
Some Social Predictors of Gamophobia Among Unmarried Postgraduate Students in Tertiary Institutions in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT: *This study was carried out to determine some social predictors of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of Universities in Rivers State. To achieve this aim, three specific objectives were formulated and transformed into three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses. Consequently, correlational design was adopted and two instruments titled Gamophobic Behaviour Inventory (GBI) and Psychosocial Variable Questionnaire (PVQ) which were well validated and had reliability coefficients of 0.76 and 0.86 respectively through Cronbach Alpha. The sample of the study included 522 unmarried postgraduate students carefully and purposefully identified for the study. Furthermore, in both research questions and hypotheses, predictive relationship of the variables was the focus, therefore simple regression statistic and analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with it were used to answer the research questions and test the tenability of the stated null hypotheses respectively at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study revealed that two out of the three variables significantly predicted gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of Universities in Rivers state. The variables were masturbation ($p=.009<.05$) and parental marital background ($p=.000<.05$). On the other hand, mate selection preference ($p=.793>.05$) was not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers state. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that in the area of marriage, pre-marital counselling and counsellors should be made available to as many unmarried adults as possible. This is because many other things influence love. Adult men and women should be taught to give attention to such factors as masturbation, parental marital background etc. to avoid breaking each other's heart culminating in nuptial-phobia or gamophobia.*

KEYWORDS: masturbation, parental marital background, mate selection preference, Gamophobia

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a serious decision for every person. It can be the stuff of nightmare for some while a fancy dream for others. So much so that we might have all come across people who say things like, "I'm not ready for marriage", "Marriage is not for me", "The idea of marriage scares me a lot." All these are signs of running away from marriage or, in other words, the fear of marriage. Marriage, however, is

about two people who love each other sharing the same house with the permission of society and the law to start their own nuclear family. So why are people afraid of marriage? In this study, we expounded upon the psychosocial predictors of gamophobia, known as fear of marriage, and answer the question of how to deal with the fear of marriage.

Across the world, it seems a lot of importance is attached to the institution of marriage. This is because it forms a platform for raising families and a family performs such important function as being a therapeutic setting for social support, in addition to its economic and reproductive functions (Ogunleye, 2014). As adolescents grow into adults, they tend to begin to explore various aspects of life that include dating, forming intimate relationships and thinking of marriage in the future.

According to Erikson (1982), the major task facing people at the age of marriage is dealing with the psychosocial stage of intimacy versus isolation. Researchers posit that people resolve these identity issues by marrying and rearing children or by entering relationships that allow them to develop identities based on caring for others (Montgomery, 2005). Young people at the age of marriage seem to have the developmental need for relatedness. Many young people see relationships with peers as a major source of emotional support and therefore enhance their psychological wellbeing (Patterson, 2008). Falling in love, maintaining intimate relationships and eventual marriage are some of the goals young adults accomplish in their interactions with others, (Kefalas et al., (2011). They further established that today people have a greater discretion about whether to marry. They further stated that where young adults have been found to be appreciative of sexual relationships, they are non-committal about transiting these relationships into marriage.

According to Patterson (2008), the meaning attached to marriage is influenced by different factors. Reasons why people fall in love and marry vary across cultures. Family scholars (Kefalas et al., 2011) identified a number of conditions that have reshaped young people's notions of marriage. Some of the significant influences affecting the timing and attractiveness of marriage include schooling beyond the teen years, the liberalization of sexual behaviour, the availability of reliable methods of contraception, challenging gender roles, the threat of divorce and acceptability of remaining single (Patterson, 2008). Interestingly, despite the changing attitudes towards the institution of marriage among different societies, the proportion of young people opting for marriage is not different from what it was at the beginning of the last century (Tumuti et al., 2012).

