

Comparative Analysis of Stress-Related Factors Influencing Academic Performance of Married and Unmarried Female Students Tertiary Institutions in Delta State: The Case of Professional Diploma in Education (Pde), Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State

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ABSTRACT

The study was a comparative analysis of stress-related factors that influence the academic performance of married and unmarried female students of the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) programme, Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State. The study adopted a descriptive survey and ex-post facto designs. Three research questions and three research hypotheses guided the study. The population for the study comprised all 59 (42 married 17 unmarried) regular female students of the PDE programme for the 2021/2022 academic session and all past students of the programme from the 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 sessions. The entire population was adopted for the study due to the manageable number. The instruments for data collection were a self-structured questionnaire and past results of the programme from the 2018/2019 – 2020/2021 session. The questionnaire was a 35-item instrument of the four-point rating scale. The instrument was validated by two experts while the reliability of 0.81 was attained after a trial test was conducted. 59 copies of the instrument were administered and all were returned and used for the study. Approved final results of students for 2018/2019-2020/2021 sessions were also adopted and used for analysis to determine the differences in academic performance of married and unmarried students. Descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation were used for data analysis while t-test was used for the test of hypotheses. The findings in the study revealed among others that; both married and unmarried women experience stress related activities but in different spheres. While married women's school attendance and academic performance are influenced by care for children and husband, cooking for family members, the nature of the job, worries over the husband's attitude, worries over disappointment in a relationship, a fear of divorce, the unmarried women are influenced by care for children, home chores, care for parents, cooking for family members, nature of the job, hustling after work, no support from anyone, joblessness, worries over no husband, worries over disappointment in a relationship, worries over derogatory statements about marriage, embarrassment from peers about marriage, lopsided respect by lecturers and colleagues in favour of married women, unequal regard for married against unmarried women and unfriendly social environment. It was recommended among other things that; Institutions of higher learning should make it statutory to organise stress control seminars/workshops for married and unmarried female freshers every year to enable them to strike a balance between their home, work and academics by adopting emotion-focused strategies to ensure better psychological health and marital relationship as any unhealthy feeling or conception could affect their psychological wellbeing, the entire family and their career

INTRODUCTION

Education has long gone beyond literacy and numeracy values to becoming a provider of knowledge and

resources that hold the potential for economic empowerment, advancement and better livelihood as well social development. Education is one of the most far-reaching requirements for development, alleviating poverty, improving health outcomes and quality of life, reducing mortality rate, and enhancing economic productivity. This is achieved by reducing gender and social disparities and inequality. Education contributes to economic growth and productivity and as well sustains livelihood for national development (Omozusi, Okondu, Banjo & Kalejaiye, 2019). This makes it a basic right for all people in society irrespective of gender, race, culture, religion and status (The World Bank, 2014). In line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Article 26 of the 1948 United nation Charter (United Nations, 2019), many member nations, including Nigeria, have significantly improved in the need for education without gender borders. Thus, men and women are not only encouraged to go to school but keenly compete in all disciplines even at the tertiary level with continuity in focus.

The mounting interest of women in furthering education in tertiary institutions is increasingly sustained and nurtured. This enables them (women) to maximize the benefits of socioeconomic and sociopolitical participation. However, the mass involvement of women in continuing higher education is a recent development. Before the twentieth century, just a handful of females were granted access to education. The number of illiterate women was subsequently increasing since they had no access to education or were sent to school. This was because, at that time, women were victims of all sorts of cultural and social constraints. They were subjected to all forms of discrimination and marginalization by the existing cultural and social practices, especially in traditional African culture (Di Cesare, 2014). They were denied access to education at the expense of their most fortunate brothers who were most preferred. According to Kidwai (2020:1), women were victims of educational inequality which made women seemingly inferior to their male counterpart. The author added that women were so marginalized that;

...subjugation and arbitrariness masquerading as cultural practices, religious edicts and gender perception continue to be the existential issues facing women. Discrimination triumphs over equality, the much-touted sustaining element of our social fabric. Frequent use of the language of discrimination for perpetuating gender inequity produces a trail of exclusions stretching to multiple spheres of life. Gender-based brutality transcends the boundaries of severe material deprivation and social isolation (p.1)

However, the case is different today as women are given a free hand to read to any level of their interest and abilities.

Over the past twenty (20) years in Nigeria, there has been significant progress with regard to women's access to tertiary education. This has expanded significantly and women's enrolment including the married and unmarried has increased considerably. This development is not without challenges as going to school does not detach them (women) from their traditional role of home keeping and child care. Howard (2016) postulated that being a student-mother is a delicate juggling act.

