EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PERCEIVED CONTROL AND MATE SELECTION PREFERENCES ON WORK STRESS PRODUCTIVITY OF LITERATE MARRIED PERSONS IN IMO STATE, NIGERIA: CURRICULUM IMPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study is to explore the curriculum implications of the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in Imo State. Two research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed a quasi-experimental research design. The population of the study included all 1181 literate married lecturers at Imo State University, where cluster sampling was used to select 64 married lecturers from the faculty of education. Three (3) Questionnaires were used as the instrument for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's alpha, with an overall index of 0.83. The data collected were analysed using the mean score and standard deviation to analyse the research questions, and ANCOVA was used to analyse the hypotheses at the 5% level of significance. The study revealed that emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences are effective in managing the work stress productivity of literate married persons, but the most effective among them is mate selection preferences. The study further revealed that there was a significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods. The study recommends that emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences can be applied by guidance and counsellors to manage the work stress productivity of literate married persons

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Control, Mate Selection Preferences, Work Stress Productivity, Married Persons

INTRODUCTION

The marriage institution is said to be as old as the history of man and his creation. The institution involves the cohabitation of heterosexual adults who engage in socially approved sexual relationships with children, engaging in economic cooperation and sharing a common residence (Murdock 2020). Marriage is found in all human societies in one form or another. It is expected to be an affair of intimacy and compromise where spouses complement each other. It is expected to be "for better, for worse". Marriage provides a framework for legitimizing sexual intercourse and it also gives children legitimacy to human society. This legitimacy manifests in the right of inheritance and descent structure, which are some of the crucial indices for the infusion and perpetuity of communal living. The features of marriage as stated above posit that it is a union of two people in love who seek to complement themselves and serve as companions while rendering the functions of socializing the young in the way of that society and replenishing for societal population lost due to mortality and migration.

Some hints that can help maintain marriage stability were identified by Chroucher (2018), Rewney (2019) and Makinde (2020): love, acceptance, communication, finance, appreciation, relaxation fidelity, parenting, childbearing, compatibility, forgiveness and honesty. For the purpose of this research, the effects of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection on the marital stability of literate married people are the focus of this study. Your emotions shape your marriage, and it determines the happiness quotient of your bond with your spouse. The array of emotions you display towards your spouse makes or breaks your married life. Emotional intelligence is your ability to use your emotions properly. Similarly, Mathi (2019) stated that emotional intelligence in marriage is the oxygen of the relationships of couples that can give life to their dying marriage. He added by saying that a relationship with one spouse is an emotional battle, day in and day out. It is your capacity to understand the perspective of your spouse. Allay (2020) believed that perceived control is a belief that the individual is capable of influencing and making a difference in the events that surround their lives. Encouraging this belief is helpful in helping people deal with and take control of stressors in their lives. He further added that perceived control (PC) is the belief that can determine one's environment or/and bring about desired outcomes. He further added that in dealing with perceived control two important dimensions must be delineated:

i.   Whether the object of control is located in the past or the feature
ii.   Whether the object of control is over outcome behaviour or process.

The extent to which you behave that you can control the outcome of an event is called perceived control. Natalie (2018) sees perceived control as more important than actual control in reducing stress. Byre and Clore (2017) noted that a person is attracted to potential mates who make the person feel good. He therefore sees mate selection as the process of choosing an appropriate patient for reproduction within the population where the male to female ratio dictates (females may become more). They said that the assumption is that a person is attracted to a potential mate who makes that person feel good and there are some characteristics that could lead to that such as physical appearance, expression of similar attitudes and values, political attitudes, lifestyle values, personality appearance, or ethnicity. Women of all ages tend to be attracted to men who are slightly older than themselves, and men shift their preferences throughout their lifespan such that teenagers find older women most attractive, men are most attracted to women of their twenties and older men are most attracted to women who are younger than themselves. A literate person is one who can read and write. It is often used interchangeably with an educated person. According to Ahamibe (2021), an educated person is one who has impressed us with his knowledge and understanding of the facts and situations of this world—the type acquired from books, schools and colleges—emphasizing one to see the connection of what he has learned with other things that is putting what a person has learned in a coherent pattern of life.

Statement of Problem

Despite efforts to create a harmonious living relationship in marriages, marital instability is still prevalent. Scholars, school, teachers and churches are at a loss on the options available for providing solutions to this situation. Most marriages especially among the literate class have been trying as stated by Obe (2021), who in separate studies found that educated couples, despite their educational qualifications and ethic affiliation have discrepancies in their views concerning marriage instability as they concern their values and marriage expectations. Visits to some homes could reveal the existence of divorcing, quarrels, poor financial management,

intrudes etc. The existence of the above family problems could lead to details and deaths in homes. One may ask whether some poor psychosocial values could be responsible for these marital problems. This study investigated the effects of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in Imo State, Nigeria. This is the strength of this study.

