



Emotional Spousal Abuse and Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium (EHD) among Married Secondary School Teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria

Ebikabowei MUSAH

Government Model Secondary School

Ekeremor, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

mshebikabowei@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8894-6260>

Abstract

This research investigation was aimed at ascertaining the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. The ex-post facto correlation design was used for the study which also looked at the possible mediating influence of culture on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the subjects of the study. Results revealed that emotional spousal abuse and EHD were significantly related, and that culture significantly mediated the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the participants of this investigation. Implications of the study were highlighted.

Keywords: Emotion, Spousal abuse, Homeostasis, Disequilibrium, Teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage is regarded as the oldest institution on earth. It is the union of two adults who have agreed to live together as husband and wife in order to build a family. Marriage serves a three-pronged utility of addressing the psychological, physiological and social needs of the individuals involved. These three aspects of marriage are geared towards the physical survival and emotional instincts which constitute integral parts of nature and indeed, of organisms (Stritof & Blomquist, 2023). In other words, marriage is an essential institution that is responsible for human growth and development. It provides a basis for the internalization of society's culture which in turn is

internalized as part of adult personality structure that governs all human activities. Marriage, therefore, is the melting point of human civilization and socialization towards better life and general societal development. The meaning of this is that, without marriage, society would have been meaningless, a wild place for a wild people with wild cultures that are destitute of basic knowledge of principles of cordiality and systematic procreative existence (Parker, 2023). And, a human society without a culture can never function normally and productively (Pappas & Mckelvin, 2023).

The institution of marriage, in itself is sacred. This is because it is an agreement between two adults who on their own accord (without coercion, intimidation or deceit, and in the presence of witnesses) exchange their formal consent to live permanently a life of love (strong affection) to care for and share with each other their assets and liabilities with the ultimate goal of promoting their mutual growth and development as a couple throughout their life journey. Presumably, the main legal concern of marriage is harmonious companionship that ensures the rights of both partners with respect to each other and to define the relationship within the community (Parker, 2023).

However, in spite of its importance in human development, the marriage institution in Nigeria and perhaps, the world over, has in recent times been under siege of a psycho-emotional disease called emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) thereby making many spouses and their partners not to enjoy marital bliss. Emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) was from three key words: emotion, homeostasis and disequilibrium. The word emotion originated from the Latin word *motere* meaning to move, which when added to the prefix 'e' connotes move away, implying that in every emotion there is a tendency to act (Linguist et al, 2022). Emotion is defined by (Oggiano, 2022) as a short-term evaluative, intentional, psychological state including happiness, sadness, disgust and other inner feelings. It is seen by Solomon (2023) as a complex subjective experience accompanied by biological and behavioural changes; and that emotion involves feeling, arousal of feelings and worry, internal bodily alterations and acting in different ways like feelings or thought shown in the face. It may also be referred to as an excitement of the mind, conviction and zeal; some forceful or stimulated psychological mood; as conviction with its different imaginations, mental processes and incitements to behave.

Basically, human beings are creatures of feelings or emotions, expressed either overtly or covertly. Emotions play an important role in an individual's life particularly in the area of adjustment to personal and social needs, so they control all human behaviours. It is the continuously changing mechanism within the individual that works to provide contentment and well-being of a spouse. According to Cherry (2023), emotions are among the most basic deeply rooted, and biologically useful forms of behaviour, and they are modes of physiological integration through which human beings meet relatively critical situations.

Human beings express either of two categories of emotions, namely positive or negative emotions which also understood as pleasant or unpleasant emotions (Cherry, 2023). Positive (pleasant) emotions are experienced when a stimulus from the environment helps the individual to engage in meaningful reaction within the environment. They also help in the reduction and restoration of physiological and psychological balance within the person. Positive emotions stabilize the psychology of the individual and are expressed in different forms which include smiles, happiness, joy, laughter, love and excitement (Oggiano, 2022). On the other hand, negative (unpleasant) emotions are expressed when an individual encounters a stimulus that causes pain or distress. Such emotions disrupt the totality of one's personality over time and create physiological and physical imbalance in the individual (Baby, 2022). Negative emotions

are expressed in the forms of anger, frustration, aggression, rage, fear, anxiety, worry and sorrow.

