
RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL ORIENTATIONS AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT OF MARRIED PERSONS IN BAYELSA AND DELTA STATES

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Abstract

This study investigated religious, cultural orientations and marital adjustment of married persons in Delta and Bayelsa States. The purpose is to establish if there is relationship between religious, cultural orientations and marital adjustment among married persons in Delta and Bayelsa States. Two research questions were raised and were hypothesized to guide this study. The study adopted the correlational survey design with the population of seven thousand, two hundred and thirty-two (7,232). This entails three thousand, seven hundred and sixteen (3,716) from Warri and three thousand, five hundred and sixteen (3,516) from Yenagoa Metropolis. The multi-stage random sampling technique was used to select one thousand two hundred (1,200) respondents. The research instrument is 30 items, 4-point modified likert scale questionnaire titled “Religious, Cultural Orientations and Marital Adjustment Scale” (RCOMAS). The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and it yielded a reliability index (α) of 0.95 for religious orientation, 0.93 for cultural orientation and 0.84 for marital adjustment. The data obtained was analysed using the Coefficient of Determination and Regression statistics at 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed that there is significant relationship between religious, cultural orientations and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States. Based on the findings, it is recommended that married persons should pay attention to religious and cultural tenets that enhance better marital adjustment and put them to use. Finally, couples with and without instability issues are advised to seek family counselling services.

Keywords: Marital Adjustment, Marriage, Religious Orientations, Cultural Orientations

Introduction

The family is the basis of the society and the family is rooted in marriage. Marriage as concept has been defined by various researchers and writers. They looked at marriage from their different points of view and profession. However, there is no generally accepted definition of marriage, yet there are some common terms that exist in all the definitions. It is the institution in society in which a man and woman are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence to found and maintain a family. Marriage involves a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses establishing rights and obligations between them. It also involves a sense of priority towards commitment with love and responsibility (Akhter, 2021). Animasahun and Femi-Fatile (2016), defined marriage as the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex (male and female) as husband or wife in the mutual relationship, whereby a man and woman are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family.

The marriage institution, which is the foundation of every community vis-à-vis the society is gradually being eroded because of the menace of marital instability that is ravaging its existence. In Nigeria, separation rates in 2018 had a 14% increase across the whole population (Iwunze-Ibiam, 2019). Furthermore, cohabitation has increased for young adults over the last 50 years. In addition to the rising trend of cohabitation, the proportion of young adults who are getting married has declined over time. Iwunze-Ibiam, (2019) stated that lately, “30% of young adults age 18-34 are married, but over 40 years ago, 59% of young adults were married”. This represents a downward trend of young adults getting married. From the study of Ntoimo and Akokuwebe (2014) presenting data of marital divorce, dissolution and separation, the “Crude Marital Dissolution Rate (CMDR) in Nigeria was 11.0% per 1000, Crude Divorce Rate (CDR) was 5.0%, and Crude Separation Rate (CSR) was 6.0% per 1,000 population”. This signifies that out of every 1,000 Nigerian, five are divorced, and six separated. They stated that the “rate of separation was higher than divorce for the country in all the regions and states of the country.

For the married persons to have a stable and lasting marital relationship, there is need for proper and effective adjustment among them. This is because there are so many challenges that may confront the marriage union on a daily basis that may tend to threaten the existence and quality of the marriage. Without adequate marital adjustment, there is bound to be dissatisfaction and separation or divorce. Adjustment is a continual process by which a person varies his behaviour to provide a more harmonious relationship between himself and his environment (Sumathi & Muralidaran, 2015). Adjustment is a process, which leads us to happy and contented life by maintaining a balance between our needs and the capacity to meet these needs; persuades us to change our way of life according to the demands of the situation and gives us strength and ability to bring desirable changes in the conditions of our environment.

