RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VERBAL AND NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND ADJUSTMENT OF MARRIED TEACHERS IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS

Dr. (Mrs.) C.G. Awujo and Onwukwe, Uchennaijeoma

Department Of Educational Psychology Guidance and Counselling University Of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *This study investigated the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication patterns and marital adjustment of married teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated for the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population for the study comprised all male and female married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Simple random sampling and non-proportionate stratified random sampling techniques were used to draw the sample size of 400 respondents. Researchers developed questionnaire titled "Marital Communication Scale (MCS) and an adapted instrument titled Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS)" were used to gather data. The reliability coefficients of the instrument were 0.64 and 0.70 respectively. Data collected were analysed using simple regression and multiple regressions for research questions, ANOVA associated with simple-linear regression and ANOVA associated with multiple regressions were used to test the hypothesis. Findings of this study revealed that verbal communication and non-verbal communication were significant predictors of marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was recommended among others that Seminars could be organised for married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis with the view to helping them communicate effectively and achieve adjustments at various levels in their marriages.*

KEYWORDS: verbal communication pattern, Non-verbal communication , marital adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

Generally, in Nigerian cultural setting, marriage is a legal contract between two adults (male and female) to live as man and wife. Stritof (2017) defines marriage as a formal union, a social and legal contract between two individuals usually man and woman that unite their lives legally, economically, and emotionally. The contractual nature of marriage agreement usually implies that the couples have legal obligations to each other throughout their lives or until they decide to divorce; this is the type of marriage this study addressed. Marriage is an ancient practice, although its meaning may have changed throughout time and space. It is a term used to describe a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife, therefore any other dyadic union without a legal binding cannot be called marriage. There are two elements in marriage according to Ramcharan (2008). One is bodily (sexual wish) and another is divine (love, respect, adore) etc. Many couples go into the marital union for a whole lot of reasons some of which may include financial dependence, need for partnership, need for love and affection, need for children to carry on family name and other varied reasons. As a result most marriages are on the brink of collapse due to inability of spouses to meet up with the perceived roles and duties of their spouse.

Married couples need to understand the unique nature of each other and the individual differences that exist among them because most marital issues stem from this ignorance. When couples adjust to several areas of conflict in their home, it brings about marital stability. Adjustment in marriage is a term used to explain couples ability to experience issues in marriage and tackle it with candour. The presence of crisis in a dyadic union is a universal issue; no marriage is without troubles, but handling them is the key to marital satisfaction.Lack of adjustment in marital relationships can lead to separation and divorce. Marital maladjustment arises when spousesfail to express themselves about what they want or do not want in the marital relationship. It is erroneous for a couple to believe that their partner knows it all i.e. how the feel, what they think or want, it is only when such feelings are expressed that one can be certain that they are aware.

Communication in marriage is very vital for marital success. According to Woko (2006), there is a strong relationship existing between communication skills and marital happiness. It involves the ability of two people to share and examine all their perception, feelings, ideas and thoughts to come to an accurate understanding of what is happening; with the aim of facilitating marital progress, marital harmony and marital satisfaction. Communication has also been viewed by Adewale (2012) as a live wire to a successful marital relationship. To him, no marriage can thrive where there is a communication bridge. Through communication, broken fences are mended, broken hearts are fixed, there is re affirmation of love and feelings for one another.

Communication is the start of every relationship, we cannot do without communication, but while communication is important, the way and manner it is being conveyed is the most important. There are many ways couples can communicate some of which include; verbal, non-verbal, (eye contact, gestures, behaviour, etc.), written communication, touch and emotion etc.

Verbal communication is very useful in marriage; it allows one to communicate such broad range of experience through language. According to Idowu and Esere (2007), Verbal Communication requires the use of words, vocabulary, numbers and symbols and is organized in sentences using language.Awotua-efebo (2002) also describes verbal communication as the human vocal sounds or the arbitrary graphic presentation of these sounds in writing, used systematically and conventionally by a speech community for purpose of communication. It is a medium for couples to express affection for each other; the verbal statement that leads to marriage is often the question tagged "will you marry me?" married couples also communicate broad range of emotive experiences which include verbal admiration such as " you are beautiful/handsome", "I admire everything about you". Verbal appreciation of spouse like saying "thank you", "you are the best" etc. verbal assurance like saying "I still love you despite all odds", "I will be there for you always" etc. verbal seduction like saying "you are my heartbeat", "I need you" etc. expressions of regret like " am sorry". "Please forgive me" etc. verbal expression of the above emotive and cognitive experiences.

