

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57125/FED.2023.12.25.07>

How to cite: Musah, E. (2023). Social Spousal Abuse and Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium (EHD) Amid Married Secondary Schools Teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. *Futurity Education*. 3(4). 118-131. <https://doi.org/10.57125/FED.2023.12.25.07>

Social Spousal Abuse and Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium (EHD) Amid Married Secondary Schools Teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria

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Received: September 1, 2023 | **Accepted:** October 26, 2023 | **Available online:** November 8, 2023

Abstract: This study aimed to demonstrate the relationship between social spousal abuse and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) among married secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. The goals of the study were to enlighten the reader about the EHD phenomenon, to find out the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD as well as to seek for ways to curb it in marriages. The investigation adopted the ex post facto correlation design and also considered the possible moderating influence of gender on the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among the subjects of the study. The population comprised all married teachers in secondary schools across Rivers State of Nigeria, about 8,499 out of which 766 (11%) were selected through stratified random sampling technique for the study. Two instruments namely, the Social Spousal Abuse Scale (SSAS) with five items and Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium Scale (EHDS) with 15 items were developed by the researcher for collection of data on social spousal abuse behaviours and EHD indicators. Reliability coefficients of $\alpha = .68$ and $\alpha = .99$ for SSAS and EHDS respectively were achieved through Cronbach Alpha. The study was guided by two each of research questions and null hypotheses. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested with correlation and regression statistics at 0.05 significance level. The statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for data analysis. The results showed that social spousal abuse was significantly related to EHD and that gender was not found to significantly moderate the relationship of social spousal abuse with EHD among subjects of the study. Implications of the study were highlighted among which is that persons in the helping professions should work jointly in order to eliminate EHD

in marriages among married secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. Suggestions for further studies were equally made. One of them was that this particular study should be replicated on the same population or another with a larger sample size for greater generalisation.

Keywords: Disequilibrium, Emotion, Gender, Homeostasis, Secondary School, Social Spousal Abuse, Teachers.

Introduction

The phenomenon called emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) refers to a condition in which a person has lost the ability to proportionately maintain their emotional experiences and expressions in order to be in harmony with self and others around them. In such a situation, the individual finds it difficult to achieve the life goals and aspirations. It is about a person's state of emotional imbalance whereby the individual can no longer maintain a state of emotional well-being and soundness of heart and body (Malik et al., 2021). They further stated that it is a condition in which unpleasant experiences of the individual generate negative emotional attitudes in them that adversely affect their normal everyday functioning. EHD also weakens a person's immune system and makes them vulnerable to contagious emotional viruses and disease invasions.

If an individual experience emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD), they express negative emotions like fear, anger or disgust that throws their brain and body out of balance. When this happens, such a person may no longer be able to adequately utilise the everyday life competencies such as perception, appraisal and precise expression of emotions; access and evoke emotional stimuli when they facilitate cognition; comprehension of emotional messages and use them for emotional information and regulate their own emotions for personal growth and well-being (Malik et al., 2021). The adverse effects of EHD on individuals are quite disheartening, so much that persons who are victims of it exhibit behaviours that suggest mental instability. In other words, such persons behave in maladaptive ways.

However, quite unfortunately, the EHD phenomenon has infiltrated the marriage institution in Nigeria and caused colossal damages in many marriages. Victims of EHD do not have control of their behaviours, hence most of their behavioural reactions are unconsciously expressed and not intentional. Some spouses have inadvertently violated societal laws and got punished in accordance with extant laws of their societies like imprisonment and committal to death. Wessells and Kostelny (2022) opine that spouses under the grip of EHD seldom consider repercussions of their actions. According to them, their rational minds, at this stage, are overwhelmed by their emotional minds. A number of spouses who are under the influence of EHD destroy property, or even murder fellow human beings in extreme cases when they divert attention to things in their environment. There are also those under the EHD influence who do not direct their maladaptive behaviours towards people and things in their environment but on self. These are they who are often depressed, overly afraid and in serious cases, commit suicide.

