

CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND RESOLUTION OF MARITAL CONFLICT AS PERCEIVED BY MARRIED ADULTS IN ONDO METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The study investigated causes, consequences and resolution of marital conflict. The population of the study comprised all married adults in Ondo metropolis and the sample consisted of 100 randomly selected married adults in Ondo metropolis. A survey research design was adopted for the study. Three research questions were raised to guide the study. Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach alpha which yielded a coefficient of 0.867. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, simple percentages and ranking. The findings of the study revealed causes of marital conflict to include money, poor or no communication, unsatisfying sex, relatives interference, schedule of work, repeated mistakes, careless talk, extra marital sex and hostile personality among others: the consequences are psychological abuse of partners, depression, physical abuse of partners, alcoholism among others while identifying the real issue, expressing your feelings, not bringing up the past and specifying areas of agreement are among the means of resolving marital conflict. It was therefore recommended that financial empowerment is effective communication should be encouraged among married adults.

Keywords: *Causes, consequence, marital conflict, married adults, resolution.*

Introduction

Marriage is an age-long institution. It is believed to be instituted by God when He brought Eve to Adam to live together as husband and wife in order to solve the problem of loneliness. According to Ogunsanmi (2005), marriage is an arrangement between a man and a woman who make a commitment to love and adore one another and remain together through good times and bad. According to Osarenren (2002), a marriage is assumed to be successful until one partner passes away. She asserts that it is assumed that both couples would remain together inseparably, putting up with one another till death. Despite this, there may be cases of conflict because it involves human beings. Conflict in marriage is inevitable due to individual uniqueness and differences in tastes, habits, likes and dislikes, values and standards. It is not necessarily destructive depending on whether it is being rightly used. As couples progress deeper into their relationships, it is unavoidable that opinions, feelings and wants will clash. Conflict becomes destructive when couple's "weapon" are turned upon each other instead of on the problem or issue. If issues are ignored or suppressed,

stage may be set for a painful explosion of built-up anger.

Divorce is predicted by spouses' claims of arguments over extramarital affairs, problematic drinking, or drug usage, as well as by wives' accounts of jealousy and wasteful spending by their partners. Divorce is more likely to occur when problems are more severe. Violence among recently weds and psychological aggression (verbal aggression and non-verbal aggressive behaviors that are not directed at the partner's body) are predictors of divorce even though it is often not acknowledged as a problem by couples (Fincham, 1994).

The effects of marital disagreement on a person's health are severe. Hence, this study investigated causes, consequences and how marital conflict can be resolved.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to find out causes, consequences and resolution of marital conflict among married adults. Specifically, this study:

1. Investigated causes of marital conflict.
2. Examined consequences of marital conflicts.
3. Determined resolution of marital conflict.

Research Questions

1. What factors contribute to marital conflict in married adults?
2. What are the consequences of marital conflict among married adults?
3. How can marital conflict be resolved among married adults?

Methodology

This study used a survey research design. All married adults in Ondo metropolis made up the population. One hundred married men and women were randomly selected from married adults in Ondo metropolis. Structured questionnaire constructed by the researchers was used to collect data for the study. Reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach alpha statistics which yielded a coefficient of 0.867. The questionnaire was divided into two parts (Section A and B). Section A deals with the demographic characteristics of the respondents which includes gender, age and type of employment while Section B consists of items on causes, consequences and resolution of marital conflicts. The data was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, and rank order.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of marital conflict?

Table 1: Causes of marital conflict

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1.	Money	100	100	1 st
2.	Unsatisfying sex	96	96	3 rd
3.	Relatives' interference	94	94	3 rd
4.	Poor or no communication	100	100	1 st
5.	Children	88	88	12 th
6.	Schedule of work	96	96	3 rd
7.	Overbearing friends	88	88	12 th
8.	Too much domestic chores	84	84	14 th
9.	Formed bad habits	92	92	10 th
10.	Unrealistic expectations	70	70	18 th
11.	Hostile personality	94	94	8 th
12.	Incompatible family background	70	70	18 th
13.	Difference in faith	82	82	15 th
14.	Different levels of education	68	68	20 th
15.	Control mentality	80	80	17 th
16.	Repeated mistakes	96	96	3 rd
17.	Keeping special secrets	92	92	10 th
18.	Careless talk	96	96	3 rd
19.	Premarital sex	82	82	15 th
20.	Extra-marital sex	96	96	3 rd

Table 1 shows that all the twenty (20) items were causes of marital conflict as money and poor or no communication were ranked 1st with 100%, unsatisfying sex, relatives interference, schedule of work, repeated mistakes, careless talk and extra-marital sex were ranked 3rd with 96% while different levels of education was ranked last with 68%. This implies that all the items listed were causes of marital conflict.

Research Question 2: What are the consequences of marital conflict?

