



Influence of Communication, Intimacy and Emotional Bonding on Marital Stability of Couples in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of communication, intimacy and emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The study was guided by three specific objectives. Three research questions were raised and answered by the study. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The design for this study was an ex post facto research design. The targeted population for this study is all the 76,207 registered married couples living in Makurdi, Benue State. The sample size for the study is 384 the sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table for sample size determination. The study adopted multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument used for data collection is a self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Psychosocial Factors on Marital Stability among Couples Questionnaire" (IPFMSCO). The instrument subjected to face and content validation by three experts: two from Department of Guidance and Counselling, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi and one from the Department of Guidance and Counselling Benue State University, Makurdi. The instrument yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-Square statistics was used in testing of the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that; communication, intimacy and emotional bonding have high and significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis. Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that psychosocial factors like communication, intimacy and emotional bonding, play prominent role on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. From the findings of this study, it was recommended among others that; Counselors should offer communication skills training programs to couples as these programs can teach effective communication techniques, active listening, conflict resolution strategies, and empathy-building exercise

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is legally recognized and socially accepted partnership, typically involving a man and a woman. According to Egbo, Egbo, Asogwa and Agbo-Peters (2020), marriage is defined as an institution to satisfy physical, psychological, social, cultural and economic needs of man and woman, which permits them to establish a stable relationship with each other. Marriage brings joy and happiness to the society and honour to those who are in it. It is usually seen as union between a man and a woman who loves each other and has agreed to leave together as husband and wife, typically with legal backing, through contemporary way or traditional rites (Makinde, Azorundu, Adeoye, & Abodunrin, 2021). Marriage is governed by laws, norms, conventions, beliefs, and attitudes that specify the spouses' rights and obligations and grant status to their children (if any). It is a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their offspring (if any) (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2009). Marriage is sacredly necessary in the interest of the society and is the only source of security for the love between a man and a woman. From a societal perspective, marriage represents all the behaviours, norms, roles, expectations, and values that are associated with the legal union of a man and woman (Vries, 2016). This institution affects all the domains of life directly or indirectly.

Marriage has several important functions, social, biological, economic, emotional, cultural, etc. In fact, when people make choices to marry, they want to live happily ever after. They want a loving, happy and successful marriage. A successful marriage is like food and it depends on many key ingredients to be successful. These ingredients include such attributes as commitment, communication, children, finances, respect, emotional bonding, religion, parents marriage, love, intimacy and so on. Furthermore, every couple desires and is expected to have a smooth and stable marriage. Research has shown that having a long-lasting marriage is very important to people and has a great impact on their health and general life satisfaction and stability (Bradbury, 2014). Different individuals who enjoy happy stable marriage live longer and healthier (Uzoagulu, 2011)

Marital stability is defined as the condition of a steady, well-balanced, and healthy relationship among couples, irrespective of occasional and inevitable disagreements that may arise in the course of their interaction. Marital stability can be seen as the endurance of a marriage due to the cooperation of both husband and wife (Lenthal, 2019). It manifests in a situation where husband and wife love each other, get along well, share common values and interests, enjoy each other's company, and have fun together. A stable marriage provides a happy life for the couple (Obidoa et al., 2011). This institution affects all domains of life directly or indirectly. Marital stability is also understood as the organization of marriage, mutual understanding or agreement between

husband and wife, and the presence of harmony in the homes of couples (Onoyase, 2017). Onoyase further explains that remaining married without divorcing, physically separating, or legally separating is considered marital stability. Stability in a marital relationship may arise from factors such as marital compatibility, marital happiness, marital adjustments, and marital satisfaction. Marital stability allows spouses to achieve desired satisfaction including marital harmony, health, marital adjustment, marital security, marital protection, and marital fulfillment (Bradbury, 2014). In stable marriages, couples enjoy better physical health, longer lifespans, psychological wellness, and higher levels of subjective happiness.

