured spouse abuse variables; the physical, emotional, psycho-socio and economic dimensions of spouse abuse behaviour. The physical dimension of spouse abuse behaviour had items description of always arguing, nagging, always battered, over bearing character, always fighting, always oppressed, always oppressing, often being assaulted. The economic dimension had item coverage of whether spouses feed the home, pay the children's school fees, maintain the home, pay rents, take financial care, pay all bills, must be financially better than the other spouse and section C of the instrument was on personality type variables. The reliability of the instrument (SABQ) (which is an estimate of its consistency and stability) was redetermined by the researcher through a Cronbach alpha reliability technique (α). The coefficient alpha obtained was 0.80 which was found significant at 0.05 alpha level. While the section C had coefficient alpha of .65 ($p < 0.05$), therefore considered reliable for the study.

Procedure for data collection

To minimize the incidence of instrument mortality, spouse abuse behaviour questionnaire was administered in person by the researcher in the five Local Government Areas and communities randomly selected for the study.

The filled questionnaires were collected on the spot. On the spot

administration and a scored administration, ensured one hundred percent (100%) return of the questionnaires. Through this method a hundred percent (100%) rate of return of the questionnaire was achieved. The completed copies of the questionnaire was personally scored and collected by the researcher.

Method of data analysis

The multiple correlation and regression statistics was used to answer the three research questions and test the three null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Path Analysis Model was also used to illustrate the correlation among all the variables in this study. The multiple correlation and regression statistics was used because a prediction of spouse abuse behaviour on the basis of correlation among variables of socio-economic status, personality type, gender, religion, age, length of marriage, ethnicity and type of marriage was carried out. Moreover, path analytic model was used to illustrate the relative predictive power and moderator roles of the variables.

Specifically, Research Question 1 was answered with a Pearson's correlation matrix of the entire variables. Hypotheses 1 was tested with Multiple Regression of socio-economic statuses, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

Research Question 2 and 3 were answered through a comparative analysis of the moderator impacts of gender and religion among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour and with the aid of Beta weights and path analytic model. In the same vain, hypotheses 2 and three were tested through multiple correlation and regression analysis of the relationship among the socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

RESULTS

Research question 1

What is the correlation among couple's socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse?

To answer this research question, a Pearson's correlation matrix of all the variables in the study was generated and this is presented in Table 1.

In Table 1 data presented showed that there was no significant correlation between Socio-economic status and spouse abuse behaviour ($r = -0.008$), but there was inverse significant correlation between socio-economic status and personality type.

($r = -0.129^*$) and personality type and spouse abuse behaviour was not significantly correlated ($r = 0.036$). The inverse correlation between some of the variables indicated that increase or improvement in one variable (such as socio-economic status) led to decrease in the other variable (personality type) and vice versa. The answer to research question 1 therefore, is that there was inverse correlation between socio-economic status and personality type while the relationship between social economic status and Spouse abuse as well as between personality type and spouse abuse behavior was not significant.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant correlation among couples socio-

Table 1. Correlation matrix of all the variables in the study.

	Spouse abuse behaviour	Gender	Religion	Socio-economic status	Personality type
Spouse abuse behaviour	- 1.000				
Gender	-0.002	1.000			
religion	0.103*	0.078	1.000		
Socio-economic status	-0.008	-0.139	-0.039	1.000	
Personality type	0.036	-0.037	0.150*	-0.129*	1.000

*Significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 2. Multiple regression of socio-economic status, personality type, and spouse abuse behaviour.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.036 ^a	0.001	-0.003	7.833
ANOVA ^b				
Model 1	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Regression	38.899	2	19.450	0.317
Residual	30497.213	497	61.363	
Total	30536.112	499		
Variables in the equation				
MODEL	B	Std error	Beta	T
Constant	66.641	12.040		5.535*
SES	-0.281	3.966	-0.003	-0.071
Personality type	0.586	0.754	0.035	0.777

a; Predictor (constant) socio-economic status, personality type, b; Dependent variable spouse abuse behaviour. *Significant ($p > 0.05$)

economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

To test hypothesis 1, the multiple correlation and regression analysis were performed with socio-economic status personality type as independent variables while spouse abuse behaviour was the dependent variable. Further-more the path analytic model showing path coefficients (B weights) for all the variables was constructed to illustrate the degree of association among the variables.

