

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION AND MARITAL HARMONY AMONG MARRIED CATHOLICS IN EDO AND DELTA STATES, NIGERIA

¹Obiemeka, Eucharia Nkechi Ph.D ; ²Ugoji, Felicia Ngozi Prof. ;
³Agboola, James Odunayo Ph.D

¹*Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.*

²*Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, Delta State, Nigeria.*

³*Department of Education, Benson Idahosa University, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.*

ABSTRACT : This study examined the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta States. Using the multi-stage sampling procedure, the study investigated the relationship between social Intelligence and marital harmony among 606 married Catholics from 43 catholic parishes in Edo and Delta State Nigeria. Two instruments were used (Assertive Communication Scale and Marital Harmony Scale). Data were analysed using simple regression and multiple regression analysis. The result suggested that assertive communication; moderating variables of duration of marriage, educational status have strong correlation with marital harmony of the married Catholics. It was however, recommended that marriage counsellors should organize workshops, seminars for intending couples and married persons on how to spend quality time and instil the skills of assertive communication in their relationship.

KEYWORDS: *Marital Harmony, Social Intelligence, Married Catholics*

I. INTRODUCTION

Consequent upon the significance of effective communication, researches have been carried out to show how much it relates to marital stability, satisfaction, happiness, quality, adjustment and fulfilment among others. For instance, Esere, Yusuf, and Omotosho (2011) observed that a marriage without effective communication is likely to crumble. Viable communication in marital relationship is the lubricant that softens the maintenance affair from being degraded Ojukwu and Obiji (2016). According to him communication happens constantly in a marital relationship at some level, regardless of whether being expressed verbally or non-verbally. If marriage is healthy and stable, and the couples are satisfied and living in harmony, the society in which the family is the bedrock would be well- built. Observations attest that many married couples are confronted with challenges arising from lack of effective communication which appears to constitute conflicts and stress among some married persons; this ensuenegative interaction and have the capacity of impeding marital harmony, stability and satisfaction. It seems the challenges involved in achieving marital harmony is caused by insufficient skills of assertive communication at all times for a rewarding relationship. The researcher is of the hope that the important role that skilful communication plays between parties in marriage could be a relieve to couples in our Nigerian society especially married Catholics who engage in unresolved conflicts that could lead to different mishap or divorce among other incidents. The Researcher believed that effective communication could help to significantly reduce fighting and avoid a great deal of conflicts, altogether by employing assertive communication. The moderating variables of duration of marriage and educational status were thought to have the capacity of affecting the study outcomes and that was why they were studied alongside the independent variable (assertive communication) and the dependent variable (marital harmony) to know their level of interactions among them. Therefore, this study aimed at knowing the contribution that assertive communication has on marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta States respectively?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers have found out that couples who are happy in their marriages often cite viable interactions as one of most pertinent reason of why their relationship is successful. It is against this backdrop that many suggestions have been advanced as to secure harmony in the marriages of couples in society and with particular reference to married Catholics in Edo and Delta State. The following suggestion is put forward as contained in the study by Esere, Yusuf, and Omotosho (2011) who examined the impact of spousal communication on conjugal stability. A scientific structured survey titled "Impact of Spousal Communication on Marital Stability Questionnaire" was utilized to gather essential information for the examination. Three research questions and three theories were raised for the examination. These include: Is there any impact of spousal communication on marriage stability? There is no significant difference in the view of wedded adult couples because of spousal communication on marital dependability based on sex (gender) and there is no significant distinction in the impression of married adults because of spousal communication on couples' strength based on number of years in marital life. The questionnaire was regulated on 600 stratified randomly chosen married adults in Ilorin city. The t-test and ANOVA measurements were utilized to compare the view of adults who are married based on sex and number of years in marriage. The result of the findings indicates that majority of those who answer the questions attested and agreed to the fact that unhealthy interactions among couples are the bane to marital stability. Moreso, the result of the findings also revealed to a large extent that there exists a significant difference in the manner of couples on the influence of married individual's communication on marital stability on the basis of gender and the years spent in the marriage. In a study carried out by Adigeb and Mbua (2015), psychosocial factors as correlates of marital satisfaction among public servant in Cross River State, Nigeria were investigated. To accomplish the point of this investigation, psychosocial factors were framed in an absence of warmth which lead to sadness and low sexual exercises or struggles between couples; influencing their conjugal relationship in the absence of communication, time spent together and on issues of child upbringing. A total number of 250 married public servants were used as the sample for the study. Based on these, two null hypotheses were formulated. The result revealed that assertive communication among other social factors such as number of children, and time spent together significantly relate with marital satisfaction among public servants. Ledermann, Bodenmann, Rudaz, and Bradbury (2010) carried out a study on the relationship between daily stress outside and inside of the married couples and marital functioning in the form of viable and warmth discussion in conflict situations and marital quality was examined. They found out that relationship stress mediates the relationship between external stress and marital functioning at the individual level, and that the association between relationship stress and marital quality is partially mediated by communication at the dyadic level. Using the Actor-Partner Interdependence and Common Fate Model, the results of 345 couples supported the hypotheses and showed that a person's conjugal relationship stress is more strongly related with one's own external stress than with the partner's external stress. The result of the research shows that both low relationship stress and a high level of positive communication are important in Spousal affair. Uwom-Ajaegbu, Ajike, Fadolapo and Ajaegbu (2015) examined the reasons and the aftermath of communication problems in conjugal relationships. One hundred married individuals were randomly selected from Babcock University which constituted the sample for the study. The percentage frequency was utilized to juxtapose the rationale and the aftermath of communication weakness in the home front. The findings no doubt have it that most of the persons who responded to the research instrument are in the affirmative that when communication is lacking in the home, the marriage indisputably collapse. In addition, Ziaei, Jannati, Mobasheri, Taghavi, Abdollahi and Modanloo (2014) analyzed the relationship of conjugal satisfaction with sexual satisfaction among sexually active employee ladies. Strategies: One hypothesis was figured to direct the study: There is no great connection between sexual fulfilment and level of education. This analytical descriptive examination was carried on 140 married ladies working at educational and clinical institution of Golestan University of Medical Sciences. Besides, [Zaheri](#), [Dolatian](#), [Shariati](#), [Simbar](#), [Ebadi](#), and [Azghadi](#) (2016) investigated the effective factors in marital satisfaction in perspective of Iranian women and men: A systematic review. This systematic review surveys published articles from 2005 to 2015 and discovered that the spiritual and religious, sexual and interpersonal factors, communication, duration of marriage and interaction factors and mental health had positive impact on marital satisfaction.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta state?
2. What is the moderating impact of duration of marriage in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta state?
3. What is the moderating impact of educational status in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta state?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta state