The word homeostasis came from the Greek words '*homeo*' which means similar and '*stasis*' meaning stable; connoting a condition of similarity of stability among the constituents of a system. Homeostasis suggests an individual's physiological make-up to strive for the preservation of stability within the body despite changes in the outside environment. It is the process or mechanism that balances the internal environment through constant monitoring and adaptation or adjustment to changing conditions. Libretti and Puckett (2023) explained homeostasis as a characteristic of a system that regulates its internal environment and tends to maintain a stable, relatively constant condition of properties. Harris-Ray (2023) defined it as the maintenance of equilibrium in any physiological, psychological or social process by an autonomic feedback mechanism compensating for disrupting changes. Equilibrium, according to the ninth edition of the Oxford advanced learners dictionary, refers to a state of balance, especially between two opposing forces or influences; or a calm state of mind and a balance of emotions.

Emotional homeostatic equilibrium (EHE) therefore implies a situation whereby a spouse is able to keep their changing moods proportionately; otherwise they rise too high or fall too low in emotional expression or behaviour. When a spouse is in emotional homeostasis, they are said to be in a state of emotional homeostatic equilibrium (EHE) (Scott, 2022). In this condition, the individual spouse is able to adequately utilize their emotional competencies for everyday life, which include: the ability to perceive, appraise and show correct emotions; the skill to reach and stir up emotions when such emotions aid the method through which learning and insight are built in the brain; the skill to understand emotional communication and utilize emotional information, and the ability to regulate one's own emotions to promote growth and well-being (Sugawara & Sugie, 2020). They sense or perceive no pressing survival-related needs or threats, and they are physically and emotionally safe. The opposite of EHE is emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD). 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 victims vulnerable to contagious emotional viruses and disease invasions (Baby, 2022).

There are different measures of emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) which are basically four, namely mild, moderate, high and severe. Cherry (2023) explained that mild EHD refers to a situation in which the individual's emotional evaluation status is not above 25%, and is considered a good emotional health status (GEH-status). Moderate EHD implies that the individual's emotional evaluation status ranges between 26% and 47%, indicating that the person's situation is still within the scope of preventive therapy. High EHD means that the individual's emotional evaluation status is between 50% and 80%, a situation that requires a curative intervention. Then, in severe EHD, the person's emotional evaluation status is between 80% and 100%, a crisis situation that demands urgent clinical attention.

Largely, EHD has been linked to various conditions that hinder and frustrate the spouse's need satisfaction. It has been noted that for individual spouses to develop in normal and wholesome manner, it is imperative that they get their physical, social, emotional and personality needs satisfaction. Several factors account for maladjusted behaviours and hence EHD in the society. Some factors include:

- Spousal painful experiences: Experiences that trigger pain in individuals are major factors that support EHD. When an individual encounters experiences like the death of a loved one (child, wife, husband, parent or their sponsor), loss of job or income, a serious natural disaster (e.g., and earthquake, hurricane or flood), divorce, conflicts in a marital relationship, uncomfortable socio-economic conditions (family poverty or illiteracy), protracted or terminal illnesses, there is a high probability of the individual spouse to be overwhelmed by EHD. In like manner, incidents of abuse (physical, sexual, economic, social or emotional) can increase the vulnerability to EHD.
- Spousal frustration and helplessness: Frustration refers to the blocking or prevention of a potentially rewarding or satisfying act or sequence of behaviour; or the emotional response to such hindrance (Smith, 2023). EHD may be aroused in a spouse if their efforts to progress or achieve a set goal are thwarted or frustrated. This is more so if a spouse does not possess the capacity to fight back or do something in order to free self from such limiting circumstances. For example, a married woman who has been childless for a considerable period of time may gravitate towards EHD because of frustration while being powerless and helpless in her present predicament. The inability of spouses to satisfy their needs and failure arising from efforts usually create disequilibrium in their social and emotional behaviours. Gillette (2023) emphasized this point when she argued that frustration is one major factor that can bring about rebelliousness, fighting, destructive tendencies and aggressiveness in spouses. She said that when frustrated, it is difficult for a spouse to achieve something they very much desire. Other frustrating conditions like poverty, social isolation due to mental illness or being cast out of a family or social group can contribute to the risk of spousal EHD. Gillette (2023) also revealed that frustration of marital expectations has been implicated as possible triggers of EHD in marriages and family life.
- Spousal substance abuse: Substance abuse among spouses implies the excessive use of a substance to the point where it has negative effects on their physical, social, emotional and physiological integrity. Psychoactive drugs are substances which act on the individual's or spouse's nervous system to alter the state of their consciousness, modify perceptions and change moods. Categories of psychoactive drugs include depressants, stimulants and hallucinogens. Depressants such as alcohol and heroin slow down activities of the central nervous system, body functions and behaviour; stimulants like nicotine and cocaine increase the activity of the nervous system, and hallucinogens such as marijuana modify a spouse's perceptual experiences and produce hallucinations (Jenkins, 2023). Jenkins (2023) added a warning that beyond physical health and safety risks, using psychoactive substances can create unpleasant significant changes in emotional functioning and behaviour. Such changes include phobia, withdrawal symptoms, anxiety and depression.
- Spousal biological factors: Biological factors which refer to organic, internal causes may also support the manifestation of EHD in spouses (Solomon, 2023). In this perspective, it is believed that EHD may be caused by brain injuries, mental illness as well as imbalances in neurotransmitters or hormones. Neurotransmitters are chemicals that carry information from one neuron (nerve cell) to the next and, hormones are chemical messengers manufactured by the endocrine gland, secreted into the bloodstream and transported to another part of the body where it binds to a specific type of receptor and

