

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON SPOUSAL ABANDONMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ILORIN METROPOLIS: THE NEED FOR VALUE ORIENTATION.

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Abstract

The phenomenon of spouses abandoning their marital responsibilities is increasingly becoming a critical issue in many relationships, with profound repercussions for both partners and their children, if any. This study investigates how emotional intelligence might act as a mitigating factor against marital abandonment within the community of secondary school teachers in the Ilorin metropolitan region. Through a descriptive survey approach, the research sets out to accomplish multiple goals: evaluating the levels of emotional intelligence among these educators; examining their encounters with marital abandonment; probing into how emotional intelligence could potentially lessen the instances of marital abandonment; and scrutinizing any gender-based differences in emotional intelligence and experiences of marital abandonment among the teaching staff in Ilorin, Kwara State. The target population for this research included all secondary school teachers in the Ilorin metropolitan area, estimated to be 9,298 individuals, from which a sample of 400 teachers was randomly selected for detailed study. The study used a questionnaire titled "Impact of Emotional Intelligence and Gender on Marital Desertion Questionnaire (IEIGMDQ)" to collect data on marital desertion. The questionnaire was content-validated and tested with a reliability coefficient of 0.85. Demographic data was analyzed using percentages, mean, standard deviation, and rank order, while three null hypotheses were analyzed using a t-test statistical tool. The results indicated that a significant portion of the married secondary school educators displayed a strong presence of emotional intelligence. Despite this, they faced issues of marital neglect, characterized by their partners' indifference towards their basic needs, lack of support during challenging times, and neglect of their expected responsibilities, among other concerns. The study found that emotional intelligence doesn't significantly impact marital abandonment among married secondary school teachers in the Ilorin metropolitan area. There was no significant difference in emotional intelligence levels between male and female educators.

suggesting varying impacts. The study suggests that Marital Counselors should implement comprehensive premarital counselling sessions to address common issues leading to marital strife and abandonment.

Keywords: Impact, Emotional Intelligence, Marital Desertion, Teachers

Introduction

Marriage represents a crucial phase in the developmental journey of an individual's personal and social life. It is viewed as the most significant social entity, with numerous factors contributing to its stability and robustness. Therefore, according to Khorasani et al (2015), the quality of marriage stands as the most significant predictor of the psychological well-being of married individuals. Khorasani et al. (2015) suggest that the nature of the relationship between married individuals and their contentment with marital life is pivotal in determining the destiny of their marriage. Odebunmi (2007) defines marriage as the oath between a man and a woman, which forms the fundamental and crucial unit of society. Marriage, encompassing both physical and moral unions, is recognized by society as the foundational block for family creation. It is perceived in varying lights, ranging from a sacred, enduring bond transcending this life to a temporal civil pact with a predefined duration. Regardless of its characterization as either a sacrament or a civil contract, the essence of marriage transcends mere sexual gratification, embodying the coming together of two individuals from opposite genders primarily for the legitimate proliferation of children. Marriages are possibly initiated for diverse reasons, including familial consent, social convenience or economic advantages, the core aims of this institution typically revolve around companionship, sexual intimacy, and childbearing. Despite this, the ideal of a harmonious relationship leading to marital contentment is often marred by the reality of marital desertion, (Esere, Yusuf & Omotosho 2011) highlighting a disconnect between the institution's ideals and actual outcomes (Uba, 2007).

Anitha et al (2016) define marital desertion as a scenario where married persons intentionally neglect their responsibilities or commitments, particularly towards their spouse or child. Jahangir et al (2016) described a situation in which one partner may exit the marriage unilaterally, without obtaining consent or discussing the underlying issues. This conduct usually leads to the remaining partner taking on the entire burden of household management, looking after children from the union, and overseeing all additional matters, such as business activities and asset upkeep. Desertion occurs when a husband or wife abruptly exits both the family dwelling and the relationship, failing to inform their spouse of their departure. This action is taken unilaterally, without the agreement of the other party (Jahangir et al., 2016).

Separation is different from desertion in marriage. During a separation, both individuals in the marriage reach a collective agreement regarding their decision to part ways. In cases of separation, the spouse planning to leave typically notifies the other, even in the absence of mutual

consent. However, desertion is characterized by a partner leaving their spouse and possibly their children, forsaking their familial responsibilities and obligations with no intention to return (Van Brummen-Girigori & Buunk, 2015).