According to the authors, it takes time, patience and boundless energy to make progress. In addition to filling the role prescribed to them as students, they also have to schedule their lives around a growing child's needs. According to the authors, a married woman, who is a student and a mother, may have challenges pertaining to the home. The inter-role conflict is due to incompatible expectations where demand on one role makes the performance of the other more conflicting. Sumra and Schillaci (2015) stressed that home pressure is a huge problem. A married woman student who has children often gets up very early in the morning trying to get everything done at home before going to lectures and becomes tired and not very alert in classes; yet expected by both teachers, relations and well-wishers to perform excellently well (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

Howard (2016) state that family problems create imbalance for married women students who are day

students or non-residential student whose husbands move out of the family's home and come back late at night. In most cases, especially where the husband is not well informed educationally, the husbands always threaten to divorce his wife as a result of poor marital performance and overweening behaviour on the part of the student woman. This may result in depression, making her emotional state so fragile. Such a woman who is a student is distracted and has divided attention at home and at academic work. Some mothers on campus are single and others are married; some have one child to look after and others have large, blended families (Michael, 2017).

Unmarried women who are students have their own challenges. In a typical African society like Nigeria, at age 18 years and above, a female is expected to receive suitors; where this is not experienced, different meanings are ascribed to it. Some women who attend tertiary institutions decided to be part of the education system in order to be relevant in the eyes of prospective husbands. In such a case, several things can happen, including emotional stress and trauma. According to Fekih and Mounis (2020), emotional problems are the most common problems experienced by unmarried women which manifest in the presence of depressive symptoms that can evolve toward psychotic depression as dysthymia (loss of interest in daily activities, hopelessness, low self-esteem, self-criticism, trouble concentrating and trouble making decisions, effectiveness and productivity, avoidance of social activities, feelings of guilt and worries over the past, insomnia). The authors stressed further that, the impact of unmarried late stages have more negative impact and psychological effects on them which could be severe and result in the greatest harm. This harm could include academic harm as such victims could develop a loss of interest and hopelessness in academics.

One of the greatest challenges of young unmarried women is finding themselves in the midst of young men and women who are wonderfully married but see none to marry them. According to Claudia Black Center (2015), managing school life can be a big challenge for young unmarried adults as they often time fall into a combination of emotional and peer pressure. The authors stressed further that; unfortunately, a combination of peer pressure, feelings of worthlessness, depression, addiction, and trauma flashbacks can create huge barriers to the educational experience.

In spite of the seemingly dramatic irony surrounding the life of women, all of them, whether married or single, wish to be liberated educationally. Consequently, some need education for employment opportunities and freedom from the economic dominance of husbands while some need it for growth in the place of work. One educational programme that helps married and unmarried students towards achieving this dream is the Professional Diploma in Education Programme (PDE).

The Professional Diploma in Education Programme (PDE) is a post graduate programme that provides students, who have no educational background but want to migrate into education, with basic education and teaching pedagogy. It is a development programme designed by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. As contained in the Students' Handbook (Iloh & Morrison, 2021) of the PDE programme, the Programme was endorsed by the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) in the Council's Act (No. 31 of 1993) in section 1 (1), thereby given the council the mandate to determine who are teachers in Nigeria. To be able to give teachers the required knowledge and skills. Therefore, the Council introduced the PDE to run alongside the Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE). In line with this mandate, the Federal College of Education, (Technical), Asaba, established the Directorate of Professional Diploma in Education (PDE) in 2009/2010 session for the training, preparing and packaging learners who graduated in other fields but are interested and willing to become teachers. Since the introduction of the programme, the Directorate had had more women than men in enrollment. Among the women that enroll in the programme, there is a continuous blend of married and unmarried women with different learning characteristics that could either enhance or impede learning. The beauty of it all is that both married and unmarried men and women academically compete favourably in the programme in terms of performance. This perhaps prompted the study as all could not be on the same lane.

Academic performance implies a student's learning and response-ability. It is a measure of several elements of the teaching-learning activities based on set objectives. According to Williams (2018), academic performance goes beyond test and examination scores to include the ability to master a diverse set of skills illustrating intelligence, curiosity and persistence, qualities attractive to universities and employers. This implies that academic performance is a product of many intervening variables (Ketema, Shukri, & Shimelis, (2022). Bell (2018) explained academic performance as results which provide a framework for talking about how students fare in school and a constant standard to which all students are held. Performance results also allow students to be ranked and sorted on a scale that is numerically obvious, minimizing complaints by holding teachers and schools accountable for the components of every grade. Nonetheless, several factors interplay to affect the academic performance of students (Khoshlessan & Pial, 2017). One such factor is stress.