exerts a particular effect, enabling the endocrine system to function as a communication system between cells alongside and independently of the nervous system.

Emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) prevents spouses from functioning normally as human beings. It is a condition whereby it is no longer possible for a spouse to utilize their natural ability to control or keep their emotions in check in order not to cause problems for self as well as others in their society. The EHD phenomenon may be described as a condition in which the spouse expresses emotional behaviours due to negative experiences they have, which in turn lead to adverse effects on their normal functioning (Malik et al., 2021).

Spouses under the throes of EHD display unpleasant emotional behaviours such as anxiety, fright or anger that unsettles both their mental and physical activities. In that condition, the spouse loses their natural ability to properly manage their emotional experiences and behaviours so as to be able to accomplish their life goals. Victims of EHD usually behave in socially unacceptable ways. According to Wessells and Kostelny (2022), spouses under the grip of EHD seldom consider repercussions of their actions. They further opined that the rational minds of such spouses, at this stage are overwhelmed by their emotional minds, so most of their actions are unconsciously exhibited rather than intentional. Sometimes, such spouses under the influences of EHD create problems for themselves by inadvertently doing unlawful things like destruction of property, assault or even murder of other individuals, and get dealt with according to the laws of the society. That is when EHD behaviours are expressed overtly. On the other hand, some spouses under the influence of EHD direct their maladaptive behaviours on self instead of the environment. Oftentimes, such spouses are depressed, angry at the slightest provocation, overly afraid or struggles with suicide ideation (Malik et al., 2021)

In intimate partner relationships or marriages, emotional spousal abuse may be a factor that promotes EHD symptoms among intimate partners. Emotional spousal abuse is a pattern of behaviour in which a spouse deliberately indulges in acts that undermine their partner's self-confidence and leads them to consider themselves as being worthless or being insane. It refers to the consistent application of power and offensive acts by a partner to subjugate their spouse. Prebeck (2023) defined emotional abuse as any act including confinement, isolation, verbal assault, humiliation, intimidation, infantilization or any other treatment that could lessen the spouse's feeling of uniqueness, importance and self-confidence. In an emotionally abusive relationship, the perpetrator may make threats to harm the victim, their friends or family members or abandon the relationship or commit suicide. Sometimes silence and isolation are used as means of abuse (Lee, 2023). Betterhelp (2023) and Pietrangelo and Raypole (2023) listed not showing love to partner, treating partner like an object, not being romantic, not having mutual sexual relationship with partner, not caring for partner's feelings, not being faithful to partner and loving another person more than partner, as forms of emotional spousal abuse. It also involves withholding of affection, ignoring their partner and use of derogatory language on partner. These forms of emotionally abusive behaviours may lead a spouse to experience EHD. It was explained by Guy-Evans (2023) that emotional abuse, otherwise referred to as psychological abuse or violence, is a pattern of assaultive behaviour in which a marital partner does to their spouse acts that could cause them severe emotional shock, which may involve anxiety, malignant depression or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The effects of emotional abuse in marriages are quite devastating (Betterhelp, 2023). Hence, Usmani (2023) stated that it is important to remember that even though the scars from emotional abuse are not physical, they can be every bit as much permanent and harmful as the

scars of physical abuse. It makes victims feel like less of a person. A relationship that is emotionally abusive has the potential to destroy one's self-worth, cause anxiety and depression as well as make one to be helpless and isolated. Fletcher and Sissons (2023) further explained that emotional abuse is designed to chip away at a person's self-esteem, self-worth and independence and even make them believe that without the abuser, they have nothing. Unfortunately, some victims continue to remain in emotionally abusive relationships because they believe that there was no escape route for them, and also that they are worthless without their abusive partner.