Marriage also comes with material and spiritual obligations as well as other sorts of sacrifices. All this can lead to the emergence of emotions such as fear and anxiety in some people, and ultimately to turning away from the idea of marriage, even if one happens to be in a happy relationship. "Gamo" is a Greek word which means marriage and "Phobo" means fear. Hence, gamophobia means fear of marriage, commitment and being in a relationship. It is also a fear of obligations. Phobia is an excessive fear of something that presents little danger, but nonetheless makes you anxious. Many phobias are formed due to social interactions. They are personality and anxiety disorders. With this phobia, a person can like or love the other person, but when the other person wants something more serious or wants to commit to a relationship, then the person with gamophobia will begin regressing to negative feelings instead of positive ones. In the words of Reis et al. (2000), gamophobia is simply fear of commitment as it concerns marriage to another.

Gamophobia can arise from negative experiences of marriage witnessed in one's own family or close circle (Reis & Rusbult, 2004). This fear can also be defined as a psychological fear of attachment. The idea of being attached to one person makes some people think that it is better to live alone. Of course, it can be a daunting prospect to take responsibility for another person. Obviously, the concept of fear concerning marriage could be affected by a number of reasons. While some of these may be biologically related, other may completely be social in nature.

Masturbation, in its simplest term, refers to the act of self-induced genital excitement, while lesbianism, which is also known as sapphism, is female homosexuality (the act of women engaging in sexual activities with one another). The fact still remains that these two antisocial behaviours are still being practiced covertly by unmarried and married female folks in our society as alternative to marriage in order to support themselves sexually and emotionally. Masturbation is the erotic stimulation of one's own genitals, which generally, but not always, results in orgasm. It is possible that there may be a positive relationship between masturbation and relationship satisfaction. Masturbation could also be negatively associated with relationship satisfaction for a variety of reasons, including a) using sexually explicit material with masturbation, which when viewed by men has been found to be negatively correlated with relationship satisfaction for both men and women (Bridges & Morokoff, 2011) masturbation being a means of individuals distancing themselves from their partners rather than connecting with their partners; c) individuals experiencing oxytocin releases and increased bonding during orgasm (Esch & Stefano, 2005) when they are not with their partner; d) altering people's sexual schemas in ways that limit or change their partners involvement or their involvement with their partner (Taylor, 2006); e) if people are masturbating for reasons that are hurtful to their relationships; and f) masturbation leading to secrecy or guilt associated with lower relationship satisfaction (Guerrero et al., 2008).

Parental marital background is another factor that the researchers perceive may influence gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students. It is generally agreed by scholars that one's home background have the potential of influencing behaviour of an individual. Thus, if an individual is from a home where there is no good relationship between the husband (father) and wife (mother) the tendency or probability of such an individual becoming afraid of marriage could be high. Conversely, if there is good relationship between both parents, the children from such home may not suffer from gamophobia, at least not by their parental marital background. However, the general thinking concerning parental marital background influence on their children is however, inconclusive as some researchers have found contrary evidence as it concerns other variables but none for gamophobia to the best of the researcher's knowledge, hence, the inclusion in this study. Wolfinger (2003) directly addressed the timing issue and found that parental divorce was associated with an increased likelihood of marriage among teenagers; in contrast, youth with divorced parents who remained single beyond age 30 were disproportionately likely to avoid wedlock. Few studies have considered whether parental divorce is related to marital births, although Cherlin et al. (1995) found no evidence for this notion. Although parental divorce appears to increase the likelihood of forming non-traditional families, the evidence is less clear that childhood family structure has implications for forming traditional families. Only a few studies have considered how parental remarriage might affect young adults' family formation transitions. Some research suggests that living with a stepparent has few implications for cohabitation and non-marital births beyond the estimated effects of divorce (McLanahan & Bumpass, 2008).

In contrast, other studies suggested that parental remarriage increases the likelihood that youth will form cohabiting relationships (Teachman, 2003) and early marriages (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 2003). These latter findings suggest a modeling interpretation. That is, parents who remarry convey the belief that marriage is a desirable status, despite a previously unsuccessful union. Nevertheless, the number of existing studies is too small to reach clear conclusions. Few studies of family formation transitions have focused on parents' marital quality. One exception is a study by Amato and Booth (2007), which found that parents' divorce proneness (thinking and talking about divorce) was associated with non-marital cohabitation among offspring, even in the absence of parental divorce. Another study by Musick and Meier (2010) found that marital conflict predicted offspring's likelihood of having a non-marital birth. The general lack of attention to this issue is probably due to the fact that most data sets do not contain information on parents' marital quality when children were living at home

