

# PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTOR OF DEPRESSION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION OF MARRIED LECTURERS IN UNIVERSITIES OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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**Abstract:** The study examined the psychosocial factor of depression and marital satisfaction of married lecturers in universities of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this research, two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Literature review was carried out accordingly. Survey research design was adopted and a sample of five hundred and ninety (590) lecturers were used for the study. The sample was selected through stratified and simple random sampling techniques, while the questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through Cronbach alpha reliability method. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was the statistical method employed to analyze the hypotheses under study; each hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The results of the analysis revealed that depression and communication in marriage significantly influence marital satisfaction of lecturers in Cross River State universities. Based on the findings, it was recommended that professional marriage counsellors and other concerned individuals and bodies should organize and create more awareness through marriage counselling workshops, symposia and conferences for public servants on the need for marital harmony and counselling for couples.

Keyword: Psychosocial factors, depression and marital satisfaction, married lecturers in universities

## INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction has become a source of concern to couple, married, unmarried, therapists and stakeholders in all sectors. Marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflect the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a person. It is the degree of satisfaction derive from a marital relationship. When this satisfaction is not achieved from each other it leads to marital dissatisfaction. Marital dissatisfaction has some negative effects on the couple which includes depression, hatred, lack of cooperation, communication, fear, violence in the home, unfaithfulness (infidelity), rebellion, possible separation and eventful divorce and prayerlessness. Lecturers' marital satisfaction may have strong implications for the lecturers' wellbeing and delivery services in teaching-learning processes. Thus, marital satisfaction may be influenced by psychosocial factors which include depression and communication.

Observing with keen interest and concern, the actions exhibited by some lecturers in the tertiary institutions, in their negative utterances on issues of marriage, seem to suggest that, they are unhappy, sad and need love and care. Some display distress and the urge and desire to seek for affection (love) outside their partners to achieve satisfaction and peace.

Therefore, when a person does not have the desired satisfaction in a relationship, he or she may experience depression. The feelings of sadness make him or her to become unhappy and this may lead to lack of affection for the spouse. The person gradually begins to loose the feeling of live, which may be transfer to poor communication between couples. Affected spouse may wish to be left alone, may refuse to share information with his or her spouse or may prefer other concern persons to be their confiders and seek advice in decision making on issues of his or her marriage. Hence, family strengths influence a family's ability to respond to variety of stressors (examples, health, financial management, leisure, personality, support, time and routines, celebrations and traditions. Families whose response style reflect extreme (rigid or chaotic) versus balances (structured or flexible) roles tend to have difficulty adapting to change and therefore experience more dysfunction stressful times (Olson, Russel & Sprinkle, 2009). Often events are not stressful in themselves, but resultant stress is a product of a family's perception of the events in conjunction with their family resources, that is both internal and external, emotional and material capacities.

One of the major tasks of modern marriage is to achieve a state of marital satisfaction in the home. Marital satisfaction therefore can be referred to as individual's subjective experience of marriage in terms of when their needs are being met and when individual's expectations and desires are being satisfied. This can be with regards to the way couples communicate at home. Marriage problems represent a unique but common, category of adjustment difficulty that causes people to see divorce in marriages (Hollingshead, 2007).

Furthermore, marital satisfaction is not only a value term, but also a relative term. It implies

firmness and strength to endure under hard as well as easy circumstances. Hence, problems can develop in a couple's relationships because of perceived or social problem in either person or among their children. Sometimes, the couples themselves are the problem because of poor communication, marital depression, disaffection, in-laws interference, self-concept among others (Donald, 2007). It is against this backdrop that the study examines psychosocial factors of marital depression and communication on marital satisfaction of married lecturers in universities of Cross River State, Nigeria.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Gottman Cascade theory of marital stability and dissolution (1994)

Gottman Cascade theory of marital stability and dissolution (1994) stated that marital success versus failure reflects a causal process model that specifies alternative paths that satisfied or dissatisfied married partners take. Specifically Gottman argues that marital partners' negative message behaviour causes a shift in perceptions of each other that lead to unfavourable beliefs about the partner. Negative message behaviour (for instance sarcasm accusations) predicts relational instability. The ratio of positive-to-negative messages indicates marital stability at 5:1, whereas, unstable couples enact a 1:1 positive-to-negative message ratio. Unstable couples, however exhibit an equal number of positive and negative message.

According to Gottman, negative conflict behaviours lead to negative emotional reactions. Differences between stable and unstable couples also are evident in the attributions made regarding partners' negative behaviour. Stable partners rely on positive or kind attributions to explain negative behaviour he or she is tired or been under a lot of pressure. While unstable partners uses hostile attributions or explanation that reflect internal, stable, global and intentional features of the partner - he or she is self-centred, never calls to explain why he or she is late. Thus, once hostile attributions are in place, partners tend to distance themselves from one another, recast the history of marriage and finally separate.