In marital relationships, social spousal abuse may be a factor responsible for the occurrence of EHD symptoms or behaviours among partners. Social spousal abuse involves isolating the victim from their social networks and support either through disallowing them from relating with friends or family or through oral or physical attacks on them either in public or before others. It may also involve criticising or being suspicious of victim's family and friends, controlling their use of mobiles, phones and internet, and use of the family car, deliberately physically isolating victim in their home or making them

to move away from family and friends, and demanding to know where they are and who they are with at all times. This form of spousal abuse is most effective when an audience is present. It involves misbehaviours like disgracing victim in public, menacing and frightening as well as calumny. Equally, it involves offensive jokes, always barracking or uncomplimentary teasing, and pricking, holding, caressing or other kinds of unsavoury acts that victim has asked their partner to refrain from in public. Social spousal abuse may also include any behaviour designed to upset victim in front of others. The disclosure of confidential information or embarrassing events to co-workers and friends is also a socially abusive behaviour. Gossiping, spreading rumours, and playing mind games are effective means of controlling victim (Abuse Warrior, n. d.; National Domestic and Family Violence Bench Book, 2023).

It is often difficult to detect the socially abusive behaviour. It can be quite subtle and is always denied by the abuser. The abuser masterfully spreads their web of destruction, leaving the victim without recourse unless they want to enter the fray of gossip. When victim eventually leaves the abuser, they must make a fresh start with new friends who are not under the abuser's control. Only then can they be accepted for who they are and be free from the image their abuser had created of them. Social spousal abuse is the most nebulous form of abuse. Defining it is not easy and so may be possibly disregarded except if every incident of abuse is looked into, not separately but in sum (Park & Jeon, 2022). Studies have revealed quite a number of consequences of social spousal abuse. For example, PairedLife (2023) opined that social spousal abuse causes intense emotional, mental and physical damage to the victim. This opinion of PairedLife (2023), according to Tonsing et al. (2021) can be explained from the context of stress. The stress can be thought of as any event that strains or exceeds an individual's ability to cope (Sanchez & Estevez, 2022). The stress is described in The Oxford dictionary of psychology as any mental and physical pressure or anxiety that is created through physical, social, emotional, occupational or economic situations, happenings or experiences that are difficult to manage or endure. Sometimes, the stress is also used to refer to circumstances that threaten or put pressure on people, while pressure describes the stress that arises from threats of negative events (Sanchez & Estevez, 2022). From these definitions, it is noteworthy that social spousal abuse behaviours are socially and emotionally stressful.

A diversity of causes creates stress in people's lives. Frustrations over not being able to satisfy a motive, conflicts arising from mutually incompatible motives, pressures within a marital relationship and unpleasant environmental conditions are all sources of stress. Spencer et al. (2022) explained that "being frustrated in an unhappy relationship produces stress". Some unhappy marriages are sources of pressure because one spouse always seems to displease the other no matter how hard he/she tries to avoid it. The pressure of trying to avoid these negative events can sometimes be more stressful than the negative events themselves.

Married persons react to stress in both psychological and physical ways. Psychological reactions to stress often translate to symptoms of EHD. Under stress, people feel anxious, depressed and irritable (Bhandari, 2023) as well as psychosomatic symptoms such as headache and difficulty in sleeping. Cognitive change occurs as well: spouses have difficulty concentrating, lose their ability to think clearly, and find their thoughts keep returning to the source of stress. It may be interesting to understand that all these are symptoms of EHD. In simple terms, therefore, it means that social spousal abuse behaviours are sources of stress or that they are stressful experiences for the victim. Moreover, the consequences of such stressful experiences may be EHD symptoms like depression, anxiety, sleeping difficulties, irritability and cognitive or mental problems for the individual. According to Sanchez and Estevez (2022)s, when spouses experience considerable amount of stress in their lives, it can lead to depression.