The data in Table 2 showed that $F(2,497) = 0.317$, ($p > 0.05$). This indicated that there was no significant correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted and the alternative rejected. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.003 showed that 3% of the variance in spouse abuse was due to the collective impact of socio-economic status and personality type. The relative degree of association of socio-economic status, personality type with spouse abuse behaviour is shown in the Beta (B) weight

in Table 2. The significant "constant t value (5.535, $p > 0.05$) showed that there were some other potential variables which were not included in this study.

The path analytic model in Figure 1 was used to demonstrate the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type, and their spouse abuse behaviour:

The path analytic model in figure 4.1 above was used to show the correlation between socio-economic status and personality type, the relationship between socio-economic status and spouse abuse behaviour, and the relationship between personality type and spouse abuse.

Figure 1 showed that the relationship between socio-economic status and personality type was significant ($r = -0.129$) while the relationship between socio-economic status and spouse abuse as well as between personality type and spouse abuse were not significant.

Research question 2

Does gender moderate the correlation among couple

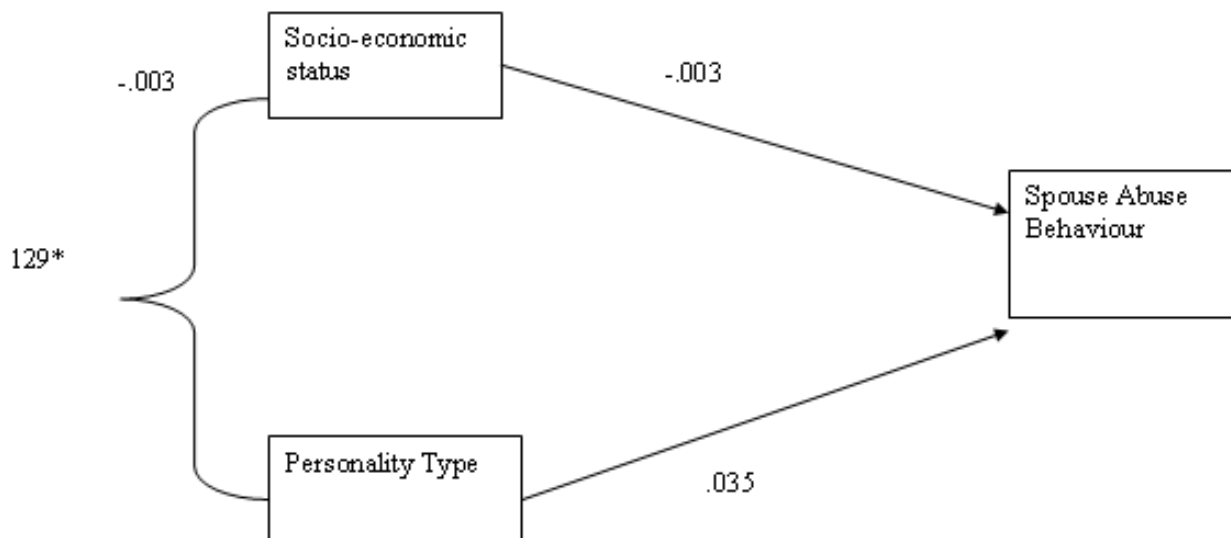


Figure 1. Path analytic model of the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse. Significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 3. Correlation of socio-economic status, personality type and gender on spouse abuse behaviour.

Model 2	B	SEB	Beta	t
Constant	66.683	12.375		5.389*
Socio-economic status	-0.290	4.012	-0.003	-0.072
Personality type	0.585'	0.756	0.038	0.774
Gender	-0.0115	0.778	0.001	-0.015

a) Predictor (constant) socio-economic status, personality type, b) Dependent variable spouse abuse behaviour. * Significant ($p < 0.05$)

socio-economic status, personality type and their spouse abuse?

A regression of socio-economic status, personality type and gender on spouse abuse was carried out to answer the research question 2. The data generated are presented in Table 3 and illustrated in Figure 2 respectively.

