

MARITAL DISCORD AMONG MARRIED TEACHERS IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOL IN ILORIN: IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELLING

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ABSTRACT

This paper was based on studying marital discord among married teachers. The inquiry was a position paper. The introduction emphasizes the meaning of marital discord. The paper looked into the broader context of marital discord while examining the causes. The paper revealed that communication, spousal assault, infidelity, family, sex, religion, friends, alcohol/drugs, and children all contribute to marital discord, with communication being identified as one of the primary sources. Less effective classroom management and physical health, as well as physical abuse, have been highlighted as consequences of marital discord. It was suggested that Marriage counselling, guided courting, successful marriage social networking, frequent marital problem seminars, and giving couples with tools to increase communication, bonding, and conflict resolution constitute various ways to address marital discord. In conclusion, the paper emphasizes the implications for counselling and conclusion.

Introduction

Marriage is the union of a man or woman to become husband and wife, the marriage can be conducted through Islamic, Christian, Traditional, Court ways. Marriage is a long time union where every individual expect the relationship to last forever, one of the vows of the Christian when they are joining them together is till death do them apart. Marriage is a universal and essential aspect of human life, existing in various forms across cultures and time. It seeks to unite individuals with different values and beliefs, fostering meaningful relationships. Marriage fulfils fundamental human needs, including procreation, childrearing, emotional connection, mutual support, and personal growth. It provides a stable environment for individuals to flourish, achieve their potential, and cultivate emotional well-being Zaheri et al (2020). Omaniya-Oyafunke et al. (2014) also defined marriage as confers legal status on sexual interactions and allows for the creation of lawful offspring.

Anyamene et al. (2021) linked marriage to various benefits for both mental and physical well-being. However, married couples across all age groups face numerous challenges due to the complex interplay of factors affecting the institution of marriage. As a couple attempts to fulfil their marital responsibilities, tension or stress might arise between them. This is known as a marital discord. Tolorunleke (2014) research shows that when two individuals choose to unite in marriage, they bring distinct aspirations and dreams to their partnership, anticipating a future together. While some of these expectations may be fulfilled, others may remain unmet, leading to a complex and dynamic marital journey. It is only reasonable to anticipate that disagreements on needs, wants, habits, values, and

other aspects of daily life will arise between couples because they are human and devoid of gods. Considering that there is always going to be disagreement in human relationships.

A marriage that is having problems and obstacles is said to be in an unstable state. Marital discord was defined by Omani-Oyafunke et.al. (2014) as the process by which marriages disintegrate due to desertion, separation, or divorce. It can show itself in a number of ways, including infidelity, poor communication, and frequent disagreements. Marital discord can arise from a nasty argument, one partner's emotional retreat, a lack of support and affection, psychiatric and mental health issues, abuse, and sexual assaults, among other things, and can endanger the entire family unit.

Many couples especially married teachers give up, since they view marriage more as a mere contract than as a covenant. In today's world, many couples, particularly married teachers, abandon their marriages due to disagreements and perceived threats to their needs and interests.

Concept of Marital Discord

Marital discord is the mis-understanding or disagreement between couples and the same incidence keep on occurring repeatedly as most couples are unable to resolved their differences such can threaten the family unit. Omani-Oyafunke et al. (2014) defined marital discord as a process whereby marriage breakdown through separation, desertion or divorce. The high incidence of marital discord among married couples has been a major concern of the society. According to Tolorunleke (2014), marital discord is a pervasive social issue that can have far-reaching and devastating consequences, causing profound sorrow and impacting not only on couples but also their children, the wider community, and society as a whole. This conflict can erode the foundation of the family unit, leading to bitter disputes, emotional disconnection, neglect, psychological distress, abuse, and even sexual violence, ultimately threatening the very fabric of family relationships. Many couples find it difficult to resolve conflicting issue as it affects the functioning and satisfaction of the family unit. Therefore, how couples handled dis-agreement and mis-understanding determines the satisfaction of the relationship because marital conflicts can also increase violence in the marital union. According to Bastan et al. (2011) cited by Muhammad et al. (2022), marriage is one of the most important needs affecting all aspects of human life for about half a century now. The school environment is negatively affected by the distressed teachers who are directly involved in marital discord making the school environment hostile and not conducive for learning.

