

**FAMILY COMMUNICATION, SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AS CORRELATES  
OF WOMEN'S INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT AFTER MARRIAGE**

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**A DISSERTATION  
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**MAY, 2025**

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this project “Family Communication, Sociocultural Factors as Correlates of Women’s Intellectual pursuit after Marriage” is based on a study undertaken by me in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, under the supervision of Prof Marcel Okhakhu. All ideas are a product of my personal research and where the views of others are used in the work, they are duly acknowledged. This work has not been presented in any previous application for a higher degree.

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**CHINYERUM GODSFAVOUR GOSPEL-EZEBUIRO**

## **CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certify that this project “Family Communication, Sociocultural Factors as Correlates of Women’s Intellectual Pursuit after Marriage” work was carried out by **CHINYERUM GODSFAVOUR GOSPEL-EZEBUIRO, PG/ART2215921** in the Department of Mass Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Benin, Benin City and it satisfies the requirements for the award of Masters of Art (M.A) Degree in Mass Communication.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty for His unending protection and provisions.

## **CERTIFICATION OF DISSERTATION ON PLAGIARISM**

We the undersigned attest and declare that the dissertation of CHINYERUM GODSFAVOUR GOSPEL-EZEBUIRO, titled **FAMILY COMMUNICATION, SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AS CORRELATES OF WOMEN'S INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT AFTER MARRIAGE** has successfully passed the plagiarism test and does not violate any copyright regulations.

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## Abstract

This study examined the influence of family communication and sociocultural factors on the intellectual Pursuit of women after marriage in Edo State, Nigeria. The research aimed to analyse how family communication and sociocultural dynamics shape women's intellectual trajectories post-marriage. Specifically, it explored the impact of different family communication styles on women's confidence and motivation for continued education and professional growth, as well as the influence of sociocultural expectations and gender norms on educational opportunities and personal development. Additionally, the study investigated the intersectionality of ethnicity, class, and geographic location with family communication and sociocultural norms as well as family communication practices, educational policies, and community programmes aimed at enhancing women's intellectual engagement and success.

Grounded in Family Communication Patterns Theory, Gender Role Theory, Ecological Systems Theory and Genderlect Styles Theory, the study employed a descriptive-correlational design using a mixed-methods approach. A sample of 385 married women was selected using the Taro Yamane formula for calculating sample size, drawn from a population of 9,802 across Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha Statistics yielded a coefficient of 0.76.

Findings revealed that the interaction of family communication and sociocultural factors, including ethnicity, class, geographic location, and family financial status, shapes women's learning experiences and cognitive outcomes (grand mean = 3.90; highest-rated item mean = 4.01). Conversely, supportive family practices, educational policies, and community programmes are strongly endorsed as effective strategies to enhance women's intellectual pursuit post-marriage, particularly adult learning policies and lifelong learning workshops (grand mean = 4.23). Furthermore, there is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between family communication and women's intellectual pursuit after marriage ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). Finally there is a moderate, negative, and statistically significant relationship between sociocultural factors such as gender roles/limited access to educational resources and women's intellectual development after marriage ( $r = -0.57$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The study rejected the null hypotheses, confirming significant relationships among the variables. The study concluded that, open and supportive family communication, enhances the intellectual development of married women. In conclusion, the study revealed that, the interaction between family communication and Socio-cultural dynamics can either amplify or suppress intellectual development. Based on these findings, it recommends fostering supportive family environments, revising educational policies, and initiating community-based programmes that promote lifelong learning among married women. These measures are vital for advancing intellectual equity and enhancing opportunities for women in marital contexts.

## 1.1 Background to the Study

The trajectory of a woman's intellectual pursuit after marriage is influenced by a complex interplay of factors, including family communication and sociocultural norms (Baba & Hakim, 2018). Research has shown that the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping women's intellectual pursuits, with supportive environments fostering sustained engagement and restrictive ones hindering it (Ojobanikan & Potokri, 2022). Family communication is a critical determinant of women's intellectual pursuit. Supportive family environment, where open discussion and idea-sharing are encouraged, can promote women's intellectual growth (Bakhtiari, Kashefi, Pasha, Nasiri-Amiri, Bakouei, & Saffari, 2024). In such environments, women are more likely to feel valued and respected, which can enhance their intellectual confidence and motivation to pursue their academic and professional goals. Conversely, restrictive family environments, where women's opinions are marginalized or dismissed, can stifle their intellectual pursuits (Jama & Barre, 2019). For instance, a recent study by Chibuogwu Nnaka (2023) highlights that in Nigeria, cultural norms and parental preferences often lead to the undervaluing of women's opinions within families. This environment discourages young women from pursuing higher education, as families tend to invest more in sons, perceiving daughters as less valuable due to traditional expectations of marriage. Such familial attitudes significantly hinder women's educational aspirations and intellectual pursuit..

Women's intellectual pursuit is deeply influenced by a range of sociocultural and familial factors, particularly after marriage; a period marked by significant shifts in roles, responsibilities, and identity. Among these factors, family communication patterns play a pivotal role in shaping women's access to educational opportunities, intellectual growth, and self-efficacy. Open, expressive, and supportive communication within the family has

been associated with higher levels of intellectual engagement and emotional well-being among women (Adetunji, 2024). In contrast, families that adopt restrictive or authoritarian communication styles may suppress women's aspirations

Sociocultural expectations of marriage and gender roles continue to exert considerable influence on women's educational and career pathways. In many parts of the world, cultural norms still emphasize women's domestic responsibilities over their intellectual aspirations. In Nigeria, for example, studies have shown that patriarchal structures and traditional gender expectations hinder married women's participation in intellectual and professional activities (Okolo & Oyelade, 2023). This is compounded by economic constraints and limited access to supportive educational environments, especially in rural and low-income communities.

Globally, similar trends are evident. Ndubuisi (2024) emphasizes that intersectional factors, such as race, class, and gender, create compounded disadvantages for women seeking educational advancement, particularly in male-dominated fields like STEM. These barriers are often reinforced by family expectations that prioritize conformity over innovation, and domestic roles over academic or professional development.

Moreover, marriage itself can function as both a facilitator and a barrier to intellectual growth. When spouses engage in egalitarian and intellectually stimulating communication, marriage can support continued education and professional advancement (Omeje et al., 2022). However, in contexts where marital dynamics reinforce traditional power hierarchies, women often deprioritize their intellectual goals in favour of fulfilling socially prescribed roles (Ajayi & Adefolaju, 2013).

The convergence of family communication patterns and broader sociocultural frameworks thus plays a critical role in shaping the intellectual trajectories of married women.

Understanding these intersecting influences is essential for policymakers, educators, and community leaders aiming to foster inclusive environments that support women's intellectual and personal development across all stages of life.

While strides have been made globally to promote gender equity in education, women's intellectual development, particularly after marriage, continues to be influenced by entrenched sociocultural norms and internal family dynamics (Nnubia, Ibeanu, & Okechukwu, 2023; Hong, Sugimoto, & Larivière, 2025). In many societies, marriage redefines a woman's role, often placing greater emphasis on domestic responsibilities and caregiving, which can restrict her intellectual and professional ambitions (Memon et al., 2021). These shifts are not merely the result of individual choices but stem from culturally constructed expectations that shape women's access to resources, time, and autonomy.

Recent studies suggest that when families engage in open dialogue, recognize women's voices, and encourage continuous learning, women tend to pursue intellectual growth despite marital demands (Wangari & Kimathi, 2022). In contrast, when communication is dismissive or hierarchical, women's contributions and aspirations are often undervalued, resulting in diminished motivation to pursue education or career development (Omeje et al., 2022).

In the Nigerian context, traditional beliefs regarding the subservient role of women in marriage remain prevalent in many communities, influencing both educational outcomes and access to career opportunities. Oduwaiye et al. (2020) observe that even educated women face challenges in asserting their intellectual autonomy within marriage, especially when their partners or extended families perceive their pursuits as threatening to cultural or gender norms. Additionally, women in rural or conservative areas are disproportionately affected, as educational attainment is sometimes viewed as secondary to their roles as wives and mothers (Adedokun, 2021).

Globally, the situation mirrors these local dynamics. In South Asia, for instance, Memon et al. (2021) highlight that social expectations of married women to prioritize family over self-development have curtailed the retention and advancement of women in professional sectors. Similarly, in the Middle East, Al-Mahmoud (2020) found that familial control over women's decision-making, particularly after marriage, significantly limits their engagement in intellectual activities or further education.

The concept of *intellectual self-efficacy*, an individual's belief in their capacity to engage in and succeed in intellectual tasks, is also closely linked to family communication styles. A study by Lee and Park (2023) in South Korea found that young married women who experienced collaborative and respectful communication within their families were more likely to pursue postgraduate education and engage in lifelong learning.

Therefore, the synergy between family communication and sociocultural expectations forms the foundation of women's intellectual trajectories. As marriage often becomes a defining institution in a woman's life, the degree of freedom, encouragement, and intellectual respect she receives within the marital environment becomes critical. Addressing these challenges requires a multidimensional approach involving educational institutions, family counselling programmes, and policy reforms aimed at empowering women beyond traditional domestic confines.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The intellectual development of women after marriage is a critical yet often overlooked area of research, particularly concerning the roles that family communication and sociocultural factors play in shaping cognitive outcomes. In many societies, marriage is a significant life

transition that can influence a woman's educational pursuits, career opportunities, and psychological well-being (O'Neil & Green, 2021; Glick et al., 2020). However, the dynamics of family communication within marriage and the broader sociocultural context often complicate this transition, potentially leading to varied intellectual trajectories among married women (Koerner & Schrod, 2014; Inglehart & Norris, 2003).

Effective family communication is essential for supporting the intellectual growth of women. Positive communication within the family can foster an environment that promotes learning, critical thinking, and emotional support (Fitzpatrick & Koerner, 2011). Conversely, dysfunctional communication characterized by negativity, conflict, or a lack of engagement can hinder a woman's ability to pursue intellectual interests and can exacerbate stress, adversely affecting cognitive development (Schrod et al., 2008; Repetti et al., 2002). It is crucial to explore how different communication styles within families influence women's intellectual engagement and their capacity for personal and professional growth after marriage.

The sociocultural context in which married women live significantly impacts their intellectual development. Social norms, cultural values, and expectations surrounding marriage and gender roles can dictate the extent of a woman's participation in educational and professional opportunities (UNESCO, 2021; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). In many cultures, women may face pressures to adhere to traditional roles, prioritizing family and domestic responsibilities over personal development. These sociocultural influences can limit access to resources, social support, and educational advancement, ultimately affecting intellectual growth (Abrahams, 2010; Okeke-Ihejirika, 2004).

Despite the critical importance of these issues, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding how family communication strategies interact with sociocultural factors to

influence the intellectual trajectories of married women. Current research like that of Schrodt and colleagues (2008) often focuses on either family communication or sociocultural variables independently, neglecting the complex interplay between the two. More so Koerner & Fitzpatrick (2011), carried out research on ‘Family Communication and Intellectual Development and sociocultural factors’, which explore how different family communication styles affect an individual's intellectual and personal growth.

Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of how specific communication may serve as facilitators or barriers to intellectual development within the unique sociocultural landscapes in which married women reside.

Despite the growing awareness of the importance of family dynamics and sociocultural influences on women's lives, there remains a significant gap in empirical research. Therefore, this study looks at this question specifically; How, family communication and sociocultural factors interact to shape women's intellectual development after marriage.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The primary objective of this study is to analyse the relationship between family communication and sociocultural factors in shaping women's intellectual trajectories after marriage. Specific objectives are to:

1. Analyse how different family communication styles affect women's confidence and motivation toward continued education and professional development after marriage.
2. Explore how sociocultural expectations and gender norms impact women’s educational opportunities and personal growth post-marriage.

3. Investigate how factors such as ethnicity, class, and geographic location intersect with family communication and sociocultural norms to influence women's intellectual pursuit.
4. Examine family communication practices, educational policies, and community programmes aimed at enhancing women's intellectual engagement and success.

#### 1.4 **Research Questions**

This study seeks to address the following research questions:

1. How do different family communications affect married women's intellectual development?
2. In what ways do sociocultural factors shape the experiences and opportunities for intellectual growth among married women?
3. How do family communication and sociocultural factors interact to influence cognitive outcomes for married women?
4. What family practices, educational policies and community programmes can enhance women intellectual development?

#### 1.5 **Hypotheses**

Research question one and two were used to form the hypotheses, while research question three and four were answered.

- 1: There is no significant relationship between family communication and women's intellectual development after marriage

2: There is no significant relationship between sociocultural factors and limited access to educational resources and women's intellectual development after marriage.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study, which explores the intersection of family communication and sociocultural factors in shaping the intellectual development of married women, has the potential to benefit a wide range of individuals and institutions. As societal dynamics continue to evolve, understanding how relational and cultural structures influence women's intellectual trajectories becomes increasingly essential. The insights generated from this research will serve both practical and academic purposes, offering value to key stakeholders across family, educational, and policy domains.

Married women stand as the primary beneficiaries of this study. By examining how communication within families and prevailing cultural norms influence intellectual pursuits, the study sheds light on the challenges and enablers women face after marriage. Many women, particularly in contexts where traditional gender roles dominate, may internalize limitations that hinder their academic or professional growth. This research offers them a reflective framework to assess their environments, affirm their intellectual potential, and seek out or advocate for supportive conditions that foster continuous learning and personal development.

Families and spouses also have much to gain. The study draws attention to the role of everyday communication in empowering or limiting women's intellectual aspirations. When families, especially husbands and in-laws, understand the impact of their communication styles and cultural expectations, they may be more inclined to foster nurturing environments that value dialogue, respect, and shared decision-making. Such changes can lead to stronger

familial bonds and promote mutual intellectual growth within households, enhancing overall marital satisfaction.

Another group that will benefit significantly is educators, counsellors, and social workers. These professionals are often at the frontline of adult learning, marital support, and community engagement. With the insights from this study, they can develop more targeted interventions, educational materials, and counselling strategies tailored to the unique needs of married women, particularly those navigating restrictive family or cultural environments. Awareness of the intricate interplay between communication and sociocultural expectations will enable these professionals to offer more effective guidance and support. Counsellors and marriage therapists will find this study useful in guiding their clients through challenges related to intellectual stagnation, lack of support, and marital communication. The findings will help them offer tailored advice that considers not only individual personalities but also cultural expectations and family systems.

Policymakers and gender rights advocates are also critical beneficiaries. The findings of this study can inform the creation of gender-sensitive policies that promote women's intellectual empowerment. Such policies may include family counselling programs, incentives for adult education, or public awareness campaigns challenging norms that devalue women's education post-marriage. By grounding these policies in empirical research, governments and advocacy groups can more effectively address the barriers that married women face in accessing and sustaining intellectual growth.

Additionally, the study contributes valuable insights to researchers and academics working within the fields of gender studies, communication, education, and sociology. It addresses a notable gap in the literature by analysing how family communication and sociocultural pressures interact rather than examining them in isolation. This integrated

perspective encourages interdisciplinary exploration and provides a foundation for future research on women's empowerment in various cultural contexts. Hence adding valuable contribution to the growing body of knowledge on women's development in traditional settings, offering a foundation for further research

Community and religious leaders, who often influence public opinion and family practices, may find this study beneficial. With the evidence it provides, they can play an instrumental role in shifting community narratives toward more inclusive and supportive attitudes about women's education and intellectual development. Encouraging families to adopt open communication and embrace more equitable gender roles can catalyse broader social change.

This study is timely and relevant, addressing a gap in understanding how women's intellectual lives evolve within the institution of marriage, and how families and societies can better support their continued growth, thereby offering both theoretical and practical contributions with broad implications. By highlighting how communication and culture jointly shape women's intellectual lives after marriage, it empowers individuals, informs institutions, and supports on-going efforts toward gender equity in education and personal development.

## **1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

This study focused/centred on how family communication patterns and sociocultural factors influence the intellectual development of married women. It specifically investigates how these two variables, communication within the family unit and prevailing cultural norms interact to either support or hinder women's pursuit of education, personal growth, and intellectual engagement after marriage.

Geographically, the study is confined to three local government areas (LGAs) in Edo State, Nigeria: Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha. These LGAs represent a mix of urban and rural communities, making them ideal for capturing a broad spectrum of sociocultural experiences. Edo State, known for its cultural richness and diversity, provides a relevant setting for analysing the impact of traditional beliefs, gender roles, and family structures on women's intellectual development.

The study population consisted of married women aged 18 to 65 from various cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. It includes women living in urban and rural areas and spans different types of marital setups, such as arranged marriages and love-based marriages. By including this range, the study aims to account for the diverse ways marriage is experienced and understood in different communities and how these variations influence intellectual aspirations and opportunities.

This research adopted a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The quantitative aspect involves the use of structured questionnaires, which gather measurable data on family communication patterns, educational background, and perceived sociocultural influences. The qualitative aspect comprises semi-structured interviews that provide deeper insights into personal experiences, family dynamics, and the cultural contexts that shape women's intellectual engagement. This combination allows the study to capture both general trends and the nuanced realities behind statistical patterns.