Several factors contribute to marital desertion. Anitha et al. (2016) identified these as including the lack of alternative means to legally dissolve the marriage; an untenable situation for either the husband or wife within the marriage; experiences of physical or psychological abuse; unexpected financial problems; and acts of unfaithfulness. Van Brummen-Girigori and Buunk (2015) point out that some instances of desertion stem from one spouse engaging in an affair outside the marriage, leading them to exit the marital relationship to pursue a continuation of that affair or explore further extramarital connections. In these regions, the spouse who abandons the family is required to stay away from the home for a minimum duration of one year. Uba (2007) stated that no difference in factors influencing the husband's and wife's desertion in marriage or divorce. Factors such as sex, communication gap, age, religion, constant conflict or domestic violence, nagging and family economic conditions could influence desertion, separation and or divorce (Uba, 2007). Additional factors involve a lack of prior consensus on the departure, an absence of financial support from the leaving spouse, and the circumstance where the remaining spouse is not directly responsible for the other's decision to leave.

When a spouse walks out of a marriage and abandons their spouse and children, it may imply their denial to contribute toward the family's financial support leaving the abandoned spouse to face unexpected economic challenges. If one is considering whether to abandon a marriage, it is essential to take note of the consequences (Schoenberg Family Law Group, 2021). There is a dearth of literature on marital desertion generally and its consequences but the consequences of marital desertion can be attributed to a broken home. Rodgers and Pryor (2008) highlighted the significant impact of a broken home on the children of such families. It has also been emphasized that the breakdown of families frequently results in children sustaining intellectual, physical, and emotional injuries that can last a lifetime. These problems can largely be traced back to the root cause of a fractured family unit. Murphy (2018) argues that a broken home negatively impacts family income, especially for mothers with children, who face increased financial responsibilities and increased work hours, disrupting their support network for parenting. The effects of broken families may impact greatly the internal organization of the family and by extension; affect a wife or husband's emotions and personality (Strohschein, 2005). The negative impacts stemming from family separation or marital abandonment can be alleviated by employing emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence involves comprehending and utilizing emotions within ourselves and others, thereby guiding our actions in line with our principles (Foltyn, 2018).

Perceiving and grasping emotions improves one's interpretation of personal drives and societal signals, markedly affecting how one engages with others, as noted by Lopes, Salovey, Côté, and Beers (2005). Furthermore, Cherniss (2010) describes emotional intelligence as not only the skill to identify and articulate emotions but also the capacity to incorporate emotions into

cognitive processes and manage emotions within oneself or in others. Emotional intelligence is related to how people perceive and understand their and other's emotions and how they can apply this knowledge in everyday life. Moreover, one could state that emotionally intelligent people make decisions about their actions based on their thinking of what they feel and why it is so, but also based on what others feel. Daniel Goleman has been noted to define 'Emotional Intelligence' as the capacity to recognize, comprehend, value, and effectively utilize Emotions to serve as a vital source of human energy and information, connectivity, creativity, and impact (as cited by Kannaiah & Shanthi, 2015). Emotional intelligence primarily concentrates on resolving emotional issues, rather than focusing on the social, political or linguistic elements found in the concept of social intelligence (Mayer et al., 2000). Goleman (2004) emphasizes the significance of empathy, which involves accurately recognizing and understanding the emotions of others, as a crucial component of emotional intelligence.

Research on emotional intelligence sheds light on significant disparities in how men and women experience emotions. Women have historically been more closely linked to the emotional realm of human nature, experiencing both positive and negative emotions with a higher intensity than their male counterparts. This observation, as pointed out by Grossman & Wood (2013), has contributed to the perpetuation of the stereotype that women are inherently more emotional than men, a view still prevalent today (Grewal & Salovey, 2015). Several research efforts have highlighted gender-related variations in the experiential components of emotional intelligence, such as emotion perception and facilitation, indicating that these differences may be foundational (Livingstone & Day, 2005; Farrelly & Austin, 2007; Castro-Schilo & Kee, 2010). Meanwhile, other studies have pinpointed gender disparities in the strategic dimensions of emotional intelligence, specifically in understanding emotions and managing them effectively (Goldenberg et al, 2006; Farrelly & Austin, 2007). Additionally, a separate group of investigations has yielded mixed outcomes, suggesting that women might possess an advantage across various facets of emotional intelligence, including perception, facilitation, understanding, and overall scores (McIntyre, 2010).