2. There is no significant impact of duration of marriage in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta state
3. There is no significant impact educational status in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics in Edo and Delta state

III. METHODOLOGY

Research design

The correlational approach of the survey research design was adopted for this study. This is a **quantitative type of research design** that attempts to find out the extent of a relationship between two or more variables.

Population

The population in this study comprised all married Catholics in Edo and Delta States. As at the time of this study there are 12,105 married Catholics in the two states. A total number of 6,005 from Delta State while 6,100 from Edo State (Source: Marriage Registry of, Edo/Delta States, 2018).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used in this study is known as multi-stage stratified random sampling technique and simple random sampling technique by balloting. The sample size of 606 married Catholics representing 5% of the entire population were used as the sample for the study.

Research instrument

Two instruments were used to obtain data for the study and the demographic questionnaire, which gives biological information about the respondents. The first instrument was Assertive communication questionnaire. This is used to measure the assertiveness of the married persons in terms of communication while the second instrument was Marital Harmony Scale which was used to measure the marital harmony existing among the married persons. The instruments were designed with the response based on a 4-point rating scale, that is strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4).

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to establish the reliability of the instruments, the researcher administered sixty (60) copies of the instrument of Assertive Communication Scale (ACS) and Marital Harmony Scale (MHS) on married persons who were not part of the study. Assertive Communication Scale (ACS) obtained an r value of 0.92 while Marital Harmony Scale obtained an r –value of 0.82. This showed that the instruments are adequately reliable and suitable for the study.

