

Full Length Research Paper

Personality variables as correlates of marital adjustment among married persons in Delta State of Nigeria

E. E. Ebinuwa-Okoh

Department of Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka – Nigeria.
E-mail: ebenuwaokoh@yahoo.com.

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This study examined the extent to which emotional expression, communication flow, financial management and work involvement predict marital adjustment among married persons in Delta State, Nigeria. One question was raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. 2561 married persons were selected through the use of purposive sampling technique to participate in the study. Data were gathered using a questionnaire titled “Marital adjustment and Personality Types Inventory (MAPTI). It has a reliability of .90. The analysis of the data generated from the respondents revealed that emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, works involvement are significant correlates and predictors of marital adjustment. Consequently, it was recommended that counseling services should focus on acquisition of skills for the general improvement of marital interaction among married persons.

Key words: Emotional expression, communication flow, management work Involvement, personality types, gender, duration of marriage, marital adjustment.

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 married persons are wedded, they always make commitment to remain in the bond of unity and love “until death do us 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 break-down of marital relationship has become a global phenomenon affecting both the rich and the poor: from the royal families of princes and princesses down to the peasant farmers in our contemporary time. The happenings among Nigerian married persons in the present

day make one fear and doubt if any joy is really attached to 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. Its 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 contracted 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, e.g. Magistrate, Area and customary probably recorded more divorce cases. The above statistics show that the rate of divorce cases is assuming a significant proportion.

The examples given are as insight into the unsavory fate of marriage 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 (Ebenuwa-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 several permissiveness and increase in divorce cases. These have led to new morality including the break-down of traditional norms and values. Such breakdown of values has numerous implications. These 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 problem in the marital world. (Edelman 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. Leading to communication breakdown. Consequently, sex life becomes unsatisfactory. Nothing holds together, and mistrust sets in (Eneh and Ndom, 1996; Agbe, 1998; Ezeh, 1998; and Mallum, 1999). This phenomenon has not been adequately researched into in our society. This study sought to examine the extent to which communication flow, emotional expression, financial management, work involvement; gender, personality types, and duration of marriage explain changes in marital adjustment.

The purpose of study

1. To determine the degree of correlation and prediction of married person's emotional expression (EME), financial management (FIM), communication flow (COF), work involvement (WOI), Personality types (PET), gender, duration of marriage (DUM) and their marital adjustment (MAA).
2. What is the relative contribution of each of the variables in predicting marital adjustments?

Research Question

What is the degree relationship between married persons emotional relationship, (EME), financial management (FOM) communication flow (COF) work involvement

(WOI), gender, personality types (PET) duration of marriage and their marital adjustment?

Research hypothesis

There is no significant predicting relationship between personality variables of (Communication flow, emotional expression, financial management, work involvement, personality types, gender, duration of marriage) and marital adjustment.

METHODOLOGY

Design of study

The study is a survey. It adopted expo-facto design. It is also correlation in nature. There is because the study sought to establish the degree and the nature of the correlation and prediction among the seven variables.

Population

The target population for the study is all married persons in Delta State. There is no reliable record of the actual number of married persons in the state. This is because most individuals marry through traditional method and do not register their marriage thereafter. The estimated population for Delta State according 1991 population census was 2.5 million. Based on the above figure, the estimated population, for married persons was placed on 250,000.2561 subjects were selected for this study.

Sample and sampling procedure

Multi stage purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of two thousand, five hundred and sixty one (2.561) married persons from nine Local Government Areas from 3 senatorial districts in Delta State. The sample comprises of 1,318 (51.5%) males and 1,245 (28.5%) females. In the sample, married individuals, whose marital duration was less than 10 years were 52.9% while those whose marriage was above 10 years were 47%. The non-graduates were 48.5% while the graduates, were 51.5% of the sample. The individuals that got married before age 30 were 1,700 or 66.4% of the sample. Those who got married after 30 years formed 33.6% of the sample.

Instrument and data collection

Marital Adjustment and personality types inventory was used to generate data for this study. The reliability of this instrument was established using Cronbach alpha. Cronbach alpha measures internal consistency. The instrument for this study had its subscales derived from standardized personality types, marital adjustment and marriage builders (Eyensck 1963; Spanier, 1978; Harley, 2002; Ebenuwa – Okoh, 2007). The Instrument was in two parts. Part one on sought relevant demographic information and the part two consisted of 5 factors; Financial management, Communication flow; Emotional Expression; Work involvement; 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 was 0.90 (at $p < 0.05$). The research instrument was

Table 1. Inter-correlation matrix, means and standard Deviations of the independent variables (personality) and Dependent variables (marital adjustment).