Table 2: Consequences of marital conflict

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1.	Depression	96	96	2 nd
2.	Eating disorders	88	88	12 th
3.	Physical abuse of partners	96	96	2 nd
4.	Psychological abuse of partners	98	98	1 st
5.	Alcoholism	92	92	4 th
6.	Early onset of drinking	80	80	17 th
7.	Episodic drinking	82	82	16 th
8.	Out of home drinking	92	92	4 th
9.	Anxiety disorders	90	90	9 th
10.	Poorer health	90	90	9 th
11.	Poor parenting practices	86	86	14 th
12.	Child maladjustment	92	92	4 th
13.	Problematic attachment to parents	88	88	12 th
14.	Parent-child conflict	92	92	4 th
15.	Conflict between siblings	84	84	15 th
16.	Parent-son conflict	90	90	9 th
17.	Drug abuse	92	92	4 th

From Table 2, it was shown that all the seventeen (17) items were consequences of marital conflict. Psychological abuse of partners ranked 1st with 98%, depression and physical abuse of partners ranked 2nd with 96%, alcoholism, out of home drinking, child maladjustment, parent-child conflict and drug abuse ranked 4th with 92% while early onset of drinking ranked last with 80%. This implies that all the seventeen (17) items were consequences of marital conflict.

Research Question 3: How can marital conflict be resolved?

Table 3: Resolution of marital conflict

S/N	Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
1.	Choosing the right time and place to discuss.	96	96	5 th
2.	Asking one's partner to discuss a difference	94	94	8 th
3.	Learning to listen	96	96	5 th
4.	Expressing one's feelings	98	98	2 nd
5.	Identifying the real issue	100	100	1 st
6.	Not bringing up the past	99	99	2 nd
7.	Specifying areas of agreement	98	98	2 nd
8.	Negotiating the issue	86	86	9 th
9.	Reaching a compromise	96	96	5 th

As shown in Table 3, all the nine items were regarded as ways of resolving marital conflict. Identifying the real issue ranked 1st with 100%; expressing one's feelings, not bringing up the past and specifying areas of agreement ranked 2nd with 98%; choosing the right time and place to discuss, learning to listen and reaching a compromise ranked 5th with 96%; asking one's partner to discuss difference ranked 8th with 94% while negotiating the issue ranked 9th and last with 86%. This implies that all the nine (9) items are ways of resolving marital conflict.

Discussion of Findings

The research findings showed causes of marital conflict as money, poor or no communication, unsatisfying sex, relatives interference, schedule of work, repeated mistakes, careless talk, extra-marital sex and personality, among others. According to Fincham (1994), extra-marital sex disputes, problematic drinking, or drug usage are predictors of divorce, as are wives' complaints of jealousy and excessive husband spending. Mevis and Merle (2000) concurred that because most marriages were not well planned, the society has seen an alarming rate of separation, divorce, marital discontentment, and occurrences of marital violence.

The study showed consequences of marital conflict as psychological abuse of partners, depression, physical abuse of partners, alcoholism, out of home drinking, poorer child adjustment, parent-child conflict, drug abuse, poorer health, anxiety disorder, among others. According to Nwadinigwe and Anyama (2010), marital adjustment has a big impact on how stable a family is for spouses. who discovered that marital dispute results in spouses being abused physically and mentally. Other significant family outcomes such as negative parenting (Erel & Burman, 1885), negative child adjustment (Grych & Fincham, 1990), problematic parental attachment (Owen & Cox, 1997), increased likelihood of parent-child conflict (Margolin, Christensen & John, 1996), and conflict between siblings (Brody, Stoneman & McCoy, 1994) are all linked to marital conflict.

It was also revealed in this study that ways of resolving marital conflicts are identifying the real issue, expressing your feelings, not dragging up the past, specifying areas of agreement, choosing the right time and place to discuss, learning to listen, reaching a compromise among others. This finding shows that effective communication and conflict resolution skills are germane to successful marital relationships. Olson and McCubbin (2003) asserted that care and love towards members play a vital role for the family to overcome the instability and burdens of the society.

Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed causes of marital conflict to include money, poor or no communication, unsatisfying sex, relatives interference, schedule of work, repeated mistakes, careless talk, extra marital sex and hostile personality among others: the consequences are psychological abuse of partners, depression, physical abuse of partners, alcoholism and so on while identifying the real issue, expressing your feelings, not bringing up the past and specifying areas of agreement are among the means of resolving marital conflict.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are given in light of the study's findings:

- Financial empowerment should be encouraged among married adults so that money would not be source of conflict in the home.
- Effective and good communication should be encouraged among couples.
- Forgiveness should be the watch word in marriage so that issues can be resolved amicably.

- Feelings should be expressed in a loving manner instead of keeping grudges.
- Husbands should be responsible and make provision for their household.
- Wives should be helper indeed by supporting their husbands in the up keep of the family.

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