

EMOTIONAL ROLE ADJUSTMENT AND MARITAL SATISFACTION OF MARRIED WORKING COUPLES IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction of married working couples in Mbaitoli local Government area of Imo State. One hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The research design adopted was the Correlation research design. Sample of 170 married couples selected from a population of 1700 couples was used for the study. Marital Role Expectation Inventory (MREI) was employed for data collection. The instrument has a reliability coefficient of .84 with split-half method. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to analyze the data generated. Based on the finding, it was recommended among others that for the spouses to enjoy satisfaction in their relationship, there should be appreciation and positive feedback between them.

Keywords: Emotions, Adjustment, marital satisfaction, roles

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage which is a socially-accepted union and bond between personalities and which also results from good interpersonal relationship is believed to be the most crucial and fundamental stage in the development of the life of an individual- and in human relationship. In marriage, upon successful performance of some marital laws and rites, the individuals come together to live and build a family. Marital relationships are heavily guided by culturally determined norms, customs and expectations. Marriage brings great joy and happiness and satisfaction to many but it may also bring dissatisfaction and unhappiness because of the differences in opinions, values, needs, desires habits, diverse expectations and hopes of the person that have decided to stay together as married couple.

Marital satisfaction is a complex, multi-dimensional, psychological state. It is a subjective feeling of satisfaction, happiness and pleasure experienced by the spouse when all aspects of the marriage is considered. Tawakol, Nikbaklit, Moghadam, Salehiniya and Razaee (2017) see it as a global evaluation of one's attitude towards his marriage. King (2016) defines it as an individual attitude towards his marital relationship. This implies that marital satisfaction can be regarded as a mental state that shows the perceived benefit and cost a marriage to a particular individual.

Marital satisfaction enables couples to cope with difficult life situations and stress, and may also contribute to partners' wellbeing and mental health. It is a psychological state which is not achievable automatically but requires that couple to invest more in it for its realization especially in the early years of their married life because of the unstable nature of the satisfaction and the risk in the relationship. But marital satisfaction is experienced when their marital relationship is consistent which what had been expected. As stated by Chehreh, Ozgo, Awiagalu and

Nasiri (2018). Socio-economic status, education, gender, religion, intelligence, emotions, adjustment, attitude, physical attractiveness, gender are some of the factors that influence and highly predict marital satisfaction..

In Nigeria, especially in the south east, the change in the role of the husband as the main provider and breadwinner of the family, and the woman as the person that takes care of the house hold chores to a situation where both couple work, take up roles that were not previously done by each gender has placed more strain on the marriage. Also the modern democratic marriage which demands that both parties should be equally involved in the decision making and responsibilities in the home is more difficult to operate and sustain at a constant level. The capacity to compromise and to give and take which is essential in successful marital relationship demands maturity of the parties involved. There is a rise in the level of stress in some relationship because of the adjustment in the roles played by the parties especially when there is a class in the needs of the parties involved. (Olah, Kotowska and Ritcher, 2016).

Marital role adjustment includes domestic role adjustment, financial role adjustment, emotional role adjustment, and extended family role adjustment, sexual role adjustment, etc. Many researchers have carried out studies on the relationship between marital role adjustment and marital satisfaction but the present study is concerned with the emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction of married couples in Imo state.

The word emotion comes from the Latin word *emovere* meaning to move, stir, agitate. According to American Psychological Association (APA, 2019) Emotion is a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioural and psychological elements. Emotion may also be regarded as how as how individuals deal with matters or situations they find

personally significant. Emotional experiences consist of subjective experiences, a psychological response and a behavioural or expressive response. Basic emotions include sadness, happiness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust.

Emotions can affect an individual's everyday life by compelling him to take actions and it can also influence the decision the individual makes about life. In marriage, emotion help to keep a meaningful connection and romantic bond thriving. This means that marriage can absolutely survive moments of anger, complaints or criticism and even some longer periods of negativity if conflicts in role adjustment are managed in a healthy and respectful way.

Of utmost importance to this study was the relationship between emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction of working couples. Anyamene and Etele (2020) studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction of male and female married teachers in Anambra state. In their findings from a sample of 1, 344 married teachers, there was a significant low relationship existing among married teachers, emotional intelligence and their marital satisfaction. It encouraged counselors involved in marital counseling to pursue habits and activities that promote marital satisfaction through periodic seminars and counseling sessions. Anhange, S., Iorwuese, P., Kwaghbah, A., Iortsughun, S. and Aondona, A. (2017) investigated emotional intelligence, happiness, hope and marital satisfaction among married people in Markurdi metropolis, where the sample consisted of one hundred and twenty 120 respondents consisting of 65(54.2%) males and 44(36.71%) females with 11(9.21%) no indicating their gender were selected through purposive sampling. Simple linear and standard multiple regression analyses were used for statistical analysis. Findings revealed that emotional intelligence did not have a significant influence on marital satisfaction among married people. They also found that happiness and hope had a

significant influence on marital satisfaction among married people.

