

INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOSITY AND EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND ON MARITAL SATISFACTION OF COUPLES IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of religiosity and educational background on marital satisfaction of couples in Oyo State, Nigeria. Two hundred (200) couples constituted the study's sample that was selected through simple random sampling technique in Oyo State, Nigeria. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with standardized instruments (a self developed scale tagged marital satisfaction Questionnaire was used) with 0.81 reliability coefficient and the data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Two research questions were formulated and answered. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among selected couples ($r = .771$; $P < 0.05$) and there is a significant relationship between educational background and marital satisfaction of selected couples ($r = .771$; $P < 0.05$). In view of these findings, the study stresses and advocates the need for family counselling centres to be established and be functional in various communities, and couples should be taught the importance of attending and visiting family counseling centers. Marriage seminars and workshops should be introduced to encourage marriage counsellors, religious bodies and other stake holders of family affairs to educate married couples and also the mature singles so as to will help them to re-orientate their knowledge for efficient marriage life ahead.

Keywords: *Religiosity, Educational background, Couples and Marital satisfaction*

Background to the Study

Marriage is perceived as a social institution under which a man and a woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitment. One ultimate thing that must be in mind is that marriage institution is not accidental, but meant to achieve certain purposes. Marriage is also a socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two

adult individuals. It is a unique institution that affirms and supports a distinct sociology in human culture; bridging of the gender gap, facilitates the generation of life through the fusion of sexes; and promotes the birthright of children to know; be connected to; and to be in stable relationship with their natural parents (Papeboes & Whitehead, 2011). Marriage

is a legal union between a man and a woman as husband and wife, which further connotes matrimony, match wedlock, alliance, association, union, to mention a few (Ariyo, 2013).

Deducing from the definitions given above, certain purposes that constitute marriage are unveiled as follows: companionship; social integration of persons, approved sexual union; mutual commitment; mutual growth, bridging of the gender gap; and promoting the birthright of children. Ariyo (2013) shows that what people consider being very important in marriage are love, sexual fidelity and ability to talk about feelings have been fairly similar over past two decades. It is also discovered that a person's beliefs about marriage and how marital satisfaction was achieved might significantly affect one's expectations and readiness for marriage (Ariyo, 2013; Papeboes & Whitehead, 2011). The beliefs of people in the Western World and in Africa about marriage and how marital satisfaction is achieved could affect their readiness and expectation for marriage.

Marriage as a matter of fact can be defined as a legal term describing certain relationships concerning individuals in order to fulfill three different types of needs: material, sexual and psychological. Many factors may contribute to relationship satisfaction, but satisfaction or lack of it ultimately motivates people to remain together or break up. People who are satisfied with their relationships tend to remain together. People who are not satisfied with their relationships tend to separate or divorce. Report shows that only one third of married persons are

happy with their marriage which had taken place for half a decade. Independent of divorce, relationship research suggests that most, if not all, couples go through difficult periods that cause significant distress and put individuals at risk for symptom development. Marital distress can lead to higher levels of depression and anxiety, and can negatively affect children of the union, which can lead to negative outcomes later in life (Bradbury, Fincham and Beach, 2010).

The connection between relationship distress or dissatisfaction and personal emotional turmoil emphasizes the importance of researching causes for relationship distress and implementing effective intervention strategies to circumvent either the dissolution of a marriage or the entering into a marriage that would later end in divorce (Snyder, 2005). Understanding the underlying elements that lead to marital satisfaction is essential for identifying how to approach couples seeking treatment for distress in their marriages. Since the 1950s, researchers such as Papeboes & Whitehead (2011) and Ariyo, 2013) have been examining factors that contribute to marital satisfaction. Physical attractiveness, affection, negativity, age at marriage, socio-economic background, similar goals and interests, and sexual activity are all factors that have been considered to affect marital satisfaction (Matthais cited in Ariyo, 2013).

The concept of marital satisfaction is used to describe the extent to which a person enjoys his/her marriage. Marital satisfaction means good feeling of marriage. Kaplan and Maddux (2012) state

that marital satisfaction is an individual experience in marriage which can only be evaluated by each person in response to the degree of marital pleasure. It depends upon the individual's expectations, needs and desires in their marriage. Marital satisfaction refers to the degree of satisfaction between the couple. This satisfaction can be addressed both from the wife's perspective towards her husband and the husband's perspective towards his wife. Some researchers like Bradbury (2010) find that in a violent couple relationship, lower level of relationship satisfaction existed as compared to a non-violent couple relationship. Jose and Alfons (2007) argue that marital satisfaction has a negative relationship in relation to physical violence. While, Lewis and Fremouw (2011) state that violence and marital satisfaction are bidirectional, which means that there may be a low satisfaction in the past that leads to violence.

