

Influence of Commuter Marriage on Physical and Verbal Aggressive Behaviors in Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of commuter marriage on physical and verbal aggressive behaviors among secondary school students in North-West Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to determine the influence of commuter marriage on physical aggression behavior and verbal aggression among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The population comprised all secondary school students and resident parents in commuter marriage homes, North-West, Nigeria. The total population was eight thousand, and forty-three students (8,043) from Secondary Schools in the study area. The sample size of the study was two hundred and eighty-seven (287) respondents. A multi-stage sampling technique which involved simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was used. The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire, titled 'Commuter Marriage questionnaire' (CMQ). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that significant relationship exists between commuter marriage and physical aggression behavior among secondary school students ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$) and significant relationship exists between commuter marriage and verbal aggression behavior among secondary school students ($p = .020 < 0.05$). From these findings, it was concluded that commuter marriage exerts notable influence on physical and verbal aggressions among secondary school students as students having commuter parents tend to have higher levels of physical aggression and that some students in commuter marriage homes used verbal aggression to express anger or frustration. The study recommended that Parents should desist from using abusive words at home as children learn from such attitudes and behaviors that are detrimental to child's growth and development

Keywords: Commuter Marriage, Physical Aggression, Verbal Aggression, Passive Aggressive Remarks, Behavioral Patterns.

Introduction

Marriage is the goal of every decent dating relationship. It is the mutual agreement to live with each other for life. Marriage is a universal institution practiced across nations of the world. It is a formal social union, a legal contract between two individuals who unite

legally, economically and emotionally to live together for life; unless they decide to divorce. Marriage gives legitimacy to sexual relations and is traditionally considered the preserver of morals and civilization (Mohamad, Nen & Sarnon, 2024). The spouses who are

committed to each other cooperate and work together to shape the family. Many young people venture into this contract without having the adequate knowledge of the demands it entails. As the marriage advances, the family begins to expand, and several needs emerge. These needs range from the basic necessities (such as clothing, food, shelter, quality education for children) to long term goals.

Many spouses undergo the marriage processes successfully, but subsequently live apart in daily life. This may be contrary to the initial plan for their marriage. Living apart may be as a result of job deployment (as in the case of those working in civil service, banks). Equally, the expansion and creation of government institutions, agencies and parastatals, civil and ethnic unrest, as well as urbanization and industrialization may compel spouses to live apart or relocate in search of greener pasture in order to improve the family standard of living; or for higher career pursuit (Wu & Wang, 2022). This outward mobility causes homes to be affected to some level of adjustments, especially where the family has children. In the event that spouses have to live in different homes and in different cities, the plan on agreed meeting period such as weekly, fortnightly and monthly becomes very necessary. Therefore, spouses need to agree on periodic meeting such as weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. This type of marital arrangement is referred to as commuter marriage.

Commuter marriages comprise of the commuting spouse, who is always away from the usual home environment, while the resident spouse remains in the primary home, taking on the primary responsibility of all the domestic life activities, these includes caring for children, household management, tackling emergency situations and giving emotional support to the family unit. This role often requires a unique blend of

independence, resilience, and adaptability. A notable challenge for resident spouses in commuter marriages is the maintenance of marital connection amid physical separation. Resident spouses may experience a sense of autonomy, as they take on a more individual role in managing family life and general household tasks (Wu & wang, 2022). The absence of parental guidance for extended periods might leave children more susceptible to the influence of their peers, which could have both positive and negative consequences depending on the nature of those peer relationships. On the flip side, children might struggle with issues of loneliness, feeling neglected, or struggling with behavioral challenges due to lack of social and emotional support from both parents. Furthermore, the impact of parents' absence, may lead to social misbehavior. Most common behavior exhibited by children are traced to parental inadequacies and aggressive behavior ranks high, (Mackinnon, Smith & Unsworth (2020).

Physical aggression is a serious issue that can have a devastating impact on individuals, families, and society as a whole. According to Crick and Grotpeter (2021), physical aggression refers to behavior involving the use of physical force to harm or intimidate others. It is a form of aggressive behavior where individuals engage in actions that cause bodily harm, pain, or discomfort to another person. Physical aggression can range from minor acts of pushing or hitting to more severe forms of violence like punching, kicking, or using weapons. The influence of a commuting family on the physical aggression of children can be complex and multifaceted. While the act of commuting may not directly cause physical aggression, various factors within the family dynamic and the child's environment may influence the likelihood of such behavior. These pointers are

limited parental presence, communication breakdown, emotional stress, lack of role modeling, unsupervised time, peer influence, coping mechanisms among others. The next unacceptable behavior is verbal aggression.