Gottman's theory orients towards conflicts management and how well couples deal with their differences, how well they argue and express themselves both verbally and non-verbal expressions. The theory is ostensibly concerned with investigating marital breakdown and provide information to enhance good understanding, communication among happy and rewarding spouses.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Family stability is crucial and importance to every society in their national development. The family as a unit determines how well the society progresses, healthy family relationship will definitely result in societal peace, while instability in families create upheavals and retards national development.

Observing the streets of the Nigerian society today, Cross River State inclusive, couples tend to experience high level of marital turbulence, diverse deterioration in marital relationships, resulting to frustration, pain, hurt, deep offence, disappointment on the part of either or both spouses in getting their marriage satisfied. Both husband and wife tend to experience series of psychological distress, depression, nervous breakdown and general health impairments as a result of unfulfilled marriage life. They also witness frustrating experiences such as social assault from in-laws, absence of children create more tension, separation and lack of proper communication leading to poor marital relationship. Also lack of trust, honesty, love, care and understanding among Nigerian lectures, universities in Cross River State inclusive have constituted serious treat to the social and economic stability in the country. Some out of frustration direct or discuss their problems in lecture room and undermine the real issue to be taught. Others may decide to hang around and making new friends, drinking, smoking and may hate the opposite sex as the case may be. All these may result to poor delivery services as attention and seriousness is not given to function well enough at work. Based on this the researchers are aimed at examining psychosocial factors (marital depression and communication) and marital satisfaction of married lecturers in universities of Cross River Sate, Nigeria.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review was carried out based on the variable under study; marital depression, communication on marital satisfaction.

#### **Marital depression and satisfaction**

Researches have been carried out on depression and marital satisfaction. Hollist, Miller, Falcoto and Femandez (2007) tested the longitudinal relationship between marital satisfaction and depression among Brazilian women. Using structural equation and modeling, result indicated that

marital satisfaction was a strong predictor of depression two years later. Marital satisfaction was also related to co-occurring depression. This result proves that the marital discord model of depression is an appropriate theoretical model for the conceptualization of marital discord and depression and suggest the potential utility of using couples therapy for treating depression among this population.

Similarly, Uebelacker, Courtangs and Wisman (2003) examined marital satisfaction as a function of depressive symptoms, communication and “self-silencing” in women. A sample of 200 teachers was randomly selected using stratified random sampling technique and a chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) analysis of variance. They discovered that depressive symptoms were associated with self-silencing and a pattern of communication characterized as wife-demand and husband withdraw. The negative correlation between depressive symptoms and marital satisfaction was significant for women and not for men. Result suggested that perceptions of interactions with one’s spouse, as well as gender related expectations of how both husband and wife interact may be an important phenomenon to address when considering depression and marital satisfaction in both men and women.

Furthermore, Whisman and Bruce (2009) found that the presence of marital dissatisfaction doubled the one year risk for major depression. They found that dissatisfied spouses were nearly three times more likely than non-dissatisfied spouses to develop a major depression episode. In fact they estimated if marital dissatisfaction could be eliminated 20-30% of new occurrences of depression could be eliminated.

Abubakar (2015) examined the relationship between psychosocial factors and marriages in northern Nigeria. He used a sample of 320 respondents drawn from the population. An instrument entitled, psychosocial factors and marriage questionnaire (PFMQ) was designed for data collection. The hypotheses were analyzed using correlation analysis and tested at .05 level of significance. The result shows a significant relationship between psychosocial factor and marriages in northern Nigeria.

Similarly Hashmi and Khurshid (2015) in their study on the relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression, found out that working married women have to face more problems in their married life as compared to non-working married women. The result further showed that highly educated working and non-working married women can perform well in their marital role and they are free from depression, as compared to uneducated working and non-working married women.

#### Communication and marital satisfaction

On this vein, Uwe (2000) comparing human motivation and psychosocial factors that bring about harmony in married home, like truth, honesty, trustworthiness, when lacking causes depression. This discourages wife and husband to work harmoniously together to achieve a better and satisfied married life.

#### Communication and marital satisfaction

Communication leakage in marriage is a major source of marital breakdown and conflict. According to AhmadiGatab and Khamen (2011), communication in marriage is called the lifeline of love. This implies that two persons now have something “in common” because it has been shared. In its most profound sense, communication is a sharing between persons. It is through communication that two parties get to know each other, their hidden anger and humiliating fears. Where there is no communication, minor issues become big problems, and silence is understood as hostility. Without communication, there can be no understanding or oneness, and there can be no common action. Hence, a lot of frustration develops and one feels alone in one’s own world, with doubt and suspicion growing in the mind. The couple drifts apart gradually, each opening new channels outside the home, until finally, they are like two strangers sharing a table in a crowded restaurant (Berns, Jacobson & Gottman, 2009). Marital communication is measured by focusing on the family as a group with regards to their listening skills, speaking skills, self-disclosure, clarity, continuity, tracking, respect and regard. In terms of listening skills, the focus is on empathy and attentive listening.