Given that education level generally increases as age increases (e.g. people do not decrease in education level) and that age is positively correlated with marital satisfaction, it seems reasonable to suggest that education level would be positively correlated with marital satisfaction as well. Research has indicated that education level may predict marital satisfaction in some populations, though past studies were focused on whether women continued their education beyond time of marriage or have shown whether educational attainment pre- and post-nuptials was related to marital satisfaction. While studies have explored whether continued education for women

could be predictive for marital instability has been explored, no studies have been devoted specifically to whether education level pre and post-nuptials is related to marital satisfaction (Emily, 2010).

Davis and Bumpass (2006) studied continued education among women. They discover that women with eight or less years of schooling at the time of marriage were less likely to continue with their education, though this was attributed to less initial commitment to education. They also find that women who had some college certificates at the time of marriage were more likely to continue their education past the time of their status and those women who were divorced or separated also tend to continue their education. However, there is no confirming or discontinuing evidence that a desire to continue education is what led to the marital instability that caused the disruption. It would, therefore, be interesting to explore whether education level could lead to marital instability, especially, when Cherlin (2009) and Kalmijn (2009) all discover that highly educated women had higher rates of unstable marriages. Jose and Alfons (2007) also observe that as education level increases, there are indications of increased sexual adjustment problems.

In contrast with the aforementioned findings, Janssen (2008) and Kalmijn (2009) find that marital dissolution is lower among women who are more religious. In fact, he concludes that religiosity at marriage plays the greatest role in accounting for trends in marital dissolution, and stated that women who marry religious partner have more

stable marriages. He also found that marriages were more stable if the husband is religious or more educated, but not if the wife is religious or more educated. Additionally, he realizes that wives that are less educated than their husbands tend to have stable marriage than the other wives who are more educated. Tucker and O'Grady (2011) also include a discussion of intelligence, as measured by educational attainment level, in their study. They investigate factors related to marital satisfaction, including religiosity, attractiveness, education level, and age at marriage. There was a positive relationship between religion of spouse and marital satisfaction of the couples.

Marital satisfaction refers to the couple's relationship inside the family. It is one of the factors that play an important role in women's aggression. Quarreling and aggression in the family and marital relationships are inevitable and do not indicate that the marital relationship must be cut off or end in divorce. The ability to communicate and handle aggression is the two most important elements for a satisfying marriage. In view of this, the present study examines the predictive influence of religiosity and educational background on marital satisfaction of couples in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The issue of marital happiness and joy which suddenly turn soar often constitute the subject of discussion all over the world. Marital relationships depreciate in value so fast that dissatisfaction is expressed by marriage partners. Globally, divorce has become a world problem as many are affected by the effect of it. Those

whose laws prohibit divorce totally complain of the non-existence of a way to escape from unsuccessful and unsuitable marriages. On the other hand, those who have opened the door for divorce, equally for both men and women complain about the growing rate of divorce and the instability of domestic life and its harmful effects. In a nutshell, reasons for high rate divorce in Nigeria include, lack of courtship, incompatibility, background differences and unemployment. There have been stable divorce rate of approximately 50% of married couples (Kreider and Fields, 2012). Only one third of married persons report being "very happy" with their marriage, which is down more than half from 25 years ago. Independent of divorce, relationship research suggests that most, if not all, couples go through difficult periods that cause significant distress and put individuals at risk of symptom development. Marital dissatisfaction has brought about high levels of depression and anxiety, and has negatively affected children of broken homes, which has lead to negative outcomes later in life and also make children from such home to engage in anti-social behaviour in the society. In view of the above assertion, the researcher concentrates on the influence of religiosity and educational background on marital satisfaction of couples in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine predictive influence of religiosity and educational background on marital satisfaction among selected couples in

Oyo State, Nigeria. Specifically, other purposes of the study include:

1. to examine the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among selected couples;
2. to investigate the relationship between educational background and marital satisfaction among selected couples

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among selected couples in Oyo State?
2. What is the relationship between educational background and marital satisfaction among selected couples in Oyo State?

Significance of the Study

The study will add to the body of knowledge on marital satisfaction. It will also help families to handle various hurdles which affect their marital satisfaction, and know necessary factors that can influence marital satisfaction. The study will also help policy makers to formulate and execute relevant policies that would enhance Nigerian family success and satisfaction. It will also aid the counselors and give them appropriate knowledge about families/couples and necessary ways to solving marital dissatisfactions. The study will also be a resource and reference source to teach singles about things and factors to be considered for marital satisfaction and how to avoid marital hurdles when they are married in the future.