Couples often seek satisfaction from a balance of emotional, social, and economic benefits from their partner, but neglecting these can lead to issues like emotional detachment, outbursts, insults, domestic violence, desertion, and even divorce. Nonetheless, certain marriages are graced with harmony, a shared sense of purpose, unity, and cooperation. These unions experience the joy of both spouses and their children and are characterized as stable marriages. So emotional intelligence promotes marital stability and in turn prevents desertion and divorce (Kamomoe et al, 2021).

Studies have shown gender differences in marital desertion. Couples might have misunderstandings due to lack of clear understanding of the gender roles and duties in marriage thus leading to marital desertion (Warnecke, 2013; Spade & Valentine, 2011). Varol et al (2015) found both genders desire to abandon their marriage because of sexual compatibility. Glantz et al

(2009) found female gender as the strongest predictor of separation or divorce, while Donner (2016) reported seven women fleeing their husband's home due to domestic violence or abuse. Mikkola (2008) asserted that the characters of the husband or wife or their attitude towards marriage could cause marital desertion.

The instances of marital desertion have been documented in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. For example, an Ilorin Area Court dissolved Abibat Lawal and Babatunde Aliyu's six-year marriage on July 14, 2017, due to neglect and abandonment by Aliyu (Ilorininfo, 2017). In another case from 2020, Mrs. Saudatu Abdulazeez accused her son-in-law of deserting her daughter because of her blue-eyed children (Ilorininfo, 2020). Notably, most prior research on marital dissertations and emotional intelligence (Herrera, 2019; Anitha, Roy & Yalamarty, 2016; Cherniss, 2010) were conducted outside Nigeria but the related one was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria (Anyamene & Anulika, 2020) and with no studies specifically investigates the influence of emotional intelligence on marital disengagement among secondary school teachers in the Ilorin metropolis, a gap this research aims to address.

Research Questions

1. How high is the emotional intelligence among secondary school educators in the Ilorin metropolitan area?
2. What kinds of experiences with marital abandonment have secondary school educators encountered in the Ilorin metropolitan area?

Research hypotheses

Ho1: Emotional intelligence will not significantly impact marital desertion experienced by secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis

Ho2: The emotional intelligence levels between male and female secondary school educators in Ilorin metropolitan area do not significantly differ.

Ho3: The experiences of marital abandonment among male and female secondary school educators in Ilorin metropolitan area show no significant variance.

Methodology

The study used a survey design to gather data on the total number of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State, which was identified as 9,298 (Kwara State Ministry of Education and Human Capital Development, 2022). The study specifically targeted teachers from 566 secondary schools in the area. Based on guidelines from Research Advisor (2006), the suggested sample size for this scale is 379 respondents, considering a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. To accommodate potential attrition, an additional 8% (30 individuals) were included, bringing the total sample size to 400 married secondary school teachers. The sampling methods employed were simple random and snowball techniques. Using a straightforward random sample technique, 40 secondary schools in Ilorin Kwara State were chosen. From each of these schools, ten teachers were chosen using snowball and random sampling techniques. This process

started with identifying a few teachers who had experienced marital desertion abandonment or divorce and then expanded to include others until the necessary number was reached. Additional teachers were selected using random sampling to gather diverse perspectives on marital desertion in cases where the number of teachers with direct experience was insufficient. The study used a questionnaire titled Emotional Intelligence on Marital Desertion Questionnaire (EIMDQ), which was developed by the researcher and validated by experts from Al-Hikmah University, Nigeria. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: A, B, and C, which collected demographic data, adapted from Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Scale, and assessed marital desertion. The reliability of the questionnaire was confirmed through a test-retest procedure on 20 secondary school teachers. Out of the 400 questionnaires, 392 were completed and analyzed using various statistical methods. The maximum score for Section B was 40, with a minimum of 10, with a range of 30. The midpoint of this range, 15, was used to establish a cut-off point of 25. Scores below 25 indicated low emotional intelligence, while scores above signified high emotional intelligence. In Section C, items scoring above a mean of 2.50 were considered indicative of a good quality of life, while scores below this threshold suggested a poor quality of life. The overall mean for each item in Section C was calculated by summing the points (4+3+2+1=10) and dividing by the number of points, resulting in a cut-off point of 2.50. Scores below this point indicated a low level of marital desertion, while those above it indicated a high level. The null hypotheses were evaluated using a t-test with a significance threshold of 0.05.