Accordingly, Bienvenu (2009); Galvin and Brommed (2016), they believed that communication have an important impact on the relationship between people. Positive characteristic of communication are good listening habits, freedom of expression, understanding and acceptance. On the other hand, negative communication is often associated with criticism, sarcasm, lack of trust and acceptance.

Shaw and Sawson (2001) in their study adopted a well validated instrument which was administered for four hundred (400) respondents. They used a systematic sampling technique to select the respondents. Using independent t-test analysis and .05 level of significance, they discovered that married lecturers ascribed high value to stability in their marriage. They believed that marital satisfaction can be improved by functioning communication and cohesion, as well as increased sense of belonging and understanding between married couples. Participants in this study purposely used

leisure with their spouse to develop better communication and relationship in their marriages.

Ledermann, Bodenmann, Rudaz and Bradbury (2010) conducted a study on the effect of communication breakdown on marital stability with 135 married lecturers in United States. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested with independent t-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings revealed that with insufficient skills for communication and conflict management, most marriages face deep pomological damages, emotional dissolution, divorce and adjustment problems in marriages. To prevent these problems is not easy without acquiring good communication learning skills.

#### **STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES**

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant influence of depression on marital satisfaction of lecturers.
2. Communication in marriage does not significantly influence marital satisfaction.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The research design used for this study is the ex-post facto design. The population of the study is made up of all married lecturers in universities of Cross River State (University of Calabar and Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) with campuses in Calabar, Obubra and Ogoja) numbering 2,907 as obtained from the establishment unit of each of the university (2017). The sampling techniques adopted for this study were the stratified, purposive and accidental sampling techniques. Stratification was based on the universities to ensure that each university is adequately represented in the study. Purposive sampling was used as the researchers intentionally decided to use only married lecturers in the universities of Cross River State. Accidental technique was used as the researchers gave the instrument only to the married lecturers they met and were willing to respond to the questionnaire items in the two universities. The sample of the study consisted of 610 married lecturers which 21% of married lecturers drawn from the population of the study area. The main instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire designed by the researchers; which was given to experts in research and statistics for face and content validation. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing was done using 50 respondents. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliability estimate ranged from 0.71 to 0.83.

#### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this section each hypothesis was restated in the null form. The variables are identified and the result of the statistical analysis carried out to test the hypothesis are presented and tested at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of depression on marital satisfaction of lecturers.

Independent variable: Depression

Dependent: Marital satisfaction

One-way analysis of variance was considered the most appropriate statistical technique employed to test the hypothesis, depression ranged from low, moderate and high level as it influences marital satisfaction among married lecturers. The result revealed that the calculated F-value of 34.558 at .05 level of significance, with 2,587 degree of freedom, with this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore, implies that psychosocial factor, such as depression significantly influence marital satisfaction. The result of the analysis in Table 1 showed that lecturers whose depression level is low are significantly different in their marital satisfaction from those lecturers with moderate or high level of depression. Also, lecturers whose depression is moderate are significantly different from those who are highly depressed.

Table 1  
Summary of data and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of depression on marital satisfaction of lecturers (N = 590)

Depression	N	X	SD
Low – 1	109	34.09	2.63
Moderate – 2	829	33.43	3.48
High – 3	152	36.15	3.51
Total	590	34.25	3.53

  

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F	P-value
Between group	774.197	2	468.857	34.558*	.000
Within group	6575.174	567	10.923		
Total	7349.371	589			

\* Significant at .05 level, critical f = 3.00, df = 2,587

Since depression have significant influence on marital satisfaction of lecturers, as post hoc analysis was employed using fishers' least significant difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 2.

Table 2  
Fisher' least significant difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of depression on marital satisfaction of lecturers

Depression	Marital satisfaction	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
1.00	2.00	-.66317	.36988	.073
	3.00	-2.05957(*)	.42001	.000
2.00	1.00	-.66317	.36988	.073
	3.00	-2.72274(*)	.32824	.000
3.00	1.00	2.05957(*)	.42007	.000
	2.00	2.72274(*)	.32824	.000

\* The mean difference is significant at .05 level

#### Hypothesis two

Communication in marriage does not significantly influence marital satisfaction of lecturers.