Marital discord has been linked to different factors which includes financial strains, infidelity, poor communication, domestic violence and spousal abuse amongst others.

Causes of marital discord

Aderinto et al (2004) found that wives' refusal to submit to their husband's authority, interference by in-laws, sexual misconduct, conflicts between career and domestic duties, religious differences, extra-marital affairs, and husbands' inability to live up to domestic responsibilities are all factors that contribute to marital discord. Onwuasoanya's (2006) study found that factors such as age at marriage, education level, religious affiliation, marriage types, income, communication, cultural background, sexual incompatibility, lack of trust, fertility status, and in-law's interference can lead to marital conflict. Some of the significant causes of marital discord according to research are: poor communication, family finance. Infidelity and spousal assault

Poor Communication Skills: Communication is critical to the health of a marriage, and when communication breaks down or becomes troublesome, it can greatly contribute to marital discord. Husbands and wives are interdependent, and their level of commitment and desire to maintain a healthy relationship often depends on the other person (Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 2008). A spouse's ability to express themselves properly and comprehend each other's views and feelings might be hampered by a lack of good communication skills. Misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and irritation may occur, resulting in a breakdown in emotional connection and intimacy. According to Esere et al. (2011), efficient communication is crucial for any relationship, including marriage. According to Esere & Idowu (2000) and Mamak (2013), inadequate communication in marriage occurs when partners are unable to communicate effectively with one another. Ineffective communication can produce emotional bonding issues, conflict, and instability in marriages. Effective marriage communication requires spouses to address difficulties, reply to inquiries, request

explanations, and accept them in a timely manner. Delays might convey the incorrect signal, which a partner may interpret the same way.

Family Finance: Married teachers often experience marital discord due to financial difficulties in managing their families. Teacher couples frequently disagree on financial matters like as bills, debt, and spending. Dealing with money troubles can have negative consequences for both the parents and their children (Glass, 2012). Research indicates that poor financial management is the leading cause of marital conflict between staff and their partners. Respondents found money management to be more stressful than other sources of conflict (Marshall & Skogrand 2004).

Infidelity: Infidelity refers to cheating on one's spouse, Poor sexual satisfaction can also contribute to infidelity. According to Papp et al. (2019), infidelity in marriages and families may lead to moral degradation, a lack of trust, and a loss of respect for the participating spouse. According to Parrotta (2018), adulterous behaviour occurs when one spouse violates relationship standards, leading to jealousy and competitiveness, which can be sexual or emotional. According to Poduska (2013), extramarital affairs involve emotional or sexual closeness that breaks trust.

Infidelity may be a contributing factor to marital problems if one or both parties have a sexual condition. Sexual illnesses, including erectile dysfunction, frigidity, premature ejaculation, orgasm disorder, and sexual pain disorder, can lead to sexual unhappiness and extramarital relationships. If not addressed appropriately, these issues can lead to dissatisfaction and a lack of trust between couples. Marital infidelity has an impact on both personal and extended families, as well as pupils in the classroom due to the teacher's attitude when presenting their lesson (Onovo 2021).

Spousal Assault: Spousal assault is any kind of aggression against somebody or forthcoming menace by others with whom they have some connections (PADV, 2015). Spousal violence also refers to the incidence of the use of force, threats, intimidation, battering, and assault in marital relationships, especially where there are differences among couples. Violence in the family, presumably, may be connected to poor management of emotions. The management of emotions may be a function of how a person views, understands, and controls his or her feelings intelligently (Scheff, 2015). Spousal assault is termed to be a kind of gender-specific abuse since its victims are mostly women, more often than not. Ajie (2011) argued that five million members of the Nigerian womenfolk are molested yearly, including older women and are victims of various acts of spousal assault. Adegbite and Ajuwon (2015) also confirmed that large proportions of the women (88.9%) in their study had experienced at least one form of violence in marriage. Female secondary school teachers who have been subjected to spousal violence may develop cognitive deficits, which can lead to poor relationships with students and poor performance in routine responsibilities (Nnyanga et al., 2021).