Emotional abuse has been linked with several EHD symptoms including increased depression, anxiety, somatic complaints and difficulties in interpersonal relationships (Tian et al., 2023). Most victims of this abuse within an intimate relationship often experience changes to their psyche and actions. Emotional abuse over a long period of time has far-reaching devastating consequences on a victim's feeling of self and personality, including development of personality disorders such as schizophrenia (Betterhelp, 2023). Personality changes may involve becoming withdrawn or becoming violent and aggressive. Cognitive decline may begin or if present, may worsen (Qasim & Muzaffar, 2021).

Often, researches on emotional expression show that emotionally abused individuals are susceptible to EHD behaviours. For instance, in one study, Watiti (2021) discovered that victimized people commonly develop emotional or psychological problems secondary to their abuse, including anxiety disorders and various forms of depression. She explained that if abuse is intense, a victim may feel severe emotional shock and have a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or acute stress disorder. In contrast, if the abuse started at infancy and was extensive, it may result in a personality disorder like borderline, narcissistic or histrionic personality disorder, or in other instances, a chronic dissociative disorder like a dissociative identity, popularly referred to as multiple personality disorder. Intense emotional abuse may make the abused to indulge in suicide ideation or actually commit suicide. Low self-esteem may cause lack of interest in intimate and trusting relationships or to personality issues, which may also lead to eating disorders, which may be considered as a victim's self-control mechanisms in their own little way when they ordinarily feel no longer in control and unprotected. Dye (2020) corroborated this fact when he asserted that experiencing emotional abuse is linked to a variety of negative consequences, including PTSD, depression, suicide and substance abuse.

In another development, Tahir et al. (2023) conducted a study on emotionally abused and non-abused female patients. Their findings indicated that women that were abused emotionally displayed higher degree of physical and mental symptoms compared to non-abused women, and that women who were abused emotionally had a significantly higher degree of social problems as against those that were not abused. The authors therefore concluded that there was an association between emotional abuse and physical and emotional symptoms among female spouses who were presently being emotionally abused by their husbands or former husbands. Similarly, in a study by Li et al. (2023), the results revealed a positive association between emotional abuse and suicide attempts and psychological distress, and that one of the strongest predictors of suicide attempts and psychological distress was emotional abuse. Moreover, results of a study by Dye (2020) showed that a history of emotional abuse and neglect was associated with increased anxiety, depression, PTSD and physical symptoms as well as lifetime trauma exposure. From the foregoing literature review, all authors are suggestive of the fact that emotional spousal abuse may be a cause of EHD symptoms in marital partners.

Culture also constitutes a variable in this study. It refers to the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group (Tsai, 2023). Mesquita (2022) saw it as the sum total of the ideas, beliefs, customs, values, knowledge and material artifacts that are handed down from one generation to the next generation. Likewise Hu (2023) defined culture as the behaviour patterns, beliefs and all other products of a group of people that are passed on from generation to generation. This implies that culture is a multidimensional concept that encompasses the collective realities of a group of people (Keller, 2022). As such, culture is made up of behaviours and traditions that have been cultivated over a long period of time. It may be a conscious aspect of a family's identity, such as taking pride in ancestry, or it may consist of unconscious practices that family members perform and never question.

A person's cultural background influences their experiences and expression of emotion (Matsumoto & Wilson, 2022). Worthy et al. (2020) study findings pointed out that an individual's emotion regulation strategies were influenced by cultural differences. It means that various cultures socialize their indigenes to control their emotions in line with their own cultural standards. Guidelines, expectations, rules and structure are provided by culture to help individuals understand and interpret behaviours. Various ethnographic research results indicated that cultural differences exist in social effects, especially as it concerns determining emotions. Depending on which emotions are preferred in a particular culture, the ways emotions are experienced are also influenced by culture. For instance, happiness is commonly regarded as a worthy emotion in every culture. Wadley (2023) stated that in countries with individualistic policies like America, happiness is considered as immense, achievable and experienced internally, while in collectivist nations like Japan, emotions such as happiness are highly relational and involves an extremely large amount of social and external factors, that are resident in shared experiences with other individuals (Koyfman, 2020). Universally speaking, however, Nigerian citizens appear to be very emotional to persons from other societies, as loud displays of emotion in public are normal and accepted (Bjornsdottir, 2022).

