



Analyzing the perception of the impact of wives' higher income on husbands in marital relationships in Otukpo L.G.A. of Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study analyzed the perception of the impacts of wives' higher income on husbands in marital relationships among couples in Otukpo L.G.A. Benue State. The objectives of the study were to identify the reasons wives' higher income affected marital relationship and to examine the impact of wives higher income on husbands. Two research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The Mean and chi square were used for analysis. The study employed survey design method. The sample size was 186 couples. Purposive sampling technique was used. Questionnaire was used for data collection. The findings revealed that according to the husbands, the highest reason wives' income affected marital relationships was that husbands did not feel like the head of the household (3.72), while the highest impact was that husbands had inferiority complex / low self esteem (3.51). The Result of the hypothesis revealed that X^2 -tab 9.488 was greater than X^2 -Cal 1.23. Therefore the hypothesis was accepted. The following was recommended: Marriage / family therapists should organize forums that will help couples strengthen the ego of husbands whenever they felt belittled; they should find strategies to help couples work together when wives salaries are higher than the husbands.

Keywords: Analyze, perception, impact, wives, higher income, husbands, Otukpo L.G.A., Benue State, Nigeria.

Introduction

Higher incomes of wives are sources of satisfaction or pains for couples. It has positive or negative effects on couples' relationship, depending on the attitude of the husbands or the wives themselves. Wives have either supported their husbands or they have a power hassle with them. Household and individuals, income is the sum of all wages, salaries, profits, interests, payment, rents and other forms of earning received in a given period of time¹. Money spent in the home is dependent on the spouse with higher incomes. The Spouse who earns more of the marital income has more say in how money is spent and who spends it². Sometimes, when women earn more than their husbands there is trouble in the home. Women who earn more than husbands are more likely to make the financial decision for their households; in marriages where the man earns more money both spouses share in the financial decision making. But in marriages where the wives bring home a bigger paycheck the woman is twice as likely as her husband to make all financial decisions³.

Reasons wives higher income affects marital relationship:

When wives earn less than husbands, there usually is no problem, but when they out-earn their husbands it constitutes a huge problem in marriages. Interestingly, it does not seem to matter whether she earns only slightly more, or substantially more, an indication that it is not female income per say, but the mere fact of earning more, affect marital relationship⁴. The higher incomes of wives affect marital stability.

The following are some reasons wives' higher income affect marital relationship:

Wives look down on their husbands who earn less: Wives who earn more than their husbands feel they are the breadwinners, when they pay more bills than their husbands. It is worse when the husbands are unemployed. Unemployed husbands are depressed and emasculated; and that has put strains on marriages. It is not merely that the man is threatened; it is that the woman looks down on the husband who earns less. It would be hard to be in a marriage where your biggest fan looks down on you⁵.

Wives have resentment towards their husbands' attitude due to their high income: Higher earning wives wonder why they are working and their husbands are at home. According to surveys of unhappy higher earning wives, these women resent their husbands for a variety of reasons: they are lazy, they lack ambition, they still expect their wives to do the household work, women are more likely to be bitter about sacrificing their careers and more likely to resent their husbands for making more money than them. Higher earning women feel very resentful of their husbands, because they are at home while they work hours⁶.

High income of wives affects their respect and attraction towards their husbands: The spouses of high income earning wives lose the admiration or esteem of their wives. Wives who earn higher may not have any respect for men who earn less⁷.

When these wives make financial decisions they leave their husbands out. Failing to include a man in financial decision in addition, wounds a man emotionally; it can affect how much you respect him and even attraction to him⁸.

Husbands do not feel like the head of the household: Husbands in this situation when sidelined by their wives in decision making, do not feel like part of their own family. They feel like strangers in their home. They do not feel like the head of the household, because of their low earnings as they do not see themselves as the bread winners in marriages⁹.