Numerous factors contribute to marital stability in today's world, including social, psychological, economic, cultural, biological, emotional, and spiritual factors, among others. Some factors result from the combination of two or more factors, such as psychosocial, socio-economic, and socio-cultural influences (Cao, Zhou, Fine & Fang, 2017). Couples' behavior can be influenced by emotional development and their social relationship with each other. Psychosocial factors are those responsible for behavioral changes toward one's partner (Adigeb & Mbua, 2015). These factors concern individual attributes and behaviors in a loving relationship. Psychosocial factors represent the dynamic interplay between psychological processes and social contexts that influence couple behavior (Arowolo, 2014). They encompass elements such as beliefs, emotions, relationships, and societal structures that impact the mental and social health of couples (Bradbury, 2014). Arowolo further asserts that psychosocial factors can manifest in forms such as spousal communication, attachment patterns between spouses, parental marital backgrounds of the couple, extent of in-laws' involvement, age at marriage, spouse's religion, type of marriage, communication, intimacy, emotional bonding, commitment, affection, parental roles, spouse's employment, religious orientation, and sexual satisfaction. For the purposes of this study, the examined psychosocial factors include communication, emotional bonding, intimacy, religious orientation, and sexual satisfaction. This study aims to explore how these factors influence marital stability, as the researcher believes they are crucial in understanding marital stability in the research area. Furthermore, relatively little collective research has been conducted on these factors in the research area.

Communication is a critical element in marriage, essential not only before the commencement of a relationship but also for its ongoing sustenance within any group. Omojola (2014) considered communication as the heart of human relationships and the foundation upon which all other relationships are built. He defines communication as the exchange of information, thoughts, and opinions between couples through speaking, writing, or the use of a common system of signs or behaviors. Communication is central to human existence, as it involves the complex process of packaging and channeling information, thoughts, and opinions from a sender to a receiver through various mediums. Similarly, Adekunabi (2014) views communication as the glue that holds together the world, continents, countries, states, societies, communities, and people. Communication plays a vital role in all human relationships, including marriage. In marriage, communication involves the exchange of information and messages between couples through spoken words, written words, symbols, body gestures, and facial expressions (Sotonade, 2012). Effective communication is among the most crucial factors in maintaining a satisfying relationship, as noted by Eser (2015), who emphasized its role as a lifeline in meaningful relationships. Conversely, lack of communication among couples may diminish intimacy between them.

Intimacy encompasses many dimensions such as love, sexuality, and emotional disclosure, and it is recognized to exist in friendships and other non-romantic relationships. Mark and Lasso (2018) define intimacy as the feeling of closeness and connection in interpersonal relationships. For the purpose of this study, intimacy refers to the sense of togetherness, bondedness, or closeness in a loving relationship, characterized by actions such as cuddling, holding hands, kissing, hugging, and more. Intimacy also significantly contributes to physical well-being. Clayton, Nagurney, and Smith (2013) believe that intimacy includes both behavioral and emotional components. The behavioral component comprises activities that partners engage in together, such as touching and conversing, while the emotional component involves feelings of love and togetherness. An intimate relationship provides warmth and emotional support to partners, as described by Omojola (2014) in the context of its role in successful relationship development and maintenance. Intimacy is a sought-after yet sometimes feared phenomenon, with individuals often investing substantial time and effort in its pursuit when single - frequenting singles bars, joining church groups, responding to personal ads, exploring online dating services, and seeking introductions to potential partners through friends. While these activities can serve as precursors to close, intimate relationships, they can also evoke anxiety and fear. Individuals seeking intimacy may worry about their likelihood of success, the effectiveness of their methods, and ultimately, their potential for happiness if they find a partner. For many, challenging childhood experiences and past failed adult relationships reinforce apprehensions that intimacy is elusive or inevitably fraught with pain and disappointment. Nevertheless, intimacy is an expectation in marriage for many couples. Indeed, close, supportive relationships are associated with both greater physical and mental well-being (Ojukwu, 2017). In intimate relationships, individuals rely on their partners during times of need and express mutual understanding. When singles seek intimacy, it is anticipated to enhance marital stability among couples. Maintaining intimacy in a marital relationship can foster strong bonding between partners.