Variables	FIM	COF	EME	WOI	PET	DUM	SEX	MAA
FIM	100							
COF	.397*	1.00						
EME	.304*	.390*	-100					
WOI	.155*	.100*	-.010	1.000				
PET	.058	-.028	-.123	.313*	1.000			
DUM	-.026	.038	-.015	-.007	.010	1.000		
SEX	-.020	.021	.034	.001	.0042	.006	1.000	
MAA	.411*	.378*	.521*	.098*	-.0090	-.360	.018	1.000
M	24.45	25.11	27.35	21.05	28.52	1.45	1.46	50.00
SD	4.24	3.21	4.25	4.35	5.97	.50	.50	6.76

N = 2561 = All coefficients are significant at 0.05 level.

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis of Factors Predicting Marital adjustment among married persons in Delta State (n = 2561).

Analysis of variance							
Source of variation	Df	SS	MS	F-ratio	MR	R ²	R ² (adj)
Due to regression	7	41580.116	5954.302				
Due to residual	2552	75112.632	29.433				
Total	2559	116792.784					

* Significant at 0.05 level.

administered personally on the subjects by the researcher and two research assistants we facilitated the data collection.

Data analysis

The data collected were analyzed in the following ways: The instrument were retrieved and scored. The respondent's scores based on emotional relationship, communication flow, work involvement, duration of marriage, gender, personality types, and financial management as they relate to marital adjustment were obtained. The mean, standard deviation, correlation matrix and multiple regression statistical tools were used to analyse the research question and hypotheses.

RESULTS

The analysis of data was done in Tables 1 – 3 and their interpretation presented below each of the table based on the research question and the null hypothesis tested in this study.

Question 1: What is the degree and nature of relationship between the personality variables of (Communication flow, emotional expression, financial management, work involvement, personality types, gender, duration of marriage) and their mental adjustment.

Table 1 show the means, standard deviations and inter-correlations matrix of the independent (personality) and dependent (marital adjustment) variable. It answers ques-

tion 1, there are positive and significant correlations between 4 of the seven independent variable and the dependent variable. The significant variable are emotional expression correlated with marital adjustment with the r-value .521 ($P < 0.05$) while Financial management and marital adjustment (FM $r = .411$ ($P < 0.05$)). and communication flow and marital adjustment (COF $r = .378$ ($P < 0.05$)). Work involvement and marital adjustment (WOI $r = .98$ ($P < 0.05$)) whereas the variables of Personality types (PET) and duration of marriage (DUM), and marital adjustment (MAA) are negative and not significant with MAA. The r values are PET $r = 0.09$ ($P < .648$) and DUM $r = -0.36$ ($P < .66$). $r = 0.018$, ($P < .355$). The relationship between gender and marital adjustment is positive but not significant.

As shown in table 2 the multiple regression analysis computed produced an F-ratio of 202.301*, which was significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. In order to determine the predictive power of these variables, the R² adjusted was computed and the value .36 was obtained. This shows that the amount of variance (PCT) contribution of variables of Communication flow, emotional expression, financial management, work involvement, personality types, gender, duration of marriage to marital adjustment was 36%. This suggests that these factors significantly influence marital adjustment.

Table 3. Testing the significance of Regression weights of each factor as predictor of marital adjustment (n = 2561).

Variables	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	-0.292	-1.833	.007	NS
Constant	15.196	1.233		12.321	.000	

B = Regression coefficient, SEB: Standard Error of B, P < 0.05 level of significance.

However, in order to show the significance of the predictive power of each of these variables, a regression coefficient was computed. Using student's t-statistic. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of data analysis is presented in Table 3.

As shown in Table 3, the factors of communication flow, financial management, emotional expression, work involvement with computed t-values of 6.622, 12.977, 22.831, 2.899 respectively, were found to be significant at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, the conclusion drawn that each factor of communication flow, financial management, emotional expression, work involvement factors significantly influenced marital adjustment.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that emotional expression is significantly related to married person's marital adjustment. This finding is in line with that of Illita (1996) who identified warmth and calmness as component of emotional expression as crucial ingredient to the emotional health of the family. However, this finding shows that emotional expression been the strongest predictor of marital adjustment is an affectionate expression of love, which symbolizes security, care, protection, appreciation, comfort and approval.

Financial management significantly relates to marital 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. This finding 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 Amao-Kehinde (1999) who, found that there is a positive association between marital communication and marital adjustment. 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 findings is consistent with (Osakwe and Ebinuwa – Okoh, 2003; Ode, 2002; Yahaya and Idowu, 1998), which 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 not significant in this study.

Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from this was 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 counseling. Especially, for the marriage counselor. The emergence incidence of marital crises has many attendant challenges and 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 practically addressed is for educators and counselors to understand the problems and provide knowledge – based information that will enable them carry on effectively in whatever circumstances they find them-selves.

Clinicians in the field of counseling have to focus on the quality of marital relationship. This implies that they should put in place different intervention programs. The first stage should be purely preventive, such as marital enrichment programme lead to mutual understanding in

marital relationship. While the subsequent stages should be creative or clinical level, all will function better.

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