Solutions to Marital Discord: Newton (2012) asserted that understanding one another's communication patterns facilitates more fruitful conversation between spouses. She named five categories of communication for both general and spouses. These communication styles include forceful, aggressive, submissive, passive-aggressive, and manipulative ones. Because assertive communication emphasizes transparency, integrity, self-respect, and directness, Newton (2012), claimed that it is the most fruitful and healthy method of communication. She claims that people who use manipulative methods are adept at swaying or subduing their spouse. The goal of an aggressive style is to win frequently at the expense of others. A person or couple that adopts a passive-aggressive manner can across as deceitful. While a submissive style is focused on pleasing others, a dominant style is harmful behind someone's back. Newton (2012), continued by saying that an assertive communication style is one in which a person or a couple forcefully defends their rights without infringing on those of others and expresses their thoughts and feelings in a clear and concise manner. It is the way a pair expresses themselves when their self-worth is still intact. The strong method, in her opinion, is the least frequently employed. She discovered that assertive communication fosters directness, honesty, self-respect, and openness, all of which contribute to marital stability.

In a study on the impact of marital counselling on sexual satisfaction, Ziaee et al. (2014) found that on the marital satisfaction scale, 63.6% of participants reported being extremely satisfied, while none reported being extremely dissatisfied. Only 0.7% of participants reported being dissatisfied with their sexual connection, whereas the majority of participants (56.4%) expressed extremely high levels of

satisfaction with their sexual relationship. This indicated that there was a considerable correlation between sexual and marital pleasure, indicating that counsellors should always focus on both.

Stith et al. (2011) suggested that Batterer intervention programs (BIPs) should be implemented for people going through spousal assault which holds offenders accountable for their actions, teaching empathy and understanding of the impact of their behaviour on victims, and building skills for healthy relationships. These programs often include group therapy, education, and support.

Consequences of Marital Instability

Teachers from broken homes are unable to give their all and are unable to help their pupils reach their full academic potential while pupils are more likely to grow into fully formed adults who can identify their academic strengths and other qualities under the guidance of a teacher from a stable and orderly household. According to Onocha (1985), referenced by Kumar (2017), a teacher from a dysfunctional household may experience insecurities that have an impact on their performance. A teacher from a dysfunctional household tasked with parenting kids on her alone won't do a good job.

Marital issues that teachers are experiencing can affect the academic performance of students in several ways:

1. **Reduced teacher effectiveness:** Teachers dealing with marital problems may be distracted, stressed, and less focused on their teaching responsibilities, leading to a decline in instructional quality (Johnson et al., 2015).
2. **Increased absenteeism:** Marital issues can lead to teacher absenteeism, resulting in students missing out on valuable instructional time and potentially falling behind academically. (Kumar et al., 2017) also found that marital problems were a significant predictor of teacher absenteeism which affect the academic performance of students (Kumar et al., 2017). This suggests that there is a direct and evident link between student academic achievement and the presence of teachers in the classroom. The continuity of instruction may be disrupted by absent teachers, which may have an impact on students' achievement of learning objectives. Less instructional time is typically lost when teachers miss work since substitutes might not be as good at teaching the material. This disruption in the learning process may make it more difficult for pupils to understand and remember key ideas.
3. **Decreased teacher morale:** Teachers experiencing marital distress may exhibit lower job satisfaction, leading to a negative classroom environment and decreased motivation to engage students in learning (National Education Association, 2019).
4. **Less effective classroom management:** Teachers preoccupied with marital issues may struggle to maintain a well-managed classroom, leading to disruptions and a lack of focus on academic learning (OECD, 2019).

Predicted Solutions to Marital Discord

- i. **Counselling and support services:** Provide teachers with access to counselling and support services to help them manage marital issues and reduce stress (Johnson et al., 2015).
- ii. **Employee assistance programs:** Offer employee assistance programs (EAPs) that provide confidential counselling and support services for teachers dealing with marital issues (National Education Association, 2019).
- iii. **Teacher development programs:** Implement teacher development programs that focus on stress management, effective classroom management, and student-teacher relationships (OECD, 2019).
- iv. **Flexible work arrangements:** Offer flexible work arrangements to help teachers balance work and personal responsibilities, reducing stress and absenteeism (Kumar et al., 2017).

