

## MARITAL CONFLICTS VARIABLES AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OYO STATE

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### Abstract

*The persistent issue of poor academic performance among secondary school students in Nigeria has raised concerns among stakeholders, with family dynamics and student behaviour recognized as contributing factors. This study investigated marital conflict variables as correlates of academic performance among secondary school students in the Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Three research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. Data were collected from 107 teachers and 233 students using a self-structured questionnaire (IMCAPO), which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78, as determined by Cronbach's Alpha, and from students' academic records in English and Mathematics for the 2024/2025 Academic Session. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and simple and multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed a low extent of marital conflict's influence on academic performance (weighted mean 2.0). Poor communication was identified as the primary cause of marital conflict (mean 3.7). Significant negative effects on children included low self-esteem and depression (weighted mean 3.3). Poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence jointly influenced academic performance ( $R^2 = 0.705$ ,  $F = 267.138$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Poor communication had a positive relative influence ( $Beta = 0.843$ ), while child abuse ( $Beta = 0.122$ ) and parental violence ( $Beta = 0.076$ ) showed negative effects. The study concluded that while students perceive a low direct impact, marital conflict produces considerable psychological harm. Recommendations include establishing school counselling units, organizing community marriage-enrichment workshops, and creating collaborative interventions among schools, social welfare agencies, and religious institutions.*

**Keywords:** Marital conflict, Academic performance, Secondary school students, Family dynamics, Ibadan North Local Government Area

### Introduction

The academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria in recent years has been a major source of uneasiness in the education sector and among all stakeholders. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for educators, policymakers, and parents to develop

effective interventions and support systems for students experiencing such challenges at home. This paper explores the intricate correlations among marital conflict, aggressive behaviour, and academic performance among secondary school students, while highlighting how family dynamics and student behaviour affect educational outcomes to promote student well-being and academic success.

Academic performance is the knowledge gained, assessed by marks, by a teacher, and/or by educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period. According to Aderemi and Ibikunle (2024), Academic Performance is the measurement of Students' achievements across various academic subjects. Poor academic performance has been attributed to inadequate instructional facilities, school location, and other influencing factors, such as family environment, and has been linked to learners' behavioural patterns (Jackson, 2023). Poor academic performance has been linked to marital conflict in the home environment and to aggressive behaviour among students (Garcia & Martinez, 2020).

Marriage, as stated by Afu and Nteh (2020), is an ancient institution, a union of people from different backgrounds, personalities, ethnicities, and religions together. Conflict is inevitable in every marriage because individuals have unique temperaments, tastes, habits, likes, and dislikes; however, when it is incessant and violent, it may directly or indirectly affect academic performance (Brown, 2022; Jones & Johnson, 2023). This correlation, understandably, is vital to the development of interventions to support the achievement and well-being of concerned students (Afu and Nteh, 2020).

Aggressive behaviours (physical or verbal) are associated with impulsive acts, poor emotional regulation, and an inability to participate meritoriously in school activities (Lee & Kim, 2021). At the height of aggressive behaviour modelled by parents resulting to violent conflict within the home, is built up stress and anxiety that affects motivation and willingness to learn or concentrate (Jones & Johnson, 2023) and hinders academic progress (Brown, 2022), learning begins at home, the home environment therefore, is of significant in the development of positive and functional behaviour management strategies within and outside the schools. Aggressive behaviour (physical or verbal), occurring amongst these grades of students (adolescents), habitually predisposes them to struggle with impulse control and poor emotional regulation, making it challenging to engage in class activities effectively (Lee & Kim, 2021). In addition, aggressive behavior creates a learning environment that could negatively impact the guilty party and their peers (Jackson, 2023).