Table 3 showed that socio-economic status, personality type and gender were not significant predictors of spouse abuse behaviour, t - value for socio economic status = - 0.072; personality type = 0.774; gender = - 0.015 respectively.

Figure 2 was used to illustrate the changes in the path coefficients of socio-economic status and personality type with spouse abuse when gender (moderator variable) was included in the model. Figure 2 showed that the predictive power of the two independent variables of socio-economic status and personality type on spouse abuse behaviour remained the same when gender was introduced into the model.

The path coefficients presented in Figure 2 did not satisfy the three conditions for establishing moderator im-

pact. These conditions, according to Elliot, Mcgregor and Gable (1999) in Ossai (2004), are that first, there must be significant relationship between the independent variables socio-economic status and personality type and relationship between the moderator variable (gender) and dependent variable (spouse abuse). Thirdly, there must be significant relationship between the independent variables (socio-economic status, personality type) and the moderator variable (Gender).

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant correlation among couples' socio-economic status, personality type, gender and spouse abuse behaviour. The data presented in Table 4 were used to test Hypothesis 2.

Dependent variable: spouse abuse

Table 4 above showed that $F(3.496) = 0.211, p > 0.05$ is

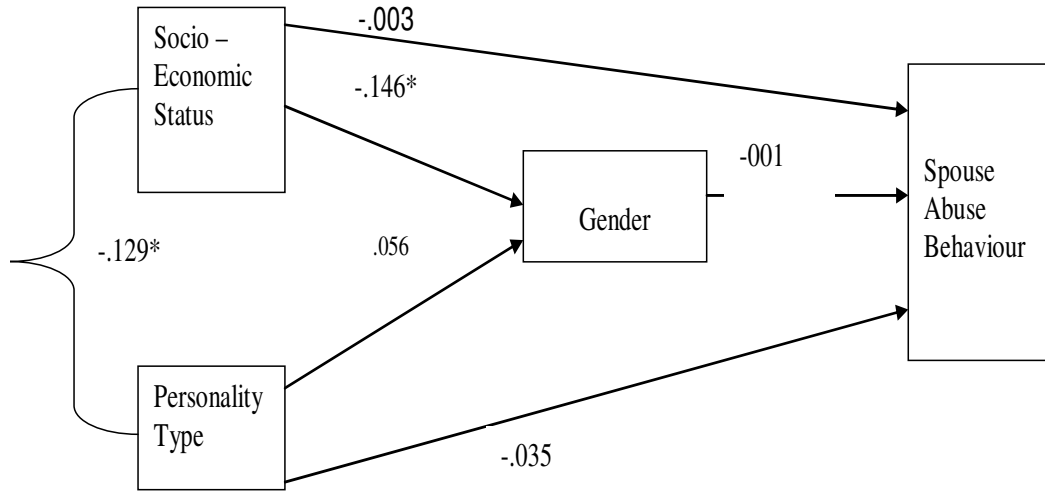


Figure 2. Moderating impact of gender on the relationship among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. Significant ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Multiple Regression of Socio –economic Status, personality type gender and spouse abuse behaviour.

Model 2	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
2	0.036 ^a	0.001	- 0.005	7.8413
ANOVA ^b				
Model 2	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F
Regression	38.913	3	12.971	0.211
Residual	30497.199	496	61.486	
Total	30536.112	499		

a) Predictors (constant); Socio-economic status, personality type. b) Gender.

not significant. The proportion of variance in the spouse abuse behaviour attributable to the joint impact of socio-economic status, personality type and gender was 5% adjusted $R^2 = 0.005$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant correlation among couples socio-economic status, personality type, gender and spouse abuse behaviour was accepted.

Research question 3

Does religion moderate the correlation among the couples socio-economic status, personality type and their spouse abuse? In order to answer research question 3, the data presented in Table 5 and illustrations in Figure 3 were generated.

