

Correlates of Marital Adjustment among Married Persons in Delta State of Nigeria

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ABSTRACT This study examined the extent to which variables of emotional expression, communication flow, financial management and work involvement can predict marital adjustment among married persons in Delta state, Nigeria. Two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. 2561 married persons were used to select a sample size of purposeful sampling technique. Data were gathered using a questionnaire titled "Marital Adjustment and Personality Types Inventory (MAPTI). It has reliability of .90. The analysis of the data generated from the respondents revealed that emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement are significant correlates and predictors of marital adjustment. Consequently, it was recommended that counselling services should focus on acquisition of skills for the general improvement of marital interaction among married persons.

INTRODUCTION

Marital relationship is the foundation of family life because it involves the union between a man and a woman as husband and wife. Marriage is a component part of the culture usually formalized by the custom, law and occasionally solemnized by religion. It is a means by which physiological, procreational, social, emotional and security needs are satisfied. The human family has become one of the most widely discussed issues in recent times. Its importance to human existence led to the United Nations declaration of 1994 as the international year of the family.

Human society is essentially developed from marital relationship when persons are wedded, they always vow to remain in the bond of unity and love "until death do them part". However, available statistics of marital breakdown show that many married persons who make such vows do not keep them to the end (National Centre for Health Statistic 1994). The breakdown of marital relationship has become a global malady affecting both the rich and the poor: from the royal families of prince and princesses down to the peasant farmers in our contemporary time. The happenings among Nigerian married persons in the present day make on fear and doubt if any joy is really attached o marriages. This is because married persons frequently nag, quarrel or fight, which may eventually lead to separation and divorce in extreme cases.

Divorce is the end result of a malfunctioning marital relationship. It traumatic effects on the society

are numerous (Riches 1991). A close look at the implications shows that family life and marriage are in for serious trouble. Statistics have shown that in America, for example, one out of every two marriages contacted end in a divorce (National Centre for Health Statistics 1994). This situation is not significantly different in other parts of the world, Nigeria inclusive. For example, in Nigeria divorce statistics from the federal high court, Benin-city, showed that 99 divorces were granted within 4 years of marriage. In 1990 there were 23 divorces; 32 in 1991; 19 in 1992 and 25 in 1993. The lower courts, for example, Magistrate, Area and customary probably recorded more divorce cases. The above statistics show that the rate of divorce cases is assuming a significant proportion.

These examples given are an insight into the unsavoury fate of marriages in Nigeria. Generally, adjustment period given not long after the wedding day and its outcome always determines either the union's survival or its demise. Soon after wedding many things begin to unfold, for instance, selfishness in management of finances and poor communication flow (Ebinuwa-Okoh 2007). Available data and experience have shown that quite a number of married persons fail to realize the marital bliss which they had earlier desired. This is because at marriage, a new and much more intimate dimension of the relationship is added. Many married persons may not have tested psychological capabilities to cope sufficiently in marriage before going into wedlock, and therefore they cannot adjust to the demands of living together in such intimate relationship.

Human society is dynamic. There are constant changes in social values mass media, science and technology. These changes have come so rapidly that the new social problems, such as severe permissiveness and increase in divorce cases have led to new morality including the breaking down of traditional norms. Such breakdown of values has numerous implications. They include sexually transmitted diseases, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) unwanted pregnancies and abortions, abandonment as well as single-parenthood. These implications have different dimensions and are causing great problems in the marital world. (Edelmar 1995).

These changes are capable of stretching family relationships to a breaking point. When this happens, love which is the true bedrock of marriage collapses. There is a communication breakdown. Sex life becomes unsatisfactory. Nothing holds together, and mistrust sets in (Eneh and Ndom 1996; Agbe 1998; Ezeh 1998; Mallum 1999). This phenomenon has not been adequately researched into our society. This study is set to examine to what extent communication flow, emotional expression, financial management, work involvement, gender, personality types, duration of marriage which taken together can explain changes in marital adjustment.

Specifically, the study provided answers to the following questions:

1. To what extent predictors when taken together predictor marital adjustment among married persons.
2. What is the relative contribution of the variables to the prediction of marital adjustment

METHODOLOGY

(a) Subjects

Multi-stage purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample size of two thousand five hundred and sixty-one (2,561) married persons from nine Local Government Area from 3 senatorial districts in Delta State. Two thousand, five hundred and sixty one (2561) subjects were sampled comprising of 1,318 males and 1245 females representing 51.5% and 48.5% respectively of the sample. Married individuals, whose marital duration was less than 10 years were 1,356 representing 52.9% of the sample while those whose marriage was above 10 years were 1,205 or 47% of the sample. The non-graduates were 1,242

or 48.5% while the degree holders were 1,318 or 51.5% of the sample. The individuals that got married before age 30 was 1700 or 66.4% of the sample. Those who got married after 30 years were 861 or 33.6% of the sample.