### **Conceptual Review**

Marital conflict, defined as disagreements between spouses over various actions (Okanume Onah et al., 2022), has been consistently associated with students' academic performance. Empirical studies reveal that marital discord adversely affects children's educational outcomes, with those from unstable homes exhibiting significantly lower performance compared to their peers from stable homes (Animasahun, 2019). Likewise, aspects of marital conflict, including its frequency, intensity, and the strategies employed by parents to resolve disputes, demonstrate a statistically significant correlation with academic success (Okanume Onah et al., 2022). Research conducted in Kenya substantiates that marital conflicts contribute to diminished concentration and lower academic grades among secondary school students (Okanume Onah et al., 2022). Among married tertiary students,

marital conflicts are associated with poor concentration, decreased CGPA, and unfavourable academic outcomes (Tanveer, Kiran, & Zubair, 2025). Additionally, research from China indicates that parental marital conflict is a positive predictor of academic burnout in adolescents (Pasca, 2024).

The Person-Environment (P-E) fit theory offers a comprehensive framework for elucidating these relationships. According to P-E fit theory, a correspondence between personal attributes, such as learning abilities, and environmental factors, such as academic demands, results in favourable outcomes, including enhanced study performance and overall satisfaction (Bohdick et al., 2022). In contrast, a lack of alignment or poor fit can lead to adverse consequences. When students face significant marital discord at home, the home environment fails to meet their academic requirements, resulting in cognitive distractions, emotional turmoil, and diminished academic involvement. Investigations into P-E fit within higher education reveal that alignment between students and their academic surroundings predicts student achievement (Lockhart, 2025). This theory has been used to analyze school climate and student outcomes, reinforcing the application of a P-E fit perspective to guide strategic initiatives for school improvement (Tanveer, Kiran, & Zubair, 2025). Additionally, P-E fit theory has been explored in educational settings, indicating that the alignment of individual values with environmental expectations affects accountability and performance (Tanveer et al., 2025). Consequently, marital conflict engenders a mismatch between the individual and the environment, undermining the supportive home atmosphere essential for optimal academic success.

### **Statement of Problem**

The exposure to violent marital discords resonates with higher levels of stress and lower academic motivation. By the same token, students exhibiting aggressive behavior (modeled at home) struggle with learning and interpersonal relationships, leading to academic difficulties, violent outbursts, bullying, truancy, increased dropout rates, disillusionment, and suicidal tendencies. These issues have confounding implications for counseling interventions on marriage conflict among secondary students.

### **Objective of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of marital conflicts on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. Specifically, the study was carried out to:

- i. I. Inquire into the extent to which marital conflict influences academic performance in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.
- ii. Ascertain the effects of marital conflict on public secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.
- iii. determine the joint influence of poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence on the academic performance of students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.
- iv. Analyze the relative influence of poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence on the academic performance of students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

## **Research Questions**

The following questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does marital conflict influence academic performance in public Secondary Schools in the study area?
2. What are the causes of marital conflicts in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria?
3. What are the effects of marital conflict on senior secondary school students in the study area?

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide this study and were tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence have no joint contribution effect on the academic performance of students in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence have no relative contribution effect on the academic performance of students in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

## **Methods**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised 37,396 secondary school students and 1,851 secondary school teachers in the study area. The study sample comprises 107 teachers and 233 secondary school students, for a total of 340 respondents. This sample size was determined using Taro Yemani's formula for a known population at the 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select the study sample to ensure adequate representation of the subgroups in the population. A self-structured questionnaire titled Impact of Marital Conflict on Academic Performance Questionnaire (IMCAPQ) for teachers and students was used to elicit information. The instrument consisted of sections (A and B). Section A covered demographic data, while Section B covered test items related to marital conflicts. The likert four scale rating system indicating level of agreement with the statements for example S.A = Strongly Agree (4) points, A = Agreed (3) points, D = Disagree (2) points, SD = Strongly Disagree (1) point was used, academic performance of the students in English Language and Mathematics in 2024/2025 Academic Session was used to determine the academic performance of the students. A pilot study involving 10 teachers and 20 students was conducted. The reliability coefficient was determined using Cronbach's alpha, yielding  $r = 0.78$  at the 0.05 level of significance, indicating that the instrument is highly reliable.