Stress, according to Chigozie (2018) is "a dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he/she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important." Stress is also a biological term which refers to the consequences of the failure of a human organism or animal to respond appropriately to emotional or physical threats, whether actual or imagined. Stress is a feeling of strain and pressure. For stress to exist, there must be stressors.

Stressors are environmental, biological, and or cognitive events that, among other things, challenge or threaten the well-being of an organism, increase its arousal or activation level, and deplete its resources (United States Environmental Protection Agency, 2022). Eatough (2022) emphasized that stress seems to be prevalent in marriage hence the phenomenon of marital stress. Marital stress here entails a condition where marriage-related factors interact with the individual to change (disrupt or enhance) his or her psychological conditions such that the person is forced to deviate from normal functioning (McCarthy, 2021; Marisennayya & Defar, 2020). The devastating effects of marital stress may depend on some factors such as coping strategies, workload, and so on. There are individual differences in how people cope with distress.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women's education has taken a new turn globally with men seemingly taking the back seat as women seem to be everywhere and in all courses. Men are also making their bit to support government efforts in ensuring gender parity and equality in the sector. This effort has resulted in more women participating in educational career pursuits; both married and unmarried. More of this is experienced in teacher education where women literarily dominate, particularly in Delta State where all the primary and secondary schools are predominantly occupied by women. This development allows non-teaching professionals to be in the system but with opportunities to improve themselves with basic teaching and pedagogical knowledge, skill and attitudes. One of the avenues for achieving this through the Professional Diploma in Education (PDE), As a postgraduate programme, more adults gain admission into it as the programme is designed for graduates, masters' degrees and Ph. D holders. As it were, more women than men enroll in the programme; a good number of them are married women and another large proportion are unmarried women. Most married women work either as civil servants, business owners, or in private institutions with so many responsibilities and demands. As married women, their primary domestic responsibilities are also on them; the care of children, meal preparation, husband matters and, in most cases, extended family responsibilities. All these do not stop the desired expectations from the school as the education system does not create room for the academic performance of married and unmarried women. In most cases, such women go to school late, tired, disorganized and unstressed emotionally, psychologically, mentally and physically; indices that interact to determine the academic performance of students. On the other hand, unmarried female students, though single, also have their challenges. Some of them stay with parents, relations or supposed benefactors and as such do not have their own time or freedom. Some snick away from responsibilities to the school to

enhance their economic and social chances for freedom. Some of them are due for marriage but are yet to settle for any. Others experience one disappointment or another; these interplay to give them emotional, psychological, mental and physical stress which manifests in distraction, lack of concentration, lack of focus and interest. Considering the above, it becomes obvious that no one is left without challenges as adults in school, whether married or unmarried; but the degree of challenges could defer from one person to another depending on the social context and circumstances and can as well affect academic activities differently. It is on the bases of the above that the researcher embarks on a comparative analysis of the academic performance of married and unmarried female students of the PDE programme from 2018-2021 as influenced by stress.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to carry out a comparative analysis of the academic performance of married and unmarried female students of the PDE programme of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, Delta State from 2018-2021 as influenced by stress. Specifically, the study aimed to;

1. Find out the differences in the factors that influence the academic performance of married and unmarried female students in the PDE programmes.
2. Find out the extent to which school attendance of married women differ from that of unmarried women in the PDE programme
3. Determine the extent at which academic performance of married women differ from those of unmarried women.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study;

1. What are the differences in the factors that influence academic performance of married women and those of unmarried women?
2. To what extent does class attendance of married women differ from those of unmarried women in the PDE programme of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Delta State?
3. To what extent does academic performance of married women differ from those of unmarried women in the PDE programme of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Delta State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 alpha level of significance in the study.

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of married and unmarried women on the factors that influence the academic performance of female students in the PDE programme.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of married and unmarried women on the differences in class attendance between married and unmarried female students of the PDE programme
3. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of married and unmarried female students of the PDE programme.