It has been discovered by scholars that marital partners who are overwhelmed by two acute stressors of life are four times more susceptible to mental health eventualities compared to those who had to cope with only one chronic stressor (Seay et al., 2023). Other scholars, Mascolo and Fawbush (2023) opined that the effects of social abuse in an intimate relationship are nearly the same as those of physical abuse on the victim. They further listed psychological stress, loss of motivation, guilt, shame, withdrawal, lowered self-esteem and self-confidence as some of the consequences of social abuse. In addition, Park and Jeon (2022) also discovered in their study that a remarkable percent of women in depression had been socially abused as an adult in a spousal relationship. And that, women in depression were significantly more inclined to have been severely socially abused compared to those not in depression after making adjustments for other considerable socio-demographic variables.

A study conducted by Radell et al. (2021) to examine if social abuse acts as an extra threat to teenage psychopathology when other known significant threats have been controlled for. The authors recruited 100 adolescent volunteers aged 12-18 years directly from 13 high schools. The socially abused adolescents were compared with 100 non-abused adolescents matched for age, gender and race. Identification interrogations as well as assessment of chosen threats to psychopathology were given to the teenagers and their parents, after which multiple regressions were used to test the individual risk introduced by social abuse. The results revealed that social abuse added considerably to other threats in explaining the identification of major depression, dysthymia, conduct disorder, substance and cigarette smoking. This result tends to justify the fact that social abuse creates psychological stress in a victim, which in turn leads them to show EHD symptoms.

In reviewing literature on the prevalence of psychological disorders among women with a history of social abuse in intimate relationships, Chatterji and Heise (2021) revealed a weighted mean prevalence of psychological disorders among them to be 49.3% in 17 studies of depression, 18.6% in 12 studies of low self-esteem and 62.9% in 10 studies of social withdrawal. According to them, weighted mean odd ratios representing associations of these problems with social abuse ranged from 3.55 to 5.62 and were characteristically concordant among studies. Differences in sampling scopes may be the explanation for variability. Dose-response relationships of social abuse to depression and social withdrawal were observed. They also stated that, although, research has not addressed many criteria for causal inferences, the existing research is consistent with the hypothesis that social abuse increases risk for psychological problems. This result is in line with that of Radell et al. (2021).

The gender is also considered in this study. The term "gender", according to Chiniara (2023), non-technically is a synonym for sex. More specifically, especially in feminist psychology, the behavioural, social and cultural attributes associated with sex. Most times, misunderstandings arise from confusing sex with gender. Our biological sex dictates our gender: the characteristics by which people are identified as male or female (Carlton et al., 2020). The sex refers to whether one is biologically male or female and determined at the moment of conception by the type of sperm that fertilises the egg. For instance, a 'Y' sperm produces a male offspring and an 'X' sperm, a female child. Sex differences are therefore biologically based. Examples include differences in the reproductive systems and genitals of males and females or differences in the average height and body proportions of each sex (World Health Organization, n. d.).

In contrast, the gender is socially determined. It is the societal meaning assigned to male and female. The gender is socially defined and enshrined in the social setting and procedure by an organization of limits that assist to assign what is proper or improper for every gender and by self-concepts, values, principles, beliefs and consequences for behaviour (World Health Organization, n. d.). Rather than describing gender as an individual property based on biology, the gender ideologists focus

on how people in their interactions with others come to perceive each other and each other's behaviour as gender appropriate or inappropriate (Canadian Institute of Health Research, 2023). In their opinion, Canadian Institute of Health Research (2023) referred to gender as the distinctions a culture makes in what it considers masculine or feminine. Gender differences, according to them, are socially determined. For example, our culture expects boys to be assertive and noisy, and girls to be helpful and understanding. One is born either male or female, but socialised to be masculine or feminine.

It has been speculated that there are gender differences in emotional expression. However, the research is mixed regarding emotional expression between the two genders. Powerful study results have shown that differences exist in the manner males and females recognize, treat and display emotions. Other research findings reveal that both male and females have more similar emotionality than dissimilarities. Peraica et al. (2023) stated that current study results have revealed significant methods by which both males and females respond to emotional stimuli and understand other people's emotions. They further enumerated their findings as follows: (a) A global study of 55 cultures found that women tend to be more emotional, agreeable, extroverted and conscientious compared to men. (b) Females interpret other person's emotional responses better than men do, in spite of whether or not they obtained such emotional signals orally or by sight. (c) Females indicated experiencing love and anger a little deeper than males did in a different investigation of gender differences in emotional reaction. These women also smiled more when recalling memories of happiness or love. (d) Men and women respond to stress in different ways. Females exhibit more sadness or anxiety compared to males, whereas males display an elevation in their blood pressure and more inclined toward alcohol consumption. (e) Females have greater proclivity for experiencing disgust compared to males when faced with a stimulus that can elicit an emotional response.

