

Trait of Personality as Predictor of Marital Adjustment among Professional Practising Counsellors in Enugu State, Nigeria

Ani Andrew Peter

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu University, Anambra State, Nigeria.

ABSTRACT

When a good climate is replaced with marital problems, the consequences are usually devastating. It results in marital instability, marriage separation, divorce or even death of the couple. This has serious effects on the home, family, children of the marriage, society and the nation. This paper is focused on the Personality Trait as Predictor of Marital Adjustment among Professional Practising Counsellors in Enugu State, Nigeria. The study raised two research questions and adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was 59 married practicing professional counsellors. No sampling was done since the number is small and manageable. Data were collected from fifty nine (59) professional practicing counsellors using a well structured questionnaire. 57 out of 59 copies of the instrument were retrieved. Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate was used to ascertain the internal consistency of the entire instrument. Data collected were used to analyze the two research questions using mean, grand mean and standard deviation. The results showed that extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are warmth, sociable, dynamics and assertive. Secondary, openness to experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are creativity, imagination, intellectually curious and attentiveness. This suggested that most of the married professional practicing counsellors in public secondary schools in Enugu State are well adjusted in their marriages. In the light of the above, recommendations were made.

Keywords: Traits, Personality, Predictor, Marital Adjustment and Counsellors

INTRODUCTION

The importance of couples understanding their personality characteristic is germane to marital bliss and adjustment. Marital adjustment is a process which is created during couples lives because it is necessary for taste conformity, person's traits recognition, behavioural rules creation and relational models formation. The importance of understanding each other personality characteristics is germane to marital bliss and adjustment. Personality is unique behaviour, thought motivation and emotion in human being and it is what makes an individual to be unique, strongly influence personal expectation, perceptions, values, attitude and even marital adjustment [1].

Marital relationship is a means by which physiological, procreation, social, emotional and security needs are satisfied. It is the foundation of family life because it involves the union between

man and woman as husband and wife. Marriage is a component of the culture usually formalized by the custom, law and occasionally solemnized by religion. The human family has become one of the most widely discussed issues in recent times. Its importance to human existence led to the United Nations declaration in 1994 as the international year of the family.

Marriage is considered one of the most significant elements in the life of human being. It is a social institution which fosters the coming together of totally different individuals with different personality traits, psychological makeup and socio-economic background to form a family [2]. [3] defined marriage as a formally-written, verbal or traditional long-term agreement between a man and a woman are attracted to each other by the power stemming from instinct; that is

compassion and love. They commit themselves to each other freely and wholly in order to establish a dynamic unit.

One can agree that where a couple is compatible, have respect and love for one another, that marriage will no doubt be a happy one. Marriage between adult male and female usually starts with expressive friendship or courtship. This marriage relationship results to life patnership which means living together as husband and wife and sharing common lifestyles and resources [4]. There is need for both couples to have full knowledge of marriage so as to enable them adjust properly in the society.

Adjustment is therefore the effort people make to meet the demands and challenges placed on them by the world in which they live. Adjustment plays a central role in everyone's existence as one strives to achieve a happy and fulfilled life. [5] defined adjustment as the psychological process through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Achieving a happy and fulfilled life even in marriage attracts challenges. One of the challenges that call for adjustment is that of forming relationship with others and living harmoniously with them in a complex society. The successful handling of such challenges in marriage may lead to marital adjustment while improper handling of such challenges in marriages marriage will likely lead to maladjustment.

Marital adjustment is the ability to handle the demands and challenges placed on the couple by the virtue of their coming together as husband and wife. [6] defined marital adjustment as complex of factors such as moment of conflict, shared activities believed to be associated with happiness or success of a given marriage. [7] viewed marital adjustment as the quality of the marital relationship itself. From the above definition, one can deduce that marital adjustment does not mean absence of problems but rather a process of adjusting and controlling oneself to accommodate the other person so that there will be harmony. In other

words, material adjustment involves tolerance on the part of all parties (in this case husband and wife). Also, in Enugu State the married professional practicing counsellors do adjust well in their families having been trained in various ways of counselling they now know how to plan for their families so as to avoid problems that tend to arise in the course of their work and practicing of their profession.

Sustainability of any marital relationship could be affected by behavioural adjustment problems relating to personality traits of the couples. Personality in this context refers to totality of a person's behaviour which encompasses his thoughts, feelings and observable behaviours [8]. [9] viewed personality as individual unique constellation of consistent behavioural traits. Personality is the impression one makes on people he has encountered. This means that it account for consistent and persistent behaviours of individuals. For instance, one can be said to be intelligent, cheerful, hopeful, outgoing or friendly.

Traits are characteristics behaviours that consistently differentiate individuals from one another. They are stable predisposition to act or behave in a consistent manner [10]. Personality traits are enduring characteristics of individuals who have long history in the study of marital relationship, since no two individuals who have long history in the study of marital relationship, since no two individuals are alike [11].

Personality traits that have received much attention in recent times is the 'Big Five' model by [12]. This model consists of five aspects of personality, namely: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness, Agreeable and Conscientiousness. Extraversion is a measure of how energetic, sociable and friendly a person is. Extraverts are commonly understood as being a 'people's person' drawing energy from being around others directing their energies towards people and the outside world. Extraversion devices warmth, sociability, likeliness, dynamism, friendliness, assertive and

gregarious, while Neurotic people tend to be anxious, hostile, self-conscious, insecure and vulnerable. According to researchers, extroversion is associated with leadership behavior. Since extroverts are more likely to assert themselves in groups, it makes sense that they often take on leadership roles when working with other people.

Openness to experience is a personality trait that people who register high on it are open to new ideas, have general appreciation for art, emotion and adventure. The personality trait that best reflects the lay concept of open-mindedness is called "openness to experience," or simply "openness." Open people tend to be intellectually curious, creative and imaginative. They are interested in art and are voracious consumers of music, books and other fruits of culture. The personality trait that best reflects the lay concept of open-mindedness is called "openness to experience," or simply "openness." Open people tend to be intellectually curious, creative and imaginative. They are interested in art and are voracious consumers of music, books and other fruits of culture. Openness involves six facets, or dimensions: active imagination (fantasy), aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety (adventurousness), intellectual curiosity, and challenging authority.

Openness to experience is one of the domains which are used to describe human personality in the Five Factor Model [2]. Openness involves six facets, or dimensions: active imagination (fantasy), aesthetic sensitivity, attentiveness to inner feelings, preference for variety (adventurousness), intellectual curiosity, and challenging authority (psychological liberalism) [8]. A great deal of psychometric research has demonstrated that these facets or qualities are significantly correlated [5]. Thus, openness can be viewed as a global personality trait consisting of a set of specific traits, habits, and tendencies that cluster together. Openness tends to be normally distributed with a small number of individuals scoring extremely high or

low on the trait, and most people scoring moderately [9]. People who score low on openness are considered to be closed to experience. They tend to be conventional and traditional in their outlook and behavior. They prefer familiar routines to new experiences, and generally have a narrower range of interests. Openness has moderate positive relationships with creativity, intelligence and knowledge [2]. Openness is related to the psychological trait of absorption, and