



INFLUENCE OF MARITAL COMMUNICATION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION ON MARRIED LECTURERS OF AKANU IBIAM FEDERAL POLYTECHNIC, UNWANA, EBONYI STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the extent to which marital communication and its dimensions (assertiveness and aggressiveness) relate to marital satisfaction among married lecturers of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana Ebonyi State. A total of one hundred and seventy-one (171) married lecturers comprising one-hundred and two (102) males and sixty-nine (69) females participated in the study (26-59years). The Marital Communication Questionnaires and Marital Satisfaction Questionnaires were the instruments used in data collection. The study utilized the Pearson Correlation technique to estimate the level of relationship. Results shows that marital communication was positively associated with marital satisfaction ($r=.20, p<.01$). However, assertive marital communication a dimension of marital communication was also positively associated with marital satisfaction ($r=.28, p<.01$) whereas aggressive marital communication was not associated with marital satisfaction, but was negatively associated with assertive marital communication. The study provides further evidence that marital communication has a significant impact on marital satisfaction among married people. The study argues that communication in marriage is essential in maintaining marital satisfaction. The paper recommends among other things, that married couples should improve in their communication for effective and efficient marital satisfaction and should always go for psychological counseling.

Keywords: Marital communication, Marital Satisfaction and Married Lecturers

Introduction

Marital communication and satisfaction represent two key elements in understanding current marital dynamics. Several researchers and family therapists claim that one of the core elements appreciations of the marital relationship is communication (Bech & Bek-Gernsheim, 2015; Hendrich & Hendrick, 2018). Communication is not only instrument for marital satisfaction but one of the crucial factors contributing to it (Karney & Bradley (2015).For instance, Harold (2010) noted that marital communication is the glue that holds relationship among married couples together. This is because responsibilities, needs and other marital obligations cannot be achieved without communication. Communication can be described as a social process that uses signs, symbols, languages and other means to bring about inter-exchange of thought and meaning between and among individuals and groups

for better understanding and relationships (Ogili, 2005). It is a complex process of creating meaning in the context of an interpersonal relationship which can be verbal and non- verbal (Barnlund, 2016). Verbal communication means a language expression, whereas non-verbal communication uses body language such as rolling of one's eyes, sighing, blinking of one's eyes and crying (Gottman, (2004). Communication is essential for two persons to feel closeness and to maintain that closeness over time. It is fundamental to human interaction and intimate relationships among married couples.

Marital communication is the way through which couples conveys information for the purpose of creating a shared understanding (Rymes, 2012).It is like a life giving river, when husband and wife cannot communicate, a huge dam is built stopping the flow of water. This causes everything around them to suffer

and slowly die. It involves careful listening, being able to empathize with the person you are listening to and then responding in a constructive and non-defensive manner. It also involves communicating your own thoughts and feelings in a way that is not critical or accusatory, so that partner can truly hear and understand what the other partner is saying instead of becoming angry or defensive. Marital communication is a tool for interpersonal relationship which involves sharing of ideas and information towards reaching an understandable agreement (Diringer, 2017).

Marital communication could be assertive and aggressive (Čudina-Obradović and Obradović, 2005). Assertive communication is open, straightforward, which is characterized by expression of thoughts, attitudes and feelings related to the subject of debate. Assertive individuals have high self-esteem and positive thoughts for themselves. Aggressive communication is the type where the partner wants to insult or humiliate his/her partner, who also can react aggressively, which often breaks the partnership and deepens the conflicts and misunderstandings. In this study, marital communication is the mean through which married lecturers pass information to one another in order to accomplish and coordinate their common goals and interests.