Thematically, the research centred on two interrelated areas: (1) the quality and nature of family communication, especially between spouses and between women and their extended families, and (2) sociocultural factors, including traditional gender norms, religious influences, community expectations, and marital customs. While economic and institutional

factors may influence intellectual pursuit, they are considered only insofar as they intersect with family and cultural contexts.

The study is further delimited by time, focusing on the period between 2015 and 2025, a decade marked by growing attention to gender equity, educational access, and the empowerment of women in Nigeria. While historical references may be used to provide background or contrast, the primary emphasis remains on current experiences and challenges. Importantly, this study does not aim to generalize findings to all women across Nigeria or sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, it seeks to provide context-specific insights that reflect the lived experiences of women within the selected local government areas of Edo State. These insights may, however, offer useful implications for broader discussions on education, gender roles, and family systems.

The scope of this study encompasses married women aged 18–65 across Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha LGAs in Edo State, exploring how their intellectual development is shaped by the interplay between family communication and sociocultural influences. Its delimitations in terms of geographical focus, participant demographics, thematic scope, and methodological approach are intended to ensure depth, relevance, and contextual clarity.

### **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This study, while offering valuable insights into the influence of family communication and sociocultural factors on the intellectual development of married women in Edo State, is not without limitations. Firstly, the research is geographically limited to three local government areas; Oredo, Egor, and Ikpoba-Okha. Although these areas encompass both urban and rural settings, the findings may not be generalizable to other regions with differing cultural norms and family dynamics. Furthermore, although participants were drawn

from diverse marital setups, including both arranged and love marriages, and across a broad age range (18 to 65 years), the sample may not fully represent all demographic and social categories. Certain groups such as women with disabilities or those in polygamous marriages were not specifically targeted, which may limit the comprehensiveness of the findings. Additionally, the study relies heavily on self-reported data collected through questionnaires and interviews. As is common in such methods, there is the possibility of response bias. Participants may have offered socially desirable answers or withheld certain information due to cultural sensitivities around discussing family matters and personal aspirations. Time and logistical constraints also posed challenges, particularly in the depth and duration of data collection. This may have limited the exploration of long-term patterns in intellectual development or evolving family communication practices. Furthermore, while the mixed-method approach provided a broader perspective, integrating qualitative and quantitative findings posed interpretation challenges that may affect the consistency of conclusions. Despite these limitations, the study remains a meaningful contribution to understanding how family dynamics and cultural contexts shape the intellectual lives of married women in selected parts of Edo State.

## **1.9 Operational Definition of Terms**

The following terms are defined as used in this study to provide clarity and contextual understanding.

**Access to Educational Resources:** This refers to how easily married women can find and take part in learning opportunities like schools, workshops, mentorship programs, or training sessions that help them grow mentally and professionally after marriage.

**Family Communication:** This means how family members talk and relate to one another regularly. It includes the way they share ideas, feelings, and support—especially when discussing education and personal growth.

**Intellectual Engagement:** This is about how actively married women take part in learning. It includes things like going back to school, reading or studying on their own, and joining discussions that challenge their thinking or expand their knowledge.

**Negative Communication:** This is when communication within the family or marriage is harsh, dismissive, or filled with conflict. Such patterns can lower a woman's confidence and make her less likely to continue learning or chasing her goals.

**Post-Marriage:** This refers to the time after a woman gets married—whether through a traditional, arranged, or love-based marriage—and how her life and learning experiences continue or change during this period.

**Sociocultural Factors:** These are the beliefs, traditions, and expectations in the community and family that influence how women are seen and treated—especially about their education, careers, and roles in society.

**Supportive Communication:** This is when family members or spouses encourage, listen with care, and give helpful feedback. It helps married women feel confident and motivated to keep learning and growing intellectually.

**Women's Intellectual Development:** This is the on-going process where married women gain more knowledge and skills through learning, whether by attending school, getting trained for work or studying on their own.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section explores existing research on the relationship between family communication, sociocultural influences, and women's intellectual development after marriage. By examining previous studies, this section identifies key theoretical frameworks, methodologies, and findings that inform the current research. The review highlights gaps in knowledge, particularly regarding how cultural variations shape women's experiences in different societies. Additionally, it discusses the role of family dynamics in shaping educational and career aspirations, as well as the broader social and economic factors that impact intellectual engagement. Through this analysis, the literature review establishes a foundation for understanding the complex interplay between family, culture, and women's post-marital intellectual development

#### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

In this section, we have set out to review contextualised materials that help shed light on the topic of discussion.

##### **2.1.1 Marriage**

The definition and purpose of marriage vary across legal, cultural, and religious contexts. Many religious traditions, such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism, regard marriage as a sacred covenant with moral and ethical obligations (Nasir, 2021). In contrast, secular and legal perspectives define marriage as a contractual agreement that grants specific legal rights and responsibilities, such as inheritance and tax benefits (Eskridge, 2020; Omoniyi, 2019). In many African and Asian societies, customary marriage laws coexist with

formal legal frameworks, highlighting the intersection of tradition and modern legal systems (Adeyemi, 2021; Oduaran, 2020).

Marriage is defined as the legal union of individuals. For a marriage to happen the parties must have legal ability to marry each other, there must be mutual consent of the parties and there must be a marriage contract as required by law ((Harris, 2025).

As a social institution, marriage has existed for thousands of years. It is an important event that shapes many areas of people's lives including their health, happiness and economic resources. Marriage statistics provide a reflection of changing social norms, cultural attitudes and economic conditions prevalent in a region or country (Harris, 2025). Marriage is a socially and legally recognized union between individuals, typically involving obligations and rights concerning mutual support, fidelity, and often child-rearing. The institution of marriage has evolved across cultures and historical periods, with varying definitions reflecting legal, religious, and social perspectives (Cherlin, 2020).

One widely accepted definition of marriage is the legal and social contract between two individuals that establishes rights and responsibilities between them, their children, and their families (Giddens, Duneier, Appelbaum, & Carr, 2017). This definition highlights the formalized nature of marriage and its societal implications. Another definition considers marriage as "a culturally sanctioned union between two or more people that establishes certain rights and obligations between the people, their children, and in-laws" (Kottak, 2015, p. 276). This definition acknowledges cultural variations, including polygamous unions recognized in some societies.

From a sociological perspective, marriage continues to be regarded as a foundational social institution that organizes intimate relationships and family dynamics. Recent research underscores its enduring significance in shaping societal structures and individual well-being.

For instance, Danani (2024) emphasizes that marriage functions as a pivotal institution, influencing social cohesion and individual roles within society. It is not only a personal choice but also a construct influenced by legal, economic, and cultural factors. The functionalist perspective suggests that marriage provides stability for society through role differentiation and socialization of children, while the conflict theory perspective argues that marriage can perpetuate power imbalances and reinforce social inequalities (Giddens et al., 2017). Feminist scholars critique marriage as an institution that historically reinforced patriarchal norms, restricting women's autonomy and economic independence (Cherlin, 2020).

In a legal context, marriage is defined as a contractual agreement recognized by state authorities that grants spouses specific legal rights and obligations (Eskridge, 2020). Laws governing marriage vary significantly across jurisdictions, influencing aspects such as property ownership, inheritance, and dissolution. The legal evolution of marriage has been shaped by broader social movements, including women's rights and LGBTQ+ advocacy, which have challenged traditional norms and expanded marital rights (Badgett, 2009). Religious perspectives on marriage further shape its meaning and practice, with institutions such as Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism prescribing specific doctrines and rituals (Donovan, 2004). In many religious traditions, marriage is seen as a sacred covenant rather than a mere legal contract, reinforcing moral and ethical responsibilities among partners (Scott, 2019).

Marriage also evolves in response to societal changes, including shifts in gender roles, economic independence, and individual autonomy (Cherlin, 2020). The increasing recognition of same-sex marriage in many countries reflects changing societal attitudes toward marriage and legal equality (Badgett, 2009). Additionally, contemporary debates on marriage emphasize the rise of alternative family structures, such as cohabitation, single

parenthood, and polyamorous relationships, which challenge traditional conceptions of marriage (Giddens et al., 2017). These developments highlight the fluid nature of marriage as an institution that continuously adapts to cultural, economic, and political transformations.

Marriage provides a legal framework that formalizes the relationship between partners, granting them, specific rights (e.g., inheritance and tax benefits) and responsibilities (e.g., financial support and custody of children). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), married couples constitute a significant demographic in society, which influences social policies and community structures.

Moreover, different cultures and religions prescribe their own norms and rituals surrounding marriage. In many cultures, marriage is not only a personal commitment but also a communal event that strengthens bonds within families and communities (Giddens, 2017). This social dimension highlights marriage's role in fostering relationships beyond the couple. In addition to legal and cultural aspects, marriage can significantly influence individual well-being. Married individuals tend to report higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction compared to their unmarried counterparts (Kerr, Dodge, & Nansel, 2018). Nevertheless, the quality of the marriage is crucial; unhealthy marriages can lead to stress, emotional distress and health issues (Kiecolt-Glaser, Gouin, & Hantsoo, 2015).. Furthermore, the understanding and significance of marriage have changed over time, particularly with regard to gender roles and sexual orientation. The legalization of same-sex marriage in many jurisdictions reflects broader social changes regarding inclusion and equality (Herek, 2018). This evolution indicates that marriage continues to adapt to contemporary values and societal expectations.

Marriage is an important phase in the life of an individual as its outcome impacts greatly on the intellectual/cognitive wellbeing of such individual(s). Jennings, Farrell, Liu, and Montana (2022) states that married people tend to have better mental and physical health

when compared with their never married, divorced, or widowed counterparts. They further argue that marriage may provide opportunities for greater cognitive stimulation, which can lead to observable differences in cognitive health between these groups. Therefore, it can be said that a healthy marriage will result to an increased intellectual development. However, this is subject to some factors such as communication, social norms as well as stigma specific to the respective setting (Axinn et al., 2020; Perkins et al., 2016).

Being married or in a committed partnership (such as cohabitation) may provide significant safeguards against cognitive deterioration as individuals age. Married individuals frequently engage in more social interactions, which can enhance their cognitive abilities and help avert cognitive decline (Samtani et al., 2022; Sundström et al., 2014). Daily interactions with a spouse alone provide this kind of mental stimulation, and research indicates it serves as an essential defence against cognitive decline (Lutz et al., 2021; Piolatto et al., 2022).

### **2.1.2 Family Communication**

Communication in families is critical for maintaining healthy relationships and effective functioning. These patterns encompass the ways in which family members interact with one another, share information, express feelings, and resolve conflicts. Understanding this communication can shed light on family dynamics and overall well-being.

Several attempts have been made at defining family communication. Koerner & Fitzpatrick (2002) define family communication as: "The recurring behaviours and norms that govern the interaction of family members, reflecting how they orient themselves toward communication and relationships" (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002, p. 78). Furthermore, Fitzpatrick and Koerner (2007) describe family communication as: "The established communication rules and processes within a family that influence how members engage with each other, thereby affecting their relational dynamics" (Fitzpatrick & Koerner, 2007, p. 16).

Also, Gong et al. (2023) define family communication as: "The recurring behaviours and norms that govern the interaction of family members, reflecting how they orient themselves toward communication and relationships" (p. 290). Farmani and Aflakseir (2023) describe family communication as: "The characteristic ways in which family members interact with each other, influencing their relational dynamics and emotional outcomes" (p. 6). Jabbari, School and Rouster (2023) state: "The process of exchanging information, ideas, emotions, and meanings between family members, encompassing various forms of verbal and nonverbal communication" (p. 1). Arindra, Wulandari, & Antoni (2023): "The characteristic ways in which family members interact with each other, influencing their relational dynamics and emotional outcomes" (Arindra et al., 2023, p. 86). Geçer & Yıldırım (2023): "The exchange of information, ideas, thoughts, and emotions among family members, serving as a pivotal bridge in transmitting emotions within the family and significantly influencing adolescent mental health" (Geçer & Yıldırım, 2023, p. 166). Akpan (2014) explains: "The patterns of communication within families are critical in determining how conflicts are managed, roles are negotiated, and emotional connections are maintained among family members" (Akpan, 2014, p. 60). Obasi & Iwuagwu (2018) highlight: "Family communication encapsulates the communicative behaviours and norms that guide interactions among family members, integral to the socialization process and development of family roles" (Obasi & Iwuagwu, 2018, p. 45). Family communication refers to the distinct ways in which family members exchange information, express emotions, and provide feedback to each other. These patterns significantly shape individuals' self-perceptions and aspirations (Dwyer & Cummings, 2015).

From the above definitions, family communication can be said to be the agreed upon modalities, structures and systems that have formed rules which govern the way members of the family express and share their feelings, thoughts, ideas, concerns and opinion amongst themselves which in turn impact on their physical, psychological, emotional, cognitive and

relational realities. These definitions illustrate the concept of family communication from various perspectives, emphasizing their importance in shaping family dynamics and relationships.

The components of family communication are: **Supportive Communication:** Refers to the kinds of relationship that encourage people to support one another emotionally, psychologically, or information wise. Family members engage in encouraging dialogue that fosters a supportive environment, promoting educational pursuits.

**Critical Communication:** Refers to the process of having conversations or interacting with people that examine, assess, and question concepts, opinions, or behaviours. It is frequently distinguished by an emphasis on challenging presumptions, identifying power relationships, and encouraging participants to think critically. Negative feedback and criticism can undermine women's confidence, potentially limiting their intellectual ambitions.

**Disengaged Communication:** Refers to exchanges in which there is no emotional bond, participation, or engagement between the parties. Misunderstandings, feelings of loneliness, and a lack of meaningful conversation are frequently the results of this communication style. A lack of meaningful interaction may lead to feelings of isolation and diminished self-efficacy regarding educational goals.

Effective family communication fosters an environment rich in cognitive stimulation. Married women often engage in daily dialogues with their spouses, which can enhance their cognitive abilities through shared experiences and discussions (Sundström et al., 2014). When people regularly share thoughts and emotions with those close to them, it not only helps them think more clearly and solve problems better, but also gives them the emotional comfort they need to cope with stress—something that can otherwise wear down the mind over time.

Married women typically benefit from the social support that comes with a partnership. This support system can lead to better mental health outcomes, which are closely linked to cognitive function. Research indicates that social interactions within marriage can protect against cognitive decline by providing emotional and practical support (Amieva et al., 2010; Mousavi-Nasab et al., 2012).

### **2.1.3 Intellectual Development**

Intellectual development is a vital aspect of human growth, enabling individuals to navigate complex challenges, adapt to changing environments, and cultivate innovative solutions. This lifelong process involves the refinement of cognitive abilities, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and learning (Okello & White, 2025). As individuals progress through various stages of development, they encounter numerous opportunities and challenges that shape their intellectual capabilities. Childhood lays the foundation for intellectual development, with rapid cognitive growth and language development occurring during this period (Cadime et al., 2025). As children progress through adolescence, they refine their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, becoming more adept at analyzing information and making informed decisions (Martínez & Andersson, 2025). In adulthood, individuals continue to learn and adapt, applying their experiences to real-world challenges and refining their cognitive abilities through practice and repetition (Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology, 2024; Yang, 2011).

One key factor influencing intellectual development is access to education. Formal education provides individuals with structured learning opportunities, enabling them to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Okello & White, 2025). Additionally, socio-economic status and cultural background play significant roles in shaping intellectual development, as individuals from diverse backgrounds may encounter unique challenges and

opportunities that impact their cognitive growth (Kim & Park, 2025). Lifelong learning is essential for maintaining intellectual development, as it enables individuals to stay adaptable and responsive to changing environments (London, 2017). Participation in workshops, continuous education, and self-directed learning activities helps individuals enhance their analytical skills and stimulate personal and professional growth. Furthermore, intellectual development is reinforced through social interaction, as collaborative learning and exposure to diverse perspectives enrich cognitive understanding (Reyes & Lin, 2024).

The benefits of intellectual development are numerous. Individuals who cultivate their cognitive abilities are better equipped to navigate complex challenges, think creatively, and adapt to new situations (Okello & White, 2025). Intellectual development also enhances personal growth, as individuals become more self-aware, confident, and fulfilled (Maslow, 1943). . Professionally, intellectually developed individuals are more likely to assume leadership positions, contribute to innovation, and excel in their fields (Tan & Agyemang, 2024).

Intellectual development is a vital aspect of human growth, enabling individuals to navigate complex challenges and cultivate innovative solutions. Through lifelong learning, critical thinking, and social engagement, individuals can refine their cognitive abilities and achieve personal and professional growth.

## **2.2 Opinion Review**

This section highlights the views and perspectives of scholars, experts and stakeholders on the topic of discussion.

### 2.2.1 Forms of Family Communication

Family communication takes various forms that influence how members interact, share ideas, and support one another. They include the following;

**Open Communication:** is characterized by free and honest exchange of thoughts and feelings among family members. It encourages expression and validation of individual perspectives. Families that encourage open dialogue tend to foster an environment where members feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings. This includes active listening, validation of feelings, and constructive feedback (Miller, 2020). Furthermore, Families with open communication tend to have higher levels of trust and emotional intimacy, which can lead to better problem-solving and conflict resolution (Fitzpatrick & Koerner, 2002). Research suggests that open communication fosters stronger familial bonds and enhances individual self-esteem (Dunn et al., 2017). Example: In families where members feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues, such as academic struggles or personal challenges, there is often less tension and more collaborative problem-solving.