METHOD

The study adopted a descriptive survey and ex-post facto designs. The study was conducted in the Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba, particularly in the Directorate of Professional Diploma in Education (DPDE) and in the PDE programme. The population of the study comprised all 59 (42 married 17

unmarried) regular female students of the PDE programme for the 2021/2022 academic session and all past students of the programme from 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 sessions. The entire population was adopted for the study due to the manageable number of enrollments. The instruments for data collection were a self-structured questionnaire and past results of students from the programme in the 2018/2019 – 2020/2021 session. The questionnaire was a 34-item instrument with a four-point rating scale coded Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree for some items and Very High Extent, High Extent, Low Extent and Very Low Extent for others. The instrument was validated by two experts while the reliability was attained after a trial test was conducted with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) for the analysis of the relationship. A reliability coefficient value of 0.81 was achieved. 59 copies of the instrument were administered and all were returned and used for the study. Approved final results of students for 2018/2019-2020/2021 sessions were also adopted and used for analysis to determine the differences in academic performance of married and unmarried students. Descriptive statistics of mean scores and standard deviation were used for data analysis while the t-test was used for the test of hypotheses.

RESULTS

4.1 Research Question 1: What are the differences in the factors that influence academic performance of married women and those of unmarried women?

Table 1: Frequency and Mean Distribution of Respondents

S/N	Item	Married Women			Unmarried Women		
		Mean	SD	decision	Mean	SD	Decision
	The following factors influence women academic performance in schools						
	Family related factors such as;						
1	Care for children	2.55	1.15	Agree	2.88	1.05	Agree
2	Care for husband	2.62	1.10	Agree	1.65	0.49	Disagree
3	Home chores	2.14	1.12	Disagree	3.06	1.09	Agree
4	Care for parents	2.10	1.03	Disagree	3.00	1.27	Agree
5	Cooking for family members	3.10	0.88	Agree	2.71	1.05	Agree
	Economic factors						
6	Nature of job	2.50	1.23	Agree	2.82	1.07	Agree
7	Hustling after work	1.98	1.07	Disagree	2.94	1.14	Agree
8	Joblessness	1.98	1.00	Disagree	2.47	1.01	Disagree
9	No support from anyone	1.88	0.92	Disagree	2.65	1.17	Agree
10	Difficulty in getting transport money	2.00	1.08	Disagree	1.65	0.79	Disagree
	Psychological Factors						
11	Worries over no husband	1.36	0.48	Disagree	2.82	1.01	Agree
12	Worries over husband attitude	3.02	1.05	Agree	1.65	0.70	Disagree
13	Worries over disappointment in relationship	2.67	1.18	Agree	2.76	1.25	Agree
14	Worries over derogatory statements about marriage	1.93	0.84	Disagree	2.94	0.97	Agree

15	Embarrassment from peers about marriage	1.95	1.06	Disagree	2.71	1.05	Agree
16	Fear of divorce	2.74	1.21	Agree	1.47	0.80	Disagree
	School Factors						
17	Sexual harassment from lecturers and colleagues	2.02	0.95	Disagree	2.35	0.93	Disagree
18	Lopsided respect by lecturers and colleagues	1.90	1.01	Disagree	2.88	1.05	Agree
19	Unequal regard for married against unmarried women	1.67	0.61	Disagree	2.82	1.24	Agree
20	Unfriendly social environment	2.24	1.08	Disagree	2.76	0.97	Agree
21	Unfriendly physical environment	3.05	1.08	Agree	2.71	1.10	Agree
22	Unhealthy Psychological environment	1.67	0.79	Disagree	2.82	1.13	Agree
23	Unhealthy learning environment	2.60	0.96	Agree	2.41	1.00	Disagree
24	Overloaded lecture timetable	2.36	0.91	Disagree	2.88	0.99	Agree
25	Too many assignments	1.98	1.05	Disagree	2.18	1.01	Disagree
	Grand mean/Standard deviation	2.24	0.95	Disagree	2.55	1.01	Agree