Barnett and Rivers (2016) affirmed that through marital communication both men and women agreed that the emotional connection they shared with their partner was what determined the quality of their relationships and marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction refers to a global level of favorability that individual spouses report with their marital relationship (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 2017). Marital satisfaction is viewed as a function of the comparison between one's best available marital alternative and one's marital outcome (Lenthal, 2009). It refers to the firmness of the marital relationship, rather than to the condition of

individual spouses. Firmness marriages are those that there is no plan to divorce. Marital satisfaction in this study is often viewed as an individual's overall quality of the marriage or the person's happiness with the marriage. Fincham and Linfield (2017), consider marital satisfaction in a broader sense, as a construct formed by two main axes such as positive and negative satisfaction. Positive marital satisfaction explores constructive satisfaction characteristics such as warmth, social support, group enjoyment, positive mood, physical affection, humor/laugh, endearment, and listener responsiveness and love (Newsom, Nishishiba, Morgan and Rook, 2003). It also include ratings of whether one's relationship is interesting, sturdy, enjoyable, friendly, and hopeful (Mattson, Rogger, John son, Davidson and Tincham, (2013) and negative marital satisfaction explores minor unconstructive exchanges such as small disagreements or nagging , angry, coercion, contempt, denial, disruptive process, dominance, hostility, interrogation and verbal attack (Windsor & Bulterwor, 2010). It is equally the relationship which have been captured by ratings of whether one's relationship is bad, lonely, boring, empty, and miserable (Mattson, Rogger, Johnson, Davidson and Tincham, (2013).

Ekot and Usoro (2006) affirmed that for marital satisfaction to be satisfied and to take into account the changing needs of its members hinges on communication. That there is huge relationship between marital communication and satisfaction. For instance, several studies have found that overall marital satisfaction was higher among couples who rated their communication high. Fowers (2000) reported that marital communication contributes to marital happiness which is evidence of satisfied marriage. But Santrock (2002) observed that low marital communication in marriage led to low satisfaction in marriage especially

among women. More and more marital failures are being blamed on the inability of couples to communicate effectively (Orthner, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Strains in marital interaction between couples living together are becoming common. In Nigeria today, the rate at which marital couples experience divorce and re-marriage is quite alarming (Dada & Idowu, 2016). Many families have been and some are still seriously at war with themselves simply because of their failure to arrest, manage or resolve conflicting issues between couples or families. Many families in Nigeria are going through a lot of stress and hardships which communication might have the solution. The effects on the children, couples themselves and community are devastating.

In Nigeria poor marital relationship is on the increase especially among workers including lecturers in tertiary institution. All these constitute serious threat to marital satisfaction in the country. In Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana where most lecturers are married men and women, the increasing conflict and crisis of related family issues might extend to offices and working environment and thereby reducing productivity in the workplace. Social Welfare Department, Nsukka Local Government Area revealed that marriages in Enugu State are besieged by numerous constraints that lead to increase in divorce and marital disharmony. They report that cases of marital disharmony they have treated so far, are characterized by great magnitude of hatred and rancor, lack of communication, uncertainty and hostility, acrimony and antagonism, lovelessness and vilification, atrocity and lack of trust, lack of respect and high-handedness among others which are evidence of not satisfied in marriage. The office, also observed that any attempt to encourage continuity of the

already soured marriages under the circumstances, appear like forcing a square peg into a round hole and vice-versa and may also be suicidal as loss of life may eventually be involved. Social Welfare Department pointed out that low marital communication has direct bearing on marital disharmony. They further reported the number of broken and unsuccessful marriages treated in the under listed years: 141 in 2008, 144 in 2009, 135 in 2010, 164 in 2011 and 139 in 2012. The total number of cases treated within these five years (2008-2012) were 888 which most led to divorce/separation (Source: Social Welfare Department, Nsukka L.G.A. Enugu State, 2012).

The researcher also observed that there is low marital relationship as result of anger, resentment, dissatisfaction, frustration and hopelessness most at times displayed by married civil servants in the office. These could threaten societal values, children and their community where they are serving. In view of this current increase in the cases/rate of divorce and low marital satisfaction globally the researcher sought to determine the influence of marital communication on marital satisfaction among lecturers of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the marital communication and satisfaction among lecturers in Unwana, Federal Polytechnic. Specifically the study will determine:

1. The relationship between marital communication and marital satisfaction among married lecturers in Unwana polytechnic.
2. The association between assertive and aggressive marital communication on marital satisfaction among lecturers.

