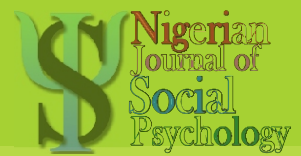


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Interpersonal Solidarity as a factor of Marital Satisfaction: A study among employed and married men and women in Ado Ekiti Metropolis

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of interpersonal solidarity on marital satisfaction among employed couples in Ado Ekiti metropolis. Data for the study were collected from a total of 187 participants (87 men and 100 women) who are currently married and employed, using the convenience sampling method. The Interpersonal Solidarity Scale (ISS) developed by Wheelless (1976) and the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) developed by Schumm et. al. (1983) were used for data collection and data collected were analyzed through the use of both the descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical package for social scientists (SPSS, version 2.0) was used. Two hypothesis were formulated and tested using the 2 by 2 Analysis of Variance and results of data analysis revealed that there is a significant influence of interpersonal solidarity on the marital satisfaction of employed couples in Ado Ekiti metropolis { $F(2,181) = 24.45, p < .01$ }. There is, however, no significant gender differences in expressed marital satisfaction among the employed couples in Ado Ekiti metropolis; and no significant interactive influence of interpersonal solidarity and gender was found on marital satisfaction of employed couples in Ado Ekiti metropolis. The findings were discussed in the light of available literature and it was recommended that would-be partners should learn not to be cynical about love but always be guided into their relationships by interpersonal love, respect for each other, unhindered communication patterns, and commitment to the love for themselves rather than being lured into relationships or even marriages by mundane, humdrum and earthly material things.

Keywords: *Interpersonal Solidarity, Marital Satisfaction, employed men and women, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria*

INTRODUCTION

The family has been undergoing significant changes in its structure, function and organization in most countries of the world according to Ntoimo and Akokuwebe (2014). The different internal and external forces in modern societies have introduced radical changes in the family structure and functions. For example, the sexual regulation function of the family has been infiltrated by premarital and extramarital relations.

Available statistics provided by Ntoimo and Akokuwebe (2014) reveals that the crude rate of marital dissolution in Nigeria was 11 per one thousand populations and that age specific marital dissolution rate ranged from 24 to 132 per one thousand ever married women and 15 to 24 for men. These statistics are alarming and suggests that more people dissolve their marriages every year. Such rate of dissolution of marriages, no doubt, has implications for the survival and sustenance of a sane world where dependable and happy children can be raised and nurtured for a better society. It is therefore expedient that investigations are carried out to look into those factors that are likely to influence marital satisfaction. It is believed that findings from such studies will be useful to Psychologists and other professional human helpers in developing their intervention and counselling strategies while conducting their psychotherapeutic sessions that has to do with marriages and families.

The institution of marriage results from effective and cordial interpersonal relationships. Marriage forms a platform for raising families and as such it is expedient that such marriages be satisfactory in nature. When partners in marriage are satisfied and happy, such will impact the society positively since it is known that children from divorce homes or separated families do not often come out brilliantly; and their attitude towards marriage in later life is negatively affected by their parents' divorce/separation (Ogunleye, 2014). More often, dating partners do eventually marry but before the consummation of their love, such partners should have had feelings of closeness between themselves which expectedly, develops as a result of shared sentiment, similarities and intimate behaviors. These phenomenon is what Wheelless (1976) termed as interpersonal solidarity.

Interpersonal Solidarity, thus, suggests a situation of mutual love between partners, free communication patterns, respect for one another, and understanding of selves to the extent that conflictual situations are out-rightly avoided or reduced to the barest minimum. It also suggests empathy for one another and willingness to assist each other in, virtually, all situations.

Interpersonal relationship is the term used to explain a social connection or affiliation between two or more persons. It can include close friends, loved ones, acquaintances,

co-workers and dating partners. This kind of relationship is most necessary between married persons and must be very cordial for the couple to experience marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction is, on the other hand, a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. It suffices therefore to say that one will perceive her/his marriage as satisfactory when the perceived benefits of the union are greater than, or equal to, investments (costs) in the relationship.

The phenomenon of interpersonal solidarity is becoming increasingly more important in interpersonal relationships' research owing to the fact that in contemporary societies, there seem to be other factors that precipitate marriage between and among dating partners. For example, the love of money seems to be impacting the decisions to marry nowadays than feelings of closeness and shared sentiments. Money itself is a ubiquitous feature of everyday life and, according to Chang and Arkin (2002) and Park, Ward and Naragon-Gainey (2017), can evoke strong emotions and needs, such as a desire for security, self-sufficiency, power over others and self-worth.