Verbal aggression, also known as verbal abuse or verbal assault, is a form of aggression in which a person uses language to inflict emotional harm on another person. Mackinnon, Smith and Unsworth (2020) highlighted that it can manifest in a variety of ways, including insults, threats, intimidation, and ridicule. Verbal aggression can have a devastating impact on victims, perpetrators, and society as a whole. Verbal aggression, characterized by the use of hostile language to harm or manipulate others, is a pervasive form of interpersonal conflict with its own set of consequences. Verbal aggression is a communication behavior that involves using words, tone, or language to harm, threaten, or manipulate another person. It is a form of aggressive behavior that does not involve physical force but can still cause emotional distress, damage relationships, and create a hostile environment. Verbal aggression can take various forms, ranging from subtle insults to explicit threats, and it can occur in various contexts, including personal relationships, the home, workplaces, and online interactions. Other verbal forms that may be peculiar in commuter families may be insults and name-calling, sarcasm, yelling and shouting, threats, criticism and blame, mockery and passive-aggressive remarks. This may be expressed between the resident parent and the children or among the children in the home. Another antisocial behavior that might be exhibited by children is defiance.

It is needful to stress that the absence of a parent in the home may create some

challenges in the life of the children. The children may have the feeling of unworthiness, sadness and stress in their normal life activities, in school and at home. If nothing is done about such feelings, it could lead to serious problems in the children's lives and the society at large. However, where efforts of both parents are combined, it may determine the outlook of the children in terms of discipline and socialization patterns (Defrain, 2020).

Parents in commuter marriage, who display strong close supervision of the children, can create a sportive learning environment which may boost the confidence of the students to thrive academically and socially. Patterson, Reid and Chamberlain (2022) opined that behavioral patterns are developed as a result of the use of suitable parenting relationship. This plays a pivotal role in shaping children's behavior. Based on the background, the researcher undertook a study on the influence of commuter marriage on physical and verbal aggressive behaviors among secondary school students in North -West, Nigeria; to find out if these misbehaviors exhibited by students are influenced by the type of marriage agreed by the parents.

The economic challenge in Nigeria is a critically responsible for the continued rise in the incidence of commuter marriages. Only one parent fending for the entire needs of the family requiring financial support has been seen to be inadequate. The incessant fluctuations in food prices, shelter and basic clothing and other essential needs such as schooling and its' related cost, transportation resulting from the prices of fuel and general cost of living without any increase in the purchasing power has become worrisome leading to the need for all hands to be on deck. Without both parents earning income, the resultant effect is a situation, where it is almost

impossible to have three square meals in many homes, access comfortable accommodation; meet the needs of clothing, payment of children's school fees and other bills. Another essential parental providence lacking because of this challenge is consistent care, love, affection and adequate supervision of the children on a daily basis. As a result of the hardship, many spouses have to look for better employment. Thus, living apart by parents may adversely affect the children's behavior, emotionally and socially. It may also affect how parents raise children, adequately supervise their social interactions and coordinate the children's activities in and out of school.

It has been observed that when a commuting parent is away, the children sometimes delay on their way from school, staying late with peers and get angry when interrogated on certain unwanted behavior. The researcher also gathered (as a teacher) that children from commuter marriages are involved in anti-social behaviors such as bullying in school and in the community and staying long on social media platform which are inimical to students' lives. The observed problems therefore necessitated this research, on the influence of commuter marriage on physical and aggressive behaviors among secondary school students in North -West, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study are to:

1. determine the influence of commuter marriage on the physical aggressive behavior among secondary school students in commuter homes
2. ascertain the influence of commuter marriage on the verbal aggressive behavior among secondary school students in commuter homes

Hypotheses of the Study

The researcher postulated the following hypotheses and tested them at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and physical-aggressive behavior among secondary school students
2. There is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and verbal aggressive behavior among secondary school students

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Survey design allows the gathering of data from a large target population through administering a structured questionnaire. The survey involves the researcher to measure respondents' opinions, feelings and attitudes to the research questions. It describes variables like attitude, opinions, values, and beliefs which leads to the gathering of information about a group of people

Population

The population of the study was drawn from all the junior secondary schools in Zaria totaling 8,043 students and resident spouses in commuter marriage families, spread across the Federal and State secondary schools.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample size of the study was two hundred and sixty (260) respondents selected in line with Bukari (2020), who indicated that with a population of thousands at 95% confidence interval and 0.5 margins of error, a sample of 260 respondents was adequate. Multi-stage sampling technique which involved simple random and purposive sampling

techniques were used for the study. This is appropriate because it allows researcher to make clusters and sub-clusters until the researcher reaches the desired size or type of group for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The research instrument that was used for data collection was the researcher's self-designed questionnaire, titled "Commuter Marriage Questionnaire" (CMQ). A pilot test was conducted at Federal Government College, Kaduna. The reason for the choice of the area was that the Secondary School share similar characteristics and does not form part of the main study area. The data collected from the administration of the pilot test result was analyzed using Cronbach alpha. This is most widely utilized form of reliability in survey research. The result obtained from the pilot test was 0.79 coefficient.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Inferential statistic of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1 revealed a highest average mean score of 3.00, indicating that students of commuter parents showed fighting as physical aggression, followed by 2.92 respondents who had engaged in throwing things at siblings when arguing; 2.83 respondents slapped their opponent during argument, 2.28 respondents used belt in an argument or fight. The result implies that a mean score of 3.00 is the highest. The result suggested that students who reported having commuter parents tend to have higher levels of physical aggression.