Husbands tend to be less involved at home: In husbands' mindset they should be above their wives, and when they are not, they see no reason to help out at home. Most times they feel they should not take up the traditional roles of their wives. Once a wife's income is actually greater than her husband's, he tends to be less involved at home and couples are, more likely to reassert traditional roles if the balance between earning power is tipped too much towards the woman¹⁰.

Couples have less marital satisfaction: Conflicts due to finances cause unrest in marriages. There is no peace between couples; even if outwardly husbands put up a supportive attitude, sometimes deep within them they are angered, that their wives earn more than them. Marital satisfaction is a real sense of happiness, satisfaction, and enjoyment which husbands and wives experience when they consider all aspects of their life¹¹. Marital dissatisfaction is the most consistent risk maker in marriage when the wife is earning higher income in marriage¹².

Husbands hate being out-earned by their wives: Husbands hate being out-earned by their wives. Men are annoyed with having successful wives who have hobbies and interest outside the home. The men do not want to share housework and child rearing responsibilities¹³. Therefore, they feel bad when wives are not home to take up their responsibilities. Most times they leave these responsibilities until their wives return home from work.

Impact of wives higher income on husbands in marital relationship: The earning power of wives has consequences on their husbands. These consequences affect marriage stability. The following are the impacts of wives' higher income on husbands in marital relationships:

The Higher income of wives makes husbands feel intimidated: Having wives with higher income than their husbands was reportedly stringed up troubles in marriage. Most men married to women with higher income often felt intimidated by their wives financial muscles¹⁴. For a lot of husbands whose wives had higher incomes than theirs, it affected their ego and they felt emasculated¹⁵. Most of these husbands are intimidated because they feel their wives are taking up their roles as sole provider in the home¹⁶.

Higher incomes of wives make the husbands have inferiority complex/low self esteem: Husbands feel they are low in importance to their wives. They feel their wives do not value them. Inferiority complex is a state whereby you persistently believe and feel that you are not able to measure up to the other in a relationship. When a woman is earning higher in marriage the feeling of failure can greatly affect the man himself in the marriage¹⁷. Wives may genuinely work to support their husbands when they are in lack. Inferiority complexity arises from the perception of the man when his wife has more economic power; rather than what is actually the case¹⁸. Husbands who suffer from low self esteem experienced fear frequently. They feel their wives are dishonest at all times. When they are late from work, it constitutes a problem. The experienced low self esteem attack, often led to depression and feelings of devastation¹⁹.

The Higher income of wives makes husbands angry: Husbands who complain virtually about everything his wife does, are never grateful for anything or help they rendered in the home. Each time she tries to be nice by getting him something it causes problems in the marriage. A husband who is never satisfied with his wife's earning power or appearance and expects her to read his mind, when he needs something instead of saying what he wants can become uncomfortable and angry²⁰. Wives also complain they feel exhausted when they are the only ones sourcing for incomes in their homes; this triggers anger in their husbands.

The Higher income of wives makes husbands less satisfied in marriage: Due to the stress from work and household responsibilities, wives are exhausted; the last thing on their minds is sex. Meanwhile, husbands need sex to feel satisfied in their marriage. It appears that when a woman married a man she is earning more than, it puts a strain on a couple's marital and sexual relationship. A husband who holds a lower-level job makes the wife look and resent him. She feels he is putting all his weight and should figure out something else to pursue, as a result the husband stops having sex with the wife each time the wife argues with him about his lack of income²¹.

The Higher income of wives affects husbands' Ego: The husbands' inflated feeling of pride is thwarted when their wives earn more than them. When a woman earns more than her husband, not all men, but some will begin to question their masculinity, a man's self-esteem and ego take a hit. When female partner prospers, and it can negatively impact his outlook on their relationship²². Women tend to be more communal, so they look for reasons to connect with other people regardless of what is driving their low self esteem, while men's bruised ego can have lasting effects on relationships²³. They remain moody and unbearable, which usually causes the conflict in marriages.