It is important to note that findings in this study will also serve as a source of reference for other researchers who may

want to conduct the same or similar study on other subjects in the part of the country.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopts descriptive survey research design of *ex-post-facto* type. This is a type of research study which test for relationship among variables. Data from this study will only be measured without any manipulation so as to determine the relationship among the independent variables (religiosity and educational background) and dependent variables (marital satisfaction among selected couples) in Oyo State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study includes randomly selected couples in five LGA of Oyo state, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Stratified random technique was used in selecting participants from five Local Government areas in Oyo State. Two hundred and twenty questionnaires were distributed among them. At the end, two hundred couples were able to complete the questionnaires which the researcher used in collating the data.

Research Instrument

A self developed scale tagged Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) was used to measure the variables in the study. The scale consists of three sections A-C. Section A consists of personal data such as age, gender, educational qualification among others and section B consists of items that measure the religiosity of the respondents. Section C consists of the items that measure the marital satisfaction of the respondents. The instrument was, however, revalidated

and the result yielded reliability coefficient of 0.81 which was considered adequate for the usage.

Procedure for Data Collection

The instruments were administered to the participants in their workplaces and offices. The researcher was assisted by research assistants in the administration and collection of the instruments. In each of the selected local governments, the administration and collection of instruments were done on the same day. The whole data collection lasted for approximately two weeks.

Method Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistical analysis was

used to analyse the data. This was used to establish the relationship among the independent variables and dependent variable.

Results and Discussion of Findings

This section presents the results and summary of findings. The study investigates the predictive influence of religiosity and educational background on marital satisfaction among selected couples in Oyo State, Nigeria. The results are presented below:

Research Question One: What is the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among selected couples?

Table 1: Religiosity and Marital Satisfaction of Couples

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	R	P	Remark
Religiosity	28.05	15.44	198	200	.771	.000	Significant
Marital Satisfaction	46.00	21.85					

The table 1 above shows that there is significant relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among selected couples ($r = .771$; $P < 0.05$). This means that relationship between religiosity has significant influence on marital satisfaction among couples. This is in line with the finding of Cherlin (2009) and Kalmijn (2009) that marital dissolution is lower among women who are more religious. In fact, he concludes that religiosity at marriage plays the greatest role in accounting for trends in marital dissolution, and stated that women who

marry religious partners have more stable marriages. He also discovers that marriages are more stable if the husband is religious or more educated than if the wife is religious or more educated. Tucker and O’Grady (2011) also include a discussion of intelligence, as measured by educational attainment level in their study. They investigate factors, related to marital satisfaction, including religiosity, attractiveness, education level, and age at marriage. There was a positive relationship between religion of spouse and marital satisfaction of the couples.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between educational background and marital satisfaction among selected couples?

Table 2: Educational Background and Marital Satisfaction of Couples

Variable	Mean	SD	DF	N	R	P	Remark
Educational background	24.85	12.49	198	200	.771	.000	Significant
Marital Satisfaction	46.00	21.85					

The table 1 above shows that there is significant relationship between educational background and marital satisfaction among selected couples ($r = .771$; $P < 0.05$). This means that relationship between religiosity has significant influence on educational background among couples. This is consistent with finding of Davis and Bumpass (2006) who study continued education among women. They find that women with eight or less years of schooling at time of marriage were less likely to continue with their education, though this was attributed to less initial commitment to education. They also found that women who had some college certificates at the time of marriage were

more likely to continue their education past the time of their images and those women who were divorced or separated also tended to continue their education. However, there was no confirming or discontinuing evidence that a desire to continue education is what led to the marital instability that caused the disruption (Bumpass and Sweet, 2005). It would, therefore, be interesting to explore whether education level could lead to marital instability, especially when Cherlin (2009) and Kalmijn (2009) all find that highly educated women had higher rates of unstable marriages. Jose and Alfons (2007) also find that as education level increased, there were indications of increased sexual adjustment problems.

Recommendations

Based on the results and findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. family counseling centers should be established in various communities, and couples should be taught the importance of attending and visiting family counseling centres, which have the tendency to enhance their marital satisfaction;
2. marriage seminars and workshops should be introduced by marriage counselors, religious bodies and other stake holders of family affairs in Nigeria to teach married couples and also the mature singles which will help them to re-orientate their knowledge for efficient marriage life ahead;
3. parents should also be taught the pattern at which they can intervene in marriage as wrong intervention can also militate against couples' marital satisfaction;

4. the film industry in Nigeria can use the media as a medium of reaching the populace on educating them about marriage, which can also have a higher impact on married couples' marital satisfaction;
5. couples should also endeavour to read books, listen to tapes, watch educating marriage movies and films, attend seminars and programmes that will enhance the marital satisfaction in their family;.
6. the Federal Government of Nigeria should find a way of giving attention to family at individual level, because the family is known to be the minute part of the community and national development. Problems in individual families can jeopardize community and national development.

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