

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT OF
WORKING CLASS WOMEN IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State Nigeria. One research question and one hypothesis guided the study. Population of the study comprised of 5,083 working class women from various ministries, parastatals and other places of work in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State. Sample consisted of 370 respondents drawn using Yamane formula for calculating sample size. Instrument for data collection was 67 item questionnaire developed by the researchers. Hand to hand administration of instrument was done by the researchers with the help of research assistants. The questionnaire was retrieved from the respondents immediately they were done with filling in their responses. Means and standard deviation as well as Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used for data analysis. The result showed that there was high correlation between communication and marital adjustment of working class women. It was also found that there was significant relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State. The study recommended that working class women should ensure that the line of communication in their families be widely and perpetually open in order to get the best in their family relationships.

Key Words: Communication, marital adjustment, working class, women, Benue State.

1. Introduction

It is natural that people make efforts to meet the challenges placed upon them by the world in which they live. Adjustment plays a vital role in every one's survival all the time in all fields of life. People strive to live happy, prosperous and fulfilled life. At the broadest level, adjustment is affected by the events in the large world around us. The marital adjustment may play its part in maximizing harmony and unity. Intimacy and trust are not received from nature, but are achieved based on personal adjustment.

A good marriage is the most rewarding experience life can offer. It makes a person feel adequate, approved and complete to a degree, which is not available in any other human relationship. However, a good marriage does not happen, rather it has to be worked upon.

As Tucker and O'Grady (2001) observes, spouses enter marriage relationship with different beliefs, about happiness and they differ in their expectations of happiness too. Therefore, mutual communication and sharing experiences are the backbone for adjustment in marriage.

After marriage, marital adjustment depends on stable intimate relationship, which includes love, care and harmony between the spouses. Husband and wife seem to fulfill several kinds of roles in this regard, husband and wife share activities of a recreational nature – participating in sports, going to the movie, or engaging in other leisure.

According to Sinha and Mukherjee (1990), marital adjustment is a state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other. Therefore calls for experiencing satisfactory relationship between spouses characterized by mutual concern, care and understanding and acceptance. Happiness, satisfaction and fulfillment of expectations are possible only by mutual adjustments that lead to a common concept of marriage.

Communication is the process by which one person receives messages from another. It is the sharing of messages, ideas, attitude and feelings resulting in a degree of understanding between a

sender and a receiver (Wayne, 2015). If love is the heartbeat of a marriage, communication is its lifeblood. According to the author, many research studies of family strengths found communication to be a common thread in keeping family relationships strong and viable. A marriage will be made or broken to the degree a couple learns and practices effective communication skills, a challenging task indeed.

The author further asserts that communication is the cornerstone of relationships. It is the main way that we enact our family relationships and the means by which we create a family identity that is, for better or worse, continued across generations. Other key roles that communication plays in the family according to Gottman (1999) include a mechanism for the socialization of children and the primary way in which family members establish, maintain and dissolve intimate relationships. The primary focus is on communication between spouses because the quality of communication between them affects the family in several important ways. It influences the quality and stability of the marital relationship. Communication within the family is extremely important because it enables members to express their needs, wants and concerns to each other. Open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows family members to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another. It is through communication that family members are able to resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in all families.

2. Statement of the Problem

In the Nigerian society, working class women are expected to perform their marital roles despite their jobs in their places of work. Working class women are therefore involved in the performance of multiple roles that may demand marital adjustment in order to cope with the challenges in marriage. Attitude towards women especially married working class women and their roles in the family has remained the same, even today taking care of the family and children is considered as their primary responsibility. Their jobs conflict with the values that may cause marital

maladjustment. As observed by Vaghela (2014), it is an accepted fact that working class married women have greatly changed their family lives. Their employments not only affect their personality but also their family relationship and are also liable to face crisis of marital adjustment. The above problem spurred the researchers to examine the relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State, Nigeria.

3. Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State?

4. Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State.

5. Research Design

Correlational survey design was used for this study. This design is appropriate for the study because it will help to establish the nature of relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State.

6. Population of the Study

The population of the study was five thousand and eighty three (5,083) educated working class women in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State, Nigeria. The women work in various ministries, parastatals, military and paramilitary formations.

7. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 370 educated married working class women was drawn using Yamane (1967) formula for calculating sample size. Multi-stage sampling technique was used for the study.

8. Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire named “Educational status of working class women and marital adjustment questionnaire (ESWCWMAQ). The instrument was divided into ten sections A-J and contained 67 items.

9. Method of Data Collection

Researchers and the research assistants used hand to hand method in administering the instrument to the respondents in the sampled area of the study. The respondents were allowed to fill in their responses after which the instruments were retrieved by the researchers and taken for analysis.

10. Method of Data Analysis

Mean, and standard deviations as well as Pearson product moment correlation were used for data analysis. Hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

11. Results

Research Question

What is the relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State?

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Communication and the Marital Adjustment

	Mean	Std Deviation	N	R
Communication	2.37	.56	370	.89**
Marital Adjustment	2.33	.51	370	

Table 1 shows that mean and standard deviation for communication were 2.37 and 0.56 while that of marital adjustment were 2.33 and .51. The value of $r = 0.89$. The implication is that,

there is high correlation between communication and marital adjustment. Working class women who communicate well in their families experience good marital adjustment.

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State, Nigeria

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation for Communication and Marital Adjustment

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Communication	.89**	.000
Marital Adjustment		

Table 2 revealed that r calculated value = .89, p (sig. = .000) $\alpha = .05$. Since $p < .05$, the hypothesis that states there is no significant relationship between communication and marital adjustment is therefore rejected. The implication is that there is significant relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State.

12. Discussion

Findings with respect to the research question and hypothesis presented on tables 1 and 2 revealed that there is a relationship between communication and marital adjustment of working class women in Benue State, Nigeria. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between communication and marital adjustment is of no significance and is rejected.

The finding is in agreement with Wayne (2015) who asserts that communication is the cornerstone of relationships. It is the main way that we enact our family relationships and the means by which we create a family identity that is, for better or worse continued across generations.

In agreement with the finding, Tucker and O'Grady (2001), opined that spouses enter marriage relationships with different beliefs about happiness and they differ in their expectations of happiness too. Therefore, mutual communication and sharing experiences are the backbone for adjustment in marriage.

To Wayne (2015), communication is the sharing of messages, ideas, attitudes and feelings resulting in a degree of understanding between a sender and a receiver. If love is the heartbeat of a marriage, communication is its lifeblood. The author further states that a marriage will be made or broken to the degree a couple learns and practices effective communication skills.

13. Conclusion

This study concludes that communication within the family is extremely important because it enables members to express their needs, wants and concerns to each other. The desire of every individual is to be happy and contented in this world. So, belonging to a happy family plays an important role in helping someone to achieve that goal of happiness and contentment. However it is important to note that happiness at home cannot be achieved without communication which is the cornerstone of any relationship.

14. Recommendation

Based on the findings, the study recommended that since communication is an important ingredient in marital adjustment, working class women should ensure that line of communication in their families be widely and perpetually opened if they want to get the best in family relationship.

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