Nwatu (2020) in the study of Marital Stress and Married Working Women in Nigeria: the role of copying strategies, self concept and Educational qualification emphasized the challenges married women were facing as a result of the roles they play at home and in the society, which may require some psychological remedies. With sample of 377 participants whose ages were between 25 and 55(mean 60.63 and SD 7.59) participated in the study. Three research instruments were used for data collection while three-way Analysis of variance was used for data analysis. Result disclosed that emotion-focused strategies yielded less manifestation of marital stress (1,369) =6.33, sig=.012. It was equally specified that copying strategies together with self concept had a joint impact on marital stress (1,369) -4.18, sig =.042. Hence, married working women should strive for higher education and also use emotion-focused copying strategies in dealing with marital. Shahid and Kazmi (2016) in their study of "the Role of Emotional Regulation in Marital Satisfaction", explored the role of emotional regulation in marital satisfaction. The objective of the study was to assess the relationship between emotional regulation and marital satisfaction. The study also examined emotional regulation as the significant predictor of marital satisfaction and has gender differences in this respect. The sample consisted of 200 married couples through convenient sampling techniques. Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test and ENRICH Marital Satisfaction scale along with demographic sheet were administered to the spouses for data collection. The scales were found highly reliable with alpha reliability coefficient 0.779 for EMS, and 0.813 for SSEIT. Results from the Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between Emotional Regulation and Marital Satisfaction. T-test analysis revealed that gender differences were found among spouses in the context of emotional regulation. Males spouses were found more

emotionally regulated than female spouses in their marital life.

In their study of Emotional Expression and spousal support as predictors of marital satisfaction, Yedirir and Hamarta (2020), studied the relationship between spousal support and the ability to express feelings of marital satisfaction, and the extent to which spousal support and the ability to express feelings can predict marital satisfaction. With a sample of 195 married couples (n=390) the Marital Life Scale, and Emotional Expression Scale were administered to the married couples and their Personal Information Form was provided. Samples were drawn using simple random sampling. The result from the Pearson Moment Correlation, Multiple Regression and Kendall Correlation Coefficient indicated that there was a relationship between all the sub-dimensions of spousal support and marital satisfaction, moreover spousal support as found to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. While a significant correlation was found between marital satisfaction and expression of proximity emotion, one of the sub-dimensions of the Emotional Expression Scale, no significant correlation was found between the expression of negative and positive emotions. Also according to the results the multiple regression analysis, the expressions of feelings did not predict marital satisfaction.

Rosand, G., Slining, K., Eberhand-Gran, M., Roysamb, Eand Tambs K. (2012) in the study of the buffering effect of relationship satisfaction on emotional distress in couples, observed marital distress and depression frequently co-occur and partnership quality is associated with depressive symptoms and mental disorders in both men and women. For instance, a wife who has not learned from her parents how to handle stressful situations in life and lacks self-confidence and self reliance may tend to run to her parents at the slightest disagreement or provocation by her husband and she may find it difficult to adjust and make a stable marriage. Similarly, a man with hot temperament or

who goes into a rage or tantrum when he meets any problem that thwart his effort, or the one who covers up his deficiencies and inadequacies by resorting to excessive alcoholic drink, is not likely to make a successful adjustment n marriage. The aim was to investigate the contribution of a set of risk factors for emotional distress among men and women in couple with special focus on satisfaction with partner relationship.

Also, it examined the extent to which high relationship satisfaction in couples act as buffer against stressful events. The results from the data collected from 62, 956 couples enrolled in the Norwegian Mother and Child Cohort Study showed that the unique effects of relationship satisfaction were similar sizes for both men and women,; substantial for self reported (B=0.23 AND B=0.28 respectively) and weak for partner reported satisfaction (b=0.04 and B=0.02). The study concluded that partner relationship dissatisfaction is strongly associated with emotional distress in men and women. Good partner relationship both perceived by the individual and by the spouse, quite strongly moderates adverse effects of various types of emotional strain. In general, Ozad (2020) noticed that there is a greater possibility of marriage stability among couples who show such personality qualities as kindness, friendliness, cooperation and tolerance in their inter-personal relationships than those couples who are neglectful, authoritarian, intolerant, overconfident, self-confident and dogmatic in their patterns of behavior. It sometimes happens that a man with some outstanding personality may marry a wife with some opposite personality traits. In this case, the personality traits complement each other.