Verbal communication is very therapeutic for married people; it also helps them openly express willingness to share thoughts and feeling and also take decisions about their goals and targets for their marriage. The inability of couples to establish a dialogue makes it impossible for them to break the stalemate. Couples become emotionally and psychologically frustrated and disengaged when they don't communicate.

Concealment has been viewed as one of the roadblock for achieving good verbal communication, Concealment which is a lack of self-disclosure in marriage often lead to mistrust, dissatisfaction and a feeling of exclusion among partner, Finkenauer et al, (2009). Verbal communication is therefore

an invaluable tool for conflict resolution in marriage, to achieve this, communication boundaries among couples should be less rigid to make room for self-disclosure, closeness and togetherness. A loving and calm chastisement is very likely to change a partner's negative lifestyle than name calling, nagging,and sneering among others.It is also important to note that the quantity and quality of time spent on communication can be both productive and destructive. Prolongedand unattended issues in marriage can be very disastrous. It is very crucial for couples to attack their problems head-on before it migrates into greater ones. Many marriages are broken because of negligence in handling overwhelming family issues. Feelings of dissatisfaction, happiness, and indifference can be expressed verbally and nonverbally.

Non-verbal communication according to Idowu and Esere (2007) refer to "body language"It involves all unspoken and unwritten messages that may be transmitted with intentions or by default. In non-verbal expression, we communicate with our body gestures, eye motion, and skin/touch sensations, space (standing, sitting, near or far apart) and smell. Nwoye (1991) stated that the way we dress; keep our hair and fingernails are all part of non-verbal communication. In marriage, expression of love using Non-verbal cues is far more emotive and believed than verbal expression. If your spouse says "I love you", for instance but his or her facial expression makes you think it's a lie, which message will you believe? Unfortunately the non-verbal expression of feelings and thoughts is easy to misconstrue. There is the tendency for couples to view their own actions differently from the way their partner views those actions; couples are more likely to observe negative than positive non-verbal behaviours. For instance, a house wife's facial expression may be viewed by her husband that he is not welcomed back at home when it is actually as a result of a state of ill health. Therefore,non-verbal communications are more directly and strongly related to emotions than words.

Effective communication is very crucial to marital adjustment, harmony and coherence. There are so many areas where adjustment is required in marriage. Several studies conducted on the subject identify the following areas of adjustment; mutual trust, finance, in-law, job, children, social activities and communication. All these factors are very important for mutual adjustment.

Mutual trust is the foundation of any relationship. Every marital relationship should be built upon trust because when trust is in place greater satisfaction, contentment and easy adjustment is attained. Adopting the right communication patterns can bring about adjustment in marriage. These communication patterns include; listening skills, agreement, approved assent, laughter, humour etc. (Fisher Giblin and Hoopes, 1982) while hostile communication patterns like criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling can put couples at high risk for divorce if it takes permanent residence in their union, Gottman in Cobbs (2013).

Good verbal and non-verbal communication are the focal point for this study, it is believed that more adjustment and marital fulfilment is achieved when couples communicate effectively, it is therefore based on this assumption that the researchers examinedthe relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication patterns and adjustment of married public school teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Statement of the Problem.
Marriage contributes to the attainment of happiness, joy and satisfaction. But not all involvedare able to reap the dividends of marriage. While most couples feel fulfilled in their marital relationship others are stressed out. Marriage is an integral part of man's existence. A study of marital relationships is almost as important as the study of life and existence. This isbecause if we are satisfied in our marital

relationships, it reflects in almost every aspect of our lives. Unfortunately, most marital relationships have been bewildered by break ups, quarrel, separation and divorce, dissatisfaction etc. this has created a negative influence on children and the society at large. If there are many stable homes in a place, such a place will invariably yield a good society. No one exists in the cloud, everyone is connected to one family or home or the other. You find a criminal in the society today; most times it is as a result of the upbringing. Therefore, if we are able to deal with the problems in marriages and homes, we would have a better society.