In marriage, adjustment is a process which is created from the time married persons come together to live as one, because it is necessary for taste conformity, behavioural rules creation and relational model's formation. Bali, Dhingra and Baru, (2016) explained that marital adjustment is the process of modifying, adopting or altering individual's and married persons' pattern of behaviour and interaction to achieve maximum satisfaction in the marital relationship. Marital adjustment is the process or mechanics of achieving harmony in achieving common goals of life between husband and wife that leads to satisfaction from living together as husband and wife. Adjustment between husband and wife allows them to avoid conflicts and helps them to resolve conflicts appropriately in such a way that both partners feel satisfied with the marital relationship (Chen, 2017). According to Nemati,

Mohamadyfar and Khaledian, (2017) the concept of marital adjustment constantly considers the processes that are necessary to achieve harmony in marital relationship. In this regard, the well-adjusted relationship is considered to be a relationship in which the participants often interact and rarely disagree, are optimistic with each other, communicate well and resolve their differences in a satisfactory and mutual manner (Nemati et al, 2017). In a nutshell, it is a process where the married persons form a relational approach to have a successful marriage.

However, for the purpose of this study the variables of religious, cultural orientations and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States was investigated in order to establish a relationship among the variables.

Marital adjustment, quality, satisfaction and success may-be related to religious orientation in the fact that every married person tends to use religion as a tool for marital adjustment, quality, satisfaction and stability in our African context (Oginyi, Ofoke & Francis, 2015). Religious orientation emphasizes the values that are related to strengthening socialization, stabilization and harmonization within and outside marital relationship. This assumption brought the idea that the religion can fortify, stabilize and support the married persons' relationship or marital adjustment (Mohammad, Rouhollah & Sacid, 2018). Religion can affect marital relations, because it has effective guidance to life improvement and effective system of beliefs and values to life reinforcement (Hunler&Genchuz, 2015). Sedighi et al, (2014) on their study on the relationship between religious orientation and marital stability among married persons of Qom City, using Pearson correlation coefficient and regression. Findings show that there is a positive correlation between religious orientation and marital adjustment ($r=0/45$, $p>0/001$). This means that religious orientation can predict marital adjustment. In addition, it was also found that religious orientation has direct and significant relationship with dimensions of dyadic satisfaction ($r=0/45$, $p>0/001$), dyadic cohesion ($r=0/41$, $p>0/001$), dyadic consensus ($r=0/40$, $p>0/001$), affectional expression ($r=0/317$, $p>0/001$) which are all indices of a stable marriage. Priyadharshini and Gopalan (2019) from their study on marital adjustment, love, personal intimacy, personality, dyadic coping and spirituality on marital stability, found that a significant correlation was established between spirituality and marital adjustment ($r= .38$, $p< .0$), spirituality and sexual intimacy ($r= .26$, $p< .05$), spirituality and agreeableness ($r= .30$, $p< .05$), spirituality and conscientiousness ($r= .35$, $p< .01$), and spirituality and openness of experience ($r= .27$, $p< .05$), which are all indices of marital stability. It implies that effective marital adjustment was significantly enhanced by personality and religious aspect of spirituality. In contrast, according to Hajjhasani and Sim (2019) in their study on marital satisfaction among girls with early marriage in Iran: emotional intelligence and religious orientation, results show no significant relationship between intrinsic religious orientation and marital stability ($r = 0.08$, $P > 0.05$). In addition, no significant relationship was also found between extrinsic religious orientation and marital stability ($r = -0.02$, $P > 0.05$). Impliedly, this research yielded no significant relationship between religious orientation and marital satisfaction in women with marriage at an early age. This result was in not in agreement with the results obtained by most of the previous studies carried out.

Cultural orientation is another variable that is an indispensable variable in the socialization process of the new entrants into every society. Cultural orientation is one of the major variables that influences the individual's way of life on a daily basis. Hence, it is defined as a way of life of a particular group of individuals in a geographical location. Culture is defined as shared meanings, understandings, or referents held by groups of people in a particular environment (Shore, 2016). Culture orientation is defined as a learned system of values that determines how people habitually interpret, perceive, and react to the world

