

A Comparative Study of Marital Adjustment among Female Teachers, Nurses and Administrative Staff in Nigeria

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Abstract: The study investigated a relative comparison of marital adjustment among teachers, nurses, and administrative staff in Ondo State, Nigeria. A survey research design was employed for the study. The study population was all female married teachers, nurses and administrative staff from the urban and rural areas of Akure South and Owo Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ondo State Nigeria. 175 respondents, who were the sample for the study, were selected through a stratified and purposive random sampling techniques. The study was guided through the use of two null hypotheses. A 20-item questionnaire titled “Adjustment Strategies Among Couples (ASAC)”, constructed by the researcher, was the instrument for the collection of data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using one-way ANOVA, Scheffe test and t-test statistics. The two hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the findings of the study, the conclusion was drawn, and recommendations made to the three professionals, that they should find ways of striking a balance between the performance of their home and workplace duties. The government should find ways of establishing more schools, health centers and administrative offices in the rural areas as they are present in the urban. This is

to enhance workers' comfort and stability at work; which would, in turn, influence their adjustment for better and peaceful living with their spouses at home.

Introduction

Nigeria is a patriarchal society with unwritten cultural standard based on gender-stereotypical factors to guide or regulate the roles of women in the home. The traditional expectations of women in the home compared with those of men, appear to be oppressive or servitude in nature. It is believed that this type of scenario could only result in women's development of low self-concept and negative self-presentation (Fletcher; 2006, 2007). In a typical Nigerian setting therefore, women are to be seen only in the home, rearing children and running around to cater for the home front to the detriment of their development. If women must take up employment at all, according to Taiss and Kauser (2010), they must engage only inflexible work hours. This might be the underlying reason why many Nigerian women rather prefer to go for jobs with little or no aspiration. On the other hand too, it could equally explain why most Nigerian men, while seeking for wives, would prefer to go for women whose careers they perceive, would not constitute a threat to their supremacy at home.

The teacher is often seen by many as a person with unique qualities, knowledgeable, a helper, a mentor, a planner, a developer, amongst other virtues. Despite all these qualities however, Olatubosun (1980) and Olabisi (2005), observed that though a teacher like any other Nigerian, wants to be honored and respected, yet the public hardly gives her the deserved honor. On the contrary, the public regards the teaching profession as an embarrassing one. It is even unfortunate that the ill-feeling seems not to be limited to people alone, but is extended to the students that the teacher teaches. This makes scholars like Olajide (2009) and Okeye (2010) see teaching profession as a spiteful one, while Okoroafor (2010) mainly describes it as a laughing stock amongst other occupations.

Nursing is a healthcare profession for everyone, either as individuals or as members of the family, to enable them to operate at their optimal level of wellness. It is one of the most important professions open more to women and to a less extent, to men. Reflecting on the public perception of the nursing profession however, Lawrence (1988) expressed the feeling that nurses in Nigeria are perceived by the generality of people as of easy virtue, who are easily disposed towards sex-making, with any person at a go! That the situation is perceived even deplorable enough that while on duty, their male patients could help to serve as alternatives for satisfying their sexual urge. Also, Emeghebo (2012) observed that public perception of nurses in the United States of America (USA) could be as a result of their interaction with others in their environment.

Other study conducted in USA, Canada, United Kingdom and Australia, by Mering and VanWyk (2013), which also look into the perception of the public on the health workers, showed too that people had stereotypical and negative views on nursing. Nevertheless, the studies of Takase, Maude, and Manias (2006), deviated a bit from others, this was based on the fact that, unlike the general perception expressed by many, these scholars reported that the nurses themselves, were

proud about their jobs, considering that they are competent health professionals, having significant responsibilities, well-respected and trusted professionals.

Emeghebo (2012) however seemed to disagree with the preceding. This was because he observed that nurses in the contemporary Nigeria hospitals are far below being trusted. This was the observation that, they are less caring, committed and dedicated to meeting the needs of their patients. Still on the stereotypical belief of the public, Liu (2010), in the online forum used to explore nurses' perception of their work roles, showed similar results. According to this scholar, participants even went to the extent of saying that they would not encourage their children to go for nursing.