The Higher income of wives leads to their abuse of power in marriage: When wives possess or exercise power or authority

in the home, due to their higher income, it can be intoxicating. Money equates to power. This includes power to get what one desire, power to influence, and power over other people. In marriage sometimes the primary income earner believes that he or she has power over the other spouse, what the spouse does, and determines the family dynamics. The spouse who makes less money ends up at the mercy of the spouse who makes more²⁴.

The Higher income of wives causes nervousness in husbands: Husbands have anxious feelings when their wives earn higher than them. Nervous husbands who earn less in marriage may find themselves angry, frustrated, sad, or disappointed that their dreams for what the relationship was going to be have been limited. When spouses deal with nervousness it can place a large strain on marital relationship²⁵.

Objective of the Study: The major objective of this study is to examine the impact of wives higher income on husbands in marital relationship using Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State as the case study.

The Specific objectives of the study were: i. to identify the perception on the reasons wives' higher income affected marital relationships. ii. to identify the perception of impact of wives' higher income on husbands in marital relationships.

Research question: i. What are the perceptions on the reasons wives' higher income affects marital relationships? ii. What are the perceptions of the impact of wives' higher on income husbands in marital relationships?

Methodology

Research Design: Survey research design was used. Survey research design was used, because the study gathered generalized information from a representative population²⁶.

Population of the study: The target population was married men and women who were members of five Idoma associations in Otukpo, who were natives of Akpa in Otukpo Local Government Area of Benue State. These associations included: Adim-akpa community development association, Akpa Distrist development association, St Fedilis Akpa catholic community, Akpa district community development association (Men's Wing) Allan ward community development association (Women's wing); with a total population of 360 men and women. Source: Secretaries of the various meetings.

Sample and sampling Technique: The sampling for this study comprised of 186 couples. The sample size for the couples was determined using Taro Yemen's formula. Purposive sampling was used.

Instrument for data collection: The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire. The questionnaires were designed based on the review of literature.

The questionnaire was structured in a four-point Likert scale. A benchmark of 2.50 was used.

Validity of the Instrument: The instrument was validated by two experts in the field. The experts made corrections and suggestions which were taken into consideration, while producing the final draft of the questionnaire.

Method of data collection: A total of 186 copies of structured questionnaires was distributed by the researcher and three research assistants. The direct contact approach was used to collect data from couples in their various meeting places. The completed copies of the questionnaires were retrieved within a period of two weeks.

Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The bio data were analyzed using simple percentage. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation. Chi square was used to analyze the hypothesis.

Results and discussion

Research Question-1: What are the perceptions of the reasons wives' higher income affected marital relationships?

Table-1: Respondents Mean Rating on the perception of reasons wives higher income affects marital relationship. Husbands.

Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
Husbands do not feel like the head of the household	3.72	0.72	Accepted
Husbands tend to be less involved at home	3.50	0.88	Accepted
Wives cut their spouses out of their family financial decision making	3.49	0.93	Accepted
Wives worry that their husbands are threatened by their earning power	3.48	0.82	Accepted
Wives tend to look down on their husbands who earn less	3.44	0.84	Accepted
Husbands hate being out-earn by their wives	3.33	0.87	Accepted
The Wives take up more housework and child care when they earn more	3.28	0.82	Accepted
Wives have resentment towards their husbands' attitude due to their high income	3.14	0.86	Accepted
High income of wives affects their respect and attraction towards their husbands	3.12	0.92	Accepted
Wives do not think husbands can take care of them	2.97	0.82	Accepted
Couples have less relationship satisfaction	2.94	0.74	Accepted
Wives feel embarrassed about husbands earning less income	2.79	0.84	Accepted

Table-1 showed that all items were accepted.

Research Question 2: What are the impacts of wives higher income on husbands in marital relationships?

Table-2: Respondents mean rating on the perception of the impact of wives' higher income on husbands in marital relationships.