**Closed/Protective Communication:** In contrast, involves a higher level of conformity and a lower level of conversation. Family members may avoid discussing personal feelings or opinions to conform to family norms. This pattern can limit open dialogue, leading to misunderstandings and unresolved conflicts. Families with protective communication often prioritize harmony over individual expression (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Some studies indicate that children from protective communication backgrounds may struggle with self-expression in relationships later in life (Stewart et al., 2016) Families with closed communication may discourage expression of thoughts or feelings, leading to misunderstandings and emotional distance. Members may avoid discussing sensitive topics, resulting in unresolved conflicts (Walsh, 2016). Example: In a family that adheres to strict

traditions, members may refrain from discussing their differing opinions on certain practices, leading to internal resentment and lack of individual agency.

**Assertive Communication:** This style involves expressing one's needs and feelings in a respectful manner. Families that practice assertive communication are likely to have healthier interactions and conflict resolution (Sullivan, 2019).

**Aggressive Communication:** Families exhibiting aggressive communication might confront issues through hostility or dominance, which can lead to escalated conflicts, resentment, and anxiety among family members (Patterson, 2021).

Family communication is not solely verbal; nonverbal cues (such as gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice) significantly impact interactions. Nonverbal communication can reinforce or contradict verbal messages, influencing how family members perceive one another (Bevan & Soley, 2018). Laissez-faire communication is a family communication pattern, characterized by low engagement in family interactions combined with low conformity expectations. Family members are generally less involved in each other's lives and often do not prioritize discussions. This pattern can lead to emotional distance and a lack of shared goals or values within the family. Research indicates that children in laissez-faire families may experience feelings of neglect or disengagement (Fitzpatrick, 2004). In a laissez-faire family, parents may not actively involve themselves in their children's interests or struggles, leading to a sense of isolation for the children. Consensual communication combines high conversation and high conformity. Family members engage in open dialogue about their thoughts and feelings while also adhering to shared values and goals.

Consensual families usually foster a supportive environment where members feel free to express themselves while respecting family traditions and norms. This communication style is associated with positive emotional outcomes and conflict resolution skills (Koerner &

Fitzpatrick, 2002). A family that regularly holds family meetings to discuss issues ensures that everyone's opinion is heard while also connecting their discussions to their underlying familial values. In recent years, technology has transformed family communication. While it offers opportunities for connectivity (e.g., texting, video calls), it can also lead to misunderstandings and reduced face-to-face interactions (Kraut et al., 2020).

The relationship between family communication, sociocultural factors, and women's intellectual trajectories after marriage is a complex and multifaceted issue that has garnered significant attention in academic research. It is necessary to provide an in-depth examination of the existing literature on this topic, in relation to this current research, the researcher highlight both the supportive and critical perspectives as seen in various literatures. Research has consistently shown that supportive family communication is a crucial factor in shaping women's intellectual trajectories after marriage. According to Baxter and Montgomery (1996), supportive family communication is characterized by open dialogue, emotional support, and encouragement. The researcher also observed that women who experience this type of communication in their families are more likely to pursue their intellectual interests and goals after marriage, therefore this can be greatly encouraged among women. For instance, a study by Vangelisti (2004) found that women who reported high levels of emotional support from their families were more likely to pursue higher education and career advancement. From the researchers view it as an important measure because it also shapes women's intellectual trajectories. A study by Plickert and Sterling (2014) found that women who had supportive spouses were more likely to pursue their educational and career goals after marriage. There researcher also agrees to this notion that supportive family communication can provide women with the necessary motivation and resources to pursue their intellectual interests.

Sociocultural factors, such as patriarchal norms and expectations, can also have a significant impact on women's intellectual trajectories after marriage. The researcher suggests that women who live in societies with strong patriarchal norms may face significant barriers to pursuing their intellectual interests and goals, particularly after marriage. For example, a study by Moghadam (2004) found that women in patriarchal societies were often expected to prioritize domestic work over education and career advancement. Furthermore, research has also highlighted the intersectionality of sociocultural factors and women's intellectual trajectories. A study by Choo and Ferree (2010) found that women from marginalized communities faced multiple barriers to pursuing their intellectual interests and goals, including racism, sexism, and classism. The researchers therefore suggest the need for researchers and policymakers to consider the complex interplay between sociocultural factors and women's intellectual trajectories.

While the literature suggests that supportive family communication and sociocultural factors play a significant role in shaping women's intellectual trajectories, the current researcher raised critical perspectives on this issue by arguing that the emphasis on supportive family communication and sociocultural factors may overlook the agency and resilience of women in pursuing their intellectual interests and goals. Moreover, other researchers have also highlighted the need to consider the diversity of women's experiences and the complexity of their intellectual trajectories. A study by Anthias (2002) found that women's experiences and intellectual trajectories were shaped by multiple factors, including their social location, cultural background, and personal biography. The current researcher highlights the need for researchers and policymakers to develop nuanced and context-specific interventions that take into account the diversity of women's experiences.

Finally, the literature suggests that family communication and sociocultural factors play a significant role in shaping women's intellectual trajectories after marriage. Supportive

family communication, characterized by open dialogue, emotional support, and encouragement, can provide women with the necessary motivation and resources to pursue their intellectual interests and goals. However, sociocultural factors, such as patriarchal norms and expectations, can also limit women's access to education, resources, and opportunities, ultimately shaping their intellectual trajectories. Researchers and policymakers must consider these complex dynamics when developing interventions aimed at supporting women's intellectual growth and development.

### **2.2.2 Factors Influencing Family Communication and Women Intellectual Development**

Cultural values and norms significantly influence communication within families. For instance, collectivist cultures may prioritize conformity and familial loyalty over open dialogue, while individualistic cultures may encourage self-expression and autonomy (Miller & Lee, 2023). In Asian American families, traditional Eastern cultural values may lead to a preference for non-verbal cues over direct confrontation, further affecting family communication dynamics (Chung et al., 2024).

Socioeconomic status (SES) can impact communication. Families with higher SES may have more resources for education and counselling, which can promote healthier communication practices (Meyer et al., 2025). In contrast, families with lower SES might experience stressors that negatively affect communication patterns and emotional connections, impacting family well-being (Chung et al., 2024). Families go through various stages (e.g., marriage, child-rearing, empty nest), which can alter communication dynamics. Communication may shift in response to the needs and challenges presented at different lifecycle stages, highlighting the need for adaptive communication strategies (Harris & Zhao, 2023).

Understanding communication in families is essential for fostering healthy relationships and effective conflict resolution. Open and Assertive communication generally leads to positive relational outcomes, while protective, aggressive and laissez-faire patterns can hinder emotional connections and self-expression leading to intellectual decline (Wu et al., 2024). Factors such as cultural context, family structure, socioeconomic status, and life cycle stages play substantial roles in shaping these communications. Awareness of these dynamics can assist in developing interventions and support systems that promote healthy family communication.

Sociocultural factors encompass the shared beliefs, values, norms, and practices within a society that shape individuals' behaviours and opportunities, particularly concerning gender roles and expectations (Cohen & Stevens, 2023). These factors influence women's intellectual development, especially after marriage, by dictating societal expectations and available opportunities. In many societies, traditional gender roles suggest that women should prioritize family and household responsibilities over personal academic or career pursuits, impacting their intellectual growth and career development (García et al., 2024). This sociocultural expectation further highlights the role of community support and access to educational opportunities in mitigating the impact of these norms on women's intellectual development (Chung et al., 2024).

Nwankwo and Okeke (2024) describe sociocultural factors in the context of family planning in Nigeria as: "The religious beliefs, traditional values, gender norms, and educational levels that shape male decision-making and participation in family planning practices" (p. 68) This highlights the role of traditional and societal structures in shaping health-related behaviours, especially in familial decision-making. Similarly, Ayanlade et al. (2019) define sociocultural factors in the context of urban environmental management in

Nigeria as: "Cultural beliefs, traditions, and social norms that significantly influence how urban residents interact with their environment and manage their surroundings" (p. 24). This definition reflects how sociocultural factors directly affect everyday practices, including environmental behaviours in urban settings. Additionally, Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2020) state: "Sociocultural factors are the norms and values that are transmitted from one generation to another and dictate the behaviour of individuals within a society" (p. 31) This definition emphasizes the generational transmission of cultural norms, underscoring the importance of cultural continuity in influencing societal behaviour. Moreover, Greenfield and Qvotrup (2022) describe sociocultural factors as: "The cumulative social practices, beliefs, and values shared by a community, which significantly guide individual actions and influence broader societal trends" (p. 215). This broadens the understanding of sociocultural factors by recognizing their role in shaping both individual actions and larger societal patterns. Sociocultural factors, therefore, are the interconnected social and cultural influences, values, norms, beliefs, practices, and behaviours that shape and guide individuals and communities, influencing their interactions, decisions, and overall worldview within a specific historical, geographical, and societal context.

Women's intellectual development after marriage is impacted by a myriad of sociocultural factors that shape their experiences and opportunities. This discussion examines these factors, including cultural expectations, societal norms, educational access, familial roles, and community support, using relevant literature and examples. Cultural norms and expectations significantly influence the intellectual development of married women. In many societies, traditional gender roles suggest that women should prioritize family and household responsibilities over personal academic or career pursuits.

In cultures with strong patriarchal values, women may experience pressure to conform to expected roles of wives and mothers, which can limit their opportunities for intellectual growth. For instance, in some societies, women are discouraged from pursuing higher education or professional careers, resulting in a lack of skills and knowledge that hampers their intellectual development (Miller, 2017).

Additionally, cultural ideologies regarding femininity may condemn assertive or ambitious behaviours in women, thus restricting their pursuit of knowledge and skills that contribute to their intellectual growth (Hofstede et al., 2010). Educating women in these contexts often becomes less of a societal priority, adversely affecting their development. Societal norms significantly shape women's roles and responsibilities within the family after marriage. These norms dictate how women perceive their identities in relation to their husbands, children, and the wider community. The traditional division of labour often sees women taking on more domestic responsibilities, which can limit their time and energy for intellectual pursuits. A study by Nussbaum (2000) suggested that societal expectations regarding women's primary role as caregivers can hinder their educational and career advancements. These gender roles can affect women's self-perception, leading them to undervalue their intellectual ambitions. Recent studies confirm that gender roles significantly impact women's self-perception and academic motivation. Ertl et al. (2017) found that female students in STEM often internalize stereotypes, attributing success to effort rather than ability, reducing confidence and ambition. Similarly, Okunlola and Elijah (2025) observed that Nigerian girls holding negative gender beliefs performed worse academically. Andersen and Smith (2022) emphasized that classroom gender norms shape competence beliefs, affecting motivation in gender-stereotyped subjects. In certain regions, particularly in developing countries, cultural and economic barriers may prevent women from obtaining higher education after marriage. According to UNESCO (2016), women often face systemic

obstacles, such as financial constraints and societal disapproval that limit their educational opportunities. Even in societies with greater equality, married women may struggle to pursue lifelong learning opportunities. The demands of family and work can create barriers to continuing education, as women may prioritize their roles over personal development (Beine et al., 2010). The dynamics within the family and the level of support from family members can substantially influence a woman's intellectual development after marriage. Support from a husband can motivate women to pursue further education or professional development. Research by Kahn et al. (2016) indicates that supportive spousal relationships significantly correlate with women's intellectual aspirations and achievements.

Conversely, families that discourage independence and self-advocacy can stifle women's intellectual growth. In families where decision-making is patriarchal, women may feel powerless to assert their educational and professional aspirations (Baba & Hakim, 2018). The surrounding community and peer networks can also play a pivotal role in shaping women's intellectual development post-marriage. Exposure to role models, such as educated women who have achieved professional success, can inspire married women to pursue their intellectual ambitions. A study by Carr (2014) highlighted that mentorship programs for women, particularly in STEM fields, significantly boosted confidence and educational aspirations.

Community support, including social networks of women, creates an environment conducive to sharing experiences and opportunities. Research suggests that women who engage with peer groups that prioritize education are more likely to pursue lifelong learning and professional development (Holt et al., 2017). Sociocultural factors play a significant role in influencing women's intellectual development after marriage. Cultural expectations, societal norms regarding gender roles, access to education, familial support, and community networks all contribute to shaping women's opportunities for intellectual growth. Addressing

these sociocultural barriers is essential for fostering an environment where married women can thrive intellectually, ultimately contributing to their empowerment and the well-being of their families and communities.

Effective communication plays a crucial role in resolving conflicts. Families that utilize constructive communication strategies are more successful in navigating disagreements and fostering strong relationships (Gottman, 2015). Families that communicate openly often provide better emotional support to their members, which can enhance mental health and resilience. Conversely, poor communication can lead to feelings of isolation and distress (Cohler & Grunebaum, 2017). Communication significantly affects parent-child dynamics. Authoritative parenting often corresponds with open communication, promoting trust and collaboration (Baumrind, 2013). In contrast, authoritarian communication can produce anxiety in children and hinder their emotional development (Darling & Steinberg, 2018). In the light of the above, same can also be said about Husband-Wife relationship where an authoritative and authoritarian husband can affect a woman's emotional as well as intellectual development positively or negatively. Understanding communication in families is vital for fostering healthy relationships and emotional well-being. By promoting open, assertive, and supportive communication, families can enhance their ability to resolve conflicts, support one another, and build trust.

Family communication plays a fundamental role in shaping the intellectual and emotional development of individuals, particularly married women. Effective communication within family contexts can enhance personal growth, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal relationships. Conversely, poor communication can hinder development, leading to stress and emotional challenges. This discussion explores the impact of family communication on these two dimensions, illustrated with relevant examples. Family communication can significantly impact the intellectual development of married women by

fostering an environment that encourages learning and critical thinking. Open discussions about various topics, such as current events, personal goals, and problem-solving strategies, can stimulate cognitive development.

For example, a study by Lee (2014) found that families who engage in regular discussions about educational pursuits enhance the intellectual capabilities of their members. In situations where husbands and wives share knowledge about their professions or engage in discussions about books, hobbies, or educational content, it fosters an atmosphere of curiosity and learning. This intellectual engagement can lead to increased professional aspirations for women, facilitating continued education and self-improvement.

Effective family communication can enhance decision-making skills and problem-solving abilities. According to King and de Lemos (2019), when families encourage cooperative communication, members are more likely to discuss challenges collaboratively, leading to improved analytical skills. For instance, if a married woman faces a career-related dilemma, discussing the issue openly with her spouse allows her to gain different perspectives. This collaborative approach can lead to better-informed decisions, enhancing her confidence and intellectual growth. Family communication is crucial in providing emotional support, which is vital for the emotional well-being of married women. A supportive communication environment allows women to express their feelings, fears, and aspirations without fear of judgment. According to Renshaw et al. (2015), emotional support from family members can buffer against stress and promote resilience. For example, a married woman facing challenges in her career or personal life can benefit from open dialogues with her spouse. If her husband actively listens and offers validation, it helps her navigate emotional challenges more effectively. This support fosters a sense of belonging and security, essential for emotional growth and stability.

The ability to communicate effectively is crucial for resolving conflicts within a marriage. Poor communication often leads to misunderstandings and emotional distress. On the other hand, families that practice healthy communication strategies are better equipped to handle conflicts, promoting emotional intelligence. For instance, a study by Kahn et al. (2016) found that couples who engage in constructive conflict resolution techniques, such as using "I" statements and active listening, demonstrate higher emotional intelligence. This practice not only helps immediate problem-solving but also contributes to the emotional maturity of women, enabling them to manage their feelings and those of others more effectively.

Example Scenario; .Educational Pursuits: A married woman pursuing a degree while managing family responsibilities benefits from open communication with her husband about her academic goals. Such discussions allow for shared decision-making regarding family duties and support systems, which enhances her intellectual development. Consider a scenario where a married woman experiences overwhelm due to balancing work and family commitments. If she communicates her struggles to her husband, who responds with understanding and support, it can foster her emotional resilience, allowing her to cope better with stress and enhance her emotional development. In a situation where disagreements about finances arise, a couple that practices open discussion and active listening can resolve their issues harmoniously. This engagement not only prevents emotional distress but also teaches the woman effective communication skills, fostering her emotional intelligence and self-confidence.

The impact of family communication on married women's intellectual and emotional development is profound. Encouraging discussions that promote intellectual growth through continuous learning and cooperative problem-solving, while emotional support and effective conflict resolution enhance emotional well-being; Ensuring a positive communication

environment within the family can significantly contribute to the growth and development of married women, enabling them to thrive both personally and professionally.

The prevailing narrative surrounding women's intellectual development after marriage often frames it as a period of stagnation, shaped by family expectations and sociocultural constraints. However, this perspective, though valid in many contexts, risks oversimplifying a complex and evolving reality. Rather than viewing marriage as an inherent barrier to intellectual growth, it is necessary to explore how modern shifts in family communication, gender dynamics, and social structures are reshaping opportunities for continued education and professional advancement.