Papp, Cummings and Goeke-Morey (2009) for example, found out that marital conflicts about money were more pervasive, problematic, and recurrent and remain unresolved despite including more attempts at problem solving. In a similar vein, Ward, Park, Walsh, Naragon-Gainey, Paravati and Whillans (2021), in their study about the love of money found out that financial success is associated with relationship satisfaction. This symbolic meaning of money seems to have made conflicts about money to be more frequent, salient, difficult to resolve, and elicit more intense and destructive communication tactics than other types of disagreements (Britt & Huston, 2012).

Researches (e.g. Karney, Bradbury and Lavner, 2018, Vinokur, Price and Caplan, 1996) have focus on the role of economic strain in precipitating financial conflicts and diminishing the quality of people's relationships with others. Results from such researches have consistently showed that economic hardships increase the risk for emotional distress which heightens the tendency to experience relationship conflicts and negative communication patterns between partners in relationship. Since it has become known that economic strain impacts marital satisfaction, it then becomes necessary to

look into possible factors that can strengthen marital bliss and as such, interpersonal solidarity is considered.

METHODS

Research Design: The study was a survey research that adopted the use of two standardized questionnaires. Its design is the ex-post facto research design because the researcher did not directly manipulate the independent variable.

Participants: Participants for the study is comprised of married men and women who are employed and are living in Ado-Ekiti metropolis. In all, a total of 187 employed men and women participated in the study. They are made up of 87 men and 100 women whose ages range from 24- 52 years.

Sample and Sampling Method: Participants for the study is sampled from the population of employed couples (men and women) who are living and working in Ado Ekiti metropolis. The convenience sampling method was used as the researcher approached the participants in their various working places. Only participants who are willing to participate in the study were given copies of the questionnaire to respond to.

Variables: Two main variables were involved in the study. They are: Interpersonal Solidarity (independent variable) and Marital Satisfaction (dependent variable). However, gender was also considered as an independent variable in the study and it was manipulated to find out if there would be gender differences in expressed marital satisfaction among employed couples in Ado Ekiti metropolis.

Measures: Two instruments were used to measure the variables in the study. They include:

- i. Interpersonal Solidarity Scale (ISS) developed by Wheelless (1976), and;
- ii. Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS) develop by Schumm; Nichols, Schectman Grigsby (1983)

Interpersonal Solidarity Scale

Interpersonal Solidarity Scale (ISS), developd by Wheelless (1976) was used to measure interpersonal solidarity among participants. The scale consisted of 20 items in all.

Respondents' responses were measured on a 7 point Likert –type scale ranging from strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1) and take less than 3 minutes to complete the 20 items.

Reliability: Reliability information is sparse; however, the scale appears internally consistent. Wheelless reported split-half reliabilities of .96 (Wheelless, et.al 1978) and .94 (Wheelless, Wheelless, & Baus, 1984) and Bell and Healey (1992) reported an alpha of .90 for the scale.

Validity: There is sufficient evidence of concurrent and criterion related validity. Wheelless (1978) predicted and found a strong relationship between self-disclosure, individualized trust, and interpersonal solidarity. Solidarity was higher when people were evaluating close, rather than distant, relationships.

Downs (1988) and Eggert and Parks (1987) used the early edition of the scale and found predicted relationships between solidarity and (a) self-disclosure in grandparents and grandchildren and (b) attraction to and expressed support from a dating partner's network. Solidarity also differed among beginning, developed, and terminating stage of relationships in an inverted V-shaped manner (Wheelless et al.,1984). Bell and Healey (1992) found solidarity correlated with idioms used by friends.

Scoring: For items 4, 6, 8,10, 13, 15and 18 scores are reversed so that 7 becomes 1, 6 becomes 2 e.t.c. Then add up the total score to get a participant's total score on the scale.

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS)

Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale was used in the present study to measure marital satisfaction. Although the scale was developed by Schumm, Nichols, Schectman, and Grigsby (1983), the scale was validated by Omani-Samani, Maroufizadeh, Ghaheri, Amini, and Navid (2018).

Reliability and Item Analysis: The internal consistency reliability of the KMSS was quite high, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.901 (0.893 for female participant and .913 for male participant). The corrected item total correlated ranged from 0.790 to 0.831 which

were above the minimum level of 0.3. The inter-item correlations were also high in magnitude within the range of 0.719-0.772

Convergent Validity: To examine the convergent validity of the KMSS, calculated Pearson correlation co-efficient between the KMSS score and CSI-4 (4-items Couples Satisfaction Index) yielded $r = 0.614, p < .001$.

Procedures for Data Collections: The sampling technique that the researcher used for this research was convenience sampling technique. Questionnaire was used for data collection since the researcher embarked on a survey research. In all, 200 copies of the questionnaire were administered to identified research participants who are employed married men and women sourced from within Ado-Ekiti metropolis. Out of the 200 copies of the questionnaire administered, only 189 were returned and out of these, only 187 were correctly filled and analyzed.

