

MODERATORS OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG MARRIED PERSONS' IN DELTA STATE: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING PRACTICE

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Abstract

This study examines the moderating impact of educational qualifications and duration of marriage on the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment. Three research questions were raised and two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The sample size of 2651 was used for the study. A valid 60 item questionnaire titled Marital Adjustment and Personality Types inventory with reliability of 0.90 was also used for this study. The results reveal that educational qualification, duration of marriage does not moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment among the respondents. The implications of the findings were addressed.

Introduction

Marriage is a lifelong interpersonal relationship between man and woman as husband and wife, governed by legal, customary and religious principles (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2009). Adegoke & Esere (1999) and Esere (2000) opined that marriage is a social institution which fosters the coming together of two totally different individuals with different personality traits, psychological make-up and often different socio-economic background to form a family. At the point of marriage comes a period of adjustment to each other. This involves some compromise by both parties for the survival of the relationship. Marital adjustment, therefore, is defined as a situation where partners are said to be happy with each other in the relationship. It is a complex concept which is dependent on many variables. Oftentimes, partners, in the course of the relationship, do not experience the marital bliss that they expect before entering into the relationship. This is the probable reason newspaper reports as well as researchers such as Okorodudu & Ebenuwa-Okoh (2003) and Ebenuwa-Okoh (2007) say that the rate at which marital relationship is laced with pains, conflict and emotional confusion in recent times has increased dramatically. This has made the values of the marriage institution to diminish, its beauty to fade and its glory to wane. However, there is a paucity of literature on the various sources of conflicts within the family setting. Consensus and expression of affection are being undermined and this has caused stress on the physiological make-up of the couples. This leads to external and internal crisis. When this happens, love, which is the bedrock of marriage, collapses. The resultant effects are that communication breaks down, sex-life becomes unsatisfactory, nothing holds

together any longer and mistrust sets in. Even educational qualifications and experiences gathered over the years become problematic.

Education could be defined as a body of knowledge acquired either in a formal or non-formal setting. This body of knowledge is pivotal to total development of the individual's personality, which also includes the person's (learner's) interactive potentials with other individuals. Thus, making him to be better adjusted to the realities of life such as in marital relationship. Ofeogbu (1998) and Popoola (1997) reported that educational qualifications are predictors of marital adjustment. They emphasized that they help to improve on all spheres of the individual's life, marriage inclusive. The importance of education in one's life cannot be underplayed. Its necessity has made it imperative for it to be an issue of investigation.

Duration of marriage may have some impact on marital adjustment. It is the number of years spent in marital relationship. Ofeoghu (1998), in his study on the effects of duration of marriage on marital adjustment, revealed that the longer the number of years in marriage, the better adjusted the couples. This finding further confirms the popular adage that "experience is the best teacher". This phenomenon has not been adequately researched into in our cultural setting. Against these background, this study is set to investigate how such experiential variables such as educational qualifications of the spouses and experiences gathered over the years in marriage can moderate the relationship between spouses' emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment.

Arising from the statement of the problem, this study will answer and test the following research questions and hypotheses respectively.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of correlation between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement, duration of marriage, educational qualification and marital adjustment?
2. Does educational qualification moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment?
3. Does duration of marriage moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Educational qualification does not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment.

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Ho₂: Duration of marriage does not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment.

Methodology

This study is a survey. It adopts expo-facto and it is correlational in nature.

Population

The population of this study consisted of all married persons in Delta State. There is no reliable record of the actual number of married persons in the state. This is because most people marry through the traditional method and do not register their marriages thereafter.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Multi-stage purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of two thousand five hundred and sixty one (2561) married persons from nine local government areas of the 3 senatorial districts of Delta State.

The sample comprises of 1,316 (51.4%) males and 1,245 (48.6%) females. In the sample, married people whose marital duration was less than 10 years were 52.9% while those whose marriage was above 10 years were 47.1%. Non-graduates were 48.5% while graduates were 51.5% of the sample. The individuals that got married before age 30 were 1,700 or 66.4% of the sample. Those who got married after 30 years formed 861 or 33.6% of the sample.