## Results

### Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of the Teachers' Demographic Characteristics

| Variable       | Level              | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender         | Male               | 48        | 44.9       |
|                | Female             | 59        | 55.1       |
| Experience     | 1-15yrs            | 158       | 73.5       |
|                | 16-20yrs           | 23        | 10.7       |
|                | 21-30yrs           | 34        | 15.9       |
|                | Less than 25 years | 2         | 1.9        |
|                | 25-30yrs           | 9         | 8.4        |
| Age            | 31-35yrs           | 25        | 23.4       |
|                | 36-40yrs           | 33        | 30.8       |
|                | 41-45yrs           | 17        | 15.9       |
|                | 46-50yrs           | 18        | 16.8       |
|                | 51-55yrs           | 3         | 2.8        |
| Qualification  | NCE                | 8         | 7.5        |
|                | B.Sc./B.A          | 40        | 37.4       |
|                | B.Ed               | 30        | 28.0       |
|                | PGDEC              | 9         | 8.4        |
| Marital Status | M.Ed               | 20        | 18.7       |
|                | Married            | 105       | 98.1       |
|                | Widowed            | 2         | 1.9        |

Source: Primary data collected from respondents.

Table 1 presents teachers' demographic characteristics. The results revealed that 44.9% of the respondents were male, while 55.1% were female. This result indicates that the proportion of female teachers in the study area is higher than that of males. Also, the results revealed that 73.5% of the respondents have spent 1-15 years in the teaching service, 10.7% have spent 16-20 years, while 15.9% have spent 21-30 years. The result implies that the majority of the sampled teachers had spent 1-15 years in the teaching service. The result revealed further that 1.9% of the respondents have their age less than 25yrs while 8.4% of the respondents were in age bracket 25-30yrs, the study revealed further that 23.4% of the teachers fall within the age bracket 31-35yrs, also 30.8% of the respondents were between 36-40yrs of age, in the same vain 15.9% of the teachers are in the age bracket 41-45yrs, also 16.8% of the respondents were in the age bracket 46-50yrs.

Furthermore, the findings show that 2.8% of respondents are aged 51 years or older. The findings imply that a higher percentage of teachers in the study area is young. Moreover, the results on the educational qualifications of the respondents revealed that 2.8% were NCE holders, 37.4% had B.Sc./B.A. degrees, while 28.0% were B. Ed: 8.4%; PGDEC: 18.7%; and 18.7% of the teachers were M.Ed holders in their respective disciplines. The study also revealed that 98.1% were married.

Table 2: Distribution of the Students' Demographic Characteristics

| Variable | Category   | n   | %    |
|----------|------------|-----|------|
| Gender   | male       | 95  | 42.1 |
|          | Female     | 135 | 57.9 |
| Class    | SS 1       | 72  | 30.9 |
|          | SS II      | 78  | 33.5 |
|          | SS 3       | 83  | 35.0 |
| Age      | 11-13      | 37  | 15.9 |
|          | 14-16      | 154 | 66.1 |
|          | 17 & above | 42  | 18.0 |

Source: Primary data collected from respondents.

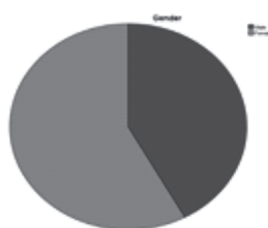


Fig 1: Chart showing the gender distribution of students

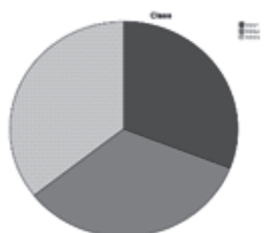


Fig 2: Chart showing class distribution of students

Table 2 presents students' demographic characteristics. The results revealed that 42.1% of the respondents were male, while 57.9% were female. This result indicates that the proportion of female students in the sampled schools is higher than that of males. Also, the results revealed that 30.9% of respondents are in SSI, 33.5% in SSII, and 35.6% in SSIII. The study found that the highest number of respondents was from SSS III.