Independent variable: Communication

Dependent: Marital satisfaction

One-way analysis of variance was considered the most appropriate statistical technique employed to test the hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in table 3, revealed that the calculated F-value of 44.604 is higher than the critical F-value of 3.00 at .05 level of significance, with 2,587 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore, implies that communication in marriage has a significant influence on marital satisfaction of lecturers. Hence, post hoc analysis was employed using Fishers' least significant difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis, which is shown in Table 4 that lecturers whose communication in marriage was low were significantly different in their marital satisfaction from those whose communication in marriage was either moderate or high. Also, lecturers whose communication in marriage was moderate were significantly different from those who were highly ranged in their marital satisfaction.

Table 3  
One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the influence of communication on marital satisfaction of lecturers (N = 590)

Communication in marriage	N	X	SD
Low – 1	100	34.07	2.43
Moderate – 2	314	33.24	3.40
High – 3	176	36.16	3.52
Total	590	34.25	3.53

  

Source of variance	SS	DF	MS	F	P-value
Between group	969.554	2	484.777	44.604*	.000
Within group	6379.818	587	10.869		
Total	7349.371	589			

\* Significant at .05 level, critical  $f = 3.00$ ,  $df = 2,587$

Table 4  
Fisher' least significant difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis of the influence of communication (in marriage) and marital satisfaction of lecturers

Communication	Marital satisfaction	Mean difference	Std. Error	Sig.
1.00	2.00	.83115(*)	.37855	.029
	3.00	-209477(*)	.41284	.000
2.00	1.00	-83115(*)	.37855	.029
	3.00	-292592(*)	.31043	.000
3.00	1.00	2.09477(*)	.41284	.000
	2.00	2.92592(*)	.31043	.000

\* The mean difference is significant at .05 level

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section is concerned with the discussion of findings that emerged from the results of the analysis. The discussion is presented in accordance to the variable of the study.

### Depression and marital satisfaction of lecturers

The finding is in line with the views of the Whisman and Bruce (2009) who found that the presence of marital dissatisfaction doubled the one-year risk of major depression. They found that dissatisfied spouses were nearly three times more likely than non dissatisfied spouses to develop a major depression episode. In fact, they estimated that if marital dissatisfaction could be eliminated 20-30% of new occurrences of depression could be eliminated.

Abubakar (2015) examined the relationship between psychosocial factors and marriages in northern Nigeria. He used a sample of 320 respondents drawn from the population. An instrument entitled, psychosocial factors and marriage questionnaire (PFMQ) was designed for data collection. The hypotheses were analyzed using correlation analysis and tested at .05 level of significance. The result shows a significant relationship between psychosocial factor and marriages in northern Nigeria.

Similarly, Hashmi and Khurshid (2015) in their study on the relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression, found out that working married women have to face more problems in their married life as compared to non-working married women. The result further showed that highly educated working and non-working married women can perform well in their marital role and they are free from depression, as compared to uneducated working and non-working married women.

### Communication and marital satisfaction

The result of the second hypothesis indicated that, communication in marriage significantly influenced marital satisfaction of lecturers. These findings are in line with the views of AhmadiGatab and Khamen (2011), they observed that communication in marriage is called the lifeline of love. This implies that two persons now have something in common because it has been shared. Therefore, communication is a sharing between persons. It is through communication that two parties get to know each other, their hidden angers and humiliating fear. Without communication, frustration develops and one feels alone in one's own world; each opening new channel outside the home until finally, they are like strangers sharing a table in a crowded restaurant (Berns, Jacobson & Gottman, 2016).

While Ledermann, Bodenmann, Rudaz and Bradbury (2010) in their study of 135 married lecturers in United States, the findings revealed that with insufficient skills for communication and conflict management, most marriages face deep pomological damages, emotional dissolution, divorce and adjustment problems. Additionally, high level of sexual problems was related with more depressive symptoms, while low levels of mutual constructive communication and high levels of demand, withdraw communication in marriage among couples.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made for continuous marital stability and satisfaction.

1. Marriage counselling, workshops, symposia, conference should be organized regularly for public servant for marital harmony and counselling.
2. Married couples, singles and those preparing for marriage should read and learn from modern marriage books or articles written by contemporary marriage counsellors and therapists, also listen or view audio-visual tapes teaching and providing information on approaches and methods that bring about marital satisfaction among couples.
3. Couples should learn to accommodate each other temperament, this may help them to communicate and understand each other at home and love with no personal regards.

4. Marriage is a life project, “till death do us part”, therefore, couples with or without children, or other related issues should be encouraged to maintain marital harmony and maintain peace.
5. Finally, professional counsellors, church leaders, government and non-governmental organizations should organize enlightenment campaigns to prompt post-marriage counselling and counselling centres or units in all ministries and institutions of study.

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