Measures

The instrument used to elicit information for the study was titled Marital Adjustment and Personality Types Inventory (MAPTI). The instrument was divided into two parts. Part one sought relevant demographic information on gender, educational qualifications, duration of marriage, type of profession, age at marriage, etc. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 60 items. The instrument was designed such that the participants could respond to the items on a 4 point scale format of Always, Sometimes, Seldom and Never, as well as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

It measures 6 sub-parts of marital adjustment: financial management, 8 items; communication flow, 8 items; emotional expression, 8 items; work involvement, 8 items; general marital behaviour, 16 items; and personality types, 12 items; totalling 60 items. The instrument had face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha. The following coefficient alpha (0.05 level) were obtained. Financial management: $r = .90$ ($p < 0.05$), communication flow: $r = .74$ ($p < 0.05$), emotional expression: $r = 0.89$ ($p < 0.05$), work involvement: $r = 0.80$ ($P < 0.05$) and general marital behaviour: $r =$

0.88 ($P < 0.05$). This revealed that the internal consistency of the instrument was reliable. The whole instrument had $r = 0.90$.

Presentation of Data

Research Question I:

What is the nature of the correlation between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement duration of marriage, educational qualification and marital adjustment?

In order to answer this question, Pearson correlation matrix of all the variables in the study was generated and this is presented in Table I.

Table I: Intercorrelations of emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement, educational qualifications, duration of marriage and marital adjustment.

	Emo-tional Expres-sion	Financial Manage-ment	Communi-cation Flow	Work Involvement	Educational Qualification	Duration of Marriage	Mari-tal Adjust-ment
Emotional Expression							
Financial Management	.30*						
Communication Flow	.40*	.40*					
Work Involvement	-.01	.16*	.10*				
Educational Qualification	.00	-.03	.02	-.03			
Duration of Marriage	-.01	-.03	.03	-.00	.05*		
Marital Adjustment	.52*	.41*	.38*	.10*	.02	-.03	
Mean (X)	27.35	24.45	25.11	21.08	1.53	1.48	50.09
Standard Deviation (SD)	4.21	4.24	3.21	4.35	.52	.52	6.76

* 0.05 level of significance.

Data in Table 1 shows that there is positive correlation between emotional expression and marital adjustment ($r=.52$), financial management and marital adjustment ($r=.41$), communication flow and marital adjustment ($r=.38$), work involvement and marital adjustment ($r=.098$). An insignificant correlation of educational qualification with the other variables was noted. Furthermore, insignificant relationship between duration of marriage and the other variables in this study was also noted. The answer to research question 1, therefore, is that there is positive and negative intercorrelation between the variables. This provides veritable ground for further analysis.

Research Question II and Hypothesis I

Research question 2 asked whether educational qualifications of married person’s moderated the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment while hypothesis 1 stated that there is no significant moderating impact of educational qualifications on the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment.

The data presented in Table 2 and Figure 1 are used to answer research question 2 and test hypothesis 1 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2: Moderating impact of educational qualification on the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment.

Model	B	SeB	Beta	T	Sig. T.
Communication Flow	.250	.039	.12	6.482	00
Financial Management	.371	.028	.23	3.389	00
Emotional Expression	.647	.028	.40	22.851	00
Work Involvement	.085	.025	.05	13.131	00
Educational Qualification	.183	.214	.01	.853	.394
Constant	14.991	1.109		13.511	000

- a. Predictors: (Constant) emotional expression, communication flow, financial management, work involvement, educational qualifications
- b. Dependent variable: Marital adjustment, Significant (P<0.05)

The table above shows the relative predictive impact of educational qualifications on the relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, financial management, work involvement and marital adjustment. The beta weights, .12 for communication flow, .23 for financial management, .40 for emotional expression, .05 for work involvement and .01 for educational qualifications are indicators of the degree of correlation between each variable of communication flow, emotional expression, work involvement, financial management, educational qualification and marital adjustment. In order to determine the moderating impact of educational qualifications on the relationship between a set of independent variables (for example, emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement) and dependent variables (for example, marital adjustment), three comparisons are made. First, there must be significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Second, there must be significant relationship between all independent variables and the moderator variable. Third, there must be

significant relationship between the moderator variable and the dependent variable. (University of Exeter, 2004 and Elliot, McGregor and Gable, 1999).

In assessing the moderator impact, the researcher utilized the beta weights and correlation matrix of the variables concerned. The beta weights were obtained by first entering the independent variables into the regression equation before entering the moderator variable as the second independent variable. These variables entered the equation as predictors. The beta weight obtained was used in the first comparison, which is comparing the beta weights of the variables (It gives a standardized picture of the actual relationship between these variables). Also, the second and third comparisons were done through the utilization of the correlation matrix (Ossai, 2004; University of Exeter, 2003 and Elliot, McGregor and Gable, 1999). The moderating impact of the variable is presented as shown in the path model below.