In a study to determine cultural aspects in emotion, Matsumoto & Wilson (2022) revealed a relationship between culture and emotional experience and expression. On that basis, they concluded that a person's social concerns ought to be determined in the context of the person's social, racial and ethnic background so as to properly consider the volume and expression of social anxiety as well as social anxiety disorder. Another study by Bjornsdottir and Rule (2021) investigated the influence of ethnicity in social anxiety disorder (SAD) and relationship with symptom severity, depression and substance use or abuse in students. Results indicated that ethnicity had a significant effect on SAD symptomatology in 54% percent of the study subjects. On the whole, a significant greater number of students with SAD had depression as against those without the disorder. It was suggested however, that ethnicity may be an essential cause of social anxiety in some societies and that the relationship between SAD and major depression was significant.

Theoretical framework

This investigation is hinged on Schachter-Singer's two-factor cognitive theory of emotions. The theory proposed that emotional responses are a function of the interaction of cognitive factors and a state of physiological arousal (Schachter & Singer, 1962). Schachter and Singer viewed the cognitive interpretation of emotional stimuli (from both outside and inside of the body) to be the key events in emotions. According to them, the process of cognitive interpretation in emotions

has two steps, which are: (1) the interpretation of stimuli from the environment and, (2) the interpretation of stimuli from the body resulting from autonomic arousal. In this theory, information from the stimulus travels first to the cerebral cortex, where it is both interpreted and experienced. Then a message is sent down to the limbic system and autonomic nervous system that results in physiological arousal. It also looks at the interpretation of stimuli within the body that result from autonomic arousal, suggesting that cognitive interpretation of these stimuli is more important than the internal stimuli themselves.

Schachter and Singer (1962) believed that emotional arousal is diffused and not specific to the different emotions. That is, the autonomic nervous system and endocrine glands are activated in the same global way regardless of which emotion is being expressed. The internal stimuli from the emotional arousal of the body play an important role in the experience of the emotion but only through a cognitive interpretation of the source of arousal. For example, if a spouse feels all churned up after a kiss, they may interpret it as love. Similarly, a frightened spouse often develops friendly feelings toward their partner if they are treated with even a slight amount of respect. According to Cherry (2022), Mcleod (2023) and Carroll and Williams (2023), this is because the autonomic sensations produced in the emotional situations are not distinctive, so it is easy to misinterpret their meanings; sexual arousal can be mistaken for love, and fear for friendship if they interpret the arousal incorrectly. In relation to this investigation, Schachter-Singer's two-factor cognitive theory therefore holds that spouses feel and/or express EHD symptoms as a result of their own cognitive interpretation of their partners' behaviours.

Statement of the problem

It has been observed that for some time now in recent years, the marriage institution in Nigeria is under the influence of the EHD phenomenon. EHD is a devastating psycho-emotional disease with a capacity to deplete a victim's immune system and thereby expose them to various contagious emotional viruses. It has caused so much destruction in several Nigerian marriages leading to increased dissolutions of marriages, separations and spousal mortality in the country. Families affected by EHD are suffering from many problems such as depression, PTSD, chronic psychosomatic pains, schizophrenia, anxiety, low self-esteem, withdrawal syndrome and often, low productivity. This researcher presumes that emotional spousal abuse may be related to EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. Therefore, the problem that this investigation seeks to find solution to is: Does emotional spousal abuse have any relationship with EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria?

Research Questions

Two research questions were raised for the study thus:

- What is the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria?
- What is the mediating influence of culture on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.
- Ho₂: There is no significant mediating influence of culture on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.

METHODS

This research study utilized an ex post facto correlation design. The rationale behind using this design is that, the researcher studied a real-life situation in which the participants have experienced what the researcher intends to investigate. It is about the collection and data analysis of some variables (in this case, emotional spousal abuse and EHD symptoms) retrospectively so as to determine whether or not one variable influences or is related to another (Saleh & Kowaleczyk, 2022; Tippins, 2023).

The population of this research investigation was all married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria, which was about 16,350: 8,499 (4,752 males and 3,747 females) and 7,851 (2,830 males and 5,021 females) in Delta and Edo States respectively. From this number, a sample of 1,486 married secondary school teachers, constituting 11% of the population were selected for the study through stratified random sampling technique based on State, Senatorial zone, Local Government Area, gender and number of schools.