Table 2 reveals that respondents (married women) agree with item 1(2.55), 2(2.62), 5(3.10), 6(2.50), 12(3.02), 13(2.67), 16(2.74), 21(3.05), and 23(2.60). The mean values are significantly higher than 2.50 criterion mean for acceptance or rejection of a mean score. However, respondents disagree with item 3(2.14), 4(2.10), 7(1.98), 8(1.98), 9(1.88), 10(2.00), 11(1.36), 14(1.93), 15(1.95), 17(2.02), 18(1.90), 19(1.67), 20(2.24), 22(1.67), 24(2.36) and 25(1.98). The mean scores for these items are significantly, less than the 2.50 criterion mean. The grand mean for the table is 2.24 and is significantly less than the 2.50 criterion mean. The mean standard deviation for the data is 0.95. The result indicates that, married women, though face different challenges such as; care for children, care for husband, cooking for family members, nature of job, worries over husband attitude, worries over disappointment in relationship, fear of divorce, unfriendly physical environment, and unhealthy learning environment as part of the factors affecting their academic performance, do not agree with home chores, care for parents, hustling after work, joblessness, no support from anyone, difficulty in getting transport money, worries over no husband, worries over derogatory statements about marriage, embarrassment from peers about marriage, sexual harassment from lecturers and colleagues, lopsided respect by lecturers and colleagues, unequal regard for married against unmarried women, unfriendly social environment, unhealthy psychological environment, overloaded lecture timetable, and too many assignments as serious factors influencing academic performance of married women as some of these activities are taken care of by other people, such as house-helpers, in the home.

On the other hand, Table 1 reveals that respondents (unmarried women) agree with items 1(2.88), 3(3.06), 4(3.00), 5(2.71), 6(2.82), 7(2.94), 9(2.65), 11(2.82), 13(2.76), 14 (2.94), 15(2.71), 18(2.88), 19(2.82), 20 (2.76), 21(2.71), 22 (2.82) and 24(2.88). The mean values are significantly higher than 2.50 criterion mean. However, respondents disagree with item 2(1.65), 8(2.47), 10(1.65), 12(1.65), 16(1.47), 17(2.35), 23(2.41), and 25(2.18). The mean scores for these items are significantly, less than the 2.50 criterion mean. The grand mean is 2.55 and is significantly less than 2.50 (criterion mean) with a standard deviation of 1.01. The result indicates that unmarried women are faced with challenges such as, caring for children, home chores, care for parents, cooking for family members, nature of the job, hustling after work, no support from anyone, joblessness, worries over no husband, worries over disappointment in a relationship, worries over derogatory statements about marriage, embarrassment from peers about marriage, lopsided respect by lecturers and colleagues in favour of married women, unequal regard for married against unmarried women, unfriendly social environment, unfriendly physical environment, unhealthy psychological environment and overloaded lecture timetable. However, they disagree with caring for the husband, difficulty in getting

transport money worries over husband’s attitude, fear of divorce, sexual harassment from lecturers and colleagues, unhealthy learning environment and too many assignments as factors that influence the academic performance of unmarried students.

Research Question 2: – To what extent does class attendance of married women differ from those of unmarried women in the PDE programme of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Delta State?

Table 2: Frequency and Mean Distribution of Respondents’ (Married Women) on the Extent Class Attendance

S/N	Item	Married Women			Unmarried Women		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
	The school attendance of Married women differs from that of unmarried women in the following ways						
26	I come late for lectures every day because of children	2.48	1.17	LE	3.00		HE
27	Usually, I come for lectures after the first three periods	2.38	0.91	LE	2.82		HE
28	I skip classes every week because of school runs	2.81	1.11	HE	2.29		
29	I miss tests repeatedly because of work at home	2.24	1.16	LE	2.71		HE
30	I select days I come for lectures because of my job	2.36	1.08	LE	2.82		HE
31	I skip classes because of stress	2.57	0.99	HE	2.06		LE
32	I skip classes because of intimidation from colleagues	2.38	1.15	LE	2.59		HE
33	I skip classes because of intimidation from lecturers	1.88	1.02	LE	2.20		LE
34	I skip classes because of pregnancy	2.19	0.97	LE	1.47		LE
35	I skip classes because of sexual advances from lecturers and colleagues	1.95	1.06	LE	2.82		HE
	Grand mean/Standard deviation	2.22	1.06	LE	2.47		LE

Table 2 reveals married women agree with all the items to a low extent except items 28 and 31 with mean scores of 2.81 and 2.57 respectively; with the values significantly higher than 2.50 (criterion mean) for acceptance of a mean value as high or low. However, the mean scores for all the other items range between 1.88 and 2.48; values that are significantly less than the 2.50 criterion mean. The grand mean is 2.22 and is significantly less than the 2.50 criterion mean while the standard deviation is 1.06. The result indicates that Care for children is not a reason for Married women going late to lectures every day, they do not usually go to lectures after the first three periods, do not miss tests repeatedly because of work at home, do not select days to attend lectures because the job, do not skip classes because of intimidation from colleagues or lecturers, do not skip classes because of pregnancy and do not skip classes because of sexual advances from lecturers and colleagues. It also reveals that married women skip classes every week because school runs accumulated stress.