Method of Data Collection

The instruments were administered to the participants in their various parishes. Six hundred and six married Catholics were randomly selected across 43 parishes of Edo and Delta State. Five (5%) percentage of the population of married Catholics in Edo State is 306 while five (5%) percentage of the population of married Catholics in Delta State is 300. The researcher briefed the respondents on the overall purpose of the study as well as information regarding confidentiality and anonymity. The completed instruments administered were retrieved from the respondents on the same day while some were subsequently retrieved.

Data analysis

Data analysis involved using simple regression and multiple regression analysis to examine the mean, standard deviation and correlation between the variables.

Results

Research Questions 1: What is the extent of relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics?

In order to answer research question 1, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was employed.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of Assertive communication and marital harmony among Married Catholics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	r ^{2(adj)}
Assertive Communication	546	23.647	5.176	.58	.34	.34
Marital Harmony	546	28.104	7.470			

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistical output and the Pearson product moment correlation results. It revealed that assertive communication: $N = 546$, $Mean = 23.647$, $SD = 5.176$ while marital harmony $N = 546$, $Mean = 28.104$, $SD = 7.470$ with an r – value = .58. This provides an answer to research question 1. It indicated that there is a positive relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics. The r^2 adjusted value of .34 constitutes 34% of the variance accounted for by assertive communication in marital harmony among married Catholics.

Research Questions 2: What is the moderating impact of duration of marriage in the relationship among social intelligence, assertive communication, sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among married Catholics?

In order to answer research question 2, Multiple Correlation Analysis was employed.

Table 2: Multiple Correlation Analysis of the moderating impact of duration of marriage in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among Married Catholics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	B	R	R ²	P
Assertive Communication	546	23.647	5.176	.449	-	-	.000
<i>Duration of Marriage</i>	546	2.154	1.009	-.136	-	-	.519
Marital Harmony	546	28.104	7.470	-	-	-	-

Table 2, presents the descriptive statistical output and the multiple correlation results. It showed that assertive communication: N = 546, Mean = 23.647, SD = 5.176, *duration of marriage*: N = 546, Mean = 2.154, SD = 1.009 while marital harmony N = 546, Mean = 28.104, SD = 7.470 with an R – value = .76 for the combined variables. It revealed that there is a positive relationship between the variables of assertive communication and marital harmony among married in marital harmony among married Catholics. However, the duration of marriage has a regression coefficient value of B = -.14. The finding is that duration of marriage does not moderate the relationship that exists among the variables.

Research Questions 3: What is the moderating impact of educational status in the relationship among assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics?

In order to answer research question 3, Multiple Correlation Analysis was employed.

Table 3: Multiple Correlation Analysis of the moderating impact of educational status in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	B	R	R ²	P
Assertive Communication	546	23.647	5.176	.447	-	-	.000
<i>Educational Status</i>	546	2.848	1.099	-.127	-	-	.506
Marital Harmony	546	28.104	7.470	-	-	-	-

Moderator Variable: Educational status, Independent Variable: assertive communication, Dependent Variable: Marital harmony

Table 3, presents the descriptive statistical output and the multiple correlation results. It showed that assertive communication: N = 546, Mean = 23.647, SD = 5.176, *educational status*: N = 546, Mean = 2.848, SD = 1.099 with an R – value = .75. This provides an answer to research question 3. The finding is that, there is a positive relationship between the combined variables of assertive communication, educational status and marital harmony among married Catholics. The R² value of .75 of all the combined variables constitutes 75% amount of the variance accounted for by assertive communication and educational status in marital harmony among married Catholics. However, educational status has a regression coefficient value of B = -.127. The finding is that educational status has a negative relationship with marital harmony among married Catholics.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics.

In order to test hypothesis 1, linear regression was employed.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis of the significance of the relationship between Assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	S. E	Sig
Regression	10363.711	1	10363.711	281.199	.842	.584	.050	.000
Residual	20049.338	544	36.855					
Total	30413.049	545						

P ≤ 0.05 level of significance; N = 545

Table 4 showed the computed F-value of 281.199 and a P-value of 0.000. Testing the hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05. The P-value of 0.000 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics. The computed standardized regression coefficient produced a Beta value of .58 which indicates that assertive communication explains 58% amount of variance in marital harmony among married

Catholics. The conclusion is that assertive communication has positive contribution to changes in marital harmony among married Catholics involved in this study.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant moderating impact of duration of marriage in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics.