This sample size is in line with Kabuacha (2021), Nishat (2021) and Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023) who stated that if the population runs in few thousands, 10% of the population should be used as sample size. The instruments for data collection were a 5-item Emotional Spousal Abuse Scale (ESAS), a 6-item Cultural Values Scale (CVS) and a 15-item Emotional Homeostatic Disequilibrium Scale (EHDS) constructed by the researcher to collect data on emotional spousal abuse behaviours, cultural values/beliefs and EHD indicators. The three research instruments were validated by experts in Tests and Measurement. Reliability coefficients of $\alpha = .97$, $\alpha = .82$ and $\alpha = .99$ for ESAS, CVS and EHDS respectively were obtained through Cronbach Alpha.

Administration of the instruments was done by personally the researcher with the help of two trained research assistants. The instruments were collected from the subjects immediately they had attended to them in order to avoid mortality of instruments. There was no room for participants to keep instruments longer than necessary. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to answer the research questions while correlation and regression analysis were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 significance level, which were deemed appropriate for this study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was employed for the analysis of data.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Analysis of Relationship between Emotional Spousal Abuse and EHD among Married Secondary School Teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria

N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ^{adjd}
1486	10.73	4.13	.59	.35	.35

Independent variable: Emotional spousal abuse

Dependent variable: EHD

Table 1 indicates a correlation coefficient of the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria as .59. This provides the answer to the research question 1. The meaning is that there is a relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the subjects of this research study.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of the Relationship between Emotional Spousal Abuse and EHD among Married Secondary School Teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	SE	T	P
Regression	1747550	1	3495.100	157.28	.16	.12	.04	4.47	.000
Residual	32666.66	1484	22.222						
Total	50142.16	1485							

$P \leq 0.05$ significance level; $N = 1,486$

In testing the hypothesis, the analysis in table 2 shows that emotional spousal abuse is significantly related to EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. The result obtained proved that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative holds true. The calculated $F = 157.28$; $P \leq 0.05$ significance level. Therefore, it is concluded that emotional spousal abuse had a significant influence on EHD among the subjects of this investigation.

Research question 2: What is the mediating influence of cultural values in the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Correlation Analysis of the Mediating Influence of Cultural Values in the Relationship between Emotional Spousal Abuse and EHD among Married Secondary School Teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria

N	Variables	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ^{adjd}
1486	Emotional spousal abuse	10.73	4.13	.55	.30	.29
	Cultural values	22.26	4.13			
	EHD	32.85	5.83			

Mediating variable: Cultural Values

Independent variable: Emotional spousal abuse

Dependent variable: EHD

The result in table 3 reveals that there is a positive relationship between emotional spousal abuse, cultural values and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria ($r = .55$). This implies that the answer to research question 2 is that there is a mediating influence of cultural values on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the subjects of this investigation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant mediating influence of cultural values on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of the mediating influence of cultural values on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	SE	T	P
Regression	15227.42	2	3806.855	159.712					
Residual	35300.71	1483	23.836						
Total	50528.13	1485							
Emo. Sp. Ab	-	-	-	-	.48	.34	.03	15.19	.000
Culture	-	-	-	-	.27	.20	.03	8.85	.000

$P \leq 0.05$ significance level; $N = 1485$

In testing hypothesis 2, the result in table 4 shows that cultural values and emotional spousal abuse significantly relate to EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. The result obtained proved that null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative holds true. The calculated $F = 159.712$; $P \leq 0.05$ significance level. By this therefore, cultural values significantly mediate the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the participants of this research investigation.

DISCUSSION

On the question of the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD, and whether cultural values have a mediating influence on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria, the investigation revealed that emotional spousal abuse was significantly related to EHD and also that cultural values have a significant mediating influence on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the participants of the study. It may be known that emotional spousal abuse is not pleasurable but causes pain, injury and discomfort both emotionally and socially, and even psychosomatically sometimes. Besides, emotional spousal abuse permeates virtually every geographical area as well as all shades of human beings with similar consequences on victims. The rich and the poor; the educated and the illiterates; urban dwellers and rural dwellers; males and females; young and old; the clergy and congregants; white collars workers and artisans; whites and blacks are all perpetrators and/or victims of emotional spousal abuse. In Nigeria, particularly, there is no geographical location or ethnic group within the country that one would not find emotional spouse abuse in marriages. This investigation therefore intends to serve as an eye-opener to both perpetrators and victims that emotional

spousal abuse has dire consequences that should be avoided in marital relationships for the family, and by extension, the society to grow and develop seamlessly.

