

Locations, sex and level of formal education as predictors of marital maladjustment: A case of married teachers in Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was premised on the high incidence of marital maladjustment among teachers in the study area. The specific objectives were to explain the joint influence of sex, locations and level of education on marital maladjustment among married teachers, establish the relationship between sex and marital maladjustment, investigate the relationship between locations and marital maladjustment and determine the relationship between the level of formal education and marital maladjustment. Thus, the independent variables were sex, location and formal educational qualifications. In this study, marital maladjustment served as the dependent variable. The sample size was 357 married teachers consisting of both males and females. Data were analysed by use of analysis of variance, correlation and coefficient of determination as well as multiple regression. However, only sex had a significant relationship with marital maladjustment. Thus, it became empirically discernible that marital maladjustment is more related to the sex of the individual teachers than locations and level of formal education.

Keywords: Level of education, locations, marital maladjustment, sex;

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1. Introduction

Marital maladjustment is a social malaise destabilising the fabric of society. In corollary, the family is the basic unit of the society and anything that affects the family eventually translates to the entire society (Ali et al., 2021; Hernández et al., 2020; Xu et al., 2019). When couples who pledge a lifetime commitment, faithfulness and fulfilment to each other begin to experience ‘cracks’ in the marriage relationship meant they are facing adjustment challenges (Avamene et al., 2021; Onyekuru, 2015). Well-adjusted marriages tend to last for a longer time while poorly adjusted marriages end up with separation and divorce. Maladjustment in a marriage could negatively affect parental roles, the couple's physical and mental health, life satisfaction, child upbringing, sexual relations with the spouse, emotional expressiveness and other problems within the social environment (Ahmadi et al., 2007; Delvecchio et al., 2015). The foregoing juxtaposes that marital maladjustment is a societal problem that must be reduced to the barest minimum if society has to function in harmony.

Nwamadi (2022) and Nwobi (1995) found that society has been inundated with alarming cases of divorce, marital dissatisfaction, loss of affection between couples and a high rate of marital violence. They maintained that incidences of marital maladjustment were caused by misunderstandings between spouses and/or unfavourable intervention of parents and friends. The main features of marital maladjustment include maltreatment, desertion, rejection, negligence, child abuse, child neglect, abscond and malicious beating among others. Factors that determine marital maladjustment are occupational maladjustment and financial management (Obineli, 2010); educational qualification, self-efficacy and employment status (Masoje, 2019); and personality traits (Iyiaydin & Sümer, 2021; Kourosch et al., 2020). Most studies on marital maladjustment looked at the causes from the angle of behaviours that led to marital breakdown as well as the personality of the couples. Very few or no studies have examined marital maladjustment from the angle of sex, location and educational qualification of the couples hence the present study.

1.1. Purpose of the study

The broad objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between sex, locations level of education and marital maladjustment among married teachers in the Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

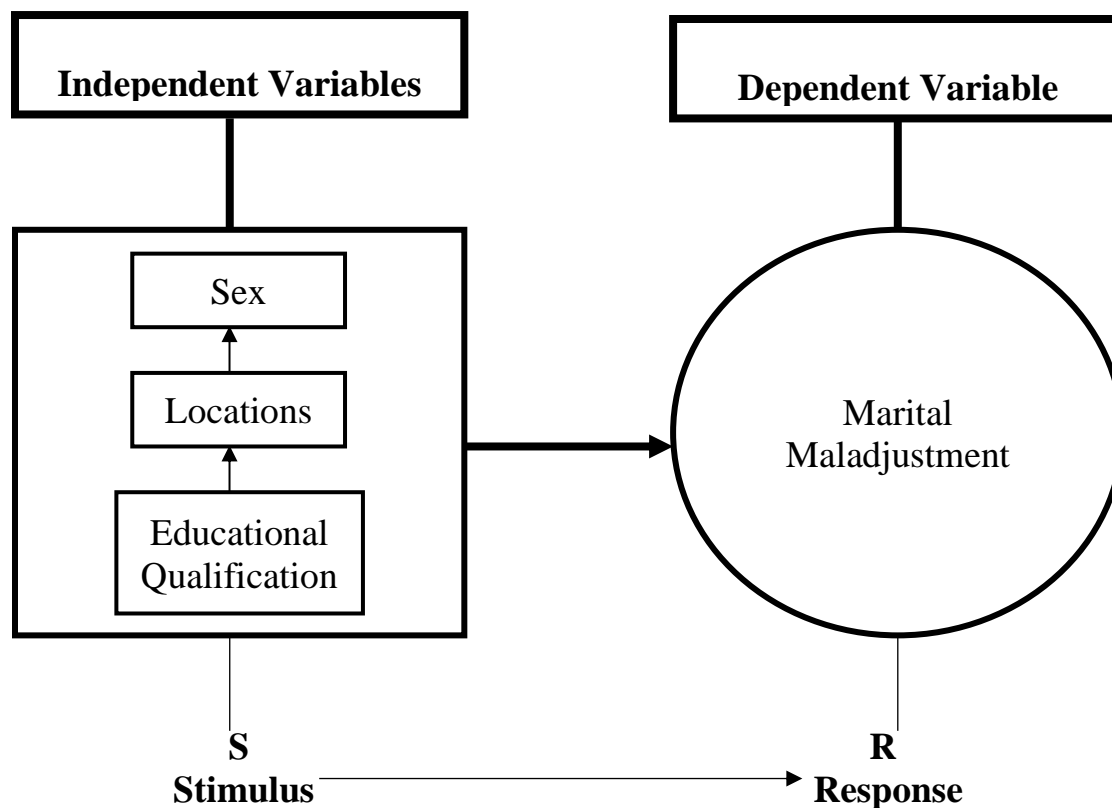
- explain the joint effect of sex, location, and educational qualification on marital maladjustment among married teachers;
- establish the relationship between gender and marital maladjustment among married teachers in the study area;
- investigate the relationship between locations and marital maladjustment; and
- determine the relationship between the level of formal education and marital maladjustment.