On the other hand, Table 6 reveals that unmarried women agree to a high extent with all the items except items 31(2.06), 33(2.20) and 34 (1.47) respectively. The values are significantly higher than 2.50 (criterion mean). However, the mean scores for the other items range between, 2.59 and 3.00; figures that are

significantly higher than the 2.50 criterion mean. The grand mean score is 2.47 and is significantly less than 2.50 (criterion mean) with a standard deviation of 1.07. The result indicates that, unmarried female students go late for lectures every day because of children they take care of, attend lectures usually after the first three periods, miss tests repeatedly because of work at home, select days they attend classes because of the nature of the job, skip classes because of intimidation from colleagues, and skip classes because of sexual advances from lecturers and colleagues due to their marital status. On the other hand, they do not absent themselves from school because of school runs, stress, intimidation from lecturers or pregnancy-related issues.

- **Research Question 3:** – To what extent does the academic performance of married women differ from those of unmarried women in the PDE programme of Federal College of Education (Technical), Asaba Delta State?

Table 3: Frequency and Mean Distribution of Respondents’ Responses on the Extent of Academic Performance

S/N	Unmarried Women			Unmarried Women		
	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
1	4.67	4.71	3.73	4.67	4.71	3.70
2	4.38	4.43	3.70	4.38	4.71	3.68
3	4.14	4.29	3.70	4.14	4.52	3.63
4	4.14	4.24	3.70	4.10	4.52	3.58
5	4.29	4.19	3.65	4.10	4.14	3.58
6	4.05	4.10	3.63	4.00	4.14	3.58
7	4.29	4.10	3.58	3.95	4.10	3.53
8	4.00	4.00	3.55	3.57	4.10	3.53
9	3.81	4.00	3.53	3.67	4.00	3.40
10	3.90	3.90	3.30	3.43	3.95	3.40
11	3.48	3.86	4.43	3.43	3.90	3.33
12	3.76	3.71	4.05	3.38	3.90	4.50
13	3.76	3.62	3.95	3.29	3.81	4.40
14	3.76	3.48	3.93	3.14	3.81	4.40
15	3.81	3.43	3.90	2.71	3.76	4.20
16	3.67	3.38	3.85	1.86	3.62	4.05
17	3.67	3.33	3.83		3.52	3.93
18	3.57	3.19	3.78		3.71	3.85
19	3.38	3.19	3.78		3.57	3.83
20	3.00	3.19	3.78		3.38	3.73
21	3.71	3.10	3.73		3.14	3.73
22	3.19	3.10			3	
23	3.10	3.05			2.71	
24	3.00	2.62				
25	2.90	2.52				
26	2.90	2.52				
27	2.81					

28	2.71					
29	2.24					
30	1.86					
Total/Grand Mean	105.86(3.52)	93.25(3.58)	79.08(3.76)	53.77(3.36)	84.82(3.68)	79.56(3.78)

Note: The comparison is based on the final CGPA of students for each year in line with married and unmarried women who enrolled and graduated from the programme.

Table 3 reveals that the PDE programme had a total enrollment of 30 married women and 16 unmarried women in the 2018/2019 academic session. It also reveals the sum of frequencies of the cumulative grade point average of 105.86 for the 30 married women with a grand mean of 3.52. Furthermore, it shows the sum of frequencies of the cumulative grade point average of 53.77 for the 16 unmarried women with a grand mean of 3.36. The figures show that the grand mean of the values for married women is significantly higher than that of unmarried women. The results indicate that married women perform relatively better than unmarried women.

In the 2019/2020 session, the sum of frequencies of the cumulative grade point average of 93.25 for the 26 married women with a grand mean of 3.58. It shows the sum of frequencies of the cumulative grade point average of 84.82 for the 23 unmarried women with a grand mean of 3.68. The results show that the grand mean of the values for married women is significantly less than that of unmarried women which is an indication that unmarried women for this session performed relatively better than married women.

Additionally, in the 2020/2021 academic session, the data reveals the sum of frequencies of the cumulative grade point average of 79.08 for the 21 married women with a grand mean of 3.76. It also shows the sum of frequencies of the cumulative grade point average of 79.56 for the 21 unmarried women with a grand mean of 3.78. The data show that the grand mean of the values for married women is relatively less than that of unmarried women which is an indication that unmarried women for this session performed relatively better than married women.