The results of this study appear logical. Delta and Edo States share a common boundary since the creation of both States in Nigeria. As a matter of fact, Delta and Edo States made up the former Midwest Region which was later renamed Bendel State following the creation of States by the General Yakubu Gowon's administration. As time went by, Bendel State also became defunct as it was divided into two distinct and independent States of Delta and Edo. Moreover, the predominant cultural groups of Urhobo/Ijaw in Delta State and the Bini of Edo State have nearly the same cultural practices and behavioural patterns, plus the fact that through inter-tribal marriages, a lot of things are now very common among people of the two States. This includes the experience and expression of emotions both in public and in the privacy of their homes. Therefore, based on these cultural and behavioural similarities, the results of this study may be attributed to them.

There is an agreement between the results of this investigation with those of several authors. For instance, Tian et al. (2023) opined that emotional abuse had been linked with several EHD symptoms including increased depression, anxiety, somatic complaints and difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Watiti (2020) and Tahir et al. (2023) also stated that emotional abuse was linked to a variety of negative consequences such as PTSD, depression, suicide and substance abuse, and that there was an association between emotional abuse and physical and emotional symptoms among victims. In addition, Li et al. (2023) and Dye (2020) revealed that there was a relationship between emotional abuse and suicide attempts and psychological distress as well as increased anxiety, depression, PTSD and lifetime exposure to trauma. In addition, the results also agree with those of Bjornsdottir and Rule (2021) and Matsumoto and Wilson (2022) with regards to the mediating effect of culture in the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among the subjects of the Study. In their study, Bjornsdottir and Rule (2021) revealed that ethnicity was related to social anxiety, and that ethnicity may be an essential cause of social anxiety. Similarly, Matsumoto and Wilson (2022) advised following the results of their study that a person's cultural background influences their experience and expression of emotions, therefore a person's social concerns ought to be determined in the context of the person's social, racial and ethnic background so as to properly consider the volume and expression of their social anxiety as well as social anxiety disorder. Worthy et al. (2020) also revealed that an individual's emotion regulation strategies were influenced by cultural differences.

CONCLUSION

Following on the results of the study, some conclusions were made:

- There is a significant relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.
- There is a significant mediating influence of cultural values on the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.

Recommendations

Going by the results of this investigation, it implies that secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States who are victims of emotional spousal abuse are more likely to exhibit EHD behaviours than non-victims. The researcher therefore recommends as follows:

- Psychologists, counselors, social workers as well as others in the helping professions should work harder to ensure that the EHD problem is eliminated or reduced to the barest minimum among the subjects of this study.
- Educational administrators in Delta and Edo States should endeavour to expose married secondary school teachers to counseling services, especially marital counseling, periodically in order for them to make proper marital adjustment.
- Subjects of this study should understand the consequences of emotional spousal abuse and use beneficial alternative means to settle differences in their marriages.
- Married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States should regularly visit marriage counselors either alone or with their partners in order to straighten knotty areas that may hinder harmonious companionship in their marriage journey.
- Subjects of this study especially those in inter-tribal marriages should endeavour to consider minor tribal differences while they relate with their partners. In doing so, they will be better placed to appreciate a lot of things from their partner's perspective and not overlook or undermine them when a need arises. This undoubtedly, will strengthen their marital relationships more.

Suggestions for further studies

This research investigation determined the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. Culture was also considered to find its mediating influence in the relationship between emotional spousal abuse and EHD among married secondary school teachers in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. From foregoing study and the results obtained, the research suggests the following topics for further research studies:

- The correlation between socio-economic status (SES) and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD). A study on this topic is important as it will unveil whether or not SES is correlated to EHD. It seems apt to conduct a study on this topic, especially where the populace is under stringent economic conditions, with many individuals and families finding it very difficult to feed, while the unemployment rate is rising astronomically by the day.
- A replication of this particular study on the same population with a larger sample or on another population.
- Relationship between socio-economic/ health needs of retired civil servants/ those about to retire and emotional homeostatic disequilibrium EHD.
- Emotional homeostatic disequilibrium (EHD) and academic performance of students.

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