The work of administrative staff is a highly demanding one. Administrative staff either in the civil service or the private sector, are into formulating and implementing duties for the organization where they serve. Many women who are parts of the labor force in Nigeria are low-skilled and found more in the informal sector. Mordi et al (2010), in trying to explain why the situation is like that, stated that it is because in Nigeria, highly skilled positions in the workplace, are predominated by men. In this wise therefore, women who are found engaging in such traditionally male-dominated occupations usually face much challenge balancing work and family duties.

Research Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were generated to guide the study. They were stated as follow:

Ho1:

There is no significant difference in the marital adjustment among teachers, nurses, and administrative staff.

Ho2:

There is no significant difference in the marital adjustment among teachers, nurses, and administrative staff from urban and rural areas.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population for the study comprised all female, married teachers, nurses and administrative staff in Ondo State, Nigeria. The sample was one hundred, and seventy-five made up of teachers, nurses, and administrative staff. They were selected through a stratified purposive random sampling technique, from urban and rural areas of Akure South and Owo Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ondo State, Nigeria.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was constructed by the researcher herself, and was titled "Adjustment Strategies Among Couples (ASAC)". It was made up of twenty (20) items. The instrument was divided into two sections; A & B. Section A was to collect data on respondents' bio-data, while Section B was in the response to their marital issues.

Data Analysis

The two hypotheses generated for the study were analyzed using one-way ANOVA, Scheffe test, and t-test statistics. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Ho1:

There is no significant difference in the marital adjustment among teachers, nurses, and administrative staff.

Table 1

One-Way ANOVA for Marital Adjustment Among Teachers, Nurses, and Administrative Staff.

Source	ss	df	ms	f-cal	f-value
Between Groups	1795.31	2		4.063	0.191
Within Groups	33579.62	152	220.91		
Total	35374.93				

*Significant; $P < 0.05$

Result in Table 1 showed that there was a significant difference in the marital adjustment among teachers, nurses, and administrative staff. This was because the data in the Table revealed that f-cal, which was 4.063, was greater than the f-value of 0.191. This implies that hypothesis one was rejected. Further analysis was carried out in Table 2, employing Scheffe test to identify which of the three professions would be significantly different at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2

Scheffe Test on the three professions.

Variables	Mean	Teaching	Nursing	Administrative Job
Teaching	185.68			
Nursing	191.28			
Executive Job	193.95	*		

The scheffe analysis in Table 2 showed that the mean for the three professions; teaching, nursing and administrative job were; 185.68, 191.28, and 193.95 respectively. This implies that, while the administrative staff and the nurses were slightly different in their patterns of adjustment, the

teachers and the administrative staff were shown to be significantly different in the patterns of their marital adjustment.

Ho2:

There is no significant difference in the marital adjustment among teachers, nurses, and administrative staff from urban and rural areas.

Table 3

The difference in the Relative Comparison of Marital Adjustment Among Teachers, Nurses and Administrative Staff from Urban and Rural Areas; Using t-test statistics.

Location	N	\bar{X}	SD	Df	t-cal	t-value
Urban	94	191.73	14.18	173	1.86	1.96
Rural	81	187.35	16.48			

Not Significant $P > 0.05$

Result in Table 3 showed that t-cal was 1.86, which was less than the t-value of 1.96, hence the hypothesis of no difference was not rejected.

Discussion

Hypothesis one which stated that there would be no significant difference in the marital adjustment among teachers, nurses and administrative staff was dismissed. In other words, there was a significant difference in the patterns of marital adjustment among the three professionals. This finding justifies the feelings that professions can have a certain effect on people's actions.