From the above discussion, the present was aimed at investigating whether emotional role adjustment has a significant relationship with marital satisfaction of married working couples in Imo State. This present study would enable them make some adjustment in their roles for better marital satisfaction.

Statement of the problem

High quality and supportive relationship in marriage is very important in the development of healthy individual in all aspect of his life. But observations and researches in the area of marriage have shown that there are many marital crisis in the life of many working couples. This situation has been source of concern to the government, Nongovernmental Organisation, parent, married couples themselves. Local government have organized seminars, workshops for married couples on issue of role adjustment in marriage, marital stability and marital satisfaction and its effect on psychological well being and mental health of individuals. Non-Governmental Organisations and churches are not left out in the campaign to see that marital stability is maintained. But their efforts have not yielded any positive result. It was on this premise that the study was undertaken to investigate emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction of working couples in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State., Nigeria.

The purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction among married working couples in Mbaitoli LGA of Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to: "Determine the relationship between emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction".

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was formulated to guide the study, "There is no significant relationship between emotional role adjustment of married working couples and their marital satisfaction."

METHODS

The study adopted correlation research design. The population comprised of 1700 married working couples in Mbaitoli Local Area of imo State, Nigeria. One hypothesis was formulated in the null to direct the

study. Marital Role Expectation Inventory was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by experts in Educational Psychology and Test and Measurement in University of Calabar. The instrument had three sections, A,B,C. Section A dealt on the demographic information of the respondents such as sex, age, length of marriage, mode of entry into marriage. Section B comprised 10 items designed to measure emotional role adjustment on a four-point modified Likert - type scale ranging from Extremely Happy to Extremely Unhappy. While section C consist of 14 items scored on a four-point modified Likert-type scale ranging from Extremely Satisfied to Extremely Dissatisfied designed to measure the level of satisfaction of the respondents in their marriage. Fifty (50) married working couples who were not part of the study were used to determine the reliability of the instrument with Split- half reliability method. The reliability coefficient was .84. One hundred and seventy (170) copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers and research assistants with the permission of the local government council chairman. All completed copies of the instruments were retrieved. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To test this hypothesis, working couples' emotional role adjustment and their marital satisfaction were compared using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The result is presented in Table 9. The information in Table 9 shows that there is a significant strong positive relationship between working couples' emotional role adjustment and their marital satisfaction ($r=.440$; $p.0.00$). Hence the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between emotional role adjustment of working Couples and marital satisfaction is rejected at the 0.05 level of significance.

TABLE 1. Pearson product Moment correlation analysis of the relationship between working couples emotional role adjustment and their marital satisfaction (n=170).

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	r	p-value
Emotional role adjustment	17.99	1.83	.440*	.000
Marital Satisfaction	23.73	3.35		

*Significant at 0.05 level of significance

The finding of the study has indicated that there is a strong positive relationship between emotional role adjustment and marital satisfaction. This implies that emotionally adjusted spouses will display better marital quality and is much likely to obtain marital satisfaction. This is in consonance with Yediriri and Hamarta (2015) who revealed that emotional expression and spousal support are predictors of marital satisfaction. Adjustment as explained by Ofoegbu, Amalu and Uchegbue (2020) is the reaction to the demands and pressure of social environment imposed upon the individual. Emotionally role adjusted spouses can process each other's emotional clues and can discuss cooperatively about situations they may have created negative feelings. They also share common interests and joints activities, which reduces the tension and anxiety to a minimal level.

Emotions are very important in any relationship and can either bring marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Couples must be emotionally mature and intelligent before entering into marriage. Also, couples must express positive emotions such as appreciation, happiness, hope etc when experienced. It goes a long way to create satisfaction for the other partner and the marriage in all. Also bottling up negative emotions for too long should be avoided. Couples should learn how to solve issues amicably and on-time to avoid a buildup of negative emotions that may lead to conflict-which means to a fight, struggle, collision or clash (Amalu, Abdullahi and Demson, 2021 p. 79)-and by extension marital dissatisfaction. During counseling, counselors involved in marital counseling should pursue habits and activities that

promote marital satisfaction through periodic seminars and counseling sessions.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded based on the finding that strong positive emotional role adjustment is an issue in marital satisfaction of married couples in Imo State. Therefore, they should be made to understand that for them to be happy, successful and satisfied in their relationship they need to believe in their abilities to succeed and at the same time support themselves emotionally in their role adjustment.

Recommendations

Based on the finding, the following recommendations were made:

1. There should be appreciation and positive feedback between spouses
2. Effective support programmes such as group counseling can be organized for spouses by the counseling unit of the state and how to manage issue in marriage so that it does not affect their work life.
3. Government on their own part should organize seminars, conferences, workshops, drama on how marital issues affect work ethics, they should also encourage the married couples to attend.

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