Test of Hypotheses

The test of hypotheses was based on the grand mean of the frequency distributions of the mean responses of the respondents on the items in the research instrument and thus the grand mean scores.

H₀₁: – There is no significant difference in the mean responses of married and unmarried women on the factors that influence the academic performance of Married and unmarried female students in the PDE programme.

Table 4: -: Test of differences in the mean responses of married and unmarried women on the factors that influence their academic performance in the PDE programme

Category	Σf	\bar{x}	SD	Standard error	DF	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Married W.	56.01	2.24	0.434	0.878	118	-2.569	1.84	Upheld
Unmarried W.	65.99	2.55	0.436					

Table 4 shows that the sum of frequencies of mean scores for married and unmarried are 56.01 and 65.99 respectively. The grand mean scores for both groups are 2.24 and 2.55 respectively. It shows a standard error of 0.878, a degree of freedom of 118 and a calculated value of -2.569. However, it shows the critical value as 1.84. The rule guiding the test of hypothesis using t-test states that; where the calculated value is

higher than the critical value the hypothesis should be rejected but where the calculated value is less than the critical value, the hypothesis should be upheld. From the results, the critical value of 1.84 is significantly higher than the calculated value of -2.569. By virtue of the established rule guiding the test, hypothesis one is accepted. It implies that the mean responses of unmarried and married women on the factors that influence their academic performance do not significantly differ.

H0₂: – There is no significant difference in the academic performance of married and unmarried female students of the PDE programme for 2018/2019; 2019/2020; and 2020/2021.

Note: Based on the spread over the years, each session attracted a different table.

Table 5: -: Test of Differences in The Mean Responses Of Respondents On Academic Performance 2018/2019

Category	$\sum f$	\bar{x}	SD	Standard error	DF	t-Cal	t-crit	Decision
Married W.	105.86	3.54	0.74	1.053	157.63	0.592	1.50	Upheld
Unmarried W.	53.77	3.36	-0.104					

Table 5 shows that the sum of frequencies of mean scores for married and unmarried women are 105.86 and 53.77 respectively. The grand mean scores for both groups are 3.54 and 3.36 respectively. It shows a standard error of 1.053, a degree of freedom of 157.63 and a calculated value of 0.592. However, it shows the critical value as 1.50. The values show that the Critical Value of 1.50 is significantly higher than the calculated value of 0.592. Based on the stated rule guiding the test of the hypothesis using a t-test hypothesis 3a is upheld. It implies that the mean academic performance of married and unmarried women for the 2018/2019 session does not significantly differ.

Table 10: -: Test of Differences in The Mean Responses of Respondents in Academic Performance for 2019/2020

Category	$\sum f$	\bar{x}	SD	Standard error	DF	t-Cal	t-crit	Decision
Married W.	93.25	3.58	0.54	0.973	176.07	-0.95	1.89	Upheld
Unmarried W.	84.82	3.68	0.45					

Table 10 shows that the sum of frequencies of mean scores for married and unmarried women are 93.25 and 84.82 respectively. The grand mean scores for both groups are 3.58 and 3.68 respectively. It shows a standard error of 0.973, a degree of freedom of 176.07 and a calculated value of -0.95. However, it shows the critical value as 1.89. The values show that the Critical Value of 1.89 is significantly higher than the calculated value of -0.95. Based on the stated rule guiding the test of the hypothesis using a t-test hypothesis 3b is upheld. It implies that the mean academic performances of married and unmarried women for the 2019/2020 session do not significantly differ.

Table 11: -: Test of Differences in the Mean Responses of Respondents in the Academic Performance for 2020/2021

Category	$\sum f$	\bar{x}	SD	Standard error	DF	t-Cal	t-crit	Decision
Married W.	79.08	3.76	0.49	0.99	156.64	-0.17	1.92	Upheld
Unmarried W.	79..56	3.78	0.50					

Table 11 shows that the sum of frequencies of mean scores for married and unmarried women are 79.08 and 79.56 respectively. The grand mean scores for both groups are 3.76 and 3.78 respectively. It shows a standard error of 0.99, a degree of freedom of 156.64 and a calculated value of -0.17. However, it shows the critical value as 1.92. The data show that the Critical Value of 1.92 is significantly higher than the calculated value of -0.17. Based on the stated rule guiding the test of the hypothesis using the t-test hypothesis 3c is upheld. It implies that the mean academic performances of married and unmarried women for the 2020/2021 session do not significantly differ.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Finding in the study reveals that, several factors such as family, traditional/cultural, personal, institutional, and biological interact to influence the academic performance of students in tertiary institutions. It also reveals that such factors could differently influence the academic performance of married and unmarried female students due to status definition and engagements. This is in agreement with the findings of Ketema, Shukri, and Shimelis (2022) who posited that the academic performance of students, especially female students, is a product of different factors which range from family to cultural factors. The study reveals further that married women are usually engrossed in several activities such as caring for children and their husbands, cooking for family members and the nature of jobs which throw them into worries over their husband’s attitudes, worries over disappointment in relationships and fear of divorce.