Recognizing emotional bonding can sometimes be intuitive, with individuals experiencing a sense of comfort, understanding, and ease in each other's presence. Emotional bonding refers to the closeness felt between partners through affection, respect, and empathy (Onoyase, 2017). Signs of emotional connection include genuine smiles, shared laughter, meaningful eye contact, open sharing of feelings, active listening, and demonstrating appreciation, affection, and trust. Additionally, if product managers dedicate attention to crafting compelling content on social media to engage customers and cultivate product loyalty over time, similar efforts by couples to attract each other may solidify their bond. According to Mark et al. (2018), emotional marital bonding can be categorized into three types: minimum, limited, and maximum bonding. Minimum bonding is characteristic of traditional marriages focused on preserving structures for utilitarian purposes. Limited interpersonal bonding in marriages provides couples with reasonable comfort and security. Maximum bonding in marriage instills satisfaction and confidence, enabling couples to enhance their understanding of each other and adjust as needed. Couples aspiring to achieve this level of connection may cultivate emotional bonding rooted in shared religious beliefs.

Therefore, this study aims to explore and address gaps in understanding the influence of communication, intimacy and emotional bonding on marital stability among couples in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage, being a union between a man and a woman, is expected to be stable, joyful, peaceful, and fulfilling. It is considered one of life's greatest satisfactions. According to Genesis chapter 1 verse 28, recognizing that man needed companionship, God expressed that it is not good for man to be alone. In His mercy, God promised to provide a companion to help man (Genesis 2:18).

However, despite these ideals, many marriages experience disorganization, misunderstandings, disagreements, and disharmony. A significant number of marriages are encountering difficult times, deviating from their intended purpose. The increasing rates of daily divorce, separation, and instances of domestic violence underscore these challenges. Consequently, many young people enter marriages with apprehension, while some anticipate separation or divorce as an inevitable outcome.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding marital relationships and their stability. It is crucial to identify factors that affect marital stability to comprehend and address the alarming trends in marital relationships. Exploring the psychosocial factors that influence the stability of marriages can provide valuable insights. This understanding can assist counsellors in devising suitable strategies to maintain marital stability among couples. The researcher therefore investigated the influence of psychosocial factors on marital stability in couples residing in Makurdi Metropolis, Benue State. The study also sought solutions through counseling interventions, which involve a unique relationship between the couple and the counselor aimed at fostering change and growth.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the influence of communication, intimacy and emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The specific objectives of the study are to;

1. ascertained the influence of communication on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.
2. determined the influence of intimacy on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.
3. ascertained the influence of emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to help guide the study;

1. What is the influence of communication on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State?
2. What is the influence of intimacy on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State?
3. What is the influence of emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- 1) Communication has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.
- 2) Intimacy has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.
- 3) Emotional bonding has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Marriage

Marriage as an institution is to satisfy physical, psychological, social, cultural and economic needs of man and woman, which permits them to establish a stable relationship with each other. Marriage according to Encyclopedia Britannica (2009) is "a legally and socially sanctioned union, usually between a man and a woman, that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners and accords status to their off spring (if any)". The concept of marriage started from the beginning of man. As a social, legal and religious institution, marriage has undergone many modifications and changes; nevertheless, its basic realities remain the same. Marriage is an important social and legal institution that protects marital stable relations by preparation, special collection of rights, points, commitments, responsibilities and anticipations and causes survival and continuation of family institution and social structure (Mohammad & Elham, 2015).

The universality of marriage within different societies and cultures is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions for which it provides structure, such as sexual gratification and regulation, division of labour between the sexes, economic production and consumption, and satisfaction of

personal needs for affection, status, and companionship. Perhaps its strongest function concerns procreation, the care of children and their education and socialization, and regulation of lines of descent. Through the ages, marriages have taken a great number of forms.