1.2. Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of the study was built on stimulus-response adapted from Skinner's (1954) operant conditioning and Bandura's (1977) social learning theories. These theories proposed that behaviour is a product of interactions among variables within and outside one's environment. It was deduced that variations that occur in the marital maladjustment of married teachers might be due to factors operating within or outside the married teachers' environment which Bandura (1977) referred to as reciprocal determinism (Figure 1).

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of the Study Adapted From Skinner (1954) Operant Conditioning and Bandura (1977) Social Learning Theory



This conceptualisation is also in line with the behavioural equation of stimulus-organism-response by Hull (1952). The theory proposes that an organism's behaviour is a product of stimulus in the environment, where the organism's innate potentials are best explored. The independent variables of the study were sex, location and educational qualification. Marital maladjustment constitutes the dependent variable (response variable). It is presumed that marital maladjustment among married teachers is associated with sex, location and educational qualification. It is expedient to investigate the possible relationship among these variables to establish the cause of marital maladjustment in the study area.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

The study is an *ex-post facto* research design. The correlation technique was adopted. This study examined the relationship between sex, location, level of formal education and marital maladjustment among married teachers in the Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State, Nigeria

2.2. Participants

The population of the study comprised only married teachers in the 180 public secondary schools in Delta Central Senatorial District. Based on data obtained from the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Delta State, the population of married teachers was 5,100.

A proportionate simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. All the schools were used for the study. However, the sample size was based on a 7% proportionate sample of the population of married teachers. This gave a sample size of 357 married teachers. It was observed that the sample size agreed with the recommendation by Gill et al. (2010) that for a population size between 5,000 and 9,999, a sample size of 357 was appropriate at a 5% confidence limit (Table 1).

Table 1

Sample Size Distribution of Respondents

S/N	LGA	Number of schools	Number of married teachers	Percentage selected (7%)
1.	Ethiope East	24	608	43
2.	Ethiope West	24	441	31
3.	Okpe	16	421	29
4.	Sapele	16	670	47
5.	Udu	14	511	36
6.	Ughelli North	44	1,184	83
7.	Ughelli South	26	463	32
8.	Uvwie	16	802	56
	Total	180	5,100	357

2.3. Data collection instruments

The data for the study were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises two sections (A and B). Section A comprises the demographic data of the respondents, while Section B contained the Marital Maladjustment Rating Scale. This scale was adapted from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, developed by Spanier (1976). The scale consists of 32 items designed to assess the relationship quality intact (married or cohabiting) between couples. There were four subscales: dyadic consensus (the degree to which the couples agree on matters of importance in the relationship), dyadic satisfaction (the degree to which the couples were satisfied with the relationship), dyadic cohesion (the degree of closeness and shared activities experienced by the couples) and dyadic affective expression (the degree of demonstrations of affection and sexual relationships).