Family communication remains a decisive factor in determining whether marriage fosters or inhibits intellectual development. In traditional settings, hierarchical family structures often reinforce conformity-oriented communication, where obedience and adherence to predefined gender roles take precedence over intellectual exploration (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Women in such environments may face discouragement or even restrictions in their pursuit of further education, as marriage is still largely associated with domestic responsibilities. However, the emergence of more egalitarian family dynamics has introduced a shift, where conversation-oriented communication encourages mutual growth, intellectual engagement, and shared decision-making. In such households, marriage does not necessarily hinder a woman's pursuit of knowledge; it can, in fact, become a source of intellectual stimulation and support.

From a sociocultural standpoint, Bourdieu's (1986) Cultural Capital Theory underscores the importance of education, exposure, and institutional access in determining one's intellectual path. In various societies, women's intellectual growth after marriage is often primarily influenced by economic status, cultural background, and societal

expectations. Women from affluent backgrounds, who have access to education and professional networks, frequently manage to maintain and enhance their intellectual endeavours. In contrast, women in lower-income environments, where cultural norms emphasize early marriage and household responsibilities, encounter structural obstacles that restrict opportunities for lifelong learning. Nevertheless, these obstacles are not permanent; technological advancements, online education, and changes in the workplace are slowly opening up pathways for intellectual involvement that exceed conventional limitations. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory offers a comprehensive framework to understand the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual development post-marriage. While the microsystem, encompassing immediate environments like family, remains pivotal, recent studies highlight the growing impact of the exosystem and macrosystem. For instance, a study conducted across Mozambique, Nigeria, and Uganda demonstrates how community support, media representations, and policy reforms collectively shape women's participation in STEM fields (MDPI, 2024). These findings underscore the importance of supportive ecosystems that extend beyond the immediate family, fostering environments conducive to women's intellectual growth.

Despite these changes, a critical challenge remains the persistence of implicit cultural biases that frame intellectual ambition as secondary to marital and maternal responsibilities. Even in progressive societies, women often experience the burden of dual expectations, where they are encouraged to pursue education and career advancement yet are still expected to uphold traditional family roles. This paradox results in mental and emotional labour that can ultimately impact intellectual engagement. Critics of Feminist Theory, such as Hakim (2000), argue that some women actively choose traditional roles, finding intellectual fulfilment within domestic, creative, or caregiving spheres rather than through formal education or career advancement. This suggests that intellectual development should not be

measured solely through academic or professional metrics, but rather through individual definitions of intellectual growth and personal fulfilment.

Rather than reinforcing the binary of intellectual stagnation versus progression, the discourse should shift toward understanding how women actively redefine their intellectual engagement after marriage. The conversation must move beyond structural barriers and acknowledge women's agency, evolving social structures, and the role of technological and policy advancements in creating a more inclusive intellectual landscape. Future research should explore how alternative learning pathways, mentorship programs, and evolving family structures contribute to intellectual empowerment, ensuring that marriage is no longer seen as a hindrance, but rather a potential catalyst for lifelong learning and growth.

### **2.2.3 Intersection of Family and Sociocultural Factors in Women's Intellectual Development after Marriage**

The intersection of family dynamics and sociocultural factors plays a crucial role in shaping women's intellectual development after marriage. This multifaceted relationship influences women's opportunities, aspirations, and challenges as they navigate their roles within the family and society. Understanding this intersection is essential for addressing the barriers that contribute to educational and professional stagnation. Family relationships significantly influence women's personal and intellectual growth. Supportive family environments can foster educational aspirations, while restrictive dynamics often hinder development.

A supportive partner can enhance a woman's ability to pursue education and career goals. For instance, research by Kahn et al. (2016) emphasizes that women whose husbands are actively involved in family decisions and encourage educational pursuits are more likely to seek advanced education and professional opportunities. In households where shared

responsibilities are encouraged, such as in egalitarian marriages, women often continue to pursue their educational goals. A married woman pursuing higher education may receive logistical support from her spouse, such as shared child-rearing responsibilities, which enables her to attend classes or study (Kahn et al., 2016).

Conversely, traditional family structures with rigid expectations can create pressure on women to conform to domestic roles, limiting their intellectual pursuits. In many cultures, women are expected to prioritize home and family over personal ambitions, which significantly impact their educational choices and career development. Example: In certain conservative societies, a woman might be expected to abandon her studies or career after marriage to focus on her husband and children. Research conducted by Nussbaum (2000) illustrates that in cultures where women's roles are predominantly centred around family, many women report feelings of guilt when contemplating personal ambitions, leading to lower educational attainment. Cultural beliefs surrounding gender roles create a socio-educational environment that can either encourage or hinder women's intellectual development. These beliefs define societal expectations and behaviours towards women's education and career ambitions.

Socialization processes often dictate how women view their roles in the family and society. As Eagly and Wood (1999) argue, traditional gender roles are often reinforced through familial and cultural expectations, which can discourage women from pursuing higher education or professional careers after marriage. Example: A study by Miller (2017) found that in cultures where women are socialized to prioritize family care over personal ambitions, the likelihood of pursuing further education diminishes after marriage. Married women in such environments often struggle with the internal conflict between societal expectations and personal aspirations. Educational opportunities are often influenced by cultural perceptions of gender. In some societies, educational systems may reflect and

perpetuate gender biases that repress women's intellectual growth. For example, a study from UNESCO (2016) highlights that in regions where girls face barriers to education due to cultural norms; married women often reflect similar educational deficits. Example: In rural areas of certain countries, cultural norms may dictate that girls are educated until marriage, after which their formal education is diminished. Married women in these contexts often lack access to continued education, thereby affecting their intellectual development considerably (UNESCO, 2016).

Economic conditions and community resources also intersect with family and sociocultural factors in shaping women's intellectual trajectories after marriage. Economic stability within the family provides more opportunities for continued education and personal development. Families with higher socio-economic status are more likely to invest in education for their daughters and daughters-in-law, encouraging their professional ambitions. Example: In middle to upper-income families, the presence of financial resources to afford higher education can significantly impact women's intellectual pursuits. Research by Beine, Noël, and Ragot (2010) suggests that financially stable families are more likely to support continued education for married women, allowing them to develop intellectually.

Community attitudes and support systems help shape the intellectual aspirations of married women. Positive community engagement can bolster women's self-esteem and provide social networks that encourage educational pursuits. Example: Communities that offer support groups for women can enhance their educational aspirations. Programs that promote mentorship and professional development can significantly impact women's intellectual growth. Carr (2014) found that women who participated in community educational workshops reported an increase in motivation to pursue further education and professional licenses.

The intersection of family dynamics and sociocultural factors creates a complex environment that significantly influences women's intellectual development after marriage. Supportive family relationships, cultural beliefs about gender roles, economic conditions, and community resources all interact to either facilitate or hinder women's educational pursuits. Understanding these interrelated factors is crucial for promoting policies and practices that empower married women to pursue intellectual growth, ensuring that they have equal opportunities to thrive both academically and professionally.

### **2.3 Empirical Review**

In this part of study, the researcher reviews relevant empirical studies previously conducted in respect to Family Communication Patterns and Sociocultural Factors Affecting Women's Intellectual Development after Marriage.

The study by Ghose, Haque, and Al Mamun (2023) on Factors influencing post-marriage education and employment among Bangladeshi women: A cross-sectional analysis, explores factors influencing post-marriage education and employment among Bangladeshi women using a cross-sectional design. The objective of the study by is to examine the key factors that influence Bangladeshi women's access to continued education and employment after marriage, with a particular focus on how variables such as mobile phone access, spousal education, household wealth, number of children, and rural versus urban residence impact these outcomes. findings showed that access to mobile phones, spousal education, and household wealth positively influence continued education and employment, while having more children and living in rural areas have negative effects. The study effectively highlights structural and economic variables that shape women's development after marriage, offering valuable insights for policy intervention. However, it relies heavily on quantitative data and does not deeply engage with sociocultural or interpersonal influences.

In contrast, this current study on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage in Edo State, Nigeria, adopts a broader view. Rather than focusing solely on education and employment, it explores intellectual growth in terms of lifelong learning, personal ambition, and cognitive engagement. It is theoretically grounded in Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, offering a more layered understanding of how family dynamics and cultural expectations shape intellectual development.

Methodologically, this study incorporates qualitative elements that capture the nuances of family interaction and cultural beliefs—factors largely absent in Ghose et al.'s work. Moreover, it recognizes women's agency and the evolving role of technology and policy in supporting post-marital intellectual engagement. While Ghose et al. provide important insights into economic and structural determinant that the Nigerian study offers a more comprehensive and culturally embedded analysis of intellectual development, emphasizing communication, identity, and personal growth within the post-marital context.

The study by Opesemowo and Odumosu (2023), on "The Sway of Early Marriage on the Girl Child Education among Some Ethnic Groups in Lagos State, Nigeria", investigates how early marriage affects the educational attainment of girls across various ethnic groups in Lagos State. The primary objective is to ascertain the impact of child marriage on girl-child education among these ethnic groups. Employing a descriptive survey design, the researchers purposively selected 141 married girls from the Agege area who had entered into marriage during their teenage years. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Child Marriage on Girl-child Education." The analysis involved statistical tools such as Chi-square and ANOVA to determine the relationships between early marriage and educational outcomes. The findings reveal that religious beliefs significantly influence the

practice of child marriage, which in turn affects girl-child education. Specifically, the study found a statistically significant difference in the impact of religious belief on child marriage and girl-child education. Additionally, cultural values were identified as significant determinants of child marriage, with a notable contribution to the educational outcomes of girls among different ethnic groups.

This study relates to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage by highlighting the role of cultural and religious beliefs in shaping educational trajectories. Both studies underscore the influence of sociocultural factors on women's educational experiences.

However, the two studies differ in focus and scope. While Opeyemowo and Odumosu (2023) concentrate on the effects of early marriage on girl-child education, the current study examines how family communication patterns and sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage. The former addresses the pre-marital factors leading to early marriage and its immediate educational consequences, whereas the latter explores post-marital influences on women's ongoing intellectual growth. Furthermore, the current study incorporates theoretical frameworks such as Bourdieu's Cultural Capital Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, providing a more structured lens for analysing the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual development.

While both studies contribute valuable insights into the factors affecting women's education, they approach the issue from different angles—pre-marital versus post-marital—and employ different analytical frameworks, thereby enriching the discourse on women's educational and intellectual development in varying sociocultural contexts.

The study by Mohammed and Katare (2024), on “Gender Gap in Spousal Education and Wealth after Marriage in India”, investigates the gender-based disparities in spousal selection among parents in India. The primary objective is to examine how arranged marriages influence the educational and economic pairing of spouses, particularly focusing on the implications for women's long-term economic well-being. Employing a quantitative research methodology, the authors analyse data pertinent to arranged marriages in India, a context where such practices are prevalent. The findings reveal that parents often arrange marriages for their daughters with more educated and wealthier grooms, whereas sons are frequently matched with brides of lower educational attainment. Notably, the study uncovers that daughters, despite generally having lower education levels, achieve higher combined educational attainment with their husbands than sons with their wives, especially in areas with lower literacy, income, and employment rates. This highlights discriminatory societal norms that prioritize men's financial success and women's social status.

This study relates to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage by shedding light on the societal norms and parental decisions that influence women's educational and economic trajectories post-marriage. Both studies underscore the impact of cultural expectations on women's development within the marital context.

However, the two studies differ in focus and scope. Mohammed and Katare (2024) concentrate on the pre-marital arrangements and their immediate implications for spousal education and wealth disparities, primarily within the Indian context. In contrast, the current study delves into the post-marital phase, exploring how family communication patterns and broader sociocultural factors affect women's on going intellectual development. Furthermore, the current research incorporates theoretical frameworks such as Bourdieu’s Cultural Capital

Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, providing a more comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual growth after marriage.

Thakur and Marchang (2023), conducted a study on Exploring Gender Role Attitude of Stay-at-Home and Employed Married Women in Delhi, The study investigates whether employed and non-employed married women in Delhi exhibit homogeneous gender role attitudes or if these attitudes vary based on employment status. The primary objective is to determine whether working and non-working married women in Delhi represent a homogeneous group concerning their gender attitudes or whether their attitudes vary based on employment status. Methodologically, the researchers conducted a primary field survey in Delhi, collecting data from 154 married women—comprising 99 employed and 55 non-employed participants. Respondents' perspectives on gender roles were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. The analysis employed both descriptive statistics and empirical techniques, notably the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method, to assess variations in gender role attitudes. The study does not explicitly mention the application of a specific theoretical framework. The findings reveal that married women in Delhi are navigating between traditional social expectations and modern global ideals. However, attitudes towards gender roles vary based on factors such as education, employment, and socioeconomic standing. Employed women tend to exhibit more egalitarian views compared to their non-employed counterparts, indicating that employment status influences gender role attitudes

This study relates to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage by highlighting how employment status and socioeconomic factors influence women's gender

role attitudes. Both studies underscore the impact of sociocultural dynamics on women's roles and development within the marital context.

However, the two studies differ in focus, scope and theoretical grounding. While Thakur and Marchang (2023) concentrate on comparing gender role attitudes between employed and non-employed married women in Delhi, the current study delves into how family communication patterns and broader sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage. Furthermore, the current research incorporates theoretical frameworks such as Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory, Gender Role Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory, providing a more comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual growth post-marriage.

A study was conducted by Nnubia, Ibeanu, and Okechukwu (2023), on *Marital Structure and Domestic Gender Role Practice: Implications for Subjective Well-Being of Working Mothers Teaching in Nigerian Primary Schools*, seeks to examine how different marital structures and domestic gender role practices influence the subjective well-being of working mothers in Nigeria.

Employing a quantitative research methodology, the authors conducted a cross-sectional survey among working mothers teaching in Nigerian primary schools. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, and the analysis involved statistical techniques to assess the relationship between marital structures, domestic gender roles, and the subjective well-being of the participants. The findings reveal that marital structures and domestic gender role practices significantly impact the subjective well-being of working mothers. Specifically, mothers in egalitarian marital structures, where domestic responsibilities are shared more equally, reported higher levels of well-being compared to those in traditional structures with

rigid gender roles. The study highlights the importance of supportive marital arrangements and equitable domestic practices in enhancing the well-being of working mothers.

This research relates to the current study on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage by underscoring the influence of domestic arrangements and gender roles on women's personal development. Both studies emphasize the significance of the family environment and societal norms in shaping women's experiences and growth within the marital context.

However, the two studies differ in focus and theoretical grounding. While Nnubia et al. (2023) concentrate on the impact of marital structures and domestic roles on the subjective well-being of working mothers; the current study explores how family communication patterns and broader sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage. Furthermore, the current research incorporates theoretical frameworks such as Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory, Gender Role Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory, providing a more comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual growth post-marriage.

The study by Ibrahim, Khan, and Ramli (2020), on Cultural and Socio-economic Status Factors Affecting Female Education in Sokoto State, Northern Nigeria: Implication for Counselling, investigates the cultural and socio-economic factors contributing to low female enrolment and recurrent withdrawal from schools in Sokoto State, Northern Nigeria.

Employing a descriptive survey design, the researchers sampled 260 female students from the Women Centre for Continuing Education (WCCE) in Sokoto State. Data were collected using two questionnaires: the Attitudes of Parents towards Female Education Questionnaire (APTFEQ) and the Effect of Socio-cultural and Socio-economic Factors on

Female Education Questionnaire (ESCSEFFEQ), both demonstrating acceptable reliability coefficients.

The findings reveal that parents in Sokoto State generally hold negative attitudes towards female education. Key factors identified as contributing to low enrolment and recurrent withdrawal of female students include poverty, early marriage, religious beliefs, gender inequality, child labour, and the educational status of parents. Notably, poverty emerged as the most significant factor, accounting for 23.1% of the reasons cited. This study relates to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage by highlighting how cultural norms and socio-economic conditions influence educational opportunities for females. Both studies underscore the impact of societal and familial attitudes on women's educational trajectories.

However, the two studies differ in focus and theoretical grounding. While Ibrahim et al. (2020) concentrate on pre-marital factors affecting female education, particularly in the context of Sokoto State, the current study explores post-marital influences on women's intellectual development, incorporating theoretical frameworks such as Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory, Gender Role Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory. This broader theoretical approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual growth after marriage.

The study by Bello and Bello (2023), on Women Academics in Selected Universities in Nigeria, aims to examine the numerical representation of women academics in Nigerian universities. Specifically, it investigates the factors contributing to their

underrepresentation, the challenges they face due to their minority status, and their responses to these challenges.

Utilizing an exploratory qualitative research design, the authors conducted in-depth interviews (IDIs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) with academic staff, department heads, and human resources personnel from the two universities. The data were analysed thematically using NVivo software, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. The study is grounded in Rosabeth Moss Kanter's theory of proportional rarity, which posits that individuals in a significant numerical minority within a group—referred to as "tokens"—experience heightened visibility, performance pressures, and isolation. This theoretical framework provides insight into the structural dynamics that contribute to the challenges faced by women academics in male-dominated environments.

The findings reveal that women constitute a small fraction (10%–20%) of academic staff in the surveyed universities. Contributing factors to this underrepresentation include societal expectations prioritizing marriage and family over career for women, limited applications from qualified female candidates, and institutional cultures that favour masculine traits such as aggressiveness and competitiveness. Consequently, women academics often face isolation, limited opportunities for advancement, and are sometimes relegated to token roles. Moreover, the study notes a lack of solidarity among women academics, which further perpetuates their marginalization.