around them (Smith, 2019). Tsai and Chentsova-Duton as cited in Ruan, (2016) defined cultural orientation as the degree to which individuals are influenced by actively engaging in the traditions, norms, and practices of a specific culture. Every society has her ways of doing things. This entails their norms, practices and way of life. This include their marital life practices and pattern. from the study of Longjohn and Sam (2020) on the influence of spousal ethnicity and locus of control on marital adjustment of post-graduate students, the ex-post-facto research design was adopted and a population of 400 post-graduate students were selected from Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt. A researcher-developed instrument was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while independent samples t-test was used to test the corresponding null hypotheses. From the result, it is shown that postgraduate students who reported being of the same ethnic group as their spouse reported a mean (36.72) and standard deviation (5.41) for marital maladjustment, while those who had spouses of different ethnic group had a mean (46.31) and standard deviation (6.11). From this mean rating, the result showed that students from homes where the spouses are from different ethnic groups had higher level of marital adjustment issues than those with spouse from similar ethnic groups. Furthermore, the result showed that when independent sample t-test was applied, a t-value = 15.23 at 398 degrees of freedom and p-value of 0.0001 were obtained. Since the p-value was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05, it therefore indicates that students from different ethnic group marriage had a significantly higher level of marital instability than those from same ethnic group marriage. Adegoke (2017) on the study of socio-cultural factors as determinants of divorce rates among women of reproductive age in Ibadan Metropolis, Nigeria, found that married persons' ethnic/cultural background has shown significant relationship with divorce rates among women of reproductive age. This was revealed from the calculated r value (-2.670) which is greater than the critical β value (-2.027) at 0.05 level of significance. However, according to Vakili, Baseri, Abbasi and Bazzaz (2015), religious beliefs and cultural adaptation are important factors in the stability of the family, as in the study of the causes of divorce by Rayhani and Ajam (2018) who reported that 73% of the marital instability predisposing factors are due to religious and cultural factors.

As marriage union weakens, the costs are borne not only by individual children and families, but all of us (Waite & Gallanger, as cited in Ojukwu, 2016), that is, the entire society. It is, therefore, of importance to identify and investigate the variables that contributes and enhances the chances of individuals to have life long lasting relationships that are less stressful. The reason being that, identifying them will help married persons enhance such areas that will help them have lasting relationships.

Statement of the Problem

The rate of marriage separation in the last two decades (2002 – 2022) has been so alarming. This situation requires urgent intervention to avert the danger this trend portend to the future of individuals and the society at large. If nothing is done about it now, the future of the institution of marriage is in great dilemma. In addition, the future of the children and the society is at risk. Consequently, adjustment is needed by both partners to keep their marital union together.

A dissatisfied and unstable marriage is characterised by breakdown through desertion, divorce or separation. If marriages are separated or divorced, the children are at risk, that is, their foundation or socialization process will be negatively tempered with, thereby leading to having maladjusted adults who will be source of troubles in the society. The danger divorce has posed to the society is grave and if nothing is done to curb the situation, the future of the

society is at risk, because a broken home breeds a lot of maladjusted individuals in the society. There is the need to keep a family stable to avoid the colossal damage it will do to the married persons, children and society at large. What roles does religious and cultural orientation play in the reaction and action of married persons to ensure effective adjustment in marital relationship?

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States?
2. What is the relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States.
2. There is no significant relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States.

Methodology

This study adopted the correlational survey designed. The population for this study is seven thousand, two hundred and thirty-two (7,232) married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States, with specific attention on married persons who have spent a minimum of ten (10) years together, in Catholic religious' faith. This population was drawn from two major metropolises of the two states viz: Warri and Yenagoa metropolis. The multi-stage random sampling procedure was used to select one thousand two hundred (1,200) participants from the study population. The research instrument that was used for this study is a 4-point modified likert scale questionnaire titled "Religious, Cultural Orientations and Marital Adjustment Scale" (RCOMAS). This questionnaire is divided into two (2) parts. Part A requests respondents to supply their demographic details, while part B contains the six (6) sub-scales viz: religious orientation scale with 10 items, cultural orientation scale with 10 items, and marital adjustment scale with 10 items, making a total of 30 items. Each sub-scale has four option responses of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha Statistics and it yielded reliability index (α) of 0.95 for religious orientation, 0.93 for cultural orientation and 0.84 for marital adjustment. In analyzing data collected for this study, Coefficient of Determination was used to answer the research questions, while Linear Regression was used to test the hypotheses.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States?