Instrument and Data Collection

Marital adjustment and personality type's inventory provided data for this study. The development and validation of the 60-item MAPTI are reported elsewhere (Eyenck 1981) Ebenuwa-Okoh 2007). In structure it is divided into two parts. Part one sought relevant demographic information and the part is consists of 5 factors: (1) Financial management (2) Communication flow (3) Emotional expression (4) Work involvement (5) General marital behaviour and personality types. The instrument has face and content validity. The internal consistency reliability estimates reported for the factors are FIM=0.90 COF=0.74, EME= 0.89, WOI=0.80, PET=0.78 GAB=0.88. The reliability for the whole instrument is 0.90 all at $p < 0.05$

The instrument was administered on the subjects in their selected L.G.A. areas. Two research assistants facilitated the data collection. For data analysis, descriptive, multivariate statistical tool were employed. However, in this paper, only MR, R^2 (adj) t-test and F are reported.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows that the use of several variables (work involvement, financial management, communication flow, emotional expression, personality types, gender duration of marriage) to predict marital adjustment yielded a coefficient of multiple regression R of 0.597 and multiple regression square (R^2) of 0.355 (adj). The table also shows that analysis of variance of the multiple regression data yielded an F-ratio of 202.301 (Significant at the 0.05 level).

Table 2 shows for each independent error variable, the standardized regression weight (B), the standard error of estimate (SeB), the degree of freedom (Df), the T-ratio, and the level at which the T-ratio is significant. As indicated in the table, the T-ratio associated with only 4 variables are significant at the 0.05 level.

The result of the present study reveals that the variables, when taken together, seem to be more effective in predicting marital adjustment.

Table 1: Regression analysis on marital adjustment

Multiple R =.597				
R Square =.357				
Adjusted R Square =.355				
Standard Error of Estimate: - 5.425.				
ANOVA				
Source of variation	Df	SS	MS	F-ratio
Due to regression	T	41580.116	5954.302	202.301
Due to residual	2552	75112.632	29.433	
Total	2559	116792.784		

Table 2: Relative contribution of the independent variables to the prediction

Variable	B	SEB	Beta	T	Significant	p-value
WOI	7.627E.02	.026	.049	2.899	.003*	S*
FIM	.367	.028	.231	12.977	.000*	S*
COF	.256	.039	.121	6.622	.000*	S*
EME	.648	.029	.404	22.731	.000*	S*
PERSON	1.812E.02	.019	.016	.947	.344	NS
GENDER	.153	.215	.011	.710	.476	NS
DUM	-.395	.215	-.0292	-1.833	.007	NS
Constant	15.196	1.233		12.321	.000	

The observed F-ratio is significant at the 0.05 level, this is an indication that the effectiveness of a combination of the independent variables in predicting marital adjustment could not have occurred by chance. The magnitude of the relationship between marital adjustment and a combination of the independent variables is reflected in the values of coefficient of Multiple R (square) (0.357) as shown in Table 1. It may thus be said that about 35% of the total variability in marital adjustment is accounted for by a linear combination of the predictor variables.

As for the extent to which each of the independent variables contribute to the prediction, the value of the T-ratio associated with respective variables, as shown in table 2, indication financial management, communication flow, work involvement each contributed significantly to the marital adjustment. The values of the standardized regression weights associated with these variables (see Table 2) indicate that variables (emotional expression) is the most potent contributor to the prediction followed by financial management, communication flow and work involvement in that order.

DISCUSSION

The study reviewed emotional expression is significantly related to married person's marital adjustment.

This finding is inline or tallies with that of Illita (1996) who identified warmth and calmness as a component of emotional expression as a crucial ingredient to the emotional health of the family. However, the significance of the present findings show that emotional expression is the strongest predictor of marital adjustment seen as affectionate expression of love which symbolizes security, care, protection, appreciation, comfort and approval.

Financial management significantly relates to marital adjustment. The second hypothesis was also rejected because there is a relationship between financial management and adjustment. This is an indication that financial issues constitute major aspect of family daily living. The significance is not only a means of exchange but also a symbol of status, influence, authority power and security. These findings tallies with those findings of Kerkmann et al. (2000) which says that there is a positive relationship between finance and marital adjustment.

There is a relationship between communication flow and marital adjustment in this study. These findings collaborate with Amono-Kehinde (1999) who, found that there is a positive association between marital communication and marital adjustment. This significance of this finding shows that effective communication enables married persons to show love, care, concern and acceptance of each other. Thus making the married

persons to become more personal, more spontaneous. Hence partners experience greater ease in self-disclosure. Work involvement also significantly correlated with marital adjustment. This finding is consistent with Osakwe and Ebenuwa-Okoh (2003). Ode (2002) and Idowu (1998) asserted that work involvement of married persons provide them the opportunity to acquire social skills which in turn enhance the achievement of smooth and peaceful marital relationships. On the other hand, gender duration of marriage and personality types were significant in this study.

CONCLUSION

The conclusions drawn from this were that emotional expression, financial management, communication flow and work involvement were significant correlates and predictors of marital adjustment while gender, duration of marriage and personality types were neither correlates nor predictors of marital adjustment. Emotional expression was the best predictor variable in the study.

IMPLICATION FOR EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING PRACTICE

These factors that have been identified as significant correlates have implication for education and counselling, especially for the marriage counsellor. The emergency incidence of marital crises has many attendant challenges and problems that people face, and they need to be properly addressed. One of the ways by which the challenges and difficulties connected with marriage can be addressed or practically solved is for educators and counsellors to understand the problems and provide knowledge-based

information that will provide the skills that will enable them carry on effectively in whatever circumstances they feel themselves.

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