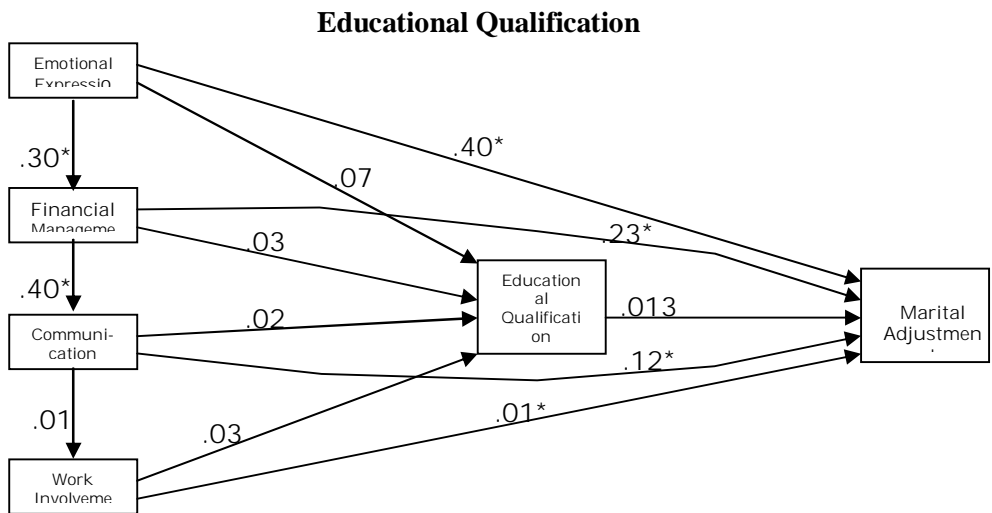


Fig.1: Path analysis model of moderating impact of educational qualification on the relationship between Emotional Expression, Communication Flow, Financial Management, Work Involvement and Marital Adjustment.

The above table shows the beta coefficients of the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. Their relationship with the moderator variable was also presented. Thus, communication flow and marital adjustment = .12, financial management and marital adjustment = .23, emotional expression and marital adjustment = .40, work involvement and marital adjustment = .05, educational qualification and marital adjustment = .13. The correlation coefficients of the relationship between educational qualifications with each of the independent variables were derived from the correlation matrix on Table I (emotional expression and educational qualification .07, financial

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management and educational qualification .03, communication flow and educational qualification -.02, work involvement and educational qualifications .03). The above coefficients show clearly that educational qualifications could not meet the criteria for establishing moderating impact.

All three conditions for establishing moderating impact (Elliot, McGregor and Gable, 1999; Ossai, 2004) were carried out. The answer to research question one, therefore, is that educational qualification does not moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment. Furthermore, hypothesis I is upheld. There is no significant moderating impact of educational qualifications on the relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, financial management, work involvement and marital adjustment.

Research Question III and Hypothesis II:

Research question 3 asked if the duration of marriage moderated the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment while hypothesis 2 stated that there is no significant moderating impact of duration of marriage on the relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, financial management, work involvement and marital adjustment.

The data presented in Table III and the path analytic model in Figure 2 are used to answer research question 2 and test hypothesis 2 at 0.05 level of significance.

Table III: Moderating impact of duration of marriage on the relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, work involvement, financial management and marital adjustment

Model	B	SeB	Beta	T	Sig.
Communication Flow	.26	.04	.12	6.61	000
Financial Management	.37	.03	.23	13.04	000
Emotional Expression	.65	.03	.40	22.80	000
Work Involvement	.08	.03	.05	3.35	000
Duration of Marriage	-.39	.21	-.02	-1.81	.069
Constant	15.84	1.10		14.38	000

- a. Predictors: Constant, emotional expression, communication flow, financial management, work involvement, duration of marriage.
- b. Dependent variable: Marital adjustment, Significant (P<0.05)

The table above shows relative predictive impact of duration of marriage on the relationship between communication flow, emotional expression, financial management, work involvement and marital adjustment. This table shows that

the relative predictive power of duration of marriage is not significant ($B=-.02$, $t=-1.81$, $p<0.69$). A close examination of correlation coefficient of the relationship between duration of marriage and the independent variables, emotional expression, communication flow, financial management and work involvement were obtained from the correlation matrix in Table I (communication flow and duration of marriage = $.03$, financial management and duration of marriage = $-.03$, emotional expression and duration of marriage = $-.01$, work involvement and duration of marriage = $-.003$). The relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment $B=-.03$.