It is on this bases that Peraica et al. (2023) asked, 'so are there apparent sex differences in emotion, and how big are those differences (using the d statistics where small differences are $+0.20$, moderate differences $+0.50$, and large differences $+0.80$ and above)?' Probably, the most compelling evidence of gender differences in emotion exists in the domain of unpleasant emotions (Carlton et al., 2020; Spencer et al., 2022).

In another development, Chatterji and Heise (2021) studied sex dissimilarities in experiences and expressivity of emotions. The heart rate (HR) was measured as an index of emotional experience while subjects were made to view 16 video scenes that incite eight kinds of emotions (horror, disgust, sadness, neutrality, anger, amusement, pleasure, surprise). The results indicated that while viewing videos that instigate an emotional reaction, males frequently showed deeper emotional experiences whereas the females displayed greater emotional expression, especially unpleasant emotions. Additionally, it was observed that gender differences were dependent on specific kinds of emotion and not the valence. Ahmadabadi et al. (2021) also undertook a research that compared a meta-analytic survey of gender differences plus moderators of differences in emotional expression at infancy through adolescence. The results revealed a very minor, although significant gender differences altogether, with girls exhibiting more pleasant emotions and internalising emotions (e.g., sadness, anxiety, sympathy) than boys, and boys showing more externalising emotions (e.g., anger) than girls. Prominently, age, interpersonal context and task valence moderated gender differences, promoting the relevance of contextual issues in sex differences. Sex differences in pleasant emotions were greatly displayed with appreciation in age, with girls exhibiting greater pleasant emotions compared to boys in middle childhood and adolescence. Contrarily, boys displayed higher externalising emotions than did girls at toddler/preschool age and middle childhood and lesser externalizing emotions compared to girls in adolescence. Malik et al. (2021) also conducted a study of gender differences in reaction to pleasant an unpleasant slide. They realized that females responded highly negatively to negative slides (e.g., dismembered bodies, physical attacks

and distress or dead animals), a gender difference which was consistent in size from ages 20-81. Givon et al. (2023) also discovered in a similar study that women responded with greater sadness to sad films than did men, and women reacted with more fear-disgust to fearfully-disgusting films than men did. In contrast, men reacted with greater happiness to happy films. Also, in another study by Yang (2022), it was found that women tended to report more negative emotionality than men.

Many of these studies are not comprehensively reviewed due to the lack of space and/or to align with the requirements of the journal. Moreover, it may interest the reader to understand that nearly all studies cited in this work were conducted outside Nigeria, which means that there is a gross lack of literature in this part of the world on this problem. It is therefore within this context of lack of literature that this study becomes imperative to contribute, at least in part, to existing knowledge.

Theoretical Framework

This research work is hinged on James-Lange's feedback theory. It is a theory that was propounded by an American psychologist, William James and a Danish psychologist, Carl Lange when they examined the nature of emotions. They maintained that the important factor in our felt emotions is the feedback from bodily changes that occur in response to an environmental stimulus. James-Lange's theory holds that the emotional stimulus that we feel is routed (by the sensory relay centre known as the thalamus) directly to the limbic system, which produces the body reactions of fear through the hypothalamus and sympathetic division of the autonomic nervous system. In other words, the feedback (repercussion) to the brain from bodily responses produces the conscious experiences of emotion that people feel. The theory seems to put the cart before the horse. "You were afraid because you escaped". The bodily activity (escape) started the emotion of fear, which means that emotional experience comes after bodily reaction to a stimulus. This may seem meaningless to many because our common sense would rather make us believe that it should be the other way around. However, certain situations in life lend credence to James-Lange's theory. For instance, if we are suddenly confronted by a dangerous animal such as a lion, our first reaction will be to run away from the charging lion and thereafter, certain emotional reactions such as increase in heartbeat, rapid breathing, feelings of weakness and so on, will follow. These reactions, which could be viewed as expression of fear, came as a result of physiological arousal that was caused by running (Nickerson, 2023).