The finding in the study also reveals that unmarried women, like married women too, also have their challenges, which they believe are more tasking and demanding than those of married women. Further revelation from the study shows that such factors as engagement in home chores, care for parents, hustling after work, joblessness, no support from anyone, difficulty in getting transport money, worries over no husband, worries over derogatory statements about marriage, embarrassment from peers about marriage, sexual harassment from lecturers and colleagues, lopsided respect by lecturers and colleagues, unequal regard for married against unmarried women, unfriendly social environment, unhealthy psychological environment, overloaded lecture timetable, and too many assignments are not serious factors influencing academic performance of married women as some of these activities are taken care of by other people, such as house-helps, in the home. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Marisennayya and Defar (2020); Yeshimebrat, Alemayehu and Firew, (2013) who, though in separate studies corroborated that single women face challenges in schools that affect their academic performance and often lead to dropout in most case, especially as, unequal social treatment by school authorities and colleagues, social representation and pressures from the home front even when they are elderly to married women.

The finding shows that unmarried women are faced with multiple challenges/factors such as, care for children, home chores, care for parents, cooking for family members, nature of the job, hustling after work, no support from anyone, joblessness, worries over no husband, worries over disappointment in a relationship, worries over derogatory statements about marriage, embarrassment from peers about marriage, lopsided respect by lecturers and colleagues in favour of married women, unequal regard for married against unmarried women, unfriendly social environment, unfriendly physical environment, unhealthy psychological environment and overloaded lecture timetable as factors that influence their academic performance.

The finding reveals that, although some married women attend classes late and skip classes, it is not an everyday occurrence and it is not because of care for children. They do not usually go for lectures after the first three periods as perceived, do not miss tests repeatedly because of work at home, do not select days to attend lectures because of their job; they do not skip classes because of intimidation from colleagues or lecturers, do not skip classes because of pregnancy, sexual advances from lecturers and colleagues but skip classes every week because accumulated stress from school runs.

On the other hand, unmarried female students go late for lectures every day and skip classes due to children they take care of; they miss tests repeatedly because of work at home, select days they attend classes because of the nature of the job, skip classes because of intimidation from colleagues, sexual advances from lecturers and colleagues due to their marital status. However, they do not absent themselves from lectures because of school runs, stress, intimidation from lecturers or pregnancy-related issues. The finding is in agreement with the position of Williams (2018). who unequivocally stated that academic performance is a product of many factors including school attendance and the finding of Ketema, Shukri, and Shimelis(2022) stated that many students, especially women face anxiety due to several factors including stress.

Additionally, the finding in the study reveals that the academic performance of married women and unmarried women is not statically in favour of either group. It alternates basically due to personal effort and input, not because of stress-related factors. This is in support of Khoshlessan and Pial (2017) who stated that;the academic performance of married and unmarried women cannot be determined through a literature review as it is not static; but vary from year to year depending on those involved as schools and programmes are open to entry and exit with newcomers coming in and the predecessors leaving the system.

The finding reveals further that all the hypotheses tested were Accepted as the critical values for each of the table was significantly higher than the calculated values; which implied that the responses of both married and unmarried female students of the PDE programme on the factors that influence academic performance, school attendance and academic performance of both groups, do not significantly differ.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings in the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Institutions of higher learning should make it statutory to organise stress control seminars/workshops for married and unmarried female new intakes every year to enable them to strike a balance between their home, work and academics by adopting emotion-focused strategies to ensure better psychological health and marital relationship as any unhealthy feeling or conception could affect their psychological wellbeing, the entire family and their career.
2. The Directorate, in collaboration with the students, should restructure the study timetable to consider the period for school runs to avoid massive absenteeism of both married and unmarried women who could be caught in the web of school runs.
3. Management of the College and other higher institutions should ensure that the learning environment should be friendly to adults with basic facilities for sanitary and hygienic convenience for students. This will give them confidence and psycho-emotional balance and concentration in class.

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