Several studies conducted in this regard have revealed that most of the challenges encumbered by couples in their marital relationships are due to poor communication. Communication may take the form of verbal, Non-verbal, etc. A study conducted by Nwoko (2006) on the relationship between communication patterns and marital adjustment revealed that a positive significant relationship existed between verbal communication and adjustment in marriage. Dainton and Aylor (2009) in their study observed that there is a relationship between communication pathways and maintenance of a good relationship. A study by Nwachukwu (2012) revealed that an effective non-verbal communication could enhance marital relationship. Nwoko (2006) also confirms this fact.

We can see from the aforementioned that a significant relationship exist between marital communication patterns and marital adjustment, although no study have been able to identify the communication patterns that is more effective. This study therefore, seeks to determine the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication patterns on marital adjustment.

Aim and Objectives
The aim of this study is to determine the relationship between verbal and non-verbal communication patterns and adjustment of married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. Specifically, the study examined:

-The relationship between verbal communication and marital adjustment among married secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.
-The relationship between non-verbal communication and marital adjustment among married secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Research Questions
The following research questions guided this study:
-What is the extent of relationship that exists between verbal communication and marital adjustment of married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis?
-To what degree does non-verbal communication relate with marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis?

Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance.
-Verbal communication does not significantly relate with marital adjustment among married Public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.
-There is no significant relationship between Non-verbal communication and marital adjustment of married Public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlation research design. The population of the study comprised all male and female married public secondary school teachers in Port-Harcourt Metropolis which is made up of Port Harcourt and Obio-Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State.Simple Random sampling and non-proportionate stratified random sampling was adopted in composing the sample. The instruments for data collection were the Marital Communication Scale (MCS) and the Marital Adjustment scale (MAS). MCS was used to assess the marital communication patterns of married public secondary school teachers while marital adjustment scale (MAS) was used to assess the married public secondary school teachers' levels of marital adjustment.

Marital communication scale (MCS) was self-developed by the researchers. The instrument had 20 items of two sub sections which focused on verbal and non –verbal communication patterns.Marital adjustment scale (MAS) is an adapted instrument of Locke-Wallace (1959) which was used to assess the married public secondary school teacher's level of marital adjustment. The original instrument contains 15-scale items that measured marital satisfaction. It was initially used to differentiate between well-adjusted and maladjusted couples; its reliability was found to be 0.90 using the split-half technique and corrected using the Spearman-Brown formula. Freeston and Plechaty (1997) confirmed the validity of the Locke-Wallace (MAS) by illustrating a significant difference from the satisfied and dissatisfied marriage sample for both men and women. The choice of the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale for the study is to determine the factors that influence marital adjustment of married teachers. The Locke-Wallace (MAS) was modified to fit the current research settings (Nigeria) and to reduce the risk of introducing bias into the study. To achieve this, the researcher investigated the content of the original items to ensure its conceptual and item equivalence to the present study, the Locke-Wallace MAS was also modified by increasing the number of items from the original 15 items to 20 item in order to represent a cross-cultural perspective, some items which were judged as being unsuitable for the target audience were removed. The instrument for the study contains 20 items which were developed using the logical method. The instrument was able to establish a large pool of attitude items based on wide exposure to literature both empirically and theoretically in nature.

Furthermore, the two instruments are non-cognitive instruments and the researcher being aware of the inherent problems in non-cognitive took steps to control response set issues associated with the instrument. To this effect, the researcher wrote the same numbers of negatively and positively keyed items for the instrument. Words, phrases and sentences that were ambiguous and unclear to the respondents were also employed. The questionnaire was made up of modified four point likertscale which requires the teachers to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the items thus; Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SA). Positively keyed items have 4, 3, 2 and 1 points while reverse is the case for negatively keyed items.

Face and content validities were ascertained. The reliability coefficient of Marital Communication Scale (MCS) was obtained using Cronbach Alpha as 0.640 and 0.703 for Verbal Communication Scale (VCS) and Nonverbal Communication Scale (NVCS) respectively. Similarly, the reliability coefficient of Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS) was obtained as 0.807. The data was analysed using simple regression to answer research questions while the hypotheses were tested using ANOVA associated with simple linear regression. The twohypotheses were tested at 0.05% alpha level.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented as shown below.