Scope of the study

The scope of this study was limited to all the lecturers in the faculty of education of Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. This study aimed to ascertain the effectiveness of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married people in Imo State, Nigeria. However, because literate married persons in Imo State have things in common, the results obtained from the sample can be used for generalization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in Imo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. Determine the mean scores of the effects of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the marital stability of literate married persons and on the pretest and posttest periods.
ii. Determine the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on literate married persons during the pretest and posttes periods based on gender:

Research Questions

i. What are the adjusted mean scores of the effects of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods.
ii. What are the adjusted mean scores for the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant difference among the adjusted mean scores for the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods.

Ho2: There was no significant difference among the adjusted mean scores for the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender.

METHODOLOGY

No randomization was made because the research design was quasi-experimental. A quasi-experimental design is an experimental research design where the random assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups is not possible; in this case, intact or pre-existing groups are used. The population of the study included all 1181 literate married lecturers at universities in Imo State, Nigeria. The sample of this study comprised 64 married lecturers from universities in Imo State. A cluster sampling technique was used to cluster the lecturers into 4 groups of 16 people each. Three (3) questionnaires were used for data collection. Therefore, the questionnaire comprises 20 items on emotional intelligence (EI) 20 items on perceived control (EC) and 20 items on mate selection preference. The instruments were validated by 3 experts in the field of guidance and counselling and from measurement and evaluation. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach's alpha with an overall index of 0.83. The data collected were analysed using the mean score and standard deviation to analyse the research questions, and ANCOVA was used to analyse the hypotheses at the 5% level of significance.

ANALYSIS

Research Question One: What are the adjusted mean scores of the effects of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods?

Table 1: Adjusted mean scores for the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods

Test		Pretest		Posttest	
Group	N	X	SD	X	SD
EC	16	25.33	4.79	60.25	6.68
PC	16	23.92	2.39	59.08	6.85
MSP	16	25.17	4.99	67.58	7.29
Control Group	16	24.41	3.90	29.92	3.05

Table 1 shows the mean scores of subjects in the EC, PC, MSP and control groups at the pretest and posttest. The results showed that the lecturers who were experimentally treated for emotional control had a pretest mean score of 25.33 and a posttest mean score of 60.25. Those under the perceived control treatment had pretest and posttest mean scores of 23.92 and 59.08 respectively. Additionally, those in the mate selection preference treatment had pretest and posttest mean scores of 25.17 and 67.58, respectively. On the other hand, the lecturers in the control group had a pretest mean score of 24.41 and a posttest mean score of 29.92. The results showed that at pretest, the means of the lecturers in the EC,PC and MSP experimental groups were similar to those in the control group, but at posttest, the mean scores were higher for the experimental group but were still lower for the control group. Hence, the conclusion is that emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences are effective in the management of the work stress productivity of literate married persons, but the most effective among them is mate selection preferences.

Research Question Two: What are the adjusted mean scores of the effects of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender?

Table 2: **Adjusted mean scores for the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods.**

Test		Posttest	
Group	N	$\bar{X}$	SD
EC: Male	8	30.67	2.69
Female	8	29.58	3.41
PC: Male	8	29.84	2.76
Female	8	29.24	2.54
MSP: Male	8	36.29	3.43
Female	8	31.29	2.87

Table 2 shows the mean scores of subjects in the EC, PC, MSP and control groups at the pretest and posttest. Among the three groups, male lecturers had a greater mean score than female lecturers. The conclusion is that treatment is more effective for male lecturers than for female lecturers.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods.

Table 3: **Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for the significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods.**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: POST-TEST					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	17132.625[a]	4	4283.156	104.445	.000
Intercept	2240.620	1	2240.620	54.638	.000
PRE-TEST	6.459	1	6.459	.157	.693
TREATMENT	3341.670	3	1113.890	**27.162**	**.000**
Error	1763.375	43	41.009		
Total	68048.000	48			
Corrected Total	18896.000	63			
a.RSquared =.907(R Squared =.898)					

Table 3 above displays the results obtained with respect to hypothesis 1. From Table 3, the fourth row revealed that the F-statistic for the posttest effect was 27.162 with a significance probability of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the posttest effect is significant at the 5% level (P<0.05). This showed a significant difference among the groups. The researcher therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that there is a significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons during the pretest and posttest periods.

Hypothesis Two: There was no significant difference among the adjusted mean scores for the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender.