Item	Mean	Std. Dev	Remarks
The Higher income of wives makes husbands have inferiority complex/low self esteem	3.51	0.90	Accepted
The Higher income of wives makes their husbands feel intimidated	3.41	0.89	Accepted
The Higher income of wives causes anger in husbands	3.39	0.88	Accepted
The Higher income of wives leads to husbands' guilt	3.22	0.80	Accepted
The Higher income of wives makes husbands less satisfied in marriage	3.19	0.90	Accepted
The Higher income of wives affects husbands ego	3.16	1.00	Accepted
The Higher income of wives leads to their abuse of power in marriage	3.14	0.90	Accepted
Husbands are uncomfortable with wives higher income	3.11	0.80	Accepted
The higher income of wives causes nervousness in husbands	3.03	0.90	Accepted
The Higher income of wives makes them want to take the husbands' role	2.95	0.80	Accepted
The Higher income of wives makes husbands lie about expenditure	2.95	0.70	Accepted
The Higher income of wives leads to husbands denial of needs	2.78	0.80	Accepted

Table-2 showed that all items were accepted

The result in Table-1 showed that the common reasons wives' higher income affected husbands in marital relationship were rated from the highest to the lowest as follows: husbands did not feel like the head of the household, husbands tended to be less involved at home, husbands hated been out earn by their wives, wives looked down on husbands who earned less, wives did not think husbands can take care of them, wives takes up more house work and child care when they earn more, couples have less relationship satisfaction, wives feel embarrassed about husband earning less income, wives have resentment towards their husbands attitude due to their high income, high income of wives affect their respect and attraction towards their husbands, wives cut their spouses out of their family decision making,

wives worry that their husbands are threatened by their earning power (3.72, 3.50, 3.49, 3.48, 3.44, 3.333.28, 3.14, 3.12, 2.97, 2.94, 2.79). Result on the findings also showed that the most common reason wives' higher income affected husbands in marital relationship was that, husbands did not feel like the head of the household, which was in agreement with Bertrand, Kameinca and Pan who said that husbands do not feel like the head of the household, because of his low earning as he does not see himself as the bread winner in the marriage and it appeared to adversely affect marital relationship⁴.

The result in Table-2 showed that, the impact of wives' higher income on husbands were rated from the highest to the lowest as follows: higher income of wives makes the husbands have inferiority complex / low self esteem, higher income of wives makes husbands feel intimidated, higher income of wives causes anger in husbands, husbands are uncomfortable with higher income of wives, higher income of wives causes nervousness in husbands, higher income of wives leads to their abuse of power in marriage, higher income of wives affects husbands ego ,higher income of wives makes them wants to take up husbands role, higher income of wives make husbands less satisfied in marriage, higher income of wives make husbands lie about expenditure, higher income of wives leads to husbands denial of needs, higher income of wives leads to husbands guilt (3.51, 3.41, 3.39, 3.22, 3.19, 3.16, 3.14, 3.11, 3.03, 2.95, 2.95, 2.78) respectively. The results showed that the highest impact of wives' higher income on husbands was higher husbands had inferiority complex / low self esteem, which agreed with the findings made by Lim, inferiority complex is a state whereby you persistently believe and feel that you are not able to measure up to the other in a relationship. When a woman is earning higher in marriage the feeling of failure can greatly affect the man himself in the marriage¹⁶.

Conclusion

The major reasons wives higher income affected husbands in marital relationship, according to husbands were found to be, husbands did not feel like the head of the household and husbands tends to be less involved at home, this would lead to depression in husbands and also instability in the marriage.

The highest impact of wives higher income on husbands in marriage were found to be higher income of the wives made husbands have inferiority complex/low self esteem; and higher income of the wives made their husbands feel intimidated the impact on the marriage is depression, health issues, like insomnia, conflict in husbands etc.

Recommendation: Based on the findings of the study, the following Recommendation was made: i. Religious organization and NGO's should organize awareness programs that will inform and enlighten couples on the impact of wives higher income on marital relationships. ii. Marriage / family therapists should organize forums that will help couples improve the self

esteem of husbands whenever they felt intimidated by of wives' income; they should find strategies to help couples work together when wives salaries are higher than the husbands.

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