
STRATEGIES ON MARITAL STABILITY AMONG MARRIED LECTURERS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

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Abstract:

The study was designed to investigate effects of strategies on marital stability among married academic lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis. To guide the study, one research question and one null hypothesis were formulated to establish the degree of effectiveness of stability on marital strategies. Researcher constructed questionnaire titled 'Marital conflict resolution strategy inventory' (MCRSI) with a reliability index of 0.87. Quasi experimental research design was used with treatment and control groups; with total population of 345 married academic staff of tertiary institutions of Sokoto Metropolis. Sample size of sixty respondents (30 case group and 30 control group) were used as representative sample. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and independent t-test to answer and test the research questions and hypothesis respectively. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that all the marital strategies (discussion, mediation and accommodation) demonstrated a significant advance showing the effectiveness of the strategies. Based on the findings, conclusion was that parents should reflect on the effects of divorce, their children and society, and try out all the strategies (discussion, mediation, accommodation) and not to stereotype on single strategy. Among the recommendations made was that marriage counseling and counseling centers should be established that will help to teach these strategies to minimize rampant separation among couples.

Keywords: Strategy, Marital stability, Married Lecturers, Tertiary Institutions, Metropolis

Introduction:

Anibueze (2000) states that marriage is a legal union of two adult of the opposite sex who live together in joy and sadness, sorrow and tears, peace and harmony till death separates them. This implies that marital relationship between couples may experience problems, difficulties, challenges, conflicts and confusions at one time or another. Marriage partners must make their choices with great prayerfulness, thoughtfulness, care, and sincerity. They should not choose by mere sight. Having the relevant knowledge and God's guidance is the key to making the best choice (Akinade, 2015).

Omeje (2000) rightly observed that marital conflicts could lead to couples' separation, divorce and maltreatment of various sorts that affect the children socially, morally, physically and emotionally. According to him no marriage is a bed of roses; hence some couples try to tolerate one another to avoid marital conflicts in their home while others don't tolerate each other hence the conflict in marriage. Ugboha (2012) sees conflict resolution as a term that encompasses the use of non-violent resistance measures by conflicted parties in an attempt to promote effective resolution. It is the ability to find a solution to marital problems or disagreements. Marital conflict resolution is important because it prevents marital conflicts from degenerating into total collapse of the marriages and abuse of children. It also ensures that none of the parties in the conflicts will have his or her self- image damaged. The aim of any marital conflict resolution is to minimize misunderstanding and enhance cordial relationship between the couples. Based on this, the researcher is interested in finding out the effect of strategies among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

The society has witnessed an alarming rate of divorce, separation and loss of affection between couples. All these among couples could threaten societal values, children, their communities and sustainable healthy lifestyles. In an attempt to resolve marital conflicts, some couples employ different strategies depending on their experiences and personal characteristics. Often times, these strategies do not help in ameliorating the problem as many couples end up getting more maladjusted through the use of inappropriate strategies. Marital counselors and therapist often use strategies such as improved communication, problem solving techniques, assertiveness training, effective negotiation skills and couple's relationship skills training to assist spouses (Akinade, 2015). It is therefore, necessary that marital conflict resolutions strategies among couples be investigated with a view to assisting couples adopt useful strategies. Against this background, the study seeks to investigate the effect of these strategies on marital stability among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to found out:

1. The effect of discussion (communication) strategy on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis.
2. The effect of mediation (consultation) strategy on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and guided the study:

- (1) What is the effect of Accommodation Strategy on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis?
- (2) What is the effect of mediation (consultation) strategy on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated and guided the conduct of the study:

H₀₁ There is no significant effect of mediation (consultation) strategy on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

H₀₂ There is no significant effect of accommodation strategy on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will help marriage as well as family counsellors who are concerned with healthy family and marital life to be aware of marital conflict resolution strategies being employed by lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto state and how effective they are. The knowledge will assist them in helping families with cases of marital conflict. This implies that the resolution of marital conflicts will be enhanced through the findings of this study.

Educational planners and designers can also benefit from this study by the insight they will gain on the attitudes, signs and ways of addressing marital conflicts. Information obtained can impact on curriculum development and upgrade teaching and learning, especially since the subjects in this study are literate persons. As such, educational planners in post-primary schools and other institutions of higher learning will be awakened to their responsibility based on the revelations likely to be made by the study.

Furthermore, the findings will be significant to couples experiencing conflict. When the result is made known to the public through workshops and seminars, couples at the verge of divorce as a result of conflict will be at advantage. Such couples will now be aware of such conflict resolution strategies that are effective and be able to apply same in their situation.

Equally, the findings of this study will provide information for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) who are interested in the area of marriage and family relationship to mount enlightenment programmes for both married couples and the youth who intend to go into marriage later in their lives. The findings will equip coordinators of pre-marital education both places of worship such as mosques, churches etc and all others who by virtue of their duties encounter people or couples with marital problems with information on available marital conflict resolution strategies. Such will make them to impact on intending couples such information, which they might use in similar situations. What this implies is that at their formative stage in marriage they must have been equipped with potentials that can alleviate their future problems.