According to this theory, different physiological states correspond with different types of emotion. It is therefore believed that a spouse's emotions and feelings constitute the consequences of their emotional behaviour. Hence, spouses do not cry because they feel sad, but that they feel sad because they cry, and also, they feel happy because they smile, and not that they smile because they are happy (Cherry, 2022). In relation to this study, James-Lange's feedback theory therefore holds that spouses feel EHD because they acted, and not that they acted because they feel EHD.

Statement of the Problem

Many marriages in this country, especially among the people of Rivers State, are facing a lot of challenges, amongst which the EHD phenomenon appears to be the most troublesome. It has caused many marriage dissolutions, death of spouses and several other consequences. Social spousal abuse is presumed to instigate EHD in marriages. That is why, the problem that this study seeks to find answer to is: Does social spousal abuse relate with emotional homeostatic disequilibrium amid secondary school teachers who are married in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Research Focus

This study focused on finding proofs about the correlation that exists between social spousal abuse and the phenomenon of EHD amid secondary school teachers who are married in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Aim

The aim of this research was to ascertain if a relationship may exist between social spousal abuse and the phenomenon of emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) amid secondary school teachers who were married in Rivers State of Nigeria, with a view to educate the public about the EHD phenomenon and make necessary recommendations for the betterment of society. In spite of the devastating effects of EHD on individuals, especially spouses, there is serious lack of literature about it in this part of the world. This study was therefore intended to, at least in part, fill that gap.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised for the study:

1. What relationship exists between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of gender in moderating the relationship of social spousal abuse with EHD among married secondary school teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: A significant relationship does not exist between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

H₀₂: The gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Methodology

General Background

This study adopted an ex post facto correlation design. In this design, a researcher studies real-life situation where the subjects have experienced what the researcher wanted to investigate. It involved the collection and analysis of data about some variable retrospectively in order to find how any or some of them influence or are related to other variables (Saleh & Kowalczyk, 2022; Tippins, 2023). The population of the research comprised all married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria, which is 8,499 (4,752 females and 3,747 males).

This investigation into the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Rivers State, Nigeria was imperative in the sense that the EHD phenomenon has caused so many problems in marriages, especially among married couples who were teachers in Rivers State secondary schools.

Sample

Out of 8,499 that was the population, a sample size of 766 (11%) in line with Kabuacha (2021), Nishat (2021), and Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) who stated that if the population runs in few thousands that 10% of the population should be used as sample size (324 males and 442 females in 35 secondary schools across the State) was chosen by stratified random sampling procedure on the basis

of senatorial district, LGA, sex and number of schools. The subjects of this study willingly accepted to participate in this investigation.

Instruments and Procedures

A 5-item Social Spousal Abuse Scale (SSAS) and a 15-item Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium Scale (EHDS) were constructed by the scholar for data collection. The validation of SSAS and EHDS were done by specialists in Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability coefficients of $\alpha = .68$ and $\alpha = .99$ for SSAS and EHDS respectively achieved by means of Cronbach Alpha. The instruments for data collection were administered on the subjects personally by the researcher and retrieved from the respondents immediately they had attended to the instruments with the help of two research assistants.

Data Analysis

All research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while correlation and regression statistics was utilised to test the hypotheses at significance level of 0.05. SPSS version 23 was employed for the data analysis.

Research Results

Research question 1: What relationship exists between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1

Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Social Spousal Abuse and EHD among Married Teachers of Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

N	Mean	SD	r	r²	r²_{adj}
766	32.96	5.91	.58	.34	.34

Note. Independent variable: Social spousal abuse; Dependent variable: Emotional homeostatic disequilibrium.