Table 5, showed the relative predictor’s impact of socio-economic status, personality type and religion on spouse abuse behaviour. The beta weights of -0.009 for socio-economic status, 0.019 for personality type and 0.101 for religion, were indicators of the degree of correlation between each of social–economic status, personality type

and region with spouse abuse behaviour. In order to determine the moderating impact of religion on the relationship between socio-economic status and spouse abuse behaviour, it was necessary to enter religion and socio–economic status as predictor variables. This was done because according to the university of Exeter (2003), when assessing the moderator effects of a variable on the relationship between an independent and dependent variables, the moderator variable is entered in the equation as a second independent variable after which the relationship between the moderator variable and the first independent variable is computed in a separate regression equation. The moderator impact would then be assessed by comparing the Beta coefficients between each of the variables in the triangular path model (Figure 3) to determine the moderator impact of religion on the relationship between socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

The path coefficients presented in Figure 3 did not satisfy the three conditions for establishing moderator impact. These conditions according to Ossai (2004) are that

Table 5. Moderating impact of religion on the relationship among socio-economic – status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

Model	B	SEB	Beta	t
Constant	66.078	11.995		5.509*
Social economic status	-0.808	3.957	-0.009	-0.204
Personality type	0.320	0.760	0.019	0.421
Religion	2.147	0.964	0.101	2.226

a) Predictors (constant), socio- economic status, personality type and religion, b) Dependent variable: Spouse abuse behaviour. * Significant (p < 0.05).

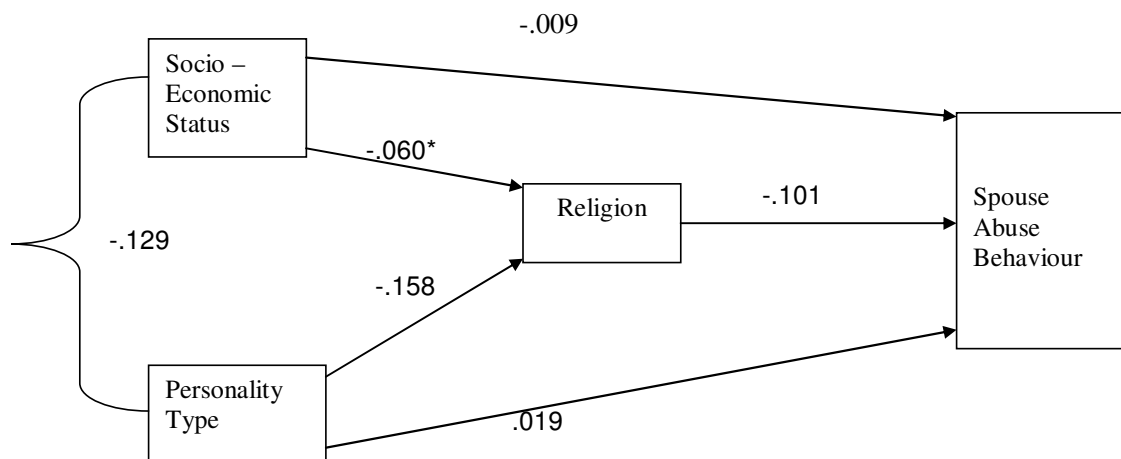


Figure 3. Path analytic model of social- economic status, personality type religion and spouse abuse behaviour. Significant (p < 0.05).

there must be significant relationship between the independent variables socio-economic status, personality type and dependent variable (spouse abuse behaviour). There must also be significant relationship between the moderator variable (religion) and dependent variable (spouse abuse). Finally, there must be significant relationship between the independent variables (social-economic status, personality type) and the moderator variable (religion) respectively. Therefore religion did not moderate the relationship between socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. All these three conditions for establishing moderate impact (Elliot, Mcgregor and Gable, 1999) were carried out. The answer to research question 3, therefore, is that religion did not moderate the correlation between socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

Hypothesis 3

There is no significant correlation among social-economic status, personality type, religion and spouse abuse behaviour. Data presented in Table 6 was used to test hypothesis 3.

Table 6 above showed that (F = 3.496) = 1.865, p >

0.05) is not significant. The proportion of variance in spouse abuse behaviour attributable to the combined impact of socio-economic status personality type and religion was 5% (Adjusted R² = .005). Therefore, the null hypothesis, 3 was accepted. There is no significant correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and religion and spouse abuse behaviour.