Marriage is a vital institution in Nigerian society, serving as a cornerstone of family life and a source of social stability. However, the practice of marriage in Nigeria is subject to a range of cultural, religious, and social factors that influence its form and function. The practice of marriage in Nigeria is deeply rooted in cultural traditions that date back centuries. According to Amadiume (2000) marriage has long served as a way to maintain social order and uphold traditional gender roles in Nigerian society. In many parts of the country, marriages are arranged by families rather than by the individuals themselves, and dowries or bride prices are often paid as part of the marriage process. Religion also plays a significant role in marriage in Nigeria. The country is home to a diverse range of religious groups, including Christians, Muslims, and traditional African religions, and each of these groups has its own customs and practices surrounding marriage (Arugu, 2014). Marriage is a central institution in Nigerian society, and it plays a vital role in the social and economic life of the country. In many parts of the country, marriage is seen as a way to establish social status and gain access to resources and opportunities. This is particularly true in rural areas, where marriages often serve as a way to maintain traditional family structures and ensure the continuity of family wealth and property. The main legal function of marriage is to ensure the rights of the partners with respect to each other and to ensure the rights and define the relationships of children within a community. Marriage has historically conferred a legitimate status on the offspring, which entitled him or her to the various privileges set down by the traditions of that community, including the right of inheritance.

Marriage is also important for the formation and maintenance of family networks in Nigeria. In many cases, marriages are arranged between families as a way to forge alliances and establish social connections. This is particularly true in parts of the country where extended family networks are strong, such as the Igbo and Yoruba regions. Despite its cultural and social significance, marriage in Nigeria is facing a range of challenges in the contemporary world (Adichie, 2013). One of the most significant challenges is the prevalence of child marriage, which is still common in many parts of the country. According to Axinn, Brauner-Otto & Ghimire (2013) Nigeria has one of the highest rates of child marriage in the world, with 44% of girls married before the age of 18. Another challenge facing marriage in Nigeria is the increasing influence of Western values and cultural norms. As Nigeria becomes more integrated into the global economy, many young Nigerians are adopting more individualistic and westernized values that challenge traditional gender roles and family structures. This has led to a decline in arranged marriages and an increase in love marriages and marriages based on mutual consent. Despite these challenges, there are also opportunities for marriage in Nigeria to evolve and adapt to changing social and economic conditions. For example, there is growing recognition of the importance of gender equality in marriage, and many young Nigerians are advocating for more egalitarian forms of marriage that value mutual respect and shared decision-making.

Marital Stability

Marital stability refers to the ability of a marriage to endure and remain strong over time. It is a key factor in determining the success of a marriage and can be influenced by a range of factors such as communication, compatibility, commitment, and shared values (Amadi & Amadi, 2014). Marital stability, therefore, can be referred to as a firm, steady, well-balanced, and healthy marital relationship between couples. It is the state of husband and wife being in an intact relationship. Marital stability can also be referred to as the direct opposite of marital instability, which is the state of disintegration and lack of mutual understanding among couples. According to Undie and Ushie (2019), marital stability is the condition of marital harmony among couples irrespective of occasional and inevitable disagreements that may arise in the course of human interaction. Marital stability is ensured as each member fulfills his/her role in the relationship.