Finally, it is hoped that this study will add to the existing body of educational research literature, which might be harnessed for further research in this and other related fields.

Research Design

The research design employed is quasi experimental design to find out the effect of conflict resolution strategies on marital stability with experimental and control group in a pre-test and post-test research design. Quasi experimental design involves the manipulation of one or more independent variables but there is no random assignment of subject groups. Therefore, couples with conflict are purposively selected and assigned to experimental group.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised of the two state government owned tertiary institutions within Sokoto metropolis with a total population of three hundred and forty five (345) from academic staff of Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic Sokoto and School of Nursing & Midwifery Sciences, Sokoto.

Table 1: Population of the Study Area

S/N	NAMES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS	NO. OF MARRIED MALE LECTURERS	NO. OF MARRIED FEMALE LECTURERS	TOTAL
1	S.S.C.O.E Sokoto.	444	149	593
2	Sokoto State University	158	89	247
3	Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto.	140	78	218
4	School of Nursing and Midwifery Sciences, Sokoto.	66	61	127
	TOTAL	808	377	1185

Source: Record office of the Institutions as at April, 2017.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Two tertiary institutions were used with an appropriate sample of 60 respondents (30 control group & 30 experimental group) selected as representative sample from the population of 345, because of the nature of the study that do not require much sample. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample, the direct and deliberate selection is what Fox (1969) called deliberate selection. This was used because according to him, if within a population there are some elements which a researcher believes that they are particularly crucial to the study, then the only way to assure this is to deliberately select them, in the sense that only married lecturers are purposively selected and from the total population of lecturers, purposive sampling was used to select 30 respondents for experimental group based on their low score in pre- test and equivalent were selected as control group based on their high score in pre-test from the total population of 345.

Table 2: Distribution of sample respondents

S/N	NAMES OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS	NO. OF MARRIED MALE LECTURERS	NO. OF MARRIED FEMALE LECTURERS	TOTAL	REP SAMPLE
1	Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto.	140	78	218	30
2	School of Nursing and Midwifery Sciences, Sokoto.	66	61	127	30
	TOTAL	206	139	345	60

Source: Record office of the Institutions as at April, 2017.

Instrument for Data Collection

The research instrument that was used for data collection in this study is a questionnaire titled: “Marital Conflict Resolution Strategy Inventory” (MCRSI) designed by the researcher.

The instrument is divided into two major parts: 1 and 2. Part 1 of the instrument sought information relating to respondents’ personal data such as gender, age, educational qualification and length of marriage. Also part 2 of the instrument is designed to assess the following: (i) Discussion strategy being employed by lecturers in resolving marital conflict and, (ii) Mediation strategy in resolving marital conflict (iii) accommodation strategy and each section has ten (10) items making a total of thirty (30) items on the whole.

Validity of the Instrument

To determine the validity of the instrument, the instrument was given to the supervisors and some Lecturers in the Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto to vet for content validity.

The aim was for their scrutiny of the items of the instrument to ascertain the representativeness of the contents of items of the instrument and the extent to which they were related to the variables under investigation.

The experts were allowed free hands to either remove any item they considered irrelevant or add any other item they considered relevant. Based on their comments and suggestions, some items were modified and in some cases, entirely new ones incorporated.

Reliability of the Instrument

To determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to a randomly selected 20 married teachers. This sample was chosen because they were outside the proposed final sample of the study. Although the sample selected for the trial testing was outside the geographical spread of the study area it was considered to have similar characteristics with the area of study. The decision to trial test the instrument out of the area of study was to guard against the situation where members of the final sample will have prior knowledge of the instrument, which may invalidate their responses.

The homogeneity of the instrument was determined by the test retest method. The reliability estimate of the questionnaire was obtained through a pilot study conducted using male and female teachers of Government Girls College of Arts, Science and Islamic Studies Arkilla, Sokoto. Twenty (20) male and female teachers of Government Girls College of Arts, Science and Islamic Studies Arkilla, Sokoto were randomly selected and given the questionnaire to fill. The questionnaire was administered twice to the same group of teachers with an interval of 4 weeks, after which the scores of the two tests were computed separately and correlated using Pearson's product moment formular (PPMCC) to determine the reliability index. The test yielded Alpha value of 0.87 which was judged fair enough to determine the reliability of the instrument. This is because; the reliability of an instrument is strong when the correlation is closer to one, while an instrument is unreliable when the reliability coefficient is closer to zero.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected using the instruments was analyzed so as to enable the researcher to answer the research questions and test hypotheses. The data analysis was carried out using statistical package for social science (SPSS). The research questions posed in this study were descriptively analyzed using means and standard deviations. The hypotheses formulated were tested at 0.05 level of significant using independent t-test statistics.