Mate selection preference is another social factor of interest in this study. The selection of a life-time mate is as paramount as life itself. There is a common axiom which states that; who you chose to marry in life may make or mar you and so choose wisely. This thinking indeed have some role in the life of individuals when it comes to selecting whom to marry. The question now, is would the fear of selecting the wrong mate predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students? Is one of the questions to be answered in this study. In their studies on mate preference, Christensen (2001) and Hill (2005) asked college students at their respective universities to rank order a list of characteristics in terms of their importance in a romantic partner. The two most important attributes, according to both samples of participants, were dependable character and emotional stability. Men and women also emphasized a pleasing disposition and mutual attraction or love. Less important attributes included similar political background (unimportant to men and women in both samples), good cook/housekeeper (unimportant to women) and good financial prospect (unimportant to men). Several experiments have been conducted to determine precisely which physical attributes men and women look for and desire in a mate. Two prime examples of these types of studies are Cunningham et al., (2010). In the Cunningham (2006) study, men were asked to judge several sample photographs of women. The results from these judgments demonstrated that the female features most positively correlated with attractiveness ratings were the neonate features of large eyes, small nose and small chin; the maturity features of prominent cheekbones and narrow cheeks; and the expressive features of high eyebrows, large pupils and a large smile. Overall, neonate features were predominantly preferred and viewed as being more feminine. However, the results also emphasized the importance of other features, such as those that indicated maturity combined with neonate features. These results have several evolutionary and social structural implications. Cunningham (2006) proposed a multiple motive hypothesis indicating that a combination of neonate and mature features may operate as a visual cue that signals optimal mating age and fertility. Additionally, the importance of the maturity features may have social structural implications, as those features tend to be non-sex-typed and have greater status and cross-cultural significance.

Gamophobia like every other social phobia is fear that impedes on the well-being of an individual including unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State. Gamophobia is a strong, persistent fear of commitment or marriage, characterized by difficulty to maintain relationships, as well as psychological and physical symptoms also seen in panic attacks. To be gamophobic means one is afraid of commitment or marriage and without marriage and the resultant procreation, the society and the attendant phenomenal demographic growth are at great risk if marriageable young adults are

afraid of marriage. Furthermore, people with gamophobic problems usually experience depressive situations, such as general loss of interest, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness.

In addition, and to the dismay of the researcher, the high rate of singlehood is becoming alarming in our society. Most single are afraid of entering into marriage due to heart break, jilting and other unpleasant experiences in relationship. If the desire to remain unmarried is not checked, the marriage institution may fade away in the hearts of mankind. This obviously may mean that the once revered institution would have no place in our society and the attendant consequences are better imagined than experienced. Hence, the problem of the study therefore, is to find out the extent to which some social variables predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at examining some social predictors of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State. specifically, the study set to:

1. Examine the extent to which masturbation predicts gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent to which parental marital background predicts gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.
3. Examine the extent to which mate selection predicts gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

Research Questions

With a view to achieving the objectives of this study, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent does masturbation predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State?
2. What is the extent to which parental marital background predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does mate selection predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

For the purpose of this study, the following null hypotheses were tested.

1. Masturbation is not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.
2. Parental marital background does not significantly predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.
3. Mate selection is not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted in this research is the correlational design. The population of the study comprised over 10,100 postgraduate students, which is all the post graduate students admitted in the