Ambali, Igbo & Ker (2023) investigated the Relationship between Social Variables and Marital Stability of Couples in Cross River State. This research was to ascertain the relationship between social variables and marital stability of couples in Cross River State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational survey design was used and the researcher sampled 400 married persons out of the total population of 49,317 registered couples in the state. Two instruments were used for the study which includes: self-developed questionnaire titled Cultural Variables Questionnaire (SCVQ) and an adapted version of Marital Stability Questionnaire (MSQ). The instruments were subjected to face and content validation. Point Biserial Correlation was used to test hypothesis one while Pearson Product Moment was used to test hypotheses two and three. Finding from the hypothesis one showed that null hypothesis was retained therefore, there is no significant relationship between educational attainment and marital stability among couples in Cross Rivers State. Null Hypothesis two was rejected which showed that there is a significant positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital stability among couples in Cross River State. From hypothesis three, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between spousal communication and marital stability among couples in Cross River State. At the same time sexual satisfaction and spousal communication have significant relationship with marital stability of couples in Cross River State. Moreover, couples who reported high level of sexual satisfaction in their marriage had stable marriages while those who reported low level of sexual satisfaction in their marriage were experiencing instability in their unions. It is also concluded that the spouses engage in quality communication between each other, the more intimate they become and the higher the chances of marital stability. In this study, finding showed that increased spousal communication was linked to increased level of marital stability among couples The reviewed study is related to the present study because both considered similar variables but differs in their analytical tools.

Awosan, Iroye and Okolo (2023) conducted a study on Effects of spousal communication on marital stability and productivity in Nigeria. This study aims to determine the effects of spousal communication on marital stability and productivity in Nigeria. This research adopted the Solution Focused Theory of premarital screening and the Sound Relationship House Theory as its theoretical framework. Females typically speak quickly and frequently more in marriage; they see it as a way of releasing tension and providing some emotional relief, unlike men who talk less because they view it as un-masculine. Marriages with open communication between partners are happier than those without it. Effective marriage communication positively influences marital conflict resolution, facilitates marital stability, and productivity. The level of effective spousal communication was sub-optimal across the country, with

the major obstacles being was couples not spending sufficient time together, using a harsh tone of voice during a conversation, bringing up memories of past adverse events, not having trust in one's spouse, and not considering spouse's opinion during a discussion, among others. This study showed a sub-optimal level of effective communication among couples in Nigeria, which in turn bring negatively impacts marital stability and productivity across the country. Effects of spousal communication on marital stability and productivity studies conducted in Nigeria showed that sub-optimal spousal communication adversely affects marital stability and productivity. The reviewed study is related with the present study in the sense that both are working on spousal communication on marital stability and also worked with Gottmans theory but they differ in analytical tools and location.

METHODOLOGY

The design for this study is a survey research design. This study was carried out in Makurdi metropolis of Benue State. Makurdi is the state capital of Benue State, located in North central Nigeria, with latitude of 7.73° and 8.54°. The population for this study is all the 76,207 registered couples living in Makurdi, Benue State (National Identity Management Commission, 2023). The sample size for the study is 384. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan Table for sample size determination. The study adopted Multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire titled "Influence of Psychosocial Factors on Marital Stability among Couples Questionnaire (IPFMSCQ). The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section A has five items and seeks to elicit information from the respondents on their demographic characteristics. Section B of the questionnaire has three clusters with each cluster having five items. The first cluster is on communication; second cluster is on intimacy while the third cluster concerns emotional bonding. The instrument yielded an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82. The direct delivery and retrieval method were employed in the administration of the instrument by the researcher. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics of Means and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions while Chi-Square (χ^2) goodness-of-fit statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented according to research questions answered and hypotheses tested as follows:

Research Question One

What is the influence of communication on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State?

To answer to the research question one, responses on influence of communication on marital stability of were collected and analyzed as shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation analysis of influence of communication on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Easy flow of discussion between my spouse and I have earned me marital stability.	384	2.82	0.85	Agree
2	Free flow of information between my spouse and I have greatly given peace to my marriage.	384	2.62	0.76	Agree
3	Quick response from my spouse on sensitive issues has enhanced stability of our marriage.	384	3.15	0.94	Agree
4	Talking with my spouse frequently has helped the stability of my marriage.	384	2.98	0.81	Agree
5	Talking on positive tone with my spouse has enhanced the stability of my marriage	384	3.07	0.88	Agree
Cluster Mean			2.93		Agree

SD= Standard Deviation; N=Total number of Item; 3.50-4.00= Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50-3.49 Agree (A); 1.50-2.49 Disagree (D); 0.50-1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD).