All these relationships are not significant at 0.05 level. This means that duration of marriage is not a moderating variable as it did not explain variance in married persons' marital adjustment in the absence of other variables. (The illustration of the moderating impact of duration of marriage is explained in the path model below.)

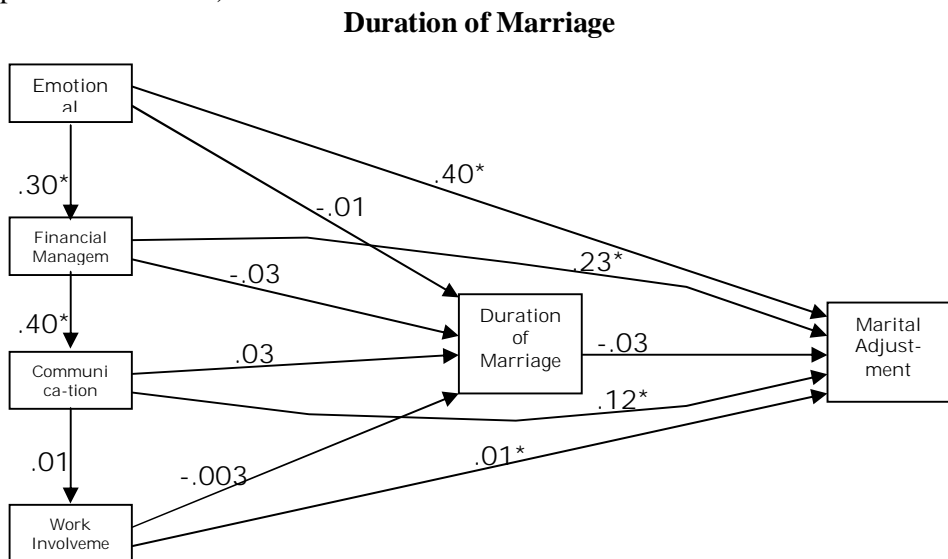


Fig.2: Path Analytical Model showing the moderating impact of duration of marriage on the relationship between Emotional Expression, Communication Flow, Financial Management, Work Involvement and Marital Adjustment. Significant at 0.05

From these co-efficient of relationships, it is clear that duration of marriage does not meet the three criteria for establishing moderating impact. This is because relationship between duration of marriage and marital adjustment is not significant. It is not also significant with the other variables. Therefore, the answer is that there is no moderating impact of duration of marriage. The hypothesis is also upheld; duration of marriage has no moderating impact on the relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, financial management, work involvement and marital adjustment.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study show that educational qualification does not have moderating impact on the relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, work involvement, financial management and marital adjustment among married persons. This finding contradicts Ebeonuwa-Okoh & Okorodudu (2003) & Ofeogbu (1998) who found that the level of educational qualifications significantly influence marital adjustment. Also, Mallum's (1998) study revealed that education appears to make for increased sense of marital responsibility. According to them, the primary function of education is to help individuals to become knowledgeable, develop potentials, characters and marital power through systematic training and instruction.

The possible explanations for the finding in this study is that the success of any marital relationship depends on the determination of the partners to make their marriage work since marital maladjustment cuts across social class, age, educational qualification and gender. Therefore, the success of marital relationship depends largely on the couple's ability to create a conducive and loving home climate.

Results on the second hypothesis revealed that duration of marriage is not a moderator of the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment. This study is at variance with Olagunya (1998) whose study revealed that duration of marriage is significant. The explanation for this findings could be that the success of marriage largely depends on the determination of the couples to create home climate that satisfies their psychological, social and economic needs.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that duration of marriage and educational qualifications are not moderators of the marital relationship between emotional expression, communication flow, work involvement, financial management and marital adjustment.

The Implications of the Findings to Counselling Practice

Already a great number of married persons had been caught in the web of marital confusion despite the knowledge and experience. It is necessary that counsellor's should develop reliable, therapeutic programmes in managing marital discord. The programmes should emphasize the need to develop spirit of tolerance, endurance, patience, love, caring and understanding which are highly demanded for harmonious co-existence in this complex institution.

Individual's who a victims of marital discord through marital counselling programme are assisted to work through their emotional, social and physical challenges. This will help to reduce the traumatic experiences and psychological problems. Therefore, the counselling should emphasize commitment and

determination by spouse to make their marriages work irrespective of educational qualification and duration of marriage.

Also, seminars organized should personalized the counselling services to help partners experiencing marital crisis out of their deep psychological, personal and social problems that are standing against their meaningful and useful marital bless and life.

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