three public universities in Rivers State for the 2020/2021 academic year. The sample of the study comprised 522 purposively and randomly selected postgraduate students, from the three universities. The instruments used for data collection were two questionnaires developed by the researcher after careful study of literature materials related to the variables of interest. The two instruments were titled Gamophobic Behaviour Inventory (GBI) and Psychosocial Variable Questionnaire (PVQ). The GBI consists of two parts section A and section B. Section A of the instrument seeks information on the demographic data of the respondents. Section B consists of 20 items eliciting gamophobic behaviour on a 4point scale of **CT** = Completely True, **MT** = Mostly True, **MF** = Mostly False and **CF** = Completely False. The second instrument titled, Social Variables Questionnaires (SVQ) consisted of 30 items eliciting social variables such as; masturbation, parental marital background and mate selection preference. These were presented in five clusters and the response options were four-point modified Liket-type scale response of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Very Low Extent (VLE), and Low Extent (LE). The scores for positive item statement were VHE (4 points), HE (3points), LE (2points) and VLE (1 point) while it was reversed for negatively keyed items. The instruments were validated by three experts. The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach Alpha method. The reliability of the Gamophobic Behaviour Inventory (GBI) was found to be 0.76. also, the following reliability coefficients were obtained: masturbation = 0.86, parental marital background = 0.87 and mate selection = 0.88. In both research questions and hypotheses, predictive relationship is being sort therefore, simple regression statistic and analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with it were used to answer the research questions and test the tenability of the stated null hypotheses respectively at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: To what extent does masturbation predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State?

To answer this research question simple regression analysis was performed on the scores from unmarried postgraduate students' masturbation and those from their gamophobia responses. The results of the analysis are as presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of R values showing the Predictive Relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' masturbation scores and their gamophobia scores

Model	Simple R	R-Square (R ²)	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
Values	.115	.013	.011	3.718

Table 1 shows an R-value of .115 and an R²-value of .013. This implies that there is a very low but positive predictive relationship between masturbation of unmarried postgraduate students and their gamophobia. A further analysis of Table 4.4 reveals that unmarried postgraduate students' masturbation could only account for 1.3 % (R² X 100) of unmarried postgraduate students' gamophobia. That is also to say that masturbation of unmarried postgraduate students' explains 1.3% of the variance in gamophobia.

Research Question 2: What is the extent to which parental marital background predicts gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State?

To answer this research question, simple regression analysis was performed on the scores from unmarried postgraduate students' parental marital background and those from their gamophobia responses. The results of the analysis are as presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of R values showing the Predictive Relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' parental marital background scores and their gamophobia scores

Model	Simple R	R-Square (R ²)	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
Values	.206	.042	.041	3.662

Table 2 shows an R-value of .206 and an R²-value of .042. The implication of this result is that there is a low but positive predictive relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' parental marital background and their gamophobia. A subsequent analysis of Table 4.5 reveals that parental marital background of unmarried postgraduate students' could only account for 4.2 % (R² X 100) of unmarried postgraduate students' gamophobia. That is also to say that parental marital background of unmarried postgraduate students explains 4.2% of the variance in their gamophobia.

Research Question 3: To what extent does mate selection predicts gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State?

To answer this research question, simple regression analysis was performed on the scores from unmarried postgraduate students' mate selection scores and those from their gamophobia responses obtained from the questionnaire administered. The results of the analysis are as presented on Table 3

Table 3: Summary of R values showing the Predictive Relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' mate selection and their gamophobia scores

Model	Simple R	R-Square (R ²)	Adjusted R ²	Standard Error of the Estimate
Values	.012	.000	-.002	3.742

In Table 3, the R-value is .012 and an R²-value of .000. The implication of this outcome is that, mate selection of unmarried postgraduate students' is not a predictor of their gamophobia. Consequent upon this is the fact that Table 4.6 further reveals that unmarried postgraduate students' mate selection could not account for 0.0 % (R² X 100) unmarried postgraduate students' gamophobia. That is also to say that mate selection of unmarried postgraduate students' do not explain 0.0% any variance in gamophobia.