Result presented on Table 1 shows that the mean scores of all the items were above the bench mark of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agree on all the item statements. The result on the Table also showed a cluster mean of 2.93 and this is an indication that communication has high influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The result on the Table further showed the standard deviation ranging from 0.76 to 0.94 and this implies that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses.

Research Question Two

What is the influence of intimacy on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State?

To answer to the research question two, responses on influence of intimacy on marital stability of were collected and analyzed as shown in the table 2.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation of analysis of influence of intimacy on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State

S/N	Item	N	Mean	SD	Remark
6	I am not shy whenever am around my spouse and this enhances my marital stability.	384	2.75	0.67	Agree
7	Staying around my spouse when we are at home has enhanced my marital stability	384	3.19	0.97	Agree
8	Sharing leisure times with my spouse has created peace in my marriage.	384	2.58	0.78	Agree
9	Rubbing my spouse on the back to show my love has greatly helped my marriage	384	2.68	0.73	Agree
10	Sleeping on same bed with my spouse has enhanced peace and stability in my marriage	384	2.90	0.90	Agree
Cluster Mean			2.82		Agree

SD= Standard Deviation; N=Total number of Item.3.50-4.00= Strongly Agree (SA); 2.50-3.49 Agree (A); 1.50-2.49 Disagree (D); 0.50-1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD).

Result presented on Table 2 shows that the mean scores of all the items were above the bench mark of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agree on all the item statements. The result on the Table also showed a cluster mean of 2.82 and this is an indication that intimacy has high influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The result on the Table further showed the standard deviation ranging from 0.67 to 0.97 and this implies that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses.

Research Question Three

What is the influence of emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of analysis of influence of emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Remark
11	Having affection for my spouse has enhanced our marital stability	384	2.67	0.79	Agree
12	Caring much about my spouse has enhanced the stability of our marriage.	384	3.10	0.91	Agree
13	Showing love to my spouse has enhanced our marital stability	384	2.75	0.71	Agree
14	Being passionate towards my spouse has enhanced our marital stability	384	3.21	0.98	Agree
15	Showing feeling of attachment to my spouse has enhanced stability of our marriage.	384	2.54	0.65	Agree
Cluster Mean			2.85		Agree

SD= Standard Deviation; N=Total number of Item; Mean = 3.50-4.00= Very Strongly Agree(SD); 2.50-3.49 Agree (A)); 1.50-2.49 Disagree (D); 0.50-1.49 Strongly Disagree (SD).

Result presented on Table 3 shows that the mean scores of all the items were above the bench mark of 2.50. This implies that the respondents agree on all the item statements. The result on the Table also showed a cluster mean of 2.85 and this is an indication that emotional bonding has high influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The result on the Table further showed the standard deviation ranging from 0.65 to 0.98 and this implies that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses.

Research Hypothesis One

Communication has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.

Table 4: Chi-square of the influence of communication on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State

	Observed N	Expected N	Df	X ² Cal	Asym.Sig.	α- value	Remark
SD	69	96.0		13.688	.003	0.05	
D	90	96.0					
A	114	96.0					
SA	111	96.0					
Total	384		3				Significant

α-Level = Significance Level; Df= Degree of Freedom; X² Cal= Chi-square Calculated Value; Asym.Sig.= asymptotic significance

The result presented on Table 4 shows that the Asym. Sig. value of 0.003 is less than the set Sig. value of 0.05 and this is an indication that the test of hypothesis is significant. This implies that communication has significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that Communication has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State is rejected

Research Hypothesis Two

Intimacy has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.