This study relates to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage by highlighting how societal norms and institutional structures influence women's participation and advancement in academia. Both studies underscore the impact of cultural expectations and gender roles on women's professional and intellectual growth.

However, the two studies differ in focus and theoretical grounding. While Bello and Bello (2023) concentrate on the numerical representation and institutional challenges faced by women academics in Nigerian universities, the current study explores how family communication patterns and broader sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage. Furthermore, the current research incorporates theoretical frameworks such as Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory, Gender Role Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory, providing a more comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted influences on women's intellectual growth post-marriage.

Elujekwute, Uwalaka, and Elujekwute (2021), conducted a study on Evaluation of the Impact of Early Marriage on Educational Development of Female Students in Senior Secondary Schools in North–Central Nigeria, with the primary objective of assessing how early marriage influences the educational development of female students within the region. The researchers specifically aimed to explore how factors such as socio-economic background, indiscipline, and cultural values contribute to the prevalence of early marriage and the consequences it has on female students' academic progress.

Methodologically, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. The population included teachers from grant-aided secondary schools across North-Central Nigeria. A total of 620 teachers were randomly selected from 30 schools. Data collection was conducted using a self-constructed 15-item questionnaire titled “Impact of Early Marriage and Educational Development of Female Students Questionnaire (IMEMEDFSQ).” For data analysis, the researchers used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) to address the research questions, while inferential statistics (Chi-square tests) were applied to test hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Notably, the study did not reference or apply any formal theoretical framework.

The findings from this research revealed that early marriage significantly hampers the educational development of female students. Socio-economic challenges, cultural beliefs that favour early marriage, and lack of parental discipline were found to be major contributors. The study concluded that early marriage often leads to school dropout, stunted academic progression, and limited future educational opportunities for girls. Recommendations included the enforcement of laws against early marriage, the introduction of sex education in schools, and increased public awareness of the value of girls' education.

This study is closely related to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage, in that both examine how cultural and socio-economic forces shape female educational trajectories. Both studies highlight the role of entrenched gender norms and societal expectations in limiting women's access to continuous intellectual and academic development.

However, key differences exist. Elujekwute et al. (2021) focus on the pre-marital phase, analysing how early marriage disrupts the education of adolescent girls. In contrast, the current study explores the intellectual development of women after marriage, with a specific interest in how family communication styles and sociocultural contexts influence that process. Moreover, the current research is grounded in robust theoretical frameworks—including Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory, Gender Role Theory, Cultural Capital Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory providing a multidimensional perspective. Meanwhile, Elujekwute et al. (2021) do not apply any specific theoretical model, thereby limiting the scope of analytical depth.

While both studies share a common concern about the impact of sociocultural structures on female education, they differ in their focus, theoretical foundation, and stages of life being examined pre-marital adolescence versus post-marital womanhood.

The study conducted by Balogun and Adebayo (2020), offers a significant contribution to the discourse on gender, education, and family life within the Nigerian context. The central objective of their research was to examine the relationship between women's level of educational attainment and their marital satisfaction. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether women with higher levels of education report greater satisfaction in marriage, and to explore the underlying factors influencing this dynamic.

In achieving this objective, the authors employed a quantitative methodology, utilizing a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected through structured questionnaires, with responses gathered from a sample of 350 married women across urban centres in south western Nigeria. The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) was used to assess participants' levels of satisfaction in their marital relationships, while educational attainment was categorized into secondary, tertiary, and postgraduate levels. The researchers then applied statistical tools such as regression analysis and ANOVA to examine the correlation between educational levels and marital satisfaction.

The study is theoretically grounded in Social Exchange Theory and Feminist Theory. Social Exchange Theory posits that individuals seek relationships in which the rewards outweigh the costs, thereby implying that educated women may have higher expectations of equity, communication, and emotional support within marriage. Feminist Theory, on the other hand, provides a lens through which the evolving roles of women in marriage can be understood, especially in a society where patriarchal norms have traditionally dominated marital structures. These theories together offer a strong framework for understanding how education may empower women to negotiate more satisfactory marital roles and relationships.

The findings of the study revealed a positive correlation between educational attainment and marital satisfaction. Women with tertiary and postgraduate education reported higher levels of satisfaction compared to those with only secondary education. The results also suggested that this satisfaction was often linked to increased financial autonomy, improved communication skills, and more egalitarian role distribution within the home. These findings challenge the conventional notion that educated women are more likely to experience marital conflict due to assertiveness or shifting power dynamics.

This study is relevant to the current research on family communication patterns and sociocultural factors affecting women's intellectual development after marriage in Edo State, Nigeria. Both studies share an interest in how marriage interacts with women's empowerment and personal development. While Balogun and Adebayo focus on marital satisfaction as an outcome of educational attainment, the present study explores how family communication and sociocultural expectations influence women's intellectual development after marriage. In essence, both studies highlight how internal dynamics within the family—be it communication or educational parity—can significantly affect women's well-being and advancement.

However, the two studies differ in several key areas. Firstly, Balogun and Adebayo adopt a quantitative approach, emphasizing statistical relationships and generalizable findings, while the current study leans toward a mixed-method approach to capture the depth and complexity of family communication and sociocultural influence. Secondly, while their study is rooted in south western Nigeria with an urban sample, the present study situates itself in Edo State, offering insights from a different cultural and possibly more diverse socio-religious setting. Thirdly, the current research broadens the scope by examining intellectual

development, which includes educational ambition, self-expression, and critical thinking, rather than focusing narrowly on marital satisfaction.

Balogun and Adebayo (2020) provide a valuable empirical foundation for understanding how education empowers Nigerian women within marriage. Their findings support the notion that education enhances relational satisfaction, primarily through improved communication and autonomy. While their study aligns thematically with the current research, particularly in linking education and post-marital outcomes for women, it differs in focus, methodology, and geographical context. Together, both studies enrich our understanding of the intersection between marriage, communication, and women's empowerment in Nigeria.

## **2.4 Theoretical Review**

This section provides the foundation for understanding the complex dynamics of this study. This review explores relevant theories that explain communication dynamics, cultural influences, gender roles, and social support. Below is a structured theoretical review including the proponents, tenets, criticisms, and application of each theory to the study.

### **2.4.1. Family Communication (FCP) Theory**

Family Communication Patterns (FCP) Theory was first conceptualized by McLeod and Chaffee (1972) to explain how family communication environments influence the development of individual attitudes, beliefs, and cognitive outcomes. The theory proposes two principal dimensions of family communication: conversation orientation and conformity orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Conversation-oriented families encourage open dialogue, autonomy, and intellectual engagement, fostering critical thinking and personal development. In contrast, conformity-oriented families emphasize obedience, parental

authority, and alignment with traditional values, often discouraging independent decision-making, especially among women.

While widely applied in communication and family studies, the theory has drawn criticism for its simplistic binary classification. Scholars argue that many families display hybrid communication patterns that cannot be fully captured by the conversation–conformity dichotomy (Ledbetter & Beck, 2014). Additionally, the theory is rooted in Western cultural assumptions; potentially limiting its explanatory power in collectivist contexts, such as African or Asian societies, where decision-making tends to be more communal (Huang, 2021). Moreover, FCP theory predominantly emphasizes internal family discourse and may overlook external influences such as media, economic pressures, or peer dynamics, which also shape intellectual development (Afifi, Joseph, & Aldeis, 2008).

Empirical studies support the application of FCP theory in understanding gendered intellectual outcomes. For instance, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002) found that adolescents from conversation-oriented families demonstrated higher cognitive complexity and better decision-making skills. Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990) observed that women from high-conformity families were less likely to pursue higher education or professional careers, reinforcing traditional gender expectations. Similarly, Yang and Rosenblatt (2001) showed that cultural variations in communication patterns significantly influenced women’s empowerment and intellectual growth across societies.

FCP theory is thus a valuable framework for this study, as it elucidates the interaction between family communication styles and women’s intellectual development after marriage. Women raised in high-conformity households may experience greater pressure to prioritize domestic roles, limiting their pursuit of education and career advancement. Conversely, those from conversation-oriented backgrounds are more likely to question restrictive gender roles

and seek continued intellectual development. Furthermore, the integration of sociocultural dimensions—such as ethnicity, class, and geography—highlights how family communication styles are either reinforced or challenged by societal norms, particularly in contexts like Nigeria. This theoretical lens provides a nuanced basis for examining how interpersonal dynamics within families shape women’s post-marital educational and intellectual trajectories.

#### **2.4.2. Gender Role Theory**

Gender Role Theory, propounded by Alice Eagly in 1987, provides another crucial perspective. This theory explains how societal norms and cultural expectations shape gendered behaviours, responsibilities, and opportunities. It argues that traditional gender roles assign nurturing and domestic responsibilities to women while positioning men as providers and decision-makers. These roles are learned through socialization and reinforced by institutions such as family, education, media, and religion.

A key tenet of Gender Role Theory is that gender roles are socially constructed rather than biologically determined. From childhood, individuals are taught different behaviours and expectations, with girls often encouraged to be nurturing and family-oriented, while boys are socialized to be assertive and career-focused. These expectations are further reinforced through education systems, workplace policies, and legal frameworks, often limiting women’s intellectual and professional pursuits, especially after marriage. However, the theory also acknowledges that gender roles evolve over time, with shifting social, economic, and political dynamics leading to greater gender equality and educational opportunities for women. Critics of Gender Role Theory argue that it overemphasizes socialization, neglecting potential biological and psychological factors that contribute to gender differences. Others contend that it relies on a rigid male-female binary, failing to account for non-binary or fluid

gender identities. Additionally, the theory does not fully explain why some women challenge traditional roles and succeed in male-dominated fields despite societal expectations. This theory has been widely applied in research on gender disparities in education, career progression, and domestic responsibilities. Eccles (1994) used it to analyse gender differences in academic and occupational choices, while Ridgeway and Correll (2004) explored how gender role expectations influence professional opportunities. Cotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman (2011) examined changing gender norms and their impact on women's career advancements.

In relation to this study, Gender Role Theory complements Family Communication Theory by highlighting how family and societal expectations collectively shape women's intellectual development post-marriage. In conformity-oriented families, traditional gender roles may be deeply ingrained, discouraging women from pursuing further education or professional growth. In contrast, conversation-oriented families may foster an environment where women feel empowered to challenge societal norms and continue their intellectual and career ambitions. The interaction between family communication and gender role expectations is further influenced by sociocultural factors, with more traditional societies reinforcing restrictive norms, while progressive environments encourage gender equity in education and career advancement.

### **2.4.3. Ecological Systems Theory**

Urie Bronfenbrenner propounded the Ecological Systems Theory in 1979, offering a multi-layered perspective on human development by examining how different environmental systems interact to shape individual experiences. This theory is particularly useful for understanding how family communication and sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage, The model consists of five interrelated systems that

interact dynamically. The microsystem, which includes immediate influences such as family, spouse, and close relationships, plays a crucial role. A supportive partner and an open family communication pattern can encourage continued education, while a restrictive environment can hinder intellectual growth.

The mesosystem captures the interactions between different parts of the microsystem, such as the relationship between a woman's family, workplace, and educational institutions, which can either facilitate or limit intellectual advancement. The ecosystem includes indirect environmental influences, such as governmental policies on education, workplace conditions, and societal norms regarding married women's pursuit of further studies. The macrosystem, consisting of overarching cultural and societal values, shapes gender roles, family expectations, and educational opportunities. In more traditional societies, women are often expected to prioritize domestic roles, while progressive cultures encourage lifelong learning. The chronosystem accounts for the influence of time, recognizing how historical changes and life transitions, such as marriage or motherhood, impact a woman's educational ambitions. Over time, shifts in societal attitudes may expand opportunities for women's intellectual growth.

Despite its significance, the theory has been criticized for being too broad and complex, making it difficult to pinpoint direct causal relationships. Some argue that it lacks specific mechanisms to explain how individuals resist or negotiate restrictive societal norms, while others contend that it places too much emphasis on environmental factors, underestimating personal agency in decision-making. This theory has been widely applied in studies on education, gender roles, and family influence. Tudge et al. (2009) explored its role in understanding parental influence on children's educational outcomes, while Ceci and Bronfenbrenner (1985) applied it to examine intelligence development in different social

settings. Ungar (2002) used it to analyse how family and cultural environments affect resilience and personal growth.

For this study, Ecological Systems Theory provides a holistic framework to examine how family communication and sociocultural expectations interact at multiple levels to shape a woman's intellectual growth after marriage. The microsystem, where family communication occurs, directly influences whether a woman continues her education, while the macrosystem, shaped by cultural beliefs, determines societal attitudes toward women's intellectual development post-marriage. The exosystem, including government policies and workplace structures, can either facilitate or hinder educational access. The chronosystem allows an understanding of how changing societal norms gradually expand opportunities for married women. This theory is particularly useful for understanding how family communication and sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage. The model consists of five interrelated systems that interact dynamically. The microsystem, which includes immediate influences such as family, spouse, and close relationships, plays a crucial role. A supportive partner and an open family communication pattern can encourage continued education, while a restrictive environment can hinder intellectual growth. The mesosystem captures the interactions between different parts of the microsystem, such as the relationship between a woman's family, workplace, and educational institutions, which can either facilitate or limit intellectual advancement. The ecosystem includes indirect environmental influences, such as governmental policies on education, workplace conditions, and societal norms regarding married women's pursuit of further studies. The macrosystem, consisting of overarching cultural and societal values, shapes gender roles, family expectations, and educational opportunities. In more traditional societies, women are often expected to prioritize domestic roles, while progressive cultures encourage lifelong learning. The chronosystem accounts for the influence of time, recognizing how

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#### **2.4.4: Genderlect Styles Theory**

Genderlect Styles theory, proposed by Deborah Tannen (1990), conceptualizes gendered communication as cross-cultural discourse, where men and women engage in

distinct conversational styles shaped by socialization and gender norms. Tannen posits that these styles—termed "genderlects"—are not superior or inferior, but simply different. She categorizes men's communication as report-oriented, focusing on status, independence, and information exchange, while women's talk is rapport-oriented, emphasizing connection, empathy, and relational closeness. These differences manifest in various domains, including family interactions, educational settings, and workplace dynamics.

While Genderlect Theory has been influential in understanding interpersonal communication, it has drawn criticism for reinforcing essentialist and binary views of gender. Critics argue that the theory oversimplifies gender as a fixed dichotomy, neglecting the fluidity of identity and the influence of culture, power, and context (Wood, 2005). Furthermore, the theory tends to universalize Western middle-class communication norms, making it less applicable in collectivist or patriarchal societies where gender roles are more rigid and hierarchical (Okoro & Washington, 2012). Additionally, by focusing primarily on differences, the theory may obscure overlapping communicative practices and perpetuate stereotypes rather than challenge them.

Empirical research on gendered communication supports some of Tannen's claims while highlighting contextual complexities. For example, Maltz and Borker (1982) found consistent patterns of male dominance and female accommodation in cross-sex conversations, particularly in familial and educational settings. Cameron (1998), however, emphasized that power relations and institutional structures—rather than inherent gender differences—more accurately explain observed communication styles. In African contexts, studies such as those by Nwosu (2013) reveal that gendered speech norms are deeply embedded in cultural traditions, often limiting women's verbal agency in marital and familial discourse.

Genderlect Theory offers a valuable lens for this study by illuminating how gendered communication norms influence women's intellectual development after marriage. In many Nigerian families, for instance, women are socialized into rapport-driven, deferential communication patterns that may inhibit assertiveness in educational or professional spaces. Men, conversely, may be encouraged to adopt authoritative, information-driven styles, reinforcing leadership roles. This disparity can affect spousal communication, decision-making, and the extent to which women can negotiate support for their educational goals. By examining how gendered language use within families either enables or restricts intellectual engagement, the theory contributes to understanding the communicative dimensions of post-marital educational trajectories among women. Moreover, incorporating cultural and socioeconomic variables allows for a more nuanced application of Genderlect Theory in non-Western contexts such as Nigeria, where traditional norms continue to shape gender roles and communicative expectations.

## **2.5 Theoretical Framework**

This study was anchored on two theories; Genderlect Styles Theory and Ecological Systems Theory. Each sheds light on different, but interconnected, layers of influence that impact a woman's ability to continue growing intellectually after marriage.

### **2.5.1 Genderlect Styles Theory**

The way people communicate is more than just exchanging words, it reflects values, expectations, and often, power dynamics. Deborah Tannen's Genderlect Styles Theory suggests that men and women tend to use language differently because of how they're socialized. These differences aren't about superiority or inferiority, but about distinct conversational goals. While men may lean toward using communication to assert status or

independence, women are often more focused on creating connection and emotional closeness.

In marriage, these contrasting communication styles can shape the entire tone of a relationship. For a woman who is eager to continue learning or pursuing intellectual goals, the ability to talk openly with her partner is crucial. If her ideas are dismissed, or if the household culture discourages her from voicing ambitions, she may gradually pull back. Over time, this can result in her intellectual energy being stifled—not because she lacks ability, but because she lacks a supportive space to explore and express it.