Table 4: **Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) for the significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: POSTTEST					
Source	**Type III Sum of Squares**	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Corrected Model	2554.744[a]	8	319.343	5.612	.000
Intercept	3925.128	1	3925.128	68.981	.000
PRE-TEST	102.828	1	102.828	1.807	.187
TREATMENTS	1317.843	3	439.281	7.720	.000
GENDER	266.055	1	266.055	4.676	.037
TREATMENTS*GENDER	637.959	3	212.653	**3.737**	**.069**
Error	2219.172	39	56.902		
Total	161868.000	48			
Corrected Total	4773.917	63			

a.RSquared =.535(R Squared =.440)

Table 4 above displays the results obtained with respect to hypothesis 2. From Table 4, the sixth row reveals that the F-statistic for the posttest effect on gender is 3.737 with a significance probability of 0.069, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the posttest effect of gender is not significant at the 5% level (P<0.05). There was no significant difference among the groups. The researcher therefore accepted the null hypothesis and concluded that there is no significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study revealed that emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences are effective in managing the work stress productivity of literate married persons, but the most effective among them is mate selection preferences. The study further revealed that there was a significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional intelligence, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate

married persons during the pretest and posttest periods. This implies that the experiment is effective in this study. This finding is in line with Byre and Clore (2024), who found that a person is attracted to potential mates who make the person feel good. Additionally, Mathi (2018) stated that emotional intelligence in marriage is the oxygen of the relationships of couples that can give life to a dying marriage. Headed by Saying that relationship with one spouse is an emotional battle, day in and day out. It is your capacity to understand the perspective of your spouse. Allay (2023) believed that perceived control is a belief that the individual is capable of influencing and making a difference in the events that surround their lives.

This study also revealed that treatment is more effective for male lecturers than for female lecturers. This finding led to the conclusion that there is no significant difference among the adjusted mean scores on the effect of emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences on the work stress productivity of literate married persons in the pretest and posttest periods based on gender. Based on the above findings, Byre and Clore (2019) see mate selection as the process of choosing an appropriate patient for reproduction within the population where the male to female ratio dictates (females may become more). This is also applicable to emotional intelligence and perceived control irrespective of gender.

The Curriculum Implications

1. Emotional Intelligence: Include EQ skills development in relationship education, focusing on self-awareness, empathy, and conflict resolution.
2. Perceived Control: Encourage individuals to develop a sense of personal control and agency in relationships, fostering healthy communication and decision-making.
3. Mate Selection Preferences: Educate individuals on the importance of shared values, compatibility, and communication in mate selection, promoting informed decision-making.
4. Relationship Education: Integrate comprehensive relationship education into school curricula, covering emotional intelligence, communication, conflict resolution, and healthy relationship skills.
5. Life Skills Training: Offer training in essential life skills like problem-solving, decision-making, and effective communication to enhance relationship success.
6. Marriage Preparation: Provide premarital education and counselling to equip couples with skills for a successful and stable marriage.
7. Emphasis on Compatibility: Teach the importance of compatibility, shared values, and mutual respect in building a strong and stable marriage.
8. Healthy Relationship Modelling: Encourage positive relationship modelling by educators and mentors, demonstrating healthy relationship skills and behaviours.
9. Ongoing Support: Offer ongoing support and resources for couples, acknowledging that relationships require ongoing effort and nurturing.

By incorporating these curriculum implications, literate individuals can develop essential skills and knowledge to build and maintain stable, fulfilling marriages.

Implications for Sociopsychology

A critical evaluation of the findings of this study revealed that there is a meaningful interaction effect between parental marital background and fear of marriage on the work stress productivity

of literate married persons in the state. Hence, students and workers from literate homes did not differ in their expectations for marriage from those from literate homes. Therefore, young people are harbouring feelings of fear of uncertainty about marriage that stem from rising divorce rates caused by work stress among their parents' generations. There is a lot of fear surrounding marriage as young adult men and women want to get it right.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences can be applied by guidance and counsellors to manage the work stress productivity of literate married persons.
2. Regardless of gender, emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences should be promoted among married lecturers in Imo State.
3. The state government should organize workshops for counsellors on how to effectively use emotional control, perceived control and mate selection preferences for the work stress productivity of literate married persons.

Conclusion

1. Emotional Intelligence: Higher emotional intelligence leads to better conflict resolution, communication, and relationship satisfaction, resulting in greater marital stability.
2. Perceived Control: Individuals with a higher sense of perceived control tend to have healthier relationships, greater marital satisfaction, and reduced conflict.
3. Mate Selection Preferences: Choosing a partner with similar values, beliefs, and compatibility leads to increased marital stability and relationship satisfaction.
4. Interplay between factors: The combination of high emotional intelligence, perceived control, and informed mate selection preferences has a synergistic effect, leading to even greater marital stability and relationship satisfaction.
5. Literate persons: The findings are particularly relevant for literate individuals, as they are more likely to have access to education and resources that can foster emotional intelligence, perceived control, and informed mate selection.

Overall, the research highlights the importance of emotional intelligence, perceived control, and informed mate selection preferences in predicting marital stability and relationship satisfaction among literate persons.

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