Table 5: Chi-square of the influence of intimacy on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State

	Observed N	Expected N	Df	Chi-Square	Asym. Sig.	α-Level	Remark
SD	41	96.0	3	25.833	.000	0.05	
D	91	96.0					
A	109	96.0					
SA	143	96.0					
Total	384						Significant

α-Level = Significance Level; Df= Degree of Freedom; X² Cal= Chi-square Calculated Value; Asym.Sig.= asymptotic significance

The result presented on Table 5 shows that the Asym. Sig. value of 0.000 is less than the set Sig. value of 0.05 and this is an indication that the test of hypothesis is significant. This implies that intimacy has significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that intimacy has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State is rejected.

Research Hypothesis Three

Emotional bonding has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State.

Table 6: Chi-square of the influence of emotional bonding on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State

	Observed N	Expected N	Df	Chi-square	Asym.Sig.	α-Level	Remark
SD	71	96.0		14.042	.003	0.05	
D	89	96.0					
A	121	96.0					
SA	103	96.0					
Total	384		3				Significant

α-Level = Significance Level; Df= Degree of Freedom; X² Cal= Chi-square Calculated Value; Asym.Sig.= asymptotic significance

The result presented on Table 6 shows that the Asym. Sig. value of 0.003 is less than the set Sig. value of 0.05 and this is an indication that the test of hypothesis is significant. This implies that emotional bonding has significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that emotional bonding has no significant influence on marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State is rejected.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study reveal that communication has a significant influence on marital stability among couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. This implies that couples who communicate effectively in their relationship experience enhanced marital stability, unlike those who do not communicate effectively. Findings of this study reveals that, easy flow of discussion between spouses; free flow of information; quick response from one's spouse on sensitive issue; talking with spouse frequently; using a positive tone while talking with one's spouse promotes a healthy and stable marriage. The finding corroborates with that of Eseré, et. al (2011) who found that lack of effective communication is the bane to marital stability. They further stated that, open communication is an essential factor for strong and healthy relationship which eventually gives birth to marital stability. This finding agrees with that of Sedighi, et.al (2014) who stated that, marriages with open communication between partners are happier than those without.

The findings of the study reveal that intimacy significantly influences marital stability among couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The study found that; Couples who are shy around each other, Spouses staying around when at home, Spouses sharing leisure time together, Spouses sleeping on the same bed enhances marital stability. This therefore means that couples who exhibit intimacy in their relationship will have a stable marriage unlike the couples who do not exhibit intimacy. This finding collaborates with that of Dada et. al (2006) also revealed that the memories couples created together is a way couples can construct shared meanings with each other. Thus, couple time spent together in leisure can help couple to create shared meanings which could help them to have more successful relationship. This finding is also in line with that of Mariyam (2022) who found that, couples marital stability and marital satisfaction tends to be higher when the couple participate in shared leisure time, particularly when the couple is satisfied with their leisure time.

The findings of the study revealed that emotional bonding does have a significant influence on the marital stability of couples in Makurdi Metropolis of Benue State. The study found that when spouses have affection for each other, it brings stability to their marriage. Additionally, spouses caring for each other, showing love, being passionate, and expressing feelings of attachment enhance marital stability. This indicates that couples who experience emotional bonding with their partner will have enhanced marital stability, unlike couples who do not have such a bond. The findings of the study corroborate with those of Dada and Idowu (2006), who found that emotional bonding enhances marital stability. According to Haack and Falcke (2014), romantic partnerships are marked by an even greater degree of deep care for each spouse than friendships.

Conclusion

This paper has surveyed the influence of communication, intimacy and emotional bonding on Marital Stability among couple in Makurdi Metropolis Benue State. It has shown that effective application of psychosocial factors will enhance mutual understanding with the spouses giving their best vis -avis effective communication, emotional bonding, intimacy which will promote peaceful continuity of marital unity and enhance marital stability among couples.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

- 1) The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) are to organize seminars, workshops and conferences for married members of the public on factors that can enhance marital stability such as sexual satisfaction, communication, intimacy, emotional bonding and religious orientation.
- 2) The Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should encourage more of her members to set-up counselling clinics with conducive environment in different parts of the country so that couples can avail themselves of such opportunity to learn, speak up on their challenges and receive solutions.

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