Hypothesis 1: Masturbation is not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

To test the tenability of this hypothesis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with the simple regression analysis was considered based on the scores from unmarried postgraduate students'

masturbation and those from their gamophobia responses. The results of the analysis are as presented on Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA analysis on the significance of the Predictive Relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' masturbation scores and their gamophobia scores

Source of Variation (SV)	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	96.215	1	96.215	6.96	.009	Significant
Residual	7187.85	520	13.823			
Total	7284.06	521				

* Significant at 0.05 Level of Significance

The table shows the test of significance of this predictive relationship. The test output shows an F-ratio of 6.961, which is significant at .05 probability level. To this end, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result is that, Masturbation is a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2: Parental marital background does not significantly predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

To test the tenability of this hypothesis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with the simple regression analysis was the concern based on the scores from unmarried postgraduate students' parental marital background and those from their gamophobia responses. The results of the analysis are as presented on Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA analysis showing the significance Predictive Relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' parental marital background scores and their gamophobia scores

Source of Variation (SV)	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Square (MS)	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	309.275	1	309.275	23.058*	.000	Significant
Residual	6974.794	520	13.413			
Total	7284.069	521				

* Significant at 0.05 Level of Significance

Table 5 reveals that the calculated F-ratio was 23.058, which is significant at .05 probability level. To this end, the null hypothesis is rejected. The result is that, parental marital background does significantly predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

Hypothesis 3: Mate selection Preference is not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

To test this hypothesis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with the simple regression analysis was considered based on the scores from unmarried postgraduate students' mate selection scores and those from their gamophobia responses obtained from the questionnaire administered. The results of the analysis are as presented on Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of ANOVA analysis on the significance of the Predictive Relationship between unmarried postgraduate students' mate selection and their gamophobia scores

Source of Variation (SV)	Sum of Squares (SS)	df	Mean Sq. (MS)	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	0.965	1	0.965	.069	.793	Not Significant
Residual	7283.104	520	14.006			
Total	7284.069	521				

NS = Not Significant at 0.05 Level of Significance

In Table 6, the calculated F-ratio was .069, which is not significant at .05 level of significance. Furthermore, based on the F-ratio value which is not significant, the null hypothesis stated is accepted (not rejected). The result is that; Mate selection is not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Masturbation and Gamophobia among unmarried Postgraduate students

The result here showed that, masturbation is a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State. However, unmarried postgraduate students' masturbation could only account for 1.3 % ($R^2 \times 100$) of unmarried postgraduate students' gamophobia. This result is however not surprising to the researcher when viewed from the fact that masturbation is one of the illicit means some people satisfy their sexual urge. Conversely, this is so because in marriage sexual satisfaction is one of the derivable benefits, hence, masturbation seem to play this role for some individuals thus, a possible fear for marriage or commitment to a lasting relationship. That is, since they masturbate, such individual will not see the need to get married especially if child rearing is not in their life agenda. The finding of this present study is in agreement with those of Guerrero et al. (2008) and Bridget and Morokoff (2011) who also found out that masturbation is associated with fear for marriage or commitment. Meanwhile, in 2015, Edozor and Ekechukwu who worked on lesbian practices among female students also found an association between lesbianism and less desire for marriage among the respondents. This study is included here because that act of lesbianism has a close proximity with masturbation. Lesbianism, though among the women folks also involves deriving sexual satisfaction by fondling with the genital organ of a woman by another woman. This could be described as external masturbation hence, the inclusion of Edozor and Ekechukwu (2015) study in this discourse.

Parental Marital Background and Gamophobia among unmarried Postgraduate students

The second concern of this investigation is on the predictability of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students from their parental marital background. The study revealed that parental marital background does significantly predict gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State. A further analysis of the result revealed that parental marital background of unmarried postgraduate students' could account for 4.2 % ($R^2 \times 100$) of unmarried postgraduate students' gamophobia. This finding supported earlier studies by Hughes (2005) and Vernon (2007) who respectively stated that most members of young adults had divorced parents; therefore, a large percentage of this cohort experienced multiple changes (e.g., separation and divorce of parents, joint custody and/or blending of stepfamilies) in family structure. Similarly, according to Vernon (2007),

young adults have been largely affected by divorce. Most participants in this study reported that although their parents' relationship made them a little afraid of marriage, they still wanted to get married. This finding is consistent with Sheehy (2005) assertion that young adults are afraid to repeat their parents' mistakes and that they may be reluctant to make any commitments that are not carefully considered. Also, Boyer-Pennington (2009) reported that students who came from intact homes were found to have better expectations of their probable future marriage compared to students from single and multiple divorce families.