Theoretical Review

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)

The technique of cognitive behavioural therapy is distinguished by problem-focused, short-term cognitive behavioural intervention strategies that are derived on learning theories and science. Tang (2017) and Shayan et al. (2015). Through the cognitive behavioural approach, a person gets the ability to combat their negative attitudes. The quality of an individual's marriage can be impacted by cognitive behavioural marital consultation, as demonstrated by (Young and Carlson 2011).

The goal of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) for marital disagreement is to recognize and alter harmful thought patterns and behaviours that fuel marital problems.

Abdekhodaie (2021) Techniques include:

1. Identifying and challenging irrational beliefs and negative thoughts.
2. Improving communication and problem-solving skills.
3. Enhancing emotional expression and empathy.
4. Addressing individual mental health issues.
5. Fostering a positive and supportive relationship environment.

The wife and husband's comprehension of each other's actions plays a major role in marital pleasure and marital quality enhancement in terms of solidarity and agreement.

In a research, Akbarzadeh (2014) found that the couples' cognitive behavioural education improved family performance and the divorced applicants' subscales of behaviour control, emotional companionship, communication, problem solving, and emotional engagement. According to Rajabi and Navrodi (2012), cognitive behavioural therapy aims to rectify false beliefs about marriage and attitudes toward one's spouse in addition to teaching skills for improved problem-solving and communication. Ultimately, the underlying philosophy of this comprehension is that behavioural modifications by themselves are insufficient to rectify ineffective interactions; rather, people's perspectives about their relationships and their conflicting behavioural tendencies should be prioritized.

Given the success of the current study's methodology, it is suggested that family and marriage counsellors make use of this approach's strategies to help couples have more fulfilling sexual relationships, resolve marital problems, and enhance their quality of life together. Additionally, the useful exercises and techniques of this approach should be used to avoid marital issues. These resources include workshops, instructional sessions, films, and booklets. (Shayan 2018).

Implication for Counselling

It was clear from the study that marital discord are unavoidable. Marital discord, however, can be handled as they arise, Akume et al. (2013) concluded that Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should emphasize marital communication and what impact it has on marital stability on the school curriculum. It makes it easier for counsellor to get relevant information on marital discord.

It was suggested that, marital counselling has effect on sexual compatibility of experimental and control groups. This implies that exposing married teachers with sexual problems to the marital counselling significantly adjusted the sexual relationship. This implies that marital counselling is effective in adjusting to good sexual relationship. Marriage counselling facilities in secondary schools should have skilled and behavioural-trained therapists to address the requirements of married teachers (Onovo et al., 2021).

In addition, this study will give marriage counsellors the ability to narrow down their focus to the major challenges causing marital discord, particularly during pre-marital counselling. It will also provide more information on the causes and solutions to marital discord, as well as how it can be prevented.

According to Yaro (2022), Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is an effective strategy for treating marital discord among teachers. Leaving instructors with marital discord without providing them with psychotherapeutic training, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, may have detrimental consequences on the teaching learning processes and student academic achievement which means that counsellor needs to provide psychotherapeutic training to teachers.

Lastly, counsellor play a key role in educating the teachers about their marriage, creating a safe space for married teachers to express their concerns, fears and emotion related issues.

Conclusion

The message drawn from the study is that married teachers experience marital discord. As a result, married teachers who are experiencing marital discord have higher rates of delinquency, absenteeism, drug use, hazardous sexual activity, and psychiatric problems.

Suggestions

The following ideas were made on how to reduce marital discord among married teachers:

- Counsellors are encouraged to prioritize discussing the effects of communication on marital stability throughout individual and group counselling sessions. This should be included in interactive sessions to ensure effectiveness.
- Counsellor can suggest adopting a direct approach to communication which helps foster understanding, openness, empathy, flexibility, and collaboration among married couples.
- Counsellors are encouraged to implement teacher development programs that focus on stress management, effective classroom management, and student-teacher relationships
- Schools management are encouraged to provide secondary schools with skilled and well-trained counsellors to meet the requirements of married instructors.

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