Treatment Procedures

There are three phases of treatments which include: pre-treatment phase, treatment phase and post-treatment phase. When couples with marital conflicts were identified, the couples would be used as treatment group.

Pre-Treatment Phase

This formed the introductory stage that is meeting of the researcher with the married lecturers of tertiary institutions. During the introductory session, the researcher sought the consent of the couples to voluntarily participate in the study. The researcher then administered the research instrument to the respondents so as obtain their pre-test data.

Treatment Phase

The treatment group was exposed to four weeks counseling session on healthy marital conflict resolution strategies; the control group was not to benefit from the session to be able to compare the two groups.

Post Treatment Phase

This was the final phase of the counseling intervention. At the end of the session, the instrument was readministered to the treatment group with the view of collecting post test data to determine the effectiveness of session in helping couples with marital conflict and challenges.

Analysis of the Research

Descriptive statistics mean and standard deviation were applied for the analysis of the data in order to answer research question. T- test was used to provide answers to the hypotheses that were formulated. The findings are then discussed under each of the research questions and hypotheses.

Answers to Research Questions

Question One: What is the effect of discussion strategy (communication) on marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis?

Table 4: Effect of Discussion Strategy on Marital Conflict

Strategy	Groups	Mean		Difference of Means
		Pre - test	Post – test	
Discussion Strategy	Treatment	11.73	16.87	5.86
	Control	13.53	13.53	0.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017 & SPSS Output.

Table 4 shows the pre and post – test mean scores on the effect of discussion (communication) strategy on marital conflict. From the table the difference of means in pre and post – test mean scores on treatment group shows effectiveness of discussion strategy in resolving marital conflict due to the increase in mean score from 11.73 in pre-test to 16.87 in post-test for treatment group. The strategy is not effective in resolving marital conflict within the control group because the mean scores for both pre and post – tests were constant (13.53).

Table 5: Effect of Mediation Strategy on Marital Conflict

Strategy	Groups	Mean		Difference of Means
		Pre - test	Post - test	
Mediation Strategy	Treatment	10.47	16.93	6.47
	Control	12.27	12.27	0.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017 & SPSS Output.

Table 5 shows the pre and post – test mean scores on the effect of mediation (consultation) strategy on marital conflict. From the table the difference of means in pre – test and post – test mean scores on treatment group shows effectiveness of mediation strategy in resolving marital conflict due to the increase in mean score from 10.47 in pre-test to 16.93 in post-test for treatment group. The strategy is not effective in resolving marital conflict within the control group because the mean scores for both pre and post – tests were constant (12.27).

Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the hypotheses testing for this study. Two hypotheses are tested as follows:

Table 8: Effect of Discussion Strategy in Resolving Marital Conflict

Strategy	Groups	Mean		Diff of Means	Std error	DF	T – cal	P - value	Decision
		Pre - test	Post – test						
Discussion Strategy	Treatment	11.73	16.87	5.86	0.37	58	13.978	0.000	H ₀₁ Rejected
	Control	13.53	13.53	0.00	0.52	58	0.00	1.000	H ₀₁ Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2017 & SPSS Output.

Table 8 showed that there exists significant effect of discussion strategy on marital conflict resolution among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis because the p – value of 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05 for the treatment group. Therefore, H₀₁ which states that “there is no significant effect of discussion strategy on marital conflict resolution among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis” is rejected for treatment group.

Table 9: Effect of Mediation Strategy in Resolving Marital Conflict

Strategy	Groups	Mean		Diff of Means	Std error	DF	T – cal	P - value	Decision
		Pre - test	Post – test						
Mediation Strategy	Treatment	10.47	16.93	6.47	0.386	58	16.776	0.000	H ₀₂ Rejected
	Control	12.27	12.27	0.00	0.52	58	0.00	1.000	H ₀₂ Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2017 & SPSS Output.

Table 9 showed that there exists significant effect of mediation strategy on marital conflict resolution among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis because the p – value of 0.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05 for the treatment group. Therefore, H₀₂ which states that “there is no significant effect of mediation strategy on marital conflict resolution among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis” is rejected for treatment group.

Summary of Findings

The following are the major findings of the study:

1. There is significant effect of discussion strategy on marital conflict resolution of married lecturers in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis. In the sense that Discussion Strategy helped in resolving marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis.
2. There is significant effect of mediation strategy on marital conflict resolution of married lecturers in tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis. In the sense that Mediation Strategy helped in resolving marital conflict among married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto metropolis.

3. Participants who attended the training gained significantly more than those who did not among the married lecturers of tertiary institutions in Sokoto Metropolis.

Recommendation of the Study

- i. Accommodation strategy should also be employed by couples to be able to endure each other's behavior because no individual is faultless. Like your spouse and acknowledge their positive qualities.
- ii. Attendance of training should be encouraged among participants.

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