Likewise, the finding confirms the postulation that the perception of marriage as “romantic”, however, is widespread as young adults also believe in romantic love even if they are children of divorce parents themselves (Jones & Nelson, 2006; Wallerstein, 2007). Specifically, Jones and Nelson (2006) surveyed single, never-married college students who as children witnessed inter-parental conflict to determine their attitudes toward marriage. Their study demonstrated that students from intact homes did not differ in their expectations for marriage from those from non-intact homes. Data were collected on 244 students from intact homes and 61 students from non-intact homes. However, the non-intact home group had parents who fell into the category of either divorced, or divorced with one or both parents remarried. The fact that there were still two parents in the home may have affected the results. In contrast, another study (Kalter, 2007), found that children who view inter-parental conflict might later come to be pessimistic about their marriage. Bonds-Raacke (2009) had found that those who are engaged to be married have higher idealistic distortions than those who are married or are in a long term dating relationship. College students sometimes have a mythical image of marriage as wonderful, as demonstrated in a survey that indicated their level of agreement with statements like, satisfaction increases during the first year of marriage and sexual activity is the best predictor of relationship satisfaction. Also, the finding confirms Bowlby (2009) assertion that the nature of the first close relationship determines a child 's internal working model of what close relationships are like, so it should determine the nature of an individual 's close relationships throughout the life course. There are three main early attachment styles which take precedence. Senior (2002) outlines each attachment style, the first of which is referred to as a secure attachment style, which is most commonly observed between infants and their caregivers. It is regarded as the ideal style as parents are readily available for their children and the child can easily explore novel stimuli and in so doing does not become distressed by the separation from their caregiver.

Mate selection and Gamophobia among unmarried Postgraduate students

Here the finding showed that mate selection is not a significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers State. Mate selection variable could not account for 0.0 % ($R^2 \times 100$) unmarried postgraduate students' gamophobia. This finding is inconsistent with Taylor (2008) Mate Availability Theory, which accredits the decline in marriage to an imbalance in the ratio of available men and women, known technically as the sex ratio (Taylor, 2008). The sex ratio is defined as the calculation of the number of men per 100 women. Whenever there are more women than men, a low sex ratio is said to occur. On the other hand, when there is a surplus of men, a high sex ratio is the result. Bradley (2004) and Pinderhughes (2002) suggested that the ratio was 2 to 1, Black women to Black men. Others give estimates ranging from 4 to 1, to the largest of 6 to 1, when considering the multiple factors that declare a Black man to be a desirable partner (Bradley, 2004). The 2000 U.S. Census reports the ratio being 85 Black men for every 100 Black women.

Also, the finding disagrees with Khallad (2005) who examined mate preferences among a sample of men and women from a collectivist and highly conservative patriarchal culture in the Middle East (Jordan). He found that mutual attraction and love and positive personality attributes received the highest ratings, participants also emphasized characteristics associated with the traditional social values of their culture. They desired a partner who was religious, who possessed refinement and neatness and who wanted a home and children and they were strongly opposed to marrying someone who had been divorced. In sum, culture appears to be a very powerful correlate of mate preference (Goodwin, 2009).

CONCLUSION

From the study it could be concluded that masturbation and parental marital background are significant predictors of gamophobia among post graduate students. On the other hand, mate selection preference is not significant predictor of gamophobia among unmarried postgraduate students of universities in Rivers state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this work and the conclusion reached, the following recommendations are made.

1. Efforts should be made by counselors to offer their professional expertise to salvage the marriage institution. Seminars can be held on marriages to address practical issues that can help couples to go through adjustment period smoothly. For instance, if parents are exposed to the harm done to their children by their unhealthy marital union, they will seek to do better.
2. Symbolic modeling which involves the client watching behaviour indirectly such as video simulated situations that are relevant to their situations could assist the counsellor in modifying fear of marriage (gamophobia).
3. Marriage counsellors should explore other therapies such as real life modelling to or role playing to assist their clients in overcoming their fears and thereby restructure their cognition on marriage to appropriate behaviours.

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