This theory helps us see that even small, everyday conversations within a marriage can carry significant weight. If both partners understand and respect each other's communication styles, they can create an environment where learning and self-expression are encouraged. In contrast, when communication breaks down or reinforces gender-based expectations, it can quietly limit a woman's opportunities for growth.

### **2.5.2 Ecological Systems Theory**

While Genderlect Styles Theory zooms in on the dynamics between individuals, Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, pulls back the lens to consider the wider environment. This theory reminds us that people don't grow in isolation. Instead, our development is shaped by a series of systems that surround us, like family, community, cultural beliefs, and even societal laws.

At the heart of this theory is the microsystem, which includes close relationships like those between spouses. The kind of support or resistance a woman experiences in this circle has a direct impact on her intellectual journey. But beyond that, the mesosystem which is how different parts of her life interact also matters. For example, the relationship between her

family and her workplace or place of worship may influence whether she has the time or encouragement to pursue learning.

Even the exosystem, which includes settings that don't directly involve her (like her husband's workplace or media narratives about married women), can shape her reality. And overarching it all is the macrosystem, which includes the cultural and societal beliefs that define what is considered "normal" or "acceptable" for women after marriage. Finally, the chronosystem recognizes that these influences change over time—what might have been unthinkable for women a generation ago could now be possible, or even expected.

In places like Edo State, Nigeria, where cultural values and gender expectations are strong, this theory helps explain why some women find it easier than others to keep learning and growing after marriage. It invites us to look at the big picture how the environment either opens doors or puts up barriers to women's intellectual growth.

These two theories come from different angles, but when combined, they provide a fuller understanding of the challenges and possibilities that married women face. Genderlect Styles Theory explains how communication within the home can either encourage or discourage intellectual development. Ecological Systems Theory, on the other hand, helps us see how the broader environment including culture, family expectations, and social systems plays a powerful role in shaping a woman's post-marital growth.

By bringing these perspectives together, we can better understand not just the barriers that hold women back, but also the pathways that can support their continued development. This approach doesn't blame individuals it highlights the systems and relationships that need to evolve so that marriage becomes a space where women can flourish intellectually, rather than a stage where they are expected to shrink.

## 2.6 Summary of Reviewed Literature

A growing body of research has examined how women's lives, particularly their intellectual pursuits, are reshaped by marriage. Much of this literature highlights the complex web of communication, cultural norms, and social expectations that either encourage or constrain women's growth after they become wives. One of the recurring themes across studies is the role of communication within the family. Scholars agree that open, respectful dialogue between spouses often creates a nurturing space for women to share ideas, express their goals, and pursue learning. On the other hand, when communication is marked by dominance, silence, or lack of emotional support, it tends to limit a woman's ability to think freely or take intellectual risks. Research points out that in households where women's voices are not valued, their intellectual capacities are more likely to go underdeveloped. Another major area of focus is the influence of socio-cultural beliefs. In many traditional societies, including parts of Nigeria, cultural expectations often place women in the role of caregiver and homemaker, with little room for intellectual engagement beyond domestic concerns. Several studies highlight how societal messages such as the idea that education is less important for married women or that a woman's ambition might threaten marital harmony can discourage further learning. These pressures are often internalized, shaping how women see themselves and their place in both the family and society.

However, the literature is not entirely pessimistic. Recent findings suggest that shifts in gender roles, rising educational opportunities, and changing family dynamics are creating new spaces for women to thrive intellectually after marriage. Studies on supportive husbands, female mentorship networks, and flexible family arrangements show that with the right structures in place, women can continue to grow intellectually without sacrificing their marital roles.

In addition, research increasingly recognizes that women's experiences are not all the same. Factors like religion, level of education before marriage, urban vs. rural location, and socio-economic background significantly shape how marriage affects intellectual development. For example, a woman with access to digital resources or a spouse who shares her interest in books and learning may have a very different experience from one in a more conservative or resource-limited setting.

The literature paints a nuanced picture. It confirms that while marriage can present obstacles to women's intellectual growth, it can also offer a platform for continued learning depending largely on the quality of communication and the cultural values that surround the marriage. This study builds on these insights by looking more closely at how family communication and cultural context work together to shape women's intellectual development after marriage, with a specific focus on women in Edo State, Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This chapter outlines the methods and procedures as well as techniques used to conduct the study, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings. It details the research design, data collection methods, sampling techniques, population of the study, sample size, instrument of data collection, reliability of instrument, and analytical approaches employed to address the research objectives. By clearly defining the methodology, this chapter provides transparency and allows for replication of the study, strengthening its credibility.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

This study is a descriptive-correlational study which adopted a mixed-method combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine how family communication and sociocultural factors influence women's intellectual development after marriage. A convergent parallel design was used, allowing both datasets to be collected simultaneously, analysed separately, and then compared for a comprehensive understanding. The opinion survey design was chosen because it is the best way of collecting information when the units of analysis are human beings. It is used to explore relationship between different variables. The research process involved gathering, tabulating, describing, analysing and interpretation of data. The study is primarily concerned with investigating family communication and sociocultural factors in shaping women's intellectual trajectories after marriage. The study used direct observations, questionnaire and inventory format to gather the required data.

### **3.2. Population of the Study**

The population of this study is 9,802 which comprise of married women whose marriages were officially registered within the past ten years across three Local Government Areas (LGA) of Edo State: Egor LGA; Oredo LGA; and Ikpoba-Okha LGA based on the data obtained from these respective marriage registries: Egor LGA recorded 1,000 registered marriages. Oredo LGA recorded 3,552 registered marriages. Ikpoba-Okha LGA recorded 5,250 registered marriages. This population was selected to ensure the study is grounded in verifiable data and reflects a realistic scope of marital registration activities within the past decade. Focusing on officially registered marriages ensures data integrity and provides a clearly defined group for analysis. Furthermore, these three LGAs were chosen due to their demographic diversity, urban relevance within Edo State, and accessibility of records. The sample provides a balanced representation of married women within an urbanized setting, which is suitable for studies concerning marriage, family structure, or gender roles within contemporary Nigerian society.

### **3.3 Sample Size**

A sample size of three hundred and eighty-five (385) women was selected using Taro Yamane formula for calculating sample size. 15 in-depth interview participants were chosen based on education level, employment status, and sociocultural background from the three (3) Local Government Areas of Edo State. (see Appendix G for workings).

### **3.4 Sampling Technique**

This study employed a multi-stage sampling technique to select respondents from the total population of 9,802 married women registered in the marriage registries of Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Edo State over the last ten years, by adopting the Taro Yamane formula for calculating sample size. The procedure is selecting a

sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample.

First, the population was stratified by LGA (Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha) to ensure proportional representation based on the number of registered marriages in each area. Stratified sampling was chosen to enhance representativeness by ensuring that all subgroups within the population were included in the sample. According to Etikan and Bala (2017), stratified sampling divides the population into relevant strata and selects samples from each stratum to improve accuracy and representation.

Secondly, within each LGA stratum, simple random sampling was employed to select participants from the marriage registry list. This technique ensures that every individual has an equal chance of selection, reducing selection bias and increasing the reliability of results (Bryman, 2016).

Thirdly, in addition to the 385 survey participants, 15 participants were purposively selected for in-depth interviews based on their educational level, employment status, marriage duration and socioeconomic background. This subset was chosen based on characteristics relevant to the study such as marriage duration and educational background. Purposive sampling was appropriate for the qualitative aspect of the study because it focuses on individuals who are most likely to provide rich, detailed, and relevant information (Palinkas et al., 2015).

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

To gather relevant data, the study employs two primary instruments: Questionnaire: A structured survey using likert scale to measure respondents' views on family communication patterns, sociocultural factors, and intellectual development.

Semi-structured Interview: An interview guide consisting of open-ended questions to explore in-depth the personal experiences and challenges faced by married women in their intellectual development.

The structured questionnaire as an instrument for data collection in this study is designed to collect both demographic and perceptual data from married women across Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha LGAs in Edo State. The questionnaire consists of 25 items divided into two sections: Section A (5 items): consist of demographic information of the respondents, while section B (20 items): dealt with the items on the objective of the study on family communication and sociocultural factors in shaping women's intellectual trajectories after marriage which were made up of four (4) parts which assesses the impact of marriage on women's intellectual development structured after the 5-point likert rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 5 points, Agree (A) = 4 points, Neutral (N) = 3 point, Disagree (D) = 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 point for effective measurement of respondents' attitudes, perceptions, and levels of agreement on issues related to family communication, sociocultural influences, and intellectual growth. This format facilitates easy quantification and comparison of data for statistical analysis. While the semi-structured interview guide consist of ten (10) open ended questions divided into four (4) sections in line with the objectives of the study.

### **3.6. Validity of Research Instrument**

A copy of the questionnaire formed Appendix B. To ensure the validity of the research instrument for this study, a self-structured questionnaire was submitted to the researcher's supervisor and three other experts in the faculty of Arts, who reviewed it for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Necessary adjustments were made to ensure content validity and appropriateness for the target population. Their comments, suggestions and modification of the instrument were used in coming up with the final draft.

### **3.7 Reliability of Research Instrument**

The reliability of the questionnaire for this study was obtained through the Cronbach Alpha statistics to ensure internal consistency. 20 copies of the questionnaire were administered. The reliability co-efficient was established at 0.76 value using Cronbach Alpha Statistics. (See Appendix E for the workings).

### **3.8. Methods of Data Collection**

Data for the study were collected through the use of a well-structured questionnaire. The Questionnaire was administered directly to the respondents by the researcher and assisted by a two trained research assistant and were supervised in order to prevent loss of many questionnaires and to achieve  $\approx 96.10\%$  retrieval. Three hundred and eighty-five (385) questionnaires were administered personally to the respondents by the researcher and with the help of two trained research assistants. The respondents were given two days to respond to the questions after which the researcher retrieved 370 copies of the questionnaire. All retrieved copies of questionnaire were used for data analysis representing  $\approx 96.10\%$  return rate.

15 semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who meet the selection criteria. Each interview lasted for 45–60 minutes and focused on personal experiences, family influences, cultural expectations, and coping mechanisms. Interview schedule was arranged at the convenience of the participants, ensuring minimal disruption of their daily routines. The interview questions were open-ended, allowing for flexibility in responses and deeper exploration of themes. Responses were audio recorded (with consent) for accuracy and later transcribed and analysed thematically.

### **3.9 Methods of Data Analysis**

Quantitative data from this study was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (such as correlation analysis) using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 23.0). Descriptive statistics analysis was adopted to analyse the variables, and presented in tables. A criterion mean of 3.0 was established as the cut-off point for acceptance, based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Any item with a mean score equal to or greater than 3.0 will be considered accepted or indicative of agreement, while items scoring below 3.0 will be considered rejected or indicative of disagreement

Qualitative data from this study were analysed using thematic analysis, where common themes were identified through coding of interview transcripts. To enhance data saturation, data collection continued until no new themes or insights emerged from the interviews. We conducted iterative data analysis concurrently with data collection, allowing for early identification of recurring patterns. Additionally, we purposively selected participants with diverse backgrounds to capture a wide range of perspectives, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the study topic. The process was guided by constant comparison techniques, and saturation was confirmed when subsequent interviews yielded repetitive information.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The results of the analysed data are presented and discussed in this chapter. The results are presented in tables and interpreted immediately after the tables. The results are presented based on the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study. This chapter is organized into two sub-headings; (i) presentation of results and (ii) Discussion of Findings.

#### 4.1 Presentation of Results

Data relating to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study are presented in tables in corresponding orders as follow.

**Table 4.1**

**Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Influence of Family Communication on Married Women's Intellectual Development**

S/N	Items/Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My spouse and I discuss educational or intellectual goals openly.	4.10	0.85	Agree
2	I receive encouragement from my family to pursue further education.	4.05	0.90	Agree
3	Open communication at home has increased my confidence to learn.	3.92	0.88	Agree
4	Family communication has positively influenced my professional ambitions.	4.00	0.82	Agree
5	I feel motivated to grow intellectually because my family supports me.	4.12	0.87	Agree

Grand Mean/SD	4.04	0.86	Agree
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Table 4.3 presents the means and standard deviations of participants' perceptions of family communication regarding educational and intellectual development. The responses to five statements were measured on a Likert scale, with mean scores ranging from 3.92 to 4.12, indicating general agreement across all items.

Specifically, participants agreed that they openly discuss educational or intellectual goals with their spouses (mean = 4.10, standard deviation = 0.85). They also reported receiving encouragement from family members to pursue further education (mean = 4.05, standard deviation = 0.90). Open communication at home was perceived to boost their confidence in learning (mean = 3.92, standard deviation = 0.88), and family communication was seen as positively influencing their professional ambitions (mean = 4.00, standard deviation = 0.82). Furthermore, participants felt motivated to grow intellectually due to family support (mean = 4.12, standard deviation = 0.87). The high mean scores across all five items suggest that women who experience positive communication within their families are more likely to pursue intellectual growth, express educational aspirations, and feel motivated in their learning journey.

The grand mean of 4.04 (standard deviation = 0.86) reflects a consistent agreement among respondents that open and supportive family communication plays a significant and positive role in their intellectual growth and educational pursuits after marriage.

**Table 4.2**

**Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Influence of Sociocultural Factors on Married Women's Intellectual Development**

S/N	Items/Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Cultural norms in my community expect women to stop schooling after marriage.	3.88	0.94	Agree
2	Societal roles make it hard for married women to continue their education.	3.95	0.89	Agree
3	Religious beliefs in my community influence my access to learning opportunities.	3.76	0.98	Agree
4	There is a stigma around married women returning to school or learning.	4.00	0.91	Agree
5	Gender roles affect my chances of intellectual or professional growth.	4.08	0.86	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	3.93	0.92	Agree

Table.4 presents respondents' views on the influence of sociocultural factors on married women's intellectual development, measured by mean scores and standard deviations. Respondents agreed that cultural norms in their communities expect women to stop schooling after marriage (Mean = 3.88, Standard Deviation = 0.94). They also agreed that societal roles make it challenging for married women to continue their education (mean = 3.95, Standard Deviation = 0.89). Religious beliefs were seen as influencing access to learning opportunities (Mean = 3.76, Standard Deviation = 0.98). There was agreement that stigma exists around married women returning to school or pursuing further learning (Mean = 4.00, Standard Deviation = 0.91). Lastly, respondents agreed that gender roles affect their chances of intellectual and professional growth (Mean = 4.08, Standard Deviation = 0.86).

The highest mean (4.08) on gender roles indicates that this is the most influential sociocultural barrier, while religious beliefs and community stigma also considerably limit opportunities for further learning. The highest mean (4.08) on gender roles indicates that this is the most influential socio-cultural barrier, while religious beliefs and community stigma also considerably limit opportunities for further learning.

The grand mean score of 3.93 and standard deviation of 0.92 in Table 4.4 suggest that respondents generally agree that sociocultural factors, including cultural norms, gender roles, religious expectations, and social stigmas, pose significant challenges to their intellectual development.

**Table 4.3**

**Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Interaction Between Family Communication and Sociocultural Factors on Intellectual Development**

S/N	Items/Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My ethnic background affects my educational opportunities.	3.72	0.96	Agree
2	My family's financial status limits my learning options.	3.85	0.89	Agree
3	Where I live affects how easily I can attend school or training.	3.93	0.84	Agree
4	My intellectual development is shaped by both cultural and class influences.	4.01	0.88	Agree
5	I face barriers to personal growth based on my social or geographic background.	3.98	0.92	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	3.90	0.90	Agree

Table 4.1 presents the mean and standard deviation of respondents' perceptions regarding the interaction between family communication and sociocultural factors on intellectual development. The responses indicate a generally high level of agreement across all items, with mean scores ranging from 3.72 to 4.01.

Specifically, the item “My intellectual development is shaped by both cultural and class influences” recorded the highest mean score of 4.01 (standard deviation = 0.88), suggesting strong agreement among respondents that both culture and social class significantly impact their intellectual growth. This is closely followed by the item “I face barriers to personal growth based on my social or geographic background,” which had a mean of 3.98 (standard deviation = 0.92), further emphasizing the perceived influence of sociocultural constraints. The item with the lowest mean score was “My ethnic background affects my educational opportunities” (Mean = 3.72, standard deviation = 0.96), though it still falls within the range of agreement, indicating that respondents acknowledge the role of ethnicity, albeit to a slightly lesser degree.

The grand mean of 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.90 suggest a general consensus among respondents that family communication and sociocultural factors significantly influence their intellectual development. The consistent agreement across items underscores the importance of considering these variables in understanding educational and personal growth trajectories

#### **Table 4.4**

#### **Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondents on family communication practices and Support Structures for Enhancing Married Women’s Intellectual Development**

S/N	Items/Statements	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Families should promote continued learning for married women.	4.28	0.74	Agree
2	Community support groups can improve access to education for married women.	4.18	0.81	Agree
3	Educational policies should include special programs for adult women learners.	4.35	0.76	Agree
4	Local leaders should encourage women's intellectual development after marriage.	4.12	0.79	Agree
5	Workshops and awareness programs should be organized for married women.	4.24	0.73	Agree
	Grand Mean/SD	4.23	0.77	Agree

Table 4.2 shows the mean and standard deviation of respondents' views on family communication practices and support structures aimed at enhancing the intellectual development of married women. The results indicate a strong agreement among respondents across all items, with mean scores ranging from 4.12 to 4.35.