The scale comprises varying response categories which involved ordinal, Likert and dichotomous measurements described as follows:

- Items 1–15 used a 6-point ordinal scale (from always agree to always disagree).
- Items 16–22 used a 6-point ordinal scale (from ‘all the time’ to ‘never’).
- Item 23 used a 5-point Likert scale (from every day to never).
- Item 24 used a 5-point Likert scale (from ‘all of them’ to ‘none of them’).
- Items 25–28 used a 6-point ordinal scale (from never to more often).
- Items 29–30 used a dichotomous (yes or no) scale.
- Item 31 was rated on a 7-point-Likert type scale (from extremely unhappy to perfect).
- Item 32 asked respondents to choose the most relevant statement from a total of six options.

Spanier (1976) reported an appropriate level of internal consistency for the entire scale (Cronbach’s alpha = 0.96). Values reported for the subscales were Cronbach’s alpha: dyadic consensus = 0.90, dyadic satisfaction = 0.94, dyadic cohesion = 0.86 and dyadic affective expression = 0.73.

Spanier (1976) recommended the following as the scoring formula for the instrument:

High score = less distress, high adjustment

Norms –	70	=	Divorce
	98	=	Distress
	114.8	=	Norm for happy married couples

2.3.1. Test of validity and reliability of the instrument

Expert judgment and factor analysis were used to establish the validity of the instrument. Apart from the researchers' other experts in guidance and counselling were consulted to ensure the face validity of the instrument. Factor analysis was used to assess the content and construct validity of the instrument. The principal component analysis of the extraction method was used to estimate the content validity of the instrument. The explained variance was 78.60%, which showed that the scale had content validity. Rotated factor loading of the varimax method was used to estimate the construct (marital maladjustment) validity of the instrument. The values obtained ranged from 0.51 to 0.70.

For the test of reliability, the test–retest method was used. The questionnaire was administered to 50 married teachers in the Delta Central Senatorial District at intervals of 2 weeks. The data obtained were analysed using the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient. A coefficient of 0.79 was obtained, which implied that the instrument had high internal consistency.

2.4. Ethical consideration

The questionnaire was administered to the respondents directly by the researchers with the help of three research assistants. The researchers visited the various schools used for the study and permission was sought from the principal. Thereafter, we approached the respondents, explained the purpose of the visit and established a rapport before administering the questionnaire. The researchers explained the content of the questionnaire to the respondent when the need arose. The completed questionnaire was retrieved immediately. All participants in the study remained anonymous throughout the study.

2.5. Data analysis

The data were analysed using analysis of variance, correlation and coefficient of determination as well as multiple regression at a significance level of 0.05.

2.6. Operational definition of terms

Sex: In this study, the sex of married teachers referred to the biological qualities of either male or female excluding homosexuality.

Locations: Meant married teachers in rural and urban locations of the study area.

Educational qualification: This referred to the highly qualified and less qualified teachers. In this study, highly qualified teachers were those who possess a degree, postgraduate diploma and postgraduate degree, and less qualified teachers were those who possess an Ordinary National Diploma, Nigerian Certificate in Education and Teachers' Grade II Certificate. Educational qualification was used to measure the level of formal education.

Marital maladjustment: Marital maladjustment is a condition that explains the absence of marital stability, harmony, satisfaction and happiness among the married teacher.

3. Results

3.1. Relationship between sex, locations, level of formal education and marital maladjustment

The joint effect of sex, location and level of formal education on marital maladjustment was tested by analysis of variance (Table 2). The F -ratio = 3.152, $p = 0.025$ showed that there was a significant

difference between the input variables. The r^2 value (0.030) meant that sex, location and level of formal education could be used to predict marital maladjustment up to 3%. There was a significant relationship between marital maladjustment and sex ($t = 2.783, p = 0.006$). There was no significant relationship between marital maladjustment and locations ($t = -0.601, p = 0.548$), and there was no significant relationship between marital maladjustment and the level of formal education ($t = 0.198, p = 0.843$). Null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Table 2

Results of the Relationship Between Sex, Locations, Formal Educational Qualification and Marital Maladjustment

Model	SS	Df	MS	T	Sig.
Regression	3,812.248	3	1,270.749		
Residual	125,393.064	311	403.193	3.152	0.025 ^b
Total	129,205.312	314			
Variables in equation					
Model	Un-standardised coefficient		Standardised coefficient	T	Sig
	B	Std. error	beta		
Constant	84.184	6.567		12.820	0.000
Sex	6.606	2.374	0.161	2.783	0.006
Location	-1.508	2.509	-0.035	0.601	0.548
Educational qualification	0.472	2.378	0.011	0.198	0.843

$\alpha = 0.05, R = 0.172, R\text{-square} = 0.030$.