In order to test hypothesis 2, multiple regression analysis was employed.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis of the significance of the moderating impact of duration of marriage in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	S.E	t	Sig
Regression	17437.182	4	4359.295	181.751	-	-	-	-	.000
Residual	12975.867	541	23.985	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	30413.049	545	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assertive Communication	-	-	-	-	.449	.311	.048	9.368	.000
<i>Duration of Marriage</i>	-	-	-	-	-.136	-.018	.211	-.645	.519

$P \geq 0.05$ level of significance; N = 545

As shown in Table 5, the analysis of duration of marriage as a moderator variable produced $B = -.136$, Beta $\beta = -.018$, t - value = $-.645$, $P \geq .05$ level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant moderating impact of duration of marriage in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony is rejected. The finding is that duration of marriage has a significant moderating impact on the relationship that exists between the variables and marital harmony of the married Catholics. Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that duration of marriage significantly moderates the relationship that exists between the variables of assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics involved in this investigation.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant moderating impact of educational status in the relationship among social intelligence, assertive communication, sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among married Catholics.

In order to test hypothesis 3, multiple regression analysis was employed.

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis of the significance of the moderating impact of educational status in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics.

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	B	β	S.E	t	Sig
Regression	17447.811	5	3489.562	145.340	-	-	-	-	.000
Residual	12965.238	540	24.010	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	30413.049	545	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Assertive Communication	-	-	-	-	.447	.310	.048	9.296	.000
<i>Educational Status</i>	-	-	-	-	-.127	-.019	.192	-.665	.506

$P \geq 0.05$ level of significance; N = 545

As shown in Table 6, the analysis of educational status as a moderator variable produced $B = -.127$, Beta $\beta = -.019$, t - value = $-.665$, $P \geq .05$ level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant moderating impact of educational status in the relationship between assertive communication and marital harmony is accepted. The finding is that educational status has a significant moderating impact on the relationship that exists between the variables and marital harmony of the married Catholics. Therefore, the conclusion is drawn that educational status significantly moderates the relationship that exists between the variables of assertive communication and marital harmony among married Catholics involved in this investigation.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that assertive communication, duration of marriage and educational status have significant contribution to marital harmony of married Catholics used for the study.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from this study, it is recommended that marriage counsellors should encourage the intending couple to consider assertive communication, duration of marriage and educational status before marriage.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Adigeb, A. P & Mbua, A. P (2015). The Influence of Psychosocial Factors on Marital Satisfaction Among Public Servants in Cross River State. *Global Journal of Human-Social Science*, 15(8), 1-9.

- [2]. Esere, M. O., Yusuf, J & Omotosho, J. A. (2011). Influence of spousal communication on marital stability: implication for conducive home environment. *Edo Journal of Counselling*, 4 (1& 2), 50-61.
- [3]. Ledermann, T., Bodenmann, G., Rudaz, M & Bradbury, T. M (2010). Stress, Communication, and Marital Quality in Couples. *Family Relations* 59: 195–206.
- [4]. Ojukwu, M. O., & Obiji, D. (2016). Effects of socio-psychological factors on marital stability of married persons in Imo State Nigeria. *Research Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 2(1). Retrieved from <http://www.iiardpub.org>
- [5]. Tan.L. (2014). Correlational study. In W.F. Thomson(Ed) music in the social and behavioral sciences: An encyclopedia (pp.269-271). Thousand Oaks: SAGE publication
- [6]. Uwom-Ajaegbu, O. O., Ajike, E. O., Fadolapo, L & Ajaegbu, C (2015). An Empirical Study on the Causes and Effects of Communication Breakdown in Marriages. *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion*, 11, 1-9.
- [7]. Zaheri, F, Dolatian, Shariati., Simbar, Ebadi&Azghadi (2016). Effective Factors in Marital Satisfaction in Perspective of Iranian Women and Men: A systematic review. *Electron Physician*. 8(12): 3369–3377.
- [8]. Ziaei T, Jannati Y, Mobasheri E, Taghavi T, Abdollahi H, Modanloo M, et al. The relationship between marital and sexual satisfaction among married women employees at Golestan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. *Iran Journal Psychiatry Behaviour Science* 2014; 8(2): 44-51.