Results

Demographic data is a summary of the data collected from respondents, presented in terms of frequency and percentages.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender and Age

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	149	38.0
Female	243	62.0
Total	392	100
Age		
Below 30 years	164	41.8
30 years and above	228	58.2
Total	392	100

Table 1 shows that 38.0% of respondents were male, while 62.0% were female. Age was a significant factor, with 41.8% of respondents under 30 and 58.2% aged 30 and above.

Research Questions 1: What is the degree of emotional intelligence among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolitan area?

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Frequency and Percentage Regarding Their Emotional Intelligence Level

Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	28	7.1
High	364	92.9
Total	392	100

The data from Table 2 indicates that 92.9% of respondents exhibited high emotional intelligence, while 7.1% had a low level.

Research Question 2: What are the marital desertion experiences of secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?

Table 3: Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order Analysis on the Marital Desertion Experiences of the Respondents

Item No	For the past 1 month or more, my partner:	Mean	S.D	Rank Order
3	do not care if I eat or not	3.02	0.94	1 st
2	do not help me when I have problems	3.01	0.92	2 nd
10	ignores everything he/she supposed to do for me	2.94	0.89	3 rd
6	do not care how I was feeling	2.89	0.72	4 th
9	do not comfort me when I am upset	2.79	0.83	5 th
7	pays no attention to me	2.77	0.92	6 th
5	has stopped calling me on the phone	2.70	0.86	7 th
8	is not interested in my activities or hobbies	2.60	0.85	8 th
4	has stopped expressing his/her love to me	2.49	1.08	9 th
1	do not bother to take care of me if I get sick	2.36	0.97	10 th

Table 3 reveals that item 3 which states that at times my partner: “does not care if I eat or not” ranked 1st with a mean score of 3.02. Item 2 which states that “do not help me when I had problems” ranked 2nd with a mean score of 3.01 and item 10 which states that "neglects all the responsibilities he/she is expected to fulfill for me". On the other hand, items 8, 4 and 1 which state that "shows no interest in my interests or hobbies", "no longer communicates his/her affection towards me" and "shows no concern for my well-being when I fall ill" ranked 8th, 9th and 10th

due to their spouse's lack of care, assistance, and comfort, with 8 out of 10 items ranking above the mean cut-off point of 2.50. This indicates that the spouse ignored their needs, cared less about their feelings, and did not comfort them when upset.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: Emotional intelligence will not significantly impact marital desertion experienced by secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis

Table 4: Pair t-test showing the Impact of Emotional Intelligence on Marital Desertion of the Respondents

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	p-value
Emotional intelligence	33.47	392	4.555	391	1.09	.234
Marital desertion	27.57	392	5.424			

The study's p-value of .234, exceeding the 0.05 threshold, indicates that emotional intelligence doesn't significantly impact marital abandonment among secondary school educators in Ilorin metropolitan area.

Hypothesis Two: There is no clear difference in the emotional intelligence of male and female secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis

Table 5: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing the difference in the Emotional Intelligence of the Respondents based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	149	33.32	2.836	390	0.52	1.96	.601
Female	243	33.56	5.347				

The study's t-value of 0.52 is below the critical t-value of 1.96, with a p-value of .601, exceeding the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, indicating no significant difference in emotional intelligence levels between male and female secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolitan area.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the marital desertion experienced by male and female secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis

Table 6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing the difference in the Marital Desertion Experienced by the Respondents based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	149	149	26.39	390	3.43	1.96	.001
Female	243	243	28.30				

*Significant, $p < 0.05$

The study found a significant difference in marital desertion between male and female secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolitan area, with a t-value of 3.43, which is above the critical t-value of 1.96 and a p-value of .001, which is below the .05 significance level, rejecting the null hypothesis.