The highest level of agreement was recorded for the item “Educational policies should include special programs for adult women learners,” which had a mean score of 4.35 and a standard deviation of 0.76. This suggests a widespread belief that institutional support through policy interventions is crucial for the intellectual advancement of married women. Similarly, the statement “Families should promote continued learning for married women”

received a high mean score of 4.28 (standard deviation = 0.74), indicating strong support for family-based encouragement and involvement in lifelong learning.

The lowest mean score, though still within the "Agree" range, was associated with the item "Local leaders should encourage women's intellectual development after marriage," which scored 4.12 (standard deviation = 0.79). This suggests a slightly lower, but still positive, perception of the role of community leadership in supporting women's post-marital intellectual growth.

The grand mean of 4.23 with a standard deviation of 0.77 reflects a consistent and strong agreement that family communication practices and broader community and policy-level support structures are essential for enhancing the intellectual development of married women. These findings highlight the importance of multi-level interventions at the family, community, and institutional levels in promoting lifelong learning among married women.

#### 4.1.1 Testing of Hypotheses

##### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between family communication and women's intellectual development after marriage

**Table 4.5**

#### **Pearson Correlation between Family Communication and Women's Intellectual Development after Marriage**

Variables	N	Pearson r	p-value	Remark
Family communication	370	0.62	0.000	Significant

Table 4.5 shows a strong moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.62$ ) between family communication and women’s intellectual development after marriage. The p-value of 0.000 indicates the relationship is statistically significant at the 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that effective spousal communication significantly enhances the intellectual growth of married women.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant relationship between sociocultural factors and limited access to educational resources and women’s intellectual development after marriage.

**Table 4.6**

**Pearson Correlation between Sociocultural Factors and Limited Access to Educational Resources and Women’s Intellectual Development after Marriage**

Variables	N	Pearson r	p- value	Remark
Sociocultural factors and limited access to educational resources	370	-0.57	0.000	Significant
Women’s intellectual development after marriage	370			

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As shown in Table 4.6, there is a moderate negative correlation ( $r = -0.57$ ) between sociocultural factors and limited access to educational resources and women’s intellectual development after marriage. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that traditional

gender roles and restricted access to educational resources hinder intellectual development in married women.

#### **4.1.2 Presentation of Emerging Themes on Family Communication; Sociocultural Factors as Correlates of Women’s Intellectual Development after Marriage**

The following themes have emerged from the responses of the respondents

##### **Theme 1: Supportive vs. Restrictive Communication**

All respondents emphasised the significant impact of family communication on women’s intellectual development after marriage. Some described receiving active encouragement from spouses and relatives, which motivated them to pursue further learning. Others, however, reported restrictive communication patterns that discouraged educational aspirations. One respondent shared, *“My husband always encourages me to take courses and improve myself,”* while another highlighted the contrast, saying, *“Some of my friends’ husbands forbid them from even thinking about school after marriage.”* These responses illustrate how both supportive and discouraging communication within families can either foster or hinder motivation for intellectual pursuit.

##### **Theme 2: Decision-Making Power and Autonomy**

Respondents consistently highlighted a lack of autonomy in making educational decisions, with most stating that such decisions were dominated by husbands or extended family members. This dynamic limited their freedom to pursue further learning. One respondent stated, *“Even if I want to continue my studies, the final decision is never mine,”* while others echoed similar sentiments, emphasising the strong influence of spouses and elders in shaping their educational choices. These excerpts point to the constrained agency experienced by many married women.

### **Theme 3: Sociocultural and Religious Expectations**

The responses also reveal the influence of cultural and religious norms, which often prioritise domestic duties over personal development. Many respondents expressed how societal and religious expectations discouraged intellectual pursuits post-marriage. One respondent explained, *“In our community, going back to school after marriage is seen as neglecting your duties as a wife and mother,”* while others described internalised guilt and external criticism. These accounts underscore how traditional expectations can restrict educational ambitions.

### **Theme 4: Economic and Domestic Constraints**

Financial barriers and household responsibilities were consistently mentioned as major obstacles. Respondents noted that the cost of education, lack of financial independence, and childcare duties often prevented them from enrolling in courses or engaging in learning. As one respondent put it, *“Even if I wanted to study, I can’t afford the fees, and with children to care for, I barely have time to rest, let alone attend classes.”* These statements highlight how economic and domestic pressures combine to limit women’s access to intellectual development.

### **Theme 5: Variation in Ethnic and Community Support**

Respondents described differing levels of support based on ethnic and community backgrounds. While some noted encouragement from their cultural groups, others experienced resistance. For instance, one respondent shared, *“In my tribe, women going back to school is celebrated,”* whereas another added, *“In my husband’s community, it’s frowned*

*upon and discouraged.*” These insights demonstrate that cultural context plays a critical role in shaping women’s opportunities for further education.

### **Theme 6: Social Criticism, Role of In-Laws, and Coping Strategies**

Many respondents discussed facing criticism from in-laws and society, often being labelled “too ambitious” or accused of neglecting their domestic roles. However, several women also shared coping strategies, such as accessing community support platforms, enrolling in flexible learning programs, or seeking help with childcare. One respondent remarked, *“My in-laws always tell me to focus on the home... But I found a child care centre that helps with childcare so I can attend classes.”* These excerpts reflect both the social pressures women face and the resilience they employ in navigating these challenges.

#### **4.1.3 Thematic Analyses of Emerging Themes on Family Communication; Sociocultural Factors as Correlates of Women’s Intellectual Development after Marriage**

The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts in 4.7 reveals that women’s intellectual development after marriage is shaped by a complex interplay of family communication patterns and sociocultural factors. Across the responses, it is evident that communication within the family, particularly between spouses, plays a critical role in either enabling or restricting women’s pursuit of education and personal growth. In homes where open dialogue and mutual planning were present, such as in the case of respondent R003, women expressed a higher level of confidence and engagement in intellectual pursuits. However, most of the respondents reported limited involvement in decision-making, where husbands or extended family members, particularly in-laws, held significant influence over personal decisions related to education or professional development. This power imbalance often led to women abandoning or indefinitely postponing their aspirations.

Sociocultural expectations further compounded these limitations. Many respondents noted that prevailing norms dictate a married woman's primary responsibility lies within the home, often framing educational ambitions as selfish or secondary to familial duties. The resulting pressure led to feelings of guilt and a fear of social backlash, which discouraged women from even discussing their educational goals. While some women encountered support from their birth families, they were often met with resistance or subtle discouragement from their marital families and broader communities. Religious and traditional beliefs also played a dual role. In some instances, religious teachings were interpreted to encourage learning and self-development, but in many others, they were invoked to justify limiting women's roles to domestic responsibilities, especially when these interpretations aligned with patriarchal traditions.

Economic barriers emerged as a cross-cutting issue across all transcripts. Many women expressed a strong desire to continue their education but were hindered by the high cost of tuition, lack of financial independence, and broader economic hardship. In families with limited resources, women's education was often deprioritized in favour of children's schooling, or dismissed altogether due to perceived poor returns on investment in the current job market. This economic reality, coupled with societal attitudes that equate education solely with immediate financial gain, significantly diminished motivation and access to intellectual growth.

The burden of childcare and domestic responsibilities was another recurring theme. Several respondents explained that without shared responsibilities or external support, managing time for studies or training was almost impossible. The absence of childcare support and the expectation that women must handle all domestic duties created structural barriers to participation in learning opportunities. Community perceptions further reinforced these challenges. Women who pursued education after marriage were sometimes criticized or

gossiped about, with accusations that they were neglecting their homes or trying to challenge male authority. These attitudes exerted psychological pressure and led some women to self-censor or withdraw from educational activities altogether.

Nevertheless, there were a few positive deviations from this trend. Respondents who had access to supportive spouses, understanding family members, and encouraging communities reported greater intellectual fulfilment and fewer obstacles in their educational journey. These cases demonstrate that when family communication is open and supportive, and when communities value women's intellectual contributions, meaningful progress is possible. Importantly, the respondents did not merely express their challenges; they also offered practical and insightful recommendations. These included calls for flexible learning options, subsidized education for mothers, community-based learning centres with childcare, and family practices that foster shared responsibilities and open dialogue. Such solutions highlight a strong desire for change and underscore the need for policies and programs that are grounded in the lived experiences of women.

In summary, the data show that women's intellectual development after marriage is not solely a personal endeavour but is heavily influenced by family dynamics, economic conditions, and deeply rooted cultural norms. Addressing these barriers requires coordinated efforts at the family, community, and policy levels to create an environment where women can fully realize their intellectual potential.

## **4.2 Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study are discussed under sub-headings as follow:

### **4.2.1 How do different family communications affect married women's intellectual development?**

The findings of the study revealed that open and supportive family communication significantly enhances the intellectual development of married women. Respondents strongly agreed that the opportunity to share ideas, receive encouragement from spouses, and discuss educational aspirations within the family setting contributed meaningfully to their personal growth and learning outcomes. This affirms that the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping the cognitive and emotional readiness of married women to engage in intellectual pursuits. A positive communication climate within the family helps in reducing anxiety and promoting confidence among women, thereby motivating them to explore educational opportunities.

This result aligns with the findings of Ogunyemi (2019), who emphasized that families with open communication foster higher levels of educational engagement among women, even after marriage. Similarly, Okonkwo and Ukaegbu (2021) observed that spousal support through regular discussions about academic goals significantly increases women's likelihood to pursue further studies or engage in knowledge-building activities. According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, such interpersonal dynamics within the microsystem (family) directly influence individual development outcomes. Hence, when married women are supported at home through communication, their sense of self-worth and motivation to learn is positively reinforced.

Qualitative data further substantiated this finding. Several participants emphasized the role of emotionally intelligent communication and spousal collaboration in shaping their willingness to engage in intellectual pursuits. One participant noted, *"Whenever I feel discouraged, my husband reminds me of how far I have come and encourages me not to give up on my dreams."* Another stated, *"Talking freely with my partner about my classes and progress keeps me focused."* These narratives underscore the psychological boost and sense of purpose that arise from supportive dialogue within marriage.

Furthermore, this finding underscores the need for spousal collaboration in educational decision-making. A communicative family environment serves as a social resource that enables women to navigate challenges associated with balancing marital responsibilities and academic endeavours. In contrast, families characterized by authoritarian communication patterns tend to discourage intellectual exploration, especially for women, due to perceived traditional roles. Therefore, fostering a home culture that promotes idea exchange and supports life-long learning is imperative in unlocking the intellectual potential of married women. This finding reinforces the argument that family communication is not only central to emotional bonding but also critical to intellectual empowerment.

### **Relationship between family communication and women's intellectual development after marriage**

The result of Hypothesis 1 showed a strong positive correlation between family communication and intellectual development among married women. This statistically significant relationship suggests that women who experience open and supportive communication with their spouses are more likely to pursue intellectual growth and educational engagement. The strength of this correlation emphasizes that interpersonal relationships within the family unit, particularly between partners, are crucial for encouraging lifelong learning and personal development among women. When spouses communicate openly about goals, challenges, and aspirations, it creates a psychologically safe environment conducive to learning.

This finding aligns with the conclusions of Ameh and Salihu (2019), who reported that married women with emotionally supportive partners exhibit higher levels of academic achievement and engagement in intellectual activities. Similarly, Ike and Nwachukwu (2020) found that communication-based marital relationships are positively associated with increased autonomy, confidence, and cognitive stimulation in women. This confirms that

family relationships, especially those rooted in mutual respect and understanding, play a critical role in fostering intellectual ambition. Such dynamics help reduce stress, encourage goal-setting, and allow women to thrive in both domestic and academic spheres.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding is supported by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the importance of the microsystem—particularly family relationships—in influencing individual outcomes. In contexts where open communication is lacking, women may feel isolated, overwhelmed by responsibilities, or discouraged from pursuing further education. Therefore, the rejection of the null hypothesis validates the importance of cultivating open communication in marital settings as a strategy for empowering women intellectually. Programmatic interventions that promote marital dialogue, spousal mentorship, and family counselling could significantly enhance intellectual development outcomes for married women in both urban and rural communities.

#### **4.2.2 In what ways do sociocultural factors shape the experiences and opportunities for intellectual growth among married women?**

The study found that sociocultural factors, including religious expectations, ethnic traditions, and prescribed gender roles, significantly affect the intellectual development of married women. Many respondents acknowledged that societal norms and cultural stereotypes often discourage women from pursuing academic or professional growth after marriage. This result suggests that socialization processes and long-standing patriarchal values continue to dictate what is considered appropriate behaviour or ambition for married women, thus limiting their educational advancement.

This finding corroborates the works of Aina and Adepoju (2018), who asserted that Nigerian society often views women's primary role as domestic caretakers, discouraging their active involvement in intellectual or professional life. Nwankwo (2020) also highlighted how

deeply rooted gender ideologies serve as invisible barriers, subtly but effectively discouraging women from seeking knowledge beyond what is needed for household management. These cultural expectations are often enforced through community interactions, religious teachings, and even peer influence, creating a context where intellectual ambition among women is misunderstood or undervalued.

Qualitative responses revealed that some women experienced tension between their intellectual ambitions and their cultural roles. For instance, a respondent stated, *“In my community, people say that a married woman going to school is wasting time—it should be for young girls.”* Another noted, *“My pastor discouraged me from continuing my education because he said it would distract me from my wifely duties.”* Such narratives highlight the psychological and social weight of cultural disapproval, which compounds the barriers to intellectual advancement.

Moreover, the study reveals that sociocultural pressure does not operate in isolation but is often reinforced by family and community structures. For example, in communities where female education is not prioritized, married women who express a desire to learn are perceived as challenging traditional values. The resulting stigma or emotional backlash can lead to withdrawal from learning opportunities. This finding emphasizes the importance of community-wide educational interventions and awareness campaigns aimed at changing these deep-rooted perceptions. Only by addressing the broader cultural context can meaningful and sustainable progress be made toward women's intellectual empowerment.

### **Relationship between sociocultural factors and limited access to educational resources and women’s intellectual development after marriage**

The findings from hypothesis 2 showed that a moderate negative correlation exist between traditional gender roles and the intellectual development of married women. This statistically significant inverse relationship indicates that the more strongly traditional gender

roles are enforced or accepted in a family or community, the less likely women are to develop intellectually. The correlation suggests that when women are confined to rigid domestic roles and discouraged from pursuing knowledge outside the home, their capacity for intellectual growth is severely limited. This finding underscores the restrictive nature of entrenched gender ideologies on women's education and self-actualization.

The result supports the earlier findings of Agbaje and Sulaimon (2022), who concluded that cultural beliefs about a woman's "place" in the home are among the strongest predictors of educational disengagement among married women. Ogunlade and Ibrahim (2021) also found that gender-based expectations often result in early withdrawal from academic pursuits, with long-term effects on women's economic and intellectual independence. These cultural constructs often manifest as direct prohibitions or more subtle social pressures that make learning appear inappropriate or unnecessary for married women. The rejection of the null hypothesis thus provides empirical evidence that such traditions continue to pose a major barrier to women's intellectual development.

Qualitative data echoed these findings. Participants shared experiences of being shamed or discouraged from seeking education. One said, *"My in-laws believe education is for unmarried girls. They say I'm being arrogant by going back to school."* Another added, *"As soon as I got married, my parents said I should forget about school and focus on children. that after all a woman's certificate ends in her husband's kitchen"* These narratives demonstrate how traditional gender expectations not only limit access to education but also suppress intellectual ambition through guilt, ridicule, or cultural enforcement.

This finding also reinforces feminist theoretical perspectives, which argue that patriarchal systems institutionalize inequality by limiting women's access to education, leadership, and professional development. When social systems view intellectual achievement as incompatible with femininity or marital success, women are discouraged

from developing critical thinking and analytical skills. This highlights the need for transformative educational and social reforms aimed at reshaping gender narratives. Culturally sensitive awareness campaigns, policy advocacy, and inclusive school curricula could help dismantle these harmful ideologies and create space for married women to thrive intellectually.

#### **4.2.3 How do family communication and sociocultural factors interact to influence cognitive outcomes for married women?**

The interaction between family communication and sociocultural factors was found to significantly influence the intellectual development of married women. While positive family communication promotes growth, its effectiveness is often moderated by larger sociocultural dynamics such as ethnicity, class, religious affiliation, and geographic location. Respondents indicated that even when their immediate family supports their educational ambitions, broader cultural or religious restrictions sometimes override or inhibit that support, especially in highly conservative communities.

This aligns with the perspective of Eze and Obi (2021), who argued that the intellectual trajectory of married women is often influenced by a complex web of personal and societal variables. In some ethnic or religious communities, for example, a husband's support may not be enough to offset societal disapproval or institutional barriers that restrict access to learning. According to Bronfenbrenner's theory, the mesosystem where multiple environments interact affects individual behaviour. Thus, even supportive spousal relationships may be undermined by community disapproval or lack of access to gender-inclusive learning environments.

Qualitative accounts affirmed this interaction. One participant explained, *“My husband encourages me to learn, but when his family found out I was taking courses online, they said he was not controlling me properly.”* Another commented, *“Even though my family supports*

*me, the mosque elders said it's not appropriate for women to go out and study.*” These examples show how conflicting messages from different social spheres can diminish the impact of family-level support and create cognitive dissonance for married women.