Table 1: Correlation and Coefficient of Determination of Religious Orientation and Marital Adjustment of Married Persons

Variables	N	r	r ²	r ² %	Decision
Religious Orientation	1,200	0.210	0.441	4.41	Positive Relationship
Marital Adjustment					

Table 1 shows that the r-value of 0.210 is the extent of relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons, which revealed a positive relationship between the two variables. The coefficient of determination was 0.441 and the amount of contribution of religious orientations to marital adjustment is 4.41%.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States?

Table 2: Correlation and Coefficient of Determination of Cultural Orientation and Marital Adjustment of Married Persons

Variables	N	r	r ²	r ² %	Decision
Cultural Orientations	1,200	0.240	0.057	5.70	Positive Relationship
Marital Adjustment					

Table 2 indicated the r-value of 0.240, r²=0.057 as the extent of relationship between cultural and marital adjustment of married persons, which shows low positive relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons. The coefficient of determination is 0.057 and the amount of contribution of cultural to marital adjustment is 5.7%.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States.

Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis of Religious Orientation and Marital Adjustment of Married Persons

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	962.026	1	962.026	55.039	0.000
Residual	20939.641	1198	17.479		
Total	21901.667	1199			

Table 3 shows the F-value of 55.039 and p-value of 0.000. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.000 is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between religious orientations and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States, is hereby rejected. This revealed that there is significant relationship between religious orientations and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States.

Table 4: Linear Regression Analysis of cultural orientation and Marital Adjustment of Married Persons

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1257.828	1	314.457	18.203	0.000
Residual	20643.828	1198	17.275		
Total	21901.667	1199			

Table 4 indicates the F-value of 18.203 and a p-value of 0.000. Testing the null hypothesis at an alpha level of 0.05, the p-value of 0.000 was less than the alpha level of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States, is hereby rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States.

Discussion

The analysis for answering research question one, the result indicated that there is a positive relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States. Testing hypothesis one shows that there is a significant relationship between religious orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States. This implies that there is religious orientation positively impact marital adjustment of married persons. The reason for this finding is because life approach is based on religious beliefs which also include marital relationship practice. The finding supports the views of Priyadharshini and Gopalan (2019) who found in their study on marital adjustment that there is significant correlation established spirituality and marital adjustment, spirituality and sexual intimacy, spirituality and agreeableness, spirituality and conscientiousness and spirituality and openness and experience. However, the finding is at variance with the study of Hajihassani and Sim (2019) whose results shows that no significant relationship exists between intrinsic religious orientation and marital stability, also no significant relationship was found between extrinsic religious orientation and marital stability.

The finding in research question two, finding revealed that there is significant relationship between cultural orientation marital adjustment of married persons. Results from hypothesis five states that there is a significant relationship between cultural orientation and marital adjustment of married persons in Bayelsa and Delta States. Reason for this finding being that an individual is born and raised in a cultural setting. These cultural practices spell out the accepted ways of life which also include marital practices. An individual learns the ways of his/her culture right from birth as such they are internalized. These controls the way an individual behave and handle issues which also include marital adjustment issues. This finding is in agreement with the finding from the study of Adegoke (2017), Vakili et al, (2015), who found that religious beliefs and cultural adaptation are important factors in the stability of the family.

Conclusion

Proper adjustment is paramount to the stability of the marital union and that of the individuals in the society. From the study, it was found that religious and cultural orientations have significant relationship with marital adjustment. In line with the findings of this study, religious orientation, income, influences better marital adjustment, while it can be moderated by the impact of cultural orientation, work demand to ensure they have stable marriage. This, therefore calls for couples to utilize the tenets of their religion and culture in their everyday marital relationship life.

Recommendations

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

1. Married persons should pay attention to religious and cultural tenets that enhance better marital adjustment and put them to use.
2. Churches and custodians of cultures should have an orientation system on pre-marital and during-marital counselling to avoid marital instability in marriages.
3. Finally, couples with and without instability issues are advised to seek family counselling services.

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