Method of Statistical Analysis: The 2 by 2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data testing for the influence of gender and interpersonal solidarity on marital satisfaction. Gender here was considered on male and female levels while Interpersonal solidarity was considered on high and low levels.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics Table

		N	MEAN	SD
Gender	Male	87	18.22	3.31
	Female	100	17.92	3.90
	High	136	18.76	2.59
Interpersonal Solidarity	Low	26	13.96	6.09
	Undecided	25	18.48	2.16

From table 1 above, it is observed that 87 married men participated in the study while the study involved 100 married women. It is also observed that 136 (Mean = 18.76) participants reported high interpersonal solidarity with 26 of them being low in interpersonal solidarity (Mean = 13.96). Twenty-five (25) of the research participants

were undecided in terms of interpersonal solidarity and as such, their responses were not considered in the interpretation of results in the present study.

Table 2: 2 x 2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) table showing the influence of interpersonal solidarity and gender on marital satisfaction among employed men and women in Ado-Ekiti.

Source	SS	df	MS	F
Gender	15.86	1	15.86	1.49
Interpersonal Solidarity	521.05	2	260.53	24.45**
Gender & Interpersonal Solidarity	8.09	2	4.04	0.38
Error	1928.82	181	10.66	
Total	2456.35	186		

** - Significance at .01 level

Table 2 above showed a significant main influence of interpersonal solidarity on marital satisfaction [F (2, 181) = 24.45, P < .01]; but no significant main influence of gender (sex) [F (1,181) = 1.49 P > .01] was found on marital satisfaction. Also, no significant joint influence of gender and interpersonal solidarity on marital satisfaction [F (2,181) = 0.38, P > .05] was found.

Discussion of Results

Results from the present study revealed that interpersonal solidarity has a significant influence on marital satisfaction. This result is consistent with the findings of Priddis DeAnne (2015) who found solidarity to be associated with relational satisfaction. A comparison of the mean scores on table 1 above suggests that participants who are high in interpersonal solidarity (18.76) are more likely satisfied in their marriages than those who reported low (13.96) interpersonal solidarity.

Miczo and Averbeck (2020) also found perceived partner positive relational humor to be positively associated with relationship satisfaction. A partner can only be perceived as positively humorous if such has a capacity to share sentiments, similarities and intimate behaviors with a partner. These constitute what Wheelless (1976)

conceptualized as interpersonal solidarity. From table 2 too, it is shown that there is no significant gender difference in marital satisfaction of employed men and women in Ado-Ekiti.

This result contravenes the finding of Jackson, Miller, Oka and Henry (2014) who found a statistically significant gender differences in marital satisfaction between men and women with women slightly less satisfied than men in their meta analysis of gender differences in marital satisfaction. Also, Fowers (1991) found out that men are somewhat more satisfied with their marriages than women. Differences in the result of present study as it relates with gender differences and the result of previous researches may be accounted for by changes in the environment, and, or personality characteristics of participants in the studies. For example, whereas the current study made use of employed men and women in Ado-Ekiti, the meta analysis by Jackson et. al, (2014) made use of participants drawn from educated elites in America. That the environment of existence of the participants in the studies differ may also account for differences in the personality characteristics of the participants and as such may influence results from the studies. Lewin, in his field theory (1936) already argued that behavior is a function of both the environment and the personality predispositions of individual organisms. And Rusbult and Van-Lange (2003) in their interdependence theory explained adaptations to repeatedly encountered interdependence patterns as well as the embodiment of such adaptations in interpersonal dispositions, relationship specific motives, and social norms.

In addition, the changing life-styles or societally promoted egalitarianism and equality of sexes which encourages both men and women to engage in domestic chores and paid employments may have impacted marital relationships to induce no significant gender differences in their marital satisfaction.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Findings from the present study have indicated that Interpersonal Solidarity is a significant factor to be considered when choosing a dating partner so as to engender a peaceful living among partners and in families. This consideration is most important because it is only when families are functioning as appropriate that the larger society

can also be peaceful and sane and it is in such families that dependable leaders of tomorrow can be raised as children.

The study also found out that there was no gender difference in marital satisfaction between employed men and women who are married in Ado Ekiti metropolis. The changing life-style and gender roles that encourages equality of sexes may have accounted for the finding. The finding suggests that married men and women in employment should continue to see themselves as help mates without necessarily ascribing specific duties or roles to men or women. After all, men and women are created as help mates who are to love and respect one another in the interest of peaceful co-existence and marital bliss.

It is recommended that individuals going into a relationship should not be cynical about love but always consider mutual love and affection with intimacy, passion, and commitment while entering into their relationship so as to guarantee a lasting relationship; rather than considering mundane, humdrum and earthly material things. Moreover, it is recommended that partners should love and respect each other while also being one another's true help mate.

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