Hypotheses

1. These will be a significant association between marital communication and marital satisfaction among married lecturers of Federal Polytechnic, Unwana.
2. There will be a statistical significance relationship between assertive and aggressive communication on marital satisfaction among married lecturers.

Method

Participants

A total of 171 married lecturers (male = 102 and female = 69) of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic participated in the study, they were aged 26-59yrs. Convenience sampling technique was used in selecting the sample that participated in the study.

Instruments

The Dutch Marital Communication and Satisfaction Questionnaire (DMCSQ) by Fincham and Lifeled (1990) were used to elicit information from the respondents who are married lecturers. The instrument has 17 items for marital communication (assertive 1-6 items and aggressive 7-17 items) $\alpha=.86$ and marital satisfaction has 13 items ($\alpha=.79$).

Design/Statistics

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics.

Results

Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation Matrix of the factor variable on marital satisfaction.

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Marital satisfaction	34.48	4.77	1	.28**	.01	.20**
2	Assertivemarital communication	21.56	2.92		1	-.34**	.28**
3	Aggressive marital communication	16.19	4.36			1	.66**
4	Marital communication	34.91	4.09				1

****P<01, N =171**

The correlation table reveal that there is a significant positive relationship between marital communication and marital satisfaction($r = .20, P<.01$). There are also significant positive correlation between assertive marital communication and marital satisfaction ($r = .28, P<.01$), assertive marital communication and marital communication ($r = .28, P<.01$), aggressive marital communication and marital communication

($r = .66, P<01$). There is also a significant negative correlation between the dimensions of marital communication –assertive and aggressive ($r = -.34, P<01$).

Discussion

Considering the results obtained through the statistical analysis on the hypothesis which stated that “there will be a significant association betweenmarital communication

and marital satisfaction among married lectures of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, was accepted as a significant positive relationship was found between marital communication and marital satisfaction ($r = .20, P < .01$), this means that, the more positive communication spouse have in their marital relationship the more marital satisfaction they will experience. This finding is in line with the findings of Barnett and Rivers (2016) who affirmed that through marital communication both men and women agreed that the emotional connection they shared with their partner determined their quality of marital satisfaction.

The second hypothesis which stated that “there is a statistical significance relationship between assertive marital communication and aggressive marital communications among married lecturers of Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Ebonyi State was tested and the finding was that “a significant positive correlation exists between assertive marital communication and marital satisfaction ($r = .28, P < .01$), assertive marital communication and marital communication ($r = .28, p < .01$), a significant positive relationship was found between aggressive marital communication and marital communication ($r = .66, P < .01$). there is a significant negative correlation between the dimension of marital communication-assertive and aggressive on satisfaction. ($r = -.34, p < .01$) which means the couples that communicates assertively differ significantly with the couples that communicates aggressively, in their marital satisfaction. This affirmed the findings of Ekot and Usoro (2006) which stated that for marital satisfaction to be experienced and maintained in marriages, its members must hinge on healthy communication (assertive communication) and not on aggressive communication which is negative and unhealthy for the wellbeing of the family.

Summary

Marital communication (assertive and

aggressive) has significant association with marital satisfaction, as assertive communications leads to marital satisfaction while aggressive communications leads to marital dissatisfaction.

Recommendations

The paper recommends the following:

1. That couples should develop assertive communication in their homes in order to enjoy marital satisfaction.
2. Every aspect of aggressive communication must be avoided in marriages for effective and efficient relationship.
3. Families should seek for family counseling any time the need arises in their marriages.
4. Psychologist should help organize seminars, conferences symposiums in schools, organizations, religious institution to help educate, inform and encourage couples on how to maintain positive communication in families in order to enjoy the needed satisfactions in marriages.

Conclusion

Communication is the bedrock of marital satisfaction, for marriages to last and be healthy, married couples must cultivate the culture of assertive communication and avoid aggressive communication in order to maintain a satisfied marital relationship where there will be no intention for separation and divorce.

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