Table 1 indicates a correlation coefficient of the correlation between social spousal abuse and EHD amid married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria as .58. This provides an answer to research question one. It means that a certain correlation exists between social spousal abuse and EHD amid married secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria.

Hypothesis 1: A significant relationship does not exist between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 2

Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Social Spousal Abuse and EHD among Married Teachers of Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	SE	T	P
Regression	9097.218	1	2274.306	98.01	.16	.10	.09	1.86	.06
Residual	17658.36	760	23.204						
Total	26755.58	761							

Note. $P \leq 0.05$ Significance level; $N = 766$.

Table 2 shows the calculated $F = 98.01$; $P \leq 0.05$ significance level. The meaning of this is that, a relationship that is significant exists between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The beta weight as seen in the table shows that social spousal abuse significantly contributes to EHD among teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research question 2: What is the influence of gender in moderating the relationship of social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 3

Correlation Analysis of the moderating influence of gender in the relationship of social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

N	Variables	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ^{adjd}
766	Gender	1.62	49	.49	.24	.23
	Social spousal abuse	10.66	3.84			
	EHD	32.96	5.91			

Note. Moderating variable: Gender; Independent variable: Social spousal abuse; Dependent variable: EHD.

The result in table 3 reveals that there is a positive correlation between gender, social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria ($r = .49$). It therefore shows that research question one is answered in the affirmative. In other words, gender has a moderating influence on the correlation of social spousal abuse with EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: The gender does not significantly moderate the relationship of social spousal abuse with EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4

Regression Analysis of the influence of gender in moderating the relationship of social spousal abuse with EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	SE	T	P
Regression	5814.456	2	1453.614	52.824					.000
Residual	20941.12	761	27.518						
Total	26755.58	76							
Gender					.37	.03	.40	.92	.36
Social spousal abuse					.69	.45	.05	13.93	.00

Note. $P \leq 0.05$ Significance level; $N = 766$.

The correlation model in table 4 shows that the gender does not have a significant moderating impact on the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD amid married teachers of secondary

schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. This makes the hypothesis as accepted and holds true. The calculated $F = 52.824$; $P \leq 0.05$ significance level. Therefore, gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. However, the beta weights of gender ($\beta = .03$) and social spousal abuse ($\beta = .45$) indicate an interaction of gender with social spousal abuse, and this interaction influences EHD among the subjects of the study.

Discussion

Regarding the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among the subjects of this study, the result of this investigation revealed the existence of a certain correlation between social spousal abuse and EHD amid married secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. In other words, social spousal abuse is significantly related to EHD among the subjects of this study, as indicated in table 2 in which the calculated $F = 98.01$; $P \leq 0.05$ significance level. This discovery suggests that when a spouse is socially abused by their partner, there is a tendency for the abuse victim to experience and/or exhibit symptoms of EHD (Mascolo & Fawbush, 2023). The outcome of this present study confirms the one by Radell et al. (2021) which revealed that social spousal abuse accounts for major depression in victims. Chatterji and Heise (2021) also found out that social spousal abuse was significantly related to depression and social withdrawal. This result is similar to these other ones probably because the consequences of social spousal abuse are the same all over the world.

About the influence of gender in moderating the relationship of social spousal abuse with EHD among the subjects of the study, the result showed no remarkable moderating influence that the gender exerts on the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. It can be seen in table 4 whereby the calculated $F = 52.824$; $P \leq 0.05$ significance level. This result may be explained from the context of socialization effects. Marriage promotes behaviours that tend to portray decency, maturity and responsibility for both men and women. As such, married persons are not expected to dress indecently but to comport themselves as mature and responsible adults in public or when relating with people within and outside the family circle. Moreover, these behavioural traits of married people are not restricted to a particular race or ethnic group but are globally acknowledged (Gambari, 2023).