However, the answer to research question 3 has shown vividly that social-economic status and personality type were largely responsible for the insignificant, correlation among the four variables, since religion did not significantly moderate the correlation among social-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the data analysis are discussed as follows:

The inconsistent inverse correlations between socio-economics status, personality type and spouse behaviour indicated that while socio economic status and personality type were improving, spouse abuse behaviour was decreasing. It is worthy to note that in the case of personality type, it showed that type A persons had better

Table 6. Multiple regression of religion, socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.

Model 3	R	R ²	R2 adjusted	Std. error of the estimate
3	106 ^a	0.011	0.005	7.8024
ANOVA ^b				
Model 3	SS	df	MS	F
Regression	340.664	3	113.555	1.865
Residual	30536.112	499		

Predictors (constant); religion, socio-economic status, personality type
dependent variable: spouse abuse behaviour.

behaviours to their partner, good behaviours led to no spouse abuse. Conversely low-income status and less improved personality type disrupt smooth family relationship. This finding of inverse correlation between socio-economic status and spouse abuse, between personality type and spouse abuse, is in consonance with the result of recent researches of Osarenren (2000), Krochalk (2002), Owuamanam and Adesaya (2003), Ordu (2004) and Ossai (2004). Whereas some of these studies cited above looked at the relationship between husband and wife in marital adjustment, the present the study has extended the frontier of knowledge by examining the relationship among the socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. The desire was to establish a basis for predicting behaviour so as to implement preventive counseling strategies on such couples who possessed negative behaviours against their partner. The present study has established that good or improved socio economic status and personality types are essential ingredients to curb abuse spouse behaviour. The importance of high level of socio-economic status and improved personality type to positive spouse relationship has also been highlighted in research findings, which suggested very strong correlation among socio-economic status, personality types and spouse (Krochalk, 2002).

The results of this study have also lent credence to the identification of physical and emotional abuse related to age, gender, marital status, living arrangement social support, economic status, physical health, psychological well – being and acculturation (Krochalk, 2002), if spouse who have low income (socio-economic status) and less improved personality type were more likely to engage in abuse behaviours as indicated by no significant inverse correlation, among socio-economic status personality type and spouse behaviours in Rivers State. Lloyd (1980) opined that as income increases, the family's perceiver needs and its spending increase even faster and that a reasonable financial contribution on the parts of the husband and wife is essential to the achievement of good marital and family relationships. Chikezie (1992) pointed out that socio- economic status is a contributing factor to marital adjustment. They believe that there is an inverse

relationship between divorce, spouse abuse and income. Thus, the higher the income the lesser the chance of spouse abuse and subsequent divorce. In support of the above stated view, Kephart (1977: 375) reported that marriage is happier in the upper class and is more stable than those in the middle and lower classes.

The inverse correlation found among socio-economics status, personality type and spouse abuse was in agreement with the study by Lloyd (1980). The study found that marriage counsellors agree that economic stress is the main cause of conflicts in most family as couples quarrel over money more than anything else. This lends credence to the fact that income status is closely related to marital adjustment and stability and that economic stress is one of the major causes of marital failure and abuses. However, such stress over money is by no means limited to the lower income group. In a more recent study, Shuji, Ossai and David (2004), found that in terms of personality types, both abusing and abused individuals tended to be less assertive and lacked self-confidence as compared to non-abusing/ abused individuals become even more dominating, thus creating a negative correlation of spouse abuse. Non-abused individuals or couples on the other hand, tended to engage in positive correlations of behaviours where both spouses were assertive, which lead to more self confidence and increase ability at problem solving.

The inverse correlation between socio-economic status and personality type indicates that type B had poorer abuse behaviour than type A person. This result was not surprising because description of type B personality (Melgosa, 1996; Akinboye, 2003) suggest that such individuals are more socially inactive, hence they spend more time to respond positively to life in social activities and behaviour such as (aggression, hostility, impulsive, irritated and a host of others) at the expense of their spouse. Conversely, type A persons tended to be more reserved, sober and diligent with their spouses. Though, there are exceptions, to this dichotomous grouping of individuals as well as a mixture of both A and type B trait individuals. This study has shown that in the majority of cases, Type A persons tended to be respectful, less proud, make good relationship and are well committed to

their homes. Invariably type B persons also have high anxiety level, impatient, anxious, workaholic and they possessed negative attitude towards marital relationship.