^aDependent variable: Marital maladjustment.

^bPredictors (constant): Sex, locations and formal education qualification.

The relationship between sex and marital maladjustment, locations and marital maladjustment and level of formal education and marital maladjustment were realised by the coefficient of determination (Tables 3–5).

3.2. Relationship between sex and marital maladjustment

In Table 3, the r value between sex and marital maladjustment was 0.21 and it corresponded to an r^2 value of 4%. This meant that sex explained marital maladjustment among married teachers by 4%. This finding is consistent with that of Afolabi (2014), who found that sex helps to determine the satisfaction level of married persons. He specifically found that male nurses tended to be more satisfied with their marital life than female nurses. However, the study is at variance with Ebinuwa-Okoh (2019) that sex did not moderate the relationship between emotional expression, financial management, communication flow, work involvement and marital adjustment among married couples.

Table 3

Results of the Relationship Between Sex and Marital Maladjustment

Variables	N	R	R ²	r ² %	Decision
Gender					
Marital maladjustment	316	0.21	0.04	4	Significant relationship

3.3. Location and marital maladjustment

In Table 4, the extent of the relationship between rural–urban locations and marital maladjustment was $r = 0.07$. This correlation was insignificant as it accounted for less than 1% of the relationship between locations and marital maladjustment.

Table 4

Results of the Relationship Between Locations and Marital Maladjustment

Variables	<i>n</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>r</i> ² %	Decision
Location					
Marital maladjustment	316	0.07	0.005	0.5	Not significant

3.4. Education and marital maladjustment

In Table 5, the relationship between formal educational qualification and marital maladjustment was $r = 0.01$ and it accounted for 0.01%. This symbolised that the relationship between the level of formal education and marital maladjustment was insignificant. Thus, formal educational qualifications did not explain marital maladjustment in the study area.

Table 5

Results of the Relationship Between Formal Education Qualification and Marital Maladjustment

Variables	<i>N</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>r</i> ² %	Decision
Educational qualifications					
Marital maladjustment	316	0.01	0.0001	0.01	Not significant

4. Discussion

The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. Schumn et al. (1998) reported a high level of marital satisfaction among male than female couples in the United States. This finding was at variance with Masoje (2019) who found that higher education levels among married couples led to improved marital adjustment. Educational differences between couples could be a source of conflict in marriage (Kumuyi, as cited by Ojukwu, 2016). The study proved that the level of formal education and locations were not significant for proper adjustment among married teachers. It corroborates Chaudhari and Patel (2009) who found that there was no significant difference in marital maladjustment and rural-urban locations among females of Mehsana (Gujarat). The study negates the *a priori* that married teachers who were residents in rural areas were more adjusted to a marriage relationship than their urban counterparts.

In the study, the extent of the relationship between rural-urban locations and marital maladjustment was insignificant as it accounted for less than 1% of the relationship between locations and marital maladjustment. This finding agrees with Chaudhari and Patel (2009), that marital adjustment among female urban and rural Mehsana (Gujarat) residents was not significant. However, it was at variance with Smith (2011), who found that varying factors within urban and rural settlements contributed to marital maladjustment.

In the study, formal educational qualifications did not explain marital maladjustment in the study area. The findings of the study, therefore, negated the *a priori* expectation that a high level of formal education is negatively related to marital maladjustment. By this, it is meant that a person who is highly educated is expected to be well-adjusted in marriage. From the results a less than 1% relationship is not strong empirical evidence to justify that level of formal education has a positive relationship with marital maladjustment. The finding is at variance with Ojukwu (2016) and Ubangha et al. (2013) who found a

highly positive relationship between education and marital stability. Similarly, Ojeme (2020) found a significant relationship between educational qualification and conflict resolution in marriage.

5. Conclusion

The study established a correlation between sex, location, formal education and marital maladjustment among married teachers in the study area. The three independent variables influence marital maladjustment. However, it was only sex that had a significant relationship with marital maladjustment.

Rural–urban locations and formal education should not constitute a major focus in marriage counselling services in the study area. From the study, it is a misconception that marital maladjustment is prevalent in rural or urban areas and among married teachers with various educational qualifications. In marriage counselling more emphasis should be directed to sex (male/female) instead of locations and level of education.

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