This result disagrees with that of Peraica et al (2021) in which it was discovered that women constituted majority of spousal abuse victims. It is also in contrast with Yang (2022) who revealed that women tend to report more negative emotionality than men. Also, in contrast with this result, Park and Jeon (2022) equally discovered that women in depression may have remarkably been exposed to larger doses of social maltreatment in an adult intimate relationship. From the foregoing, this researcher thinks that an aspect of this problem that still needs to be investigated is whether location and socio-economic status play significant roles in the occurrence of EHD in marriages.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in terms of generalisation of its results to other contexts or population for the under listed reasons:

1. Rivers State is only one State in Nigeria out of 36 States and the FCT. Its population is not even up to 10 percent of the entire Nigerian population. Besides, it is only a selected number of secondary school teachers that constituted the study participants.
2. This study was conducted with only married secondary school teachers in Rivers State. Therefore, its results can equally not be generalised to married persons in other professions or

economic endeavours. plus, persons in other climes. The implication of this that researchers should replicate this study in other settings with consideration for subject's socio-economic status and see if the results would vary.

Conclusions and Implications

Following the results of this study, these conclusions are made:

- There is a remarkable correlation between social spousal abuse and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium amid secondary school teachers in marital relationship in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- No remarkable moderating influence that the gender exerts on the relationship between social spousal abuse and EHD among married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

The results of this study reveal that social spousal abuse victims are likely to be more vulnerable to EHD symptoms than non-victims and that no particular gender suffers more social spousal abuse than the other. This means that men as well as women could suffer social spousal abuse in marital relationships. The implications of this study therefore are that:

- Persons in the helping professions like counsellors, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists and even the clergy should work concertedly towards curbing the EHD phenomenon among the subjects of this study.
- Married teachers of secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria should understand the adverse effects of social spousal abuse and adopt better ways of settling their marital issues.
- Married secondary school teachers should endeavour to access marital counselling whenever there is a need to do so.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study investigated social spousal abuse and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) among married secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. It also considered the moderating influence of gender in the relationship between social spousal abuse and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) among married secondary school teachers in Rivers State of Nigeria. Based on the foregoing, the following topics have been suggested for further research studies:

1. Relationship between emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) and academic performance of students. A study on this topic seems quite apt at this time of our nationhood. The country is passing through very difficult times, being faced with a myriad of problems in nearly every aspect such as insecurity, inflation, food scarcity, high cost of education, and many others. A lot of EHD cases of individuals may be attributed to the impact of one or a combination of these national problems on the individual. On the part of the student, when such a problem becomes unbearable, they may likely develop EHD symptoms that might interfere with their academic performance. It is on this premise that this author suggests an investigation that will ascertain whether or not emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) could have a relationship with students' academic performance.
2. Relationship between socio-economic status or location and EHD among the subjects of this study or any other population. Since emotional homeostatic disequilibrium is a psycho-emotional disease with the potential to destroy an individual's immune system and lead them to untimely death, this author thinks that an investigation into whether or not socio-economic status or location may be related to EHD in a selected population would be worthwhile. Such a study would tremendously benefit humanity by enlightening the public about factors that precipitate or trigger emotional homeostatic

disequilibrium (EHD) symptoms in individuals, for the citizens to imbibe and practice precautionary measures against the phenomenon.

3. This study should be replicated on the same population or another with a wider representative sample. The beauty of every research study is its ability to be replicated either on the same population or a different one to promote authenticity and greater generalization of results. Moreover, it also provides an impetus for later scholars to have a good resource base when conducting a study that is related to this particular problem, which is the EHD phenomenon. On the whole, it all serves to provide authentic information about the EHD problem as well as generate a reliable solution to the problem. It is therefore this author's suggestion that a replication of this study is necessary and should be made.

4. An evaluation of emotional health needs of university staff on the verge of retirement and retired staff of Nigerian universities. It is important to conduct a study that recognizes the Nigerian senior citizens especially university staff who are retired as well as those on the verge of retirement as people in a developmental stage with peculiar emotional needs that require Guidance and Counselling services that would enable the retired university staffs and the ones about to retire on how to adjust to post-retirement and pre-retirement life. The study should emphasize participants' need to access Counselling services that would enable them to easily adjust to post-retirement and pre-retirement and aging. It will go a long way in placing the subjects as well-adjusted senior citizens of the country.

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