Research Question One: What is the extent of relationship that exists between verbal communication and marital adjustment of married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis?

Hypothesis One: Verbal communication does not significantly relate with marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.
Research question one was answered by subjecting the values obtained from the variables to simple linear regression. The corresponding null hypothesis wastested using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with simple linear regression.

Table 1: Linear regression on Verbal Communication as a Predictor of Marital Adjustment.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	0.240	0.057	0.055	10.53

Table 2:   ANOVA Associated with Simple Linear Regression

Model	Sum of Square	Degree of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2692.027	1	2692.027		
Residual	44150.251	398	110.930	24.27	0.000
Total	46842.278	399			

As indicated from analysis(as shown) in table 1 above, an R-Value of 0.240 was gotten with an R^2Value of 0.057 and adjusted R^2value of 0.055. This result indicates that verbal communication predicts about 5.5% of marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.

Furthermore, the result of the ANOVA associated with simple regression yield an F- value of 24.27 at df of 1 and 398 with an associated P-value of 0.000 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This suggests that verbal communication significantly predict the marital adjustment of married among public secondary schools teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Research Question two: To what degree does non-verbal communication relate with marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis?
Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between Non-verbal communication and marital adjustment of married Public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.
Research question two was answered using simple linear regression while its corresponding null hypothesis was tested using Analysis of variance (ANOVA) associated with simple linear regression.

Table 3: Simple regression on Non-Verbal Communication as a Predictor of Marital Adjustment.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	0.238	0.057	0.054	10.54

Table 4:   ANOVA Associated with Simple Linear Regression

Model	Sum of Square	Degree of Freedom (df)	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2658.196	1	2658.196		
Residual	44184.082	398	111.015	23.94	0.000
Total	46842.278	399			

Table 3 above shows that an R-Value of 0.24 was gotten with an R^2Value of 0.057 and adjusted R^2 of 0.054. This result indicates that non-verbal communication predicts about 5.4% of marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.Furthermore, table 4 indicates the result of the ANOVA associated with simple regression yield an F- value of 23.94 at df of 1 and 398 with an associated P-value of 0.000 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This suggests that non-verbal communication significantly predict the marital adjustment of married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected while accepting alternate hypothesis.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study are summarized below.

1.   Verbal communication significantly relates with marital adjustment among married Public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.

2.   There is a significant relationship between Non-verbal communication and marital adjustment of married Public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are discussed as shown below.

Verbal Communication and Marital Adjustment

The result of the study indicates that R-Value of 0.240 was gotten with an R^2Value of 0.057 and adjusted R^2value of 0.055. This result indicates that verbal communication predicts about 5.5% of marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. Furthermore, the result of the ANOVA associated with simple regression yield an F- value of 24.27 at df of 1 and 398 with an associated P-value of 0.000 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This suggests that verbal communication significantly predict the marital adjustment of married among public secondary schools teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. This finding is supported by Nwoko (2006) who observed that there is a high positive significant relationship between verbal communication and marital adjustment. Syder (2014) also affirmed that there was a significant relationship between verbal communication style and marital adjustment among married persons in Obio-Akpor and Ikwerre local government areas of Rivers State.

Non Verbal Communication and Marital Adjustment

The result of the study shows that R-Value of 0.24 was gotten with an R^2Value of 0.057 and adjusted R^2 of 0.054. This result indicates that verbal communication predicts about 5.4% of marital

adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. Furthermore, table 4 indicates the result of the ANOVA associated with simple regression yield an F- value of 23.94 at df of 1 and 398 with an associated P-value of 0.000 which was lesser than the chosen alpha of 0.05. This suggests that non-verbal communication significantly predict the marital adjustment of married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt metropolis. This finding is supported by Nwachukwu (2012) who asserted that there is a positive significant relationship non-verbal communication pattern and marital adjustment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that verbal communication and non-verbal communication are significant predictors of marital adjustment among married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis; consequently, they should be encouraged among married couples.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1)	There is need to organise seminars for married public secondary school teachers in Port Harcourt Metropolis with the view of helping them communicate effectively and achieve adjustments at various levels in their marriages.

2)	Marriage counselling should be made compulsory for intending couples to equip them with the necessary skills for handling marital issues and achieving marital adjustment.

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