Discussion

The findings from the study showed that an overwhelming majority, 92.9%, of the participants demonstrated individual possesses a high level of emotional intelligence. This aligns with the findings of Petrides et al (2004); Pekrun et al (2002); and Brackett and Katulak (2007), who observed that teachers often demonstrate heightened emotional intelligence in their professional roles. The study also found that a majority of the respondents were undergoing marital desertion, characterized by their spouses' indifference to their basic needs, lack of support during problems, negligence of responsibilities, disregard for their feelings, and failure to provide comfort. This is consistent with Uba (2007), who suggested that many married individuals encounter various degrees of marital neglect at some point in their marriage, often stemming from negative attitudes towards their partner's needs. Interestingly, the study revealed that emotional intelligence did not significantly affect marital desertion among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis, suggesting that their emotional intelligence does not positively influence marital desertion scenarios. This aligns with the findings of Anyamene and Anulika (2020), who noted a slight association between the emotional intelligence of married educators and their satisfaction in marriage. This could be attributed to their emotional intelligence being directed towards aspects other than the stability of the marriage.

The study revealed no significant difference in emotional intelligence levels between male and female secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis, indicating similar emotional intelligence across genders. This contrasts with Goldenberg et al (2006), and Farrelly and Austin (2007), who identified gender differences in strategic aspects of emotional intelligence. However, McIntyre (2010) found a significant gender disparity, with women excelling in various emotional intelligence aspects. The lack of difference in this study could be attributed to both genders operating in similar environments, i.e., school settings. Lastly, the study revealed a significant disparity in marital desertion experiences between male and female secondary school teachers in

Ilorin metropolis. This suggests differing experiences of marital desertion across genders, diverging from Varol et al (2015), who reported gender-neutral reasons for marital abandonment due to sexual compatibility. However, this finding supports Glantz et al (2009), who noted distinct forms of marital abandonment experienced by different genders, with the female gender more likely to initiate. This variation could be attributed to emotional differences, potentially leading women to experience various forms of marital desertion.

Conclusion

The research focused on the effects of emotional intelligence on marital desertion among secondary school educators in Ilorin metropolis. The findings indicated that a large proportion of the participants displayed a high degree of emotional intelligence, yet they faced marital desertion, evidenced by their spouses' indifference towards their basic needs, lack of support in times of trouble, neglect of responsibilities, disregard for their emotional well-being, and failure to provide consolation during distress, among other issues. This investigation also concluded that emotional intelligence was not a determining factor in the instances of marital separation among the educators in the Ilorin metropolitan area. Additionally, the study observed no significant differences in emotional intelligence levels between male and female teachers. However, it did uncover a notable difference in the rates of marital desertion experienced by the two genders.

Implications for Counselling

The findings from the study revealed that despite married secondary school teachers demonstrating a significant level of emotional intelligence, they continue to experience marital abandonment. Marital counsellors can play a crucial role in guiding these individuals to apply their emotional intelligence effectively to prevent marital desertion or enhance marital stability. The counsellors could organize seminars aimed at developing robust emotional intelligence for both married and soon-to-be-married couples. Marital counsellors need to focus specifically on providing marital guidance to married teachers, dedicating quality time to discuss and address potential issues that could lead to marital desertion. For couples who are content in their marriages and not encountering desertion, the guidance would be towards maintaining unity, whereas for those who have already experienced desertion, the assistance would be in reconciling and strengthening their relationships.

Recommendations

Drawing from the insights of this research, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. It's imperative for marital counsellors to implement premarital counselling sessions aimed at prospective couples. These sessions should focus on addressing common disputes and misunderstandings that frequently result in marital separation, offering strategies for conflict resolution and effective communication.
2. It is advised that government bodies and non-profit organizations collaborate with marital counsellors to facilitate seminars, conferences, workshops, and awareness campaigns

enhance the emotional intelligence of these couples, thereby fostering a more fulfilling marital relationship and reducing the likelihood of marital breakdown.

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