Moderating impact of gender on the relationship among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour

The moderator role of gender on the relationship among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour has generated keen interest among scholars in family and marital counselling, as well as in psychology and education. The results of the present study showed that gender did not significantly moderate the relationship among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. This finding is consistent with Ossai (2003) who did not find gender as a significant factor in his study. In Nigeria, especially in Rivers State, both male and female spouses engage in abusive behaviour. It was not surprising therefore, that gender was not a significant moderator of the correlations among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse. The reports of spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers state have implicated both male and female spouse in large number, Nwaobi (1997) opined that Gender issues in marriage have been of mixed feelings over the years, social science researchers have come up with the views that marital bonds are loosing around the world. A study carried out by Filani (1984) showed that many Yoruba couples are experiencing marital instability and mala-djustment in their various homes. A lot of social, emotional psychological, financial and physical/biological factors contributed to these problems. Similarly, Nwaobi (1995), holds the same views about the Ibos. The non-moderating impact of gender on the correlations among spouses socio-economic status, personality type and abuse behaviour contradicted the view of Nwaobi (1995), who stated that in a family where the wife becomes the bread winner, because she earns higher income than the husband, it is typical and inherently stressful on the husband, other variables notwithstanding. This could lead to communication breakdown. Though the statistical figures are not available to compare the number of men and women that engaged in spouse abuse behaviours in Rivers State, it might not be surprising that more women actually engaged in spouse abuse behaviours, since ill behaviours in any form in marriage is part of spouse abuses.

Religion, socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour

The study found that religion of spouses did not significantly moderate the correlations among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour. This finding was in contradiction to the results of previous

studies by Shuji and David (2003), who found that religious beliefs contributed significantly in predicting the level of abuse among the couples and individuals. When a couple had more personality compatibility and shares values, there tended to be less chances of abuse. Couples who practice different religions, or observe conflicting religions and moral behaviours have to consider their stress on marriage bond. According to Ofoegbu (2002), a spouse with purit anistic (against pleasures) religious belief and with hedonistic (for pleasure) religious belief cannot comfortably make a successful relationship. Again, the present study extended the knowledge to the issue of spouse abuse behaviour. The insignificant moderator role of religions on the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse has provided a plat-form for counselors and psychologists who would be interested in clues that could reveal the profiles of would be spouse abuse culprits to look in the direction of low socio-economic status, unimproved personality type and religion. This knowledge will go a long way towards helping those who are genuinely interested in curbing the menace of spouse abuse to adopt preventive, rather than punitive measures.

Conclusion and Recommendation

On the basis of the findings of the research study the following conclusions were made:

1. Counselors and psychologists should not rely on level of socio-economic status and personality type to predict the spouse abuse behaviour, since socio-economic status and personality type did not correlate significantly with the spouse abuse behaviour.
2. Male and female spouses have equal tendencies of involvement in spouse abuse behaviour since gender was found to be an insignificant moderator of the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse behaviour.
3. Religion was not significant moderator of the correlation among socio-economic status, personality type and spouse abuse hence the religious belief of the spouses should not be considered when predicting abuse behaviour of couples in a marital relationship.

Since this study has actually established that socio-economic status, personality type, gender, religion, were not significantly predictors of spouse abuse behaviour among couples in Rivers State of Nigeria, the following recommendations are made in order to facilitate preventive counseling against spouse abuse behaviour in Rivers State.

1. Marriage seminar and workshop which could help minimize disunity in families should often be organized by the government and marriage counselors and couples of various sort should be encouraged to attend.

2. That the state government should without further delay come out with a policy statement on the urgent need for the introduction of premarital education and counseling programmes in the state school system as is the case in other countries of the world.

3 The state government should make adequate financial provision for the purchase of equipment, materials and the training of personnel for the effective implementation of pre-marital education and counseling programme in Rivers state.

4. Since the income status (socio-economic status) of couples does not significantly correlate with their spouse abuse behaviour, it is therefore, necessary that counselors point out to couples that money is not the sole determinant of marital relationship/happiness. Therefore, spouse should make up their minds on what actually they want in relation to their marriage happiness.

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