Table 1: Mean Responses on the Influence of Commuter Marriage on Physical Aggression Behaviour Among Secondary School Students

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	I throw things at my siblings while arguing because my parents do that	2.92	.664
2	I bite my elder siblings in a fight	2.55	.663
3	I like punching in a fight to teach my schoolmate a lesson	2.58	.735
4	I use my belt to beat in an argument or fight	2.28	.785
5	Shoving is one of my styles in a fight, in order to make them fall easily	3.00	.809
6	I can easily slap anyone that argues with me	2.83	1.116
7	I use cane on anyone that offends me to make him/her cry in my school.	2.76	.970
	Grand Mean	2.70	0.82

Table 2 indicated that the respondents had a high mean response of 3.13, which suggested that students' communication style was affected when they were angry; 2.79 of the respondents argued with parents over issues at home while the third highest score of 2.9 revealed that respondents climbed table and shout

when there is no teacher in the class. The lowest mean score of 1.95 indicated that the respondents do not talk back to their parents when angry. From the table, results with the highest scores of 3.13, deduced that some students in commuter marriage homes used verbal aggression to express anger or frustration.

Table 2: Mean Response on the Influence of Commuter Marriage on Verbal Aggression Behaviour Among Secondary School Students

S/N	Items	Mean	SD
1	I say hurtful words to my siblings because my mother does so to my father	2.53	1.181
2	I often talk back to my parent when I am angry	1.95	.988
3	My communication style is affected when I am angry	3.13	.903
4	I often murmur when asked to carry out many duties given to me at home	2.52	.746
5	I argue with my parent a lot issues at home	2.79	.872
6	I enjoy saying words that will make my class mates afraid of me when I am angry	2.50	1.151
7	I climb the table and shout when there is no teacher in the class	2.69	.781
		2.59	0.946

Hypothesis One

Table 3 revealed the p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance at a correlation index r level of 0.823 at df of 284. This shows that there is relationship between commuter marriage and physical aggression behavior among secondary school

students in North-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that "There is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and physical aggression behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria." Is therefore rejected.

Table 3: Correlation For Relationship Between Commuter Marriage and Physical Aggression Behaviour Among Secondary School Students.

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	r	p
Commuter Marriage	2.54	0.518	284	0.823	0.000
Physical Aggression	2.70	0.82			

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Hypothesis Two

Table 4 revealed the p-value of 0.020 is less than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance at a correlation index (r) level of 0.697 at df of 284. This shows that there is relationship between commuter marriage and verbal aggression behavior among secondary school students in

North-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that "There is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and verbal aggression behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria." is therefore rejected.

Table 4: Correlation for Relationship between Commuter Marriage and Verbal Aggression Behaviour Among Secondary School Students.

Variable	Mean	SD	Df	r	p
Commuter Marriage	2.54	0.518	284	0.697	0.020
Verbal Aggression	2.59	0.946			

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

Discussion

From the findings of research question one; it was revealed that students who have commuter parents tend to have higher levels of physical aggression. In a similar way, the first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and physical aggression behavior among secondary school students; had p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance, at a correlation index (r) level of 0.823 and at df of 284. So, this showed that there is a high relationship between commuter marriage and physical aggression behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and physical aggression behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria." was therefore rejected. In other words, the findings from the respondents reflected that commuter marriage had significant influence on physical aggression behavior among secondary school students. The above finding agreed with Olaleye and Oladeji (2022) who examined parenting impact on antisocial behavior of street children in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria who revealed significant association between parenting and aggression of students. Students who perceived their parents as less available were more likely to be aggressive, they asserted.

In the same stratum, research question two showed respondents having high mean response of 3.13; which suggested that students' communication style was affected negatively when they were angry. It can therefore be deduced that students in commuter marriage homes used verbal aggression to express anger or frustration. Hypothesis two also stated that there is no significant relationship between

commuter marriage and verbal aggression behavior. The p-value of 0.020 is less than the 0.05 alpha levels of significance at a correlation index (r) level of 0.697 at df of 284. This also revealed that there is relationship between commuter marriage and verbal aggression behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria. So, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between commuter marriage and verbal aggression behavior among secondary school students in North-West, Nigeria." was therefore rejected. This result implied that commuter marriage had significant influence on verbal aggression behavior among secondary school students. The challenges in commuter marriage might create stressful home environment, leading to increased tension and verbal aggression within the family. Also, commuter parents' frequent absence could limit communication and quality time with their children, potentially leading to feelings of neglect and frustration which manifest as verbal aggression. A study by Gunnar and Mats-Olov, (2022) concurred with the findings of this study, who found positive correlation between parental absence and verbal aggression among adolescents.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that commuter marriage exerts notable influence on physical and verbal aggressions among secondary school students as students having commuter parents tend to have higher levels of physical aggression and that some students in commuter marriage homes used verbal aggression to express anger or frustration.

Based on the study, recommendations were made:

1. The school authority should provide counseling sessions to students from commuter homes and students generally on the survival skills and positive behavioral therapy.
2. The emphasis on government policy and private sector on the need to strategies' to the extent that working parents are made to work in the same location for family stability.

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