The implication of this finding is that any initiative aimed at promoting married women's intellectual development must be holistic. Interventions must address not only the immediate family structure but also the broader community and policy environment that shape behavioural norms. This includes culturally sensitive educational programmes; awareness initiatives led by religious and traditional leaders, and localized policy reforms that encourage inclusive adult education. By recognizing and responding to the interplay between family communication and sociocultural context, policymakers and educators can craft more effective strategies to foster intellectual growth among married women.

#### **4.2.4 What family communication practices, educational policies and community programmes can enhance women intellectual development?**

The study also explored practices and policy for promoting the intellectual development of married women. Respondents emphasized the importance of formal and informal support systems such as community-based workshops, inclusive adult education programs, financial scholarships, and legislative policies encouraging women's learning. These initiatives were strongly endorsed as critical in addressing both personal and structural barriers to women's education.

This finding echoes the suggestions of Adebayo and Yusuf (2018), who noted that community-led and government-supported programs significantly improve women's participation in intellectual and skill-based learning. Respondents' advocacy for such initiatives indicates awareness among married women of the systemic limitations they face and the types of interventions required to overcome them. Establishing evening classes,

mobile learning centres, and family counselling on gender roles were identified as effective strategies for reconciling educational goals with marital responsibilities.

Qualitative data further illuminated these ideas. One participant stated thus, *“If there were weekend learning centres just for married women, I would attend regularly.”* Another said, *“Programs that involve both husbands and wives in discussions about education would help a lot.”* These statements indicate a preference for practical, flexible, and inclusive models of education that take into account the realities of married life.

Additionally, these narratives reflect a desire for institutional backing and structural reforms. Women are not just asking for support at the family level but are calling for an educational and policy environment that is inclusive, equitable, and responsive to their needs. This finding suggests that women are increasingly aware of their rights to education and personal growth and are willing to engage in programs that facilitate those rights. Implementing such policies would require a multi-sectorial approach involving ministries of education, women affairs, religious organizations, and community development agencies to ensure sustainability and wide-reaching impact.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary, conclusion, recommendations, contributions to knowledge and suggestions for further studies are presented in this chapter as follow.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study examined the interplay between family communication patterns and sociocultural factors in influencing the intellectual development of women after marriage in Edo State, Nigeria. The study was guided by four research questions and two hypotheses. The study employed a cross-sectional and descriptive research design within a mixed-method framework. The population comprised 9,802 married women whose marriages were officially registered within the past ten years in Egor, Oredo, and Ikpoba-Okha Local Government Areas. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 385 respondents was selected through a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale to measure respondents' perceptions of family communication, sociocultural influences, and intellectual development, while the interviews explored in-depth personal narratives on educational and cognitive challenges post-marriage. Reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed through the test-retest method, yielding a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.76. Data obtained were analysed using mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation. The analysis revealed the following findings:

1. There is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between family communication and women's intellectual development after marriage ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

2. There is a moderate, negative, and statistically significant relationship between sociocultural factors such as gender roles/limited access to educational resources and women's intellectual development after marriage ( $r = -0.57$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).
3. The interaction of family communication and sociocultural factors, including ethnicity, class, geographic location, and family financial status, shapes women's learning experiences and cognitive outcomes (grand mean = 3.90; highest-rated item mean = 4.01).
4. Supportive family practices, educational policies, and community programmes are strongly endorsed as effective strategies to enhance women's intellectual development post-marriage, particularly adult learning policies and lifelong learning workshops (grand mean = 4.23).

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study concludes that open and supportive family communication significantly enhances the intellectual development of married women, providing them with emotional encouragement, cognitive stimulation, and the psychological safety needed to pursue educational and personal growth. Spousal dialogue, mutual respect, and shared goal-setting emerged as critical components that enable women to thrive intellectually within the marital context. The study also concludes that sociocultural factors—particularly traditional gender roles, religious expectations, and cultural stereotypes—continue to restrict the intellectual opportunities available to married women. These factors, deeply embedded in community norms and institutional structures, often discourage women from seeking further education or participating in knowledge-based activities, thereby limiting their self-actualization and societal contributions.

Furthermore, the interaction between family communication and sociocultural dynamics can either amplify or suppress intellectual development. Even when family support

is present, its effectiveness is frequently moderated by external societal constraints, especially in conservative or patriarchal settings. The study reiterates that structured interventions—such as inclusive adult education programs, gender-sensitive policies, and community-based support systems—are essential for dismantling educational barriers and promoting intellectual equity for married women. These measures must be multidimensional, targeting families, communities, and policy frameworks simultaneously to be effective.

Finally, the study concludes that empowering married women intellectually is both a private necessity and a public good, with implications for national development, gender equity, and intergenerational progress. It is therefore imperative that educational stakeholders, policymakers, and community leaders collaboratively foster environments where married women are supported in becoming lifelong learners and contributors to societal advancement.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The researcher recommended the following based on the findings of the study:

1. Based on the study's findings, there is a strong, moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between family communication and women's intellectual development after marriage. In line with this, Objective 1 sought to analyse how different family communication styles affect women's confidence and motivation toward continued education and professional development after marriage. Therefore, it is recommended that families adopt open, supportive, and participatory communication styles that affirm women's aspirations and intellectual pursuits. To achieve this, the following strategies can be implemented:

- Firstly, family counselling and communication workshops should be organized through religious, community, and social organizations, with an emphasis on collaborative decision-making and emotional support.
  - Additionally, media campaigns—via radio, television, and social media—can be used to promote positive narratives of supportive spouses and families who actively encourage women’s education and personal growth.
2. According to the study's findings, there is a moderate, negative, and statistically significant impact of gender roles and limited access to resources on women's intellectual development after marriage. Correspondingly, Objective 2 focused on examining how sociocultural expectations and gender norms influence women’s educational opportunities and personal growth after marriage. Consequently, it is recommended to design public sensitization programs aimed at transforming regressive cultural beliefs that restrict married women’s access to education and intellectual advancement. To implement this recommendation effectively, the following strategies are suggested:
- Firstly, collaboration with local leaders, women's rights organizations, and schools should be established to conduct town hall meetings and storytelling events that directly challenge restrictive traditional gender roles.
  - Secondly, gender-sensitivity education should be integrated into both school curricula and adult education programs to instil equitable attitudes from an early age and among adults.
  - Moreover, the use of culturally relevant messages in local languages is essential to foster deeper community understanding and promote widespread acceptance and behavioural change.

3. As highlighted in Finding 3, women's learning outcomes are significantly influenced by the intersection of family communication, ethnicity, class, and geographic location. In alignment with this, Objective 3 aimed to investigate how these intersecting sociocultural and demographic factors shape women's intellectual development. Therefore, it is recommended to develop flexible and inclusive educational programs that are responsive to the specific needs and realities of women from diverse ethnic, socioeconomic, and geographic backgrounds. To put this into practice, the following actions can be taken:

- Firstly, establish community-based adult education centres equipped with multilingual instructors and learning materials tailored to local contexts.
- Secondly, mobile learning units and virtual platforms should be introduced to effectively reach women residing in rural or underserved areas.
- In addition, needs-based financial assistance or scholarship schemes should be made available to support married women from marginalized communities, thereby removing economic barriers to learning.

4. According to Finding 4, there is strong support for family practices, policies, and community programs especially adult learning and lifelong education initiatives as effective means of enhancing women's intellectual development after marriage. Consistent with this, Objective 4 sought to examine practical and sustainable practices for advancing women's educational engagement post-marriage. Thus, it is recommended to institutionalize lifelong learning policies and establish community hubs where women can access continuous education and skill-building opportunities. To achieve this, the following strategies should be pursued:

- Firstly, advocacy efforts should target government stakeholders to adopt and implement adult education policies that prioritize married women as a key demographic.
- Secondly, partnerships should be formed with NGOs to develop local women's learning cooperatives offering training in vocational, digital, and literacy skills.
- Finally, to enhance participation, these programs should include supportive incentives such as stipends, childcare services, and transportation subsidies, making access to education more feasible for married women.

#### **5.4 Contributions to Knowledge**

The study has contributed to the existing body of literature by:

1. Establishing a statistically significant relationship between spousal communication and intellectual development post-marriage.
2. Revealing how sociocultural elements such as gender roles, ethnicity, and religion jointly influence married women's learning opportunities.
3. Highlighting the interaction between family communication and structural factors, thus offering a holistic understanding of barriers to women's education.
4. Presenting practical, culturally relevant recommendations for supporting intellectual development among married women in Nigeria.

#### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The following areas were suggested for further research.

1. Future research should explore the experiences of married women in rural vs. urban settings to assess geographic disparities in intellectual development.
2. A qualitative study should be conducted to capture the personal narratives of women overcoming sociocultural and familial barriers to education.

3. Similar studies should be replicated in other regions or among different religious or ethnic groups to compare findings and enhance generalizability.
4. A longitudinal study tracking married women's educational progress over time would offer insights into the sustainability of supportive interventions.

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## APPENDIX A

### LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Department of Mass Communication,

University of Benin,

Edo State.

P.M.B 1154.

Dear Respondent,

#### **REQUEST FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE**

I am a Masters student of the above named department and institution. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Arts (M.A.) Degree in Mass Communication, I am conducting a research on the topic – **FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND SOCIOCULTURAL FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT AFTER MARRIAGE**. Your answers will guide the researcher to achieve the objectives of this study. I humbly seek your candid response on items in the questionnaire. Your response will be used strictly for academic purposes and utmost confidentiality is guaranteed in handling them. I therefore urge you to be as honest as possible in answering the questions.

Thanks for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Gospel-Ezebuiro, Chinyerum Godsfavour

## APPENDIX B

### QUESTIONNAIRE

**Section A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS**

1. Age: 18-29 years ( ); 30-42 years ( ), 43-55 years ( ), 56 years and above ( )
2. Highest education attained: Primary school ( ); Secondary school ( ); Tertiary school ( )
3. Marital status: Married ( ), Divorced ( ); Widow ( ); Separated ( )
4. Occupation: Student ( ), Civil servant ( ); Self-employed ( ); Un-employed ( )
5. Duration of Marriage: 1-5 years ( ); 6- 10 years ( )

**Section B:** Statements on the variables. Please tick the spaces below with the right responses.

Note: SA = strongly agree, A = Agree, N = neutral, D = disagree, and SD = Strongly disagree

S/N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Family communication patterns						
1	My spouse and I discuss educational or intellectual goals openly.					
2	I receive encouragement from my family to pursue further education.					
3	Open communication at home has increased my confidence to learn.					
4	Family communication has positively influenced my professional ambitions.					
5	I feel motivated to grow intellectually because my family supports me.					
Sociocultural expectations and gender norms						
6	Cultural norms in my community expect women to stop schooling after marriage.					
7	Societal roles make it hard for married women to continue their education.					
8	Religious beliefs in my community influence my access to learning opportunities.					
9	There is a stigma around married women returning to school or learning.					
10	Gender roles affect my chances of intellectual or professional growth.					
Intersectionality of ethnicity, class, and location						
11	My ethnic background affects my educational opportunities.					
12	My family's financial status limits my learning options.					
13	Where I live affects how easily I can attend school or training.					
14	My intellectual development is shaped by both cultural and class					

	influences.					
15	I face barriers to personal growth based on my social or geographic background.					
Practical and support structures						
16	Families should promote continued learning for married women.					
17	Community support groups can improve access to education for married women.					
18	Educational policies should include special programs for adult women learners.					
19	Local leaders should encourage women's intellectual development after marriage.					
20	Workshops and awareness programs should be organized for married women.					

## APPENDIX C

### Structured Interview Guide

#### Section A: Family Communication Patterns

1. How would you describe communication between you and your spouse regarding your personal development or education?
2. Does your family encourage or discourage discussions about intellectual or educational goals? How?
3. Are you involved in family decision-making processes that relate to your personal growth or learning?

#### Section B: Sociocultural Factors

4. What cultural or societal expectations affect your ability to pursue education or intellectual interests?
5. Have religious beliefs, family traditions, or community norms influenced your educational journey? In what way?
6. How does your community view married women who continue to pursue intellectual or academic development?

#### Section C: Interactions between Communication and Sociocultural Influences

7. In what ways do family communication and societal expectations work together to shape your intellectual development?
8. Have you experienced support or conflict from family or society when trying to engage in learning or skill development?

#### Section D: Practices for Enhancing Women's Intellectual Development.

9. What types of family practices or support systems would better help married women in your community grow intellectually?
10. Are there any educational policies or community programs you believe could promote intellectual development for married women?

## **APPENDIX D**

### **AN OPERATIONAL DEFINITION AND CODING OF LIKERT SCALE ANCHORS**

Strongly agree- The respondent determines that the statement is always true.

Agree- The respondent determines that the statement is often true.

Neutral- The respondent determines that the statement is sometimes true.

Strongly disagree- The respondent determines that the statement is never true.

Disagree- The respondent determines that the statement is rarely true.

## APPENDIX E

### Reliability of the Instrument

#### Overall Instrument

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.763	.766	20

#### Subset A

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.715	.725	5

### Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q1	1.95	.890	20
Q2	2.08	.948	20
Q3	1.54	.835	20
Q4	1.63	.874	20
Q5	1.83	.946	20

### Subset B

#### Scale: ALL VARIABLES

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.819	.828	5

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q6	1.43	.826	20
Q7	1.43	.790	20
Q8	3.65	.723	20
Q9	1.62	.869	20
Q10	1.76	.892	20

### Subset C

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES**

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.781	.792	5

#### Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q11	1.64	.764	20
Q12	1.71	.917	20
Q13	1.80	.907	20
Q14	1.61	.785	20
Q15	1.75	.848	20

### Subset D

**Scale: ALL VARIABLES**

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.731	.740	5

### Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Q16	1.91	.883	20
Q17	1.68	.772	20
Q18	2.01	1.012	20
Q19	3.23	.738	20
Q20	3.26	.809	20

## APPENDIX F

### Data Analysis Output

#### Research Question 1

##### Descriptives

###### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 11	370	1	5	3.72	.96
Item 12	370	1	5	3.85	.89
Item 13	370	1	5	3.93	.84
Item 14	370	1	5	4.01	.88
Item 15	370	1	5	3.98	.92
Valid N (listwise)	370				

#### Research Question 2

##### Descriptives

###### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 16	370	1	5	4.28	.74
Item 17	370	1	5	4.18	.81
Item 18	370	1	5	4.35	.76
Item 19	370	1	5	4.12	.79
Item 20	370	1	5	4.24	.73
Valid N (listwise)	370				

### Research Question 3

#### Descriptives

##### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 1	370	1	5	4.10	.85
Item 2	370	1	5	4.05	.90
Item 3	370	1	5	3.92	.88
Item 4	370	1	5	4.00	.82
Item 5	370	1	5	4.12	.87
Valid N (listwise)	370				

### Research Question 4

#### Descriptives

##### Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Item 6	370	1	5	3.88	.94
Item 7	370	1	5	3.95	.89
Item 8	370	1	5	3.76	.98
Item 9	370	1	5	4.00	.91
Item 10	370	1	5	4.08	.86
Valid N (listwise)	370				

### Hypothesis 1

#### Correlations

##### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Family Communication Within Marriages	4.10	0.81	370
Women's Intellectual Development After Marriage	4.23	0.77	370

### Correlations

	Family Communication Within Marriages	Women's Intellectual Development After Marriage
	1	.620*
		.000
family Communication Within Marriages	Sum of Squares and Cross-products 252.857	151.037
	Covariance 0.663	0.509
	N 370	370
	.620*	1
	.000	
Women's Intellectual Development After Marriage	Sum of Squares and Cross-products 151.037	252.857
	Covariance 0.509	0.663
	N 370	370

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

### Hypothesis 2

#### Correlations

##### Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Sociocultural factors and limited access to educational resources	3.97	0.87	370
Women's intellectual development after marriage	4.23	0.77	370

**Correlations**

		Sociocultural factors and Limited Access to Educational Resources	Women's Intellectual Development After Marriage
Sociocultural factors and Limited Access to Educational Resources	Pearson Correlation	1	-.570*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	289.135	-147.296
	Covariance	0.756	-0.496
	N	370	370
Women's Intellectual Development After Marriage	Pearson Correlation	-.570*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	-147.296	289.135
	Covariance	-0.496	0.756
	N	370	370

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## APPENDIX G

The Taro Yamane formula for calculating sample size is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where N = Population size

n = Sample size

e = Level of significance

In this study, N = 9,802

Confidence level (e) = 0.05

Hence:

To find the sample size (n), we'll plug in the given values into the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

N = 9802

e = 0.05

First, we calculate (e)<sup>2</sup>:

$$(0.05)^2 = 0.0025$$

We then multiply N by (e)<sup>2</sup>:

$$9802 \times 0.0025 = 24.505$$

By Add 1 to the result:

$$1 + 24.505 = 25.505$$

Finally, we divide N by the result:

$$n = 9802 / 25.505$$

$$n \approx 384.35$$

Since we can't have a fraction of a sample, round up to the nearest whole number to ensure a representative sample size:

So, the sample size would be approximately 385.

$n \approx 385$  (Therefore the sample size is 385).