The result of the Scheffe test in Table 2, of the study showed more, distinctively the different patterns between the marital adjustment of teachers and the administrative staff, while there was a very minimal difference between the patterns of change of the nurses and the administrative staff. This confirmed the observation of Mordi et al (2010), which stated that in Nigeria, Primary School Teaching is the most common occupation which is predominated by women. This too stresses the point that most Nigerian women prefer to direct their career goals towards roles which they feel would keep them within the social perception of female social roles. It could be understood from this dimension the reason why the few women who dare to engage in the perceived male-dominated occupations, such as administrative jobs traditionally, often have to grapple with greater difficulties to strike a balance between their workplace and family duties. Perhaps, this could be the reason too, why the teacher, whose profession was described by Okoroafor (2006) as a laughing stock, about other occupations, was found to be the most preferred, and adjudged as the better-adjusted partially, then either the nurse or the administrative staff.

Also, this result could have emanated from the fact that, teachers appear to be more favored by the public. They are often portrayed as being good models, knowledgeable, humble, calm, faithful, amongst other virtues. On the contrary, scholars such as; Lawrence (1988), Emeghebo (2012), Liu (2010), and others, all discussed at length the negative perception of the public of the nurses' non-commitment to their patients, and also their promiscuity, even at the workplace. Besides, there is also the general belief that the nurse and the administrative staff, are more assertive and proud of their careers, compared to the teacher. Naturally, most Nigerian men, based on their patriarchal tendencies, would not have much to do with assertive women; it makes them feel uncomfortable. This builds on the assumption that, such women are likely to constitute a threat to their authorities in the home. They would, therefore, prefer to go for teachers, who they assumed are less empowered, and such could make them be more submissive, manageable, and even more faithful in the home, compared to the nurses and the administrative staff.

Hypothesis two which stated that there would be no significant difference among teachers, nurses and administrative staff from urban and rural areas, was not rejected. This confirmed the belief that people of the same profession, including the teacher, the nurse and the administrative staff, no matter their location, either in the urban or rural, are likely to share common behavioral patterns. This could be traced to their being exposed to the same set of training and practices, based on the same ethical models. This observation could be confirmed by the studies of the following scholars, using the nursing profession as a point of reference. Thus, the studies of Liu (2010: China), Emeghebo (2012: US), and Lawrence (1998: Nigeria), which though were carried out at different times and in different parts of the world (as indicated in the brackets), yet in unison, all confirmed that nursing profession had a negative public perception, based on their peculiar ways of practice or behaviour towards their patients.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of the study, it could be concluded that marital adjustment has much to do with couples' profession. The findings showed further that location of jobs whether in the urban or rural areas, does not exert much influence on the marital adjustment of couples. In other words, if the professionals such as the teacher, the nurse, and the administrative staff are exposed to the same type of training, and the same conditions of service, they are most likely to behave the same way.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- (1) Even though teachers are found in the survey to be better adjusted martially than either the nurses or the administrative staff, yet they still need to be proud of their job and not allow themselves to be weighed down by people's discriminating attitudes towards their profession. As usual, they should continue to live up to the expectations of the public as good models to their students and the general public.
- (2) The nurses whose profession suffers from the influence of traditional values, probably because of their shifting-duties, should be transparently honest in the performance of

their duties. They should try not to create the impression that would make their spouses have doubtful feelings about them.

- (3) The administrative staff who are found in the male-dominated profession, should not allow themselves to be discouraged despite all barriers being put in their way, either at their workplace or in the home, to stagnate their advancement. They should always try to humble themselves at home and try to strike a balance between their profession and home duties so as to experience peaceful co-existence through the required marital adjustment with their spouses in their respective homes.
- (4) Spouses, especially the men, should have understanding minds about the commitment of their partners. Couples need to work together as a team to make things go on smoothly in their homes. It is high time men stopped being dependent on the traditional or stereotypical practices which could ruin the peace of the home.
- (5) Finally, the findings of the study showed that location of jobs either in the urban or rural, did not have any influence on the adjustment patterns of couples. This implies that it would be useful for the government centers, and administrative offices, to make adequate provisions for workers in the rural as well as in the urban areas. This is to make employees more stable and comfortable in the performance of their duties, both at home and the workplace.

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