### Research Questions 1

To what extent does marital conflict influence academic performance in public Secondary Schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Extent to Which Marital Conflict Influences Academic Performance

| ITEMS   | G.E           | M             | L.E           | N.A            | Mean | Std. Dev |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|------|----------|
| I show no interest in academic activities when there is a lack of unity in my family. | 64<br>(27.5%) | 35<br>(15.0%) | 23<br>(9.9%)  | 111<br>(47.6%) | 2.2  | 1.3      |
| The conflict between my parents affects my academic performance                       | 39<br>(16.7%) | 36<br>(15.5%) | 10<br>(4.3%)  | 148<br>(63.5%) | 1.9  | 1.2      |
| Disunity between my parent do affect my relationship with teachers                    | 44<br>(18.9%) | 28<br>(12.0%) | 32<br>(13.7%) | 129<br>(55.4%) | 1.9  | 1.2      |
| Violence in the family affects my parents' ability to provide educational materials.  | 55<br>(23.6%) | 47<br>(20.2%) | 21<br>(9.0%)  | 110<br>(47.2%) | 2.2  | 1.3      |
| Completion of assignment is always delayed when my parent are fighting.               | 38<br>(16.3%) | 42<br>(18.0%) | 18<br>(7.7%)  | 135<br>(57.9%) | 1.9  | 1.2      |
| The quarrel between my parent deprive me of extracurricular activities                | 32<br>(13.7%) | 37<br>(15.9%) | 38<br>(16.3%) | 126<br>(54.1%) | 1.9  | 1.1      |
| <b>Weighted Mean</b>  | <b>2.0</b>    |               |               |                |      |          |

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis of the extent to which marital conflict influences academic performance. The result revealed that 42.5% of the respondents agreed that they show no interest in academic activities when there is no unity in their family. In comparison, 57.5% of the respondents were not in agreement; likewise, the study revealed that 32.2% of the respondents support the view that conflict between their parents affects their academic performance. In comparison, a higher percentage 67.8% also 30.9% of the students revealed that their relationship with their teachers is negatively affected when there is disunity in their family, while 69.1% opposed it.

The study further opined that 45.8% of the respondents stated that the level of supervision they received is subject to the state of peace in their family. In comparison, 54.2% of the respondents held a contrary opinion. Similarly, the study found that 65.6% of respondents believed that misunderstandings between them do not delay the completion of their assignments. In contrast, a lower percentage of the respondents agreed that misunderstandings between their parents delay the timely completion of their assignments. Also, 70.4% of the students reported that their involvement in extracurricular activities is not affected by quarreling within the family, while 29.6% agreed that quarreling within the family usually affects their participation in extracurricular events. From the result of the findings, it can be deduced that marital conflict has a low effect on the academic performance of students because the mean score on most of the items is lower than 2.0, which is the decision rule

## Research Questions 2

What are the causes of marital conflicts in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 4: Causes of Marital Conflict

| ITEMS  | S.A           | A             | D             | S.D           | Mean | Std. Dev   |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------|------------|
| Sexual incompatibility of the spouse causes marital disunity                       | 58<br>(54.2%) | 46<br>(43.0%) | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 3<br>(2.8%)   | 3.5  | 0.6        |
| Poor communication is a serious problem within the family                          | 73<br>(68.2%) | 34<br>(31.8%) | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 3.7  | 0.5        |
| Lack of money can cause the separation of couples.                                 | 38<br>(35.5%) | 63<br>(58.9%) | 6<br>(5.6%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 3.3  | 0.6        |
| Untreated anger issues can lead to constant disagreement.                          | 62<br>(57.9%) | 38<br>(35.5%) | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 7<br>(6.5%)   | 3.5  | 0.7        |
| Excessive use of alcohol can lead to unacceptable behaviors                        | 55<br>(51.4%) | 43<br>(40.2%) | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 9<br>(8.4%)   | 3.3  | 0.9        |
| Refusal to say sorry when wrong does not have anything to do with marital conflict | 21<br>(19.6%) | 26<br>(24.3%) | 17<br>(15.9%) | 43<br>(40.2%) | 2.2  | 1.2        |
| Decision-making, especially over money, leads to disharmony in the family.         | 28<br>(26.2%) | 49<br>(45.8%) | 23<br>(21.5%) | 7<br>(6.6%)   | 3.0  | 0.8        |
| Struggle for headship in the home can lead to opposition in marriage               | 27<br>(25.2%) | 59<br>(55.1%) | 17<br>(1.9%)  | 4<br>(3.7%)   | 3.0  | 0.8        |
| Remaining faithful to the partner can prevent separation                           | 49<br>(45.8%) | 42<br>(39.3%) | 11<br>(10.3%) | 5<br>(4.7%)   | 3.3  | 0.8        |
| In-laws' interference in marital issues may lead to marital disengagement          | 48<br>(44.9%) | 52<br>(48.6%) | 7<br>(6.5%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 3.4  | 0.6        |
| Disagreement over children's upbringing causes conflict in many homes              | 51<br>(47.7%) | 45<br>(42.1%) | 8<br>(7.5%)   | 0<br>(0.0%)   | 3.4  | 0.6        |
| Difference in upbringing is another source of discord in many marriages.           | 36<br>(33.6%) | 63<br>(58.9%) | 5<br>(4.7%)   | 3<br>(2.8%)   | 3.2  | 0.7        |
| <b>Weighted Mean</b>   |               |               |               |               |      | <b>3.2</b> |

**Source: Primary data collected from respondents.**

The data in Table 4 identifies key causes of marital conflicts in Ibadan North LGA. Respondents strongly agreed that poor communication is the most critical issue, with a mean of 3.7 and 68.2% strongly agreeing. Sexual incompatibility (mean 3.5), untreated anger (3.5), in-laws interference (3.4), and disagreement over children's upbringing (3.4) also ranked high. Lack of money (3.3), excessive alcohol use (3.3), and remaining faithful (3.3) were moderately endorsed. Decision-making and struggle for headship (both mean 3.0) were slightly lower but remained above neutral. The only reversed item, "refusal to say sorry does not have anything to do with marital conflict," received a low mean of 2.2, indicating respondents disagreed, meaning they believe refusal to apologize indeed causes conflict. The weighted mean of 3.2 above the 2.5 midpoint confirms that all listed factors are perceived as significant contributors to marital disharmony. In all, communication breakdown, sexual and emotional issues, external interference from in-laws, and financial strain are the dominant causes in the study area.

### Research Questions 3

What are the effects of marital conflict in Ibadan North Local Government Area?

Table 5: Effect of Marital Conflict

| ITEMS  | S.A           | A             | D             | S.D         | Mean | Std. Dev |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|------|----------|
| Spouse keeps a distance from home during disunity in marriage                                  | 41<br>(38.3%) | 54<br>(50.5%) | 9<br>(8.4%)   | 3<br>(2.8%) | 3.2  | 0.7      |
| Sexual denial between spouses always emanates when there is conflict                           | 53<br>(49.5%) | 40<br>(37.4%) | 12<br>(11.2%) | 2<br>(1.9%) | 3.3  | 0.8      |
| Discord in marriage increases children's low self-esteem.                                      | 50<br>(46.7%) | 43<br>(40.2%) | 14<br>(13.1%) | 0<br>(0.0%) | 3.3  | 0.7      |
| Children sometimes suffer when there is disagreement between parents                           | 56<br>(52.3%) | 45<br>(42.1%) | 6<br>(5.6%)   | 0<br>(0.0%) | 3.5  | 0.6      |
| Social relations of every member of the family are reduced when there is disagreement at home. | 54<br>(50.5%) | 40<br>(37.4%) | 11<br>(10.3%) | 2<br>(1.9%) | 3.3  | 0.8      |
| Children suffer depression when there is division in the family                                | 49<br>(45.8%) | 52<br>(48.6%) | 3<br>(3.8%)   | 3<br>(3.8%) | 3.4  | 0.7      |
| Children are not secure when the family is not united  | 61<br>(57.0%) | 35<br>(32.7%) | 11<br>(10.3%) | 0<br>(0.0%) | 3.5  | 0.7      |
| Parents tend to stop their usual routine during conflict                                       | 41<br>(38.3%) | 51<br>(47.7%) | 12<br>(11.2%) | 3<br>(2.8%) | 3.2  | 0.8      |
| Disunity in marriage can lead to pretense between couples                                      | 31<br>(29.0%) | 67<br>(62.6%) | 6<br>(5.6%)   | 3<br>(2.8%) | 3.2  | 0.7      |
| <b>Weighted Mean</b>   |               | <b>3.3</b>    |               |             |      |          |

**Source: Primary data collected from respondents.**

Table 5 presents the results of the analysis on the effect of marital conflict in Ibadan North Local. The results revealed that 88.8% of respondents agreed that spouses keep their distance from home during marital disunity, while 11.2% disagreed. Also, the result indicated that 86.9% of the respondents agreed that marital conflict always leads to sexual denial, while 13.1% were not in agreement. Also, the study shows that 86.9% of respondents agreed that marital discord always enhances children's low self-esteem, while 13.1% disagreed. The study further revealed that 87.9% of the respondents agreed that the social relations of every member of a conflicting marriage are always reduced, while 12.1% did not support this assertion.

More so the result opined that 94.4% of the respondent agreed that children from a family that is experiencing division will always suffer depression in the same vain 89.7% of the respondents agreed that children are not secure when the family is not united, the study also exposed that 86.0% of the respondent were of opinion that spouse tend to stop their usual routine when there is conflict also 91.6% of the respondents agreed that pretense within couples is product of conflict.

**Table 5**

Joint Influence of Poor Communication, Child Abuse, and Parental Violence on the Academic Performance of Students in the Study Area

| <b>Model Summary</b> |  |                   |          |                   |                            |  |
|----------------------|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|--|
| Model                |  | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R-Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |  |
| 1                    |  | .839 <sup>a</sup> | .705     | .702              | 2.554                      |  |

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F       | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|---------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 5229.565       | 3   | 1743.188    | 267.138 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 2192.541       | 336 | 6.525       |         |                   |
|       | Total      | 7422.106       | 339 |             |         |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Poor Communication, Child Abuse, and Parental Violence

Table 5 shows multiple regression analysis of the joint influence of poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence on student academic performance in the study area. It reveals that poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence jointly exert a strong and statistically significant influence on students' academic performance. The R value of 0.839 indicates a high positive correlation between the combined predictors and academic performance. The R Square value of 0.705 means that approximately 70.5% of the variance in academic performance is explained by these three factors, leaving about 29.5% attributable to other unexamined variables. The adjusted R-squared of 0.702 confirms the model's robustness. The analysis of variance results show an F ratio of 267.138 with a significance value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This finding leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence jointly have a significant effect on the academic performance of students in the study area. The model's predictive capacity is substantial, underscoring the critical need for interventions addressing these psychosocial factors to improve educational outcomes. Consequently, Hypothesis 1, which states that poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence have no joint contribution effect on the academic performance of students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, is rejected.

**Table 6**

Relative Influence of Poor Communication, Child Abuse, and Parental Violence on the Academic Performance of Students in the Study Area

|       |                    | Coefficients <sup>a</sup>   |            |                           |        |      |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |                    | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |        |      |
| Model |                    | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | t      | Sig. |
| 1     | (Constant)         | 11.187                      | 1.947      |                           | 5.746  | .000 |
|       | Poor Communication | 1.434                       | .051       | .843                      | 27.953 | .000 |
|       | Child Abuse        | -.145                       | .036       | -.122                     | -4.058 | .000 |
|       | Parental Violence  | -.075                       | .030       | -.076                     | -2.541 | .012 |

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Table 6 presents a simple regression analysis of the joint influence of poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence on students' academic performance in the study area. The coefficient analysis in Table 6 reveals the unique contribution of each predictor to students' academic performance. Poor communication has a positive and statistically significant influence, with a standardized Beta coefficient of 0.843 ( $t = 27.953$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that as poor communication increases, academic performance also increases, an unexpected positive relationship that may warrant further investigation into measurement or contextual factors.

Child abuse shows a significant negative influence on academic performance, with a Beta of -0.122 ( $t = -4.058$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Parental violence also exhibits a significant negative effect, with a Beta of -0.076 ( $t = -2.541$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ). Among the three predictors, poor communication has the strongest relative influence, followed by child abuse, while parental violence has the smallest but still significant negative impact. The constant term is significant ( $B = 11.187$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Overall, while child abuse and parental violence diminish academic performance, poor communication paradoxically predicts higher performance, suggesting possible mediating variables or reverse causality requiring further exploration.

### Discussion of Findings

**The study found a low extent of marital conflict's influence on academic performance in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.** This implies that students in the Ibadan North Local Government Area do not view marital conflict as a significant direct barrier to their academic involvement. The majority of students disagreed with the notion that parental disputes influence their academic motivation, relationships with teachers, assignment completion, or participation in extracurricular activities. This finding stands in contrast to the existing literature, which highlights considerable negative impacts. For

example, Okanume Onah et al. (2022) found that marital discord negatively affects children's educational achievement, with students from unstable family environments performing markedly worse than those from stable ones.

Likewise, Animasahun (2019) reported that marital conflict contributes to diminished academic performance among university students. The low level of perceived impact in this study may be attributed to cultural or contextual elements, such as robust community support systems or effective coping strategies employed by students that mitigate the effects of familial conflicts. Furthermore, Jackson (2023) observed that poor academic performance can be linked to various factors, including the quality of instructional facilities and the geographical location of schools, implying that the family environment is merely one of several influences. The Person-Environment fit theory (Bohdick et al., 2022) posits that a discrepancy between the home environment and academic expectations results in adverse outcomes; however, the absence of such a perception in this context may suggest that students have cultivated resilience or that the conflicts assessed are not sufficiently severe to impede academic performance.

**The study established poor communication as the leading cause of marital conflict in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.** The recognition of ineffective communication as the primary factor contributing to marital discord is strongly supported by existing research. Participants identified poor communication as the most significant issue among various factors, followed by sexual incompatibility, unresolved anger, interference from in-laws, and disagreements regarding child-rearing practices. This observation aligns with the work of Afu et al. (2020), who characterized marriage as a partnership between individuals from diverse backgrounds and personalities, where conflict is unavoidable due to differing temperaments and habits. Ineffective communication intensifies these disparities, resulting in disunity.

Brown (2022) and Jones et al. (2023) confirmed that persistent and violent marital conflict has a direct or indirect effect on children's academic success, with the underlying issue often rooted in communication failures. The weighted mean of 3.2, which exceeds the midpoint, indicates that all identified factors are significant contributors. Importantly, the reversed item concerning the refusal to apologize received a low mean score, suggesting that respondents perceive this refusal as a source of conflict, thereby emphasizing the importance of communication. This finding highlights the need for counseling interventions that prioritize couples' communication skills training, as advocated by Afu et al. (2020), to mitigate the detrimental effects of marital discord on children's well-being.

**A significant negative effect of marital conflict was found on senior secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.** This research indicates that although students may not recognize a significant direct impact on their academic achievements, they do acknowledge the detrimental psychological and social consequences of marital discord on children. Participants concurred that children experience low self-esteem, depression, feelings of insecurity, and diminished social interactions, while spouses often resort to distancing behaviors and pretense. This observation is consistent with the work of Garcia and Martinez (2020), who associated marital conflict with aggressive conduct and unfavorable academic results, as well as with Jones et al. (2023), who

highlighted that stress and anxiety stemming from domestic disputes influence motivation and the desire to learn. In addition, this finding corroborates the assertions of Lee and Kim (2021), who argued that parents' aggressive behaviors contribute to inadequate emotional regulation in children.

Moreover, Tanveer et al. (2025) found that marital disputes among married tertiary students lead to poor focus and a decline in CGPA. The Person-Environment fit theory (Lockhart, 2025) posits that when the home setting does not meet a child's emotional and security needs, cognitive distractions and emotional distress ensue. This finding is significant as these psychological repercussions, although not immediately observable in academic grades, can accumulate over time and ultimately lead to a decline in academic performance.

**The study established a strong joint influence of poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.** This discovery validates that ineffective communication, child maltreatment, and parental aggression collectively have a significant impact on students' academic achievement. The combined effect accounts for a considerable portion of the variance in academic results, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This is consistent with various empirical studies referenced in the conceptual review. Okanume Onah et al. (2022) found that elements of marital discord, such as frequency, intensity, and resolution methods, are statistically significantly related to academic performance.

Animasahun (2019) similarly found that students from unstable homes tend to underperform compared with their peers from stable homes. Research conducted in Kenya (Okanume Onah et al., 2022) supports the notion that marital disputes lead to decreased focus and lower academic grades. Furthermore, Pasca (2024) discovered that parental marital discord is a significant predictor of academic burnout among adolescents. The Person-Environment fit theory (Bohndick et al., 2022) offers a conceptual framework: when ineffective communication, abuse, and violence foster a hostile home environment, a disconnect arises between the child's educational needs and the available environmental support, resulting in diminished academic engagement. This finding highlights the necessity for comprehensive interventions that tackle not only marital discord but also the related issues of child abuse and violence.

**It was found that poor communication has a positive influence. In contrast, child abuse and parental violence have a negative influence on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State.** The most surprising discovery is that inadequate communication alone exhibited a positive relative impact on academic performance, paradoxically forecasting enhanced performance, whereas child abuse and parental violence produced detrimental effects. This finding contradicts the common assumption that all types of family dysfunction adversely affect academic results. One potential explanation, as highlighted in the original document, involves measurement or contextual elements. Poor communication, unlike violent conflict, may encourage students to dedicate more time to independent study or seek academic assistance outside their home environment, thereby enhancing their performance. Alternatively, the positive correlation might indicate a coping strategy in which students

redirect their frustration toward academic success. Nevertheless, this finding stands in stark contrast to the assertions made by Jones et al. (2023), who contended that family stress diminishes motivation and focus, and to Brown (2022), who claimed that violent conflict impedes academic advancement. In addition, it diverges from the research conducted by Tanveer et al. (2025), which linked marital disputes to negative academic outcomes. The adverse impacts of child abuse and parental violence align with the observations of Lee et al. (2021), who indicated that aggressive behavior predisposes students to poor emotional regulation and challenges in participating in class activities. This paradoxical finding necessitates further exploration of mediating factors such as student resilience, teacher support, or cultural influences specific to Ibadan North.

**The scope of the work limited the study. The research was carried out in Ibadan North, although the researcher used 10 of the 42 secondary schools in the local government area.** More data would have been retrieved if a broader scope had been involved. Some teachers demanded money before taking part in the study. Secondly, **other variables like child abuse, parental violence, and poor communication could be included for further studies. The student's record of academic performance was used to determine the student's academic performance. This is another limitation.**

### **Conclusion**

This research investigated the relationship between marital conflict variables and academic performance among secondary school students in the Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. The results present a nuanced scenario. Although students indicated a minimal direct impact of marital conflict on their academic achievements, they recognized that such conflicts have considerable adverse effects on children, including diminished self-esteem, depression, feelings of insecurity, and weakened social connections. Poor communication was identified as the primary cause of marital discord, followed by issues such as sexual incompatibility, unresolved anger, interference from in-laws, and disagreements regarding child-rearing practices.

Notably, poor communication, child abuse, and parental violence collectively exert a significant influence on academic performance. Interestingly, while poor communication alone appeared to have a positive relative impact on academic outcomes, child abuse and parental violence were associated with negative consequences. These results imply that even if students do not view marital conflict as directly detrimental to their academic results, the psychological and emotional repercussions on children are considerable and may accumulate over time. The seemingly positive effect of poor communication merits further exploration. In summary, the study underscores the importance of family dynamics, particularly harmful conflict patterns, in efforts to enhance student well-being and educational success.

### **Recommendations**

**Based on the conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are imperative:**

1. The Oyo State Teaching Service Commission should establish counseling units within schools to help students develop resilience and coping mechanisms to mitigate the adverse effects of domestic conflicts.
2. Community-oriented marriage enrichment workshops that emphasize effective communication techniques, anger management, and conflict resolution strategies

should be put in place for couples residing in the Ibadan North Local Government Area.

3. Collaborative intervention initiatives that involve schools, social welfare organizations, and religious institutions should be created to tackle child abuse and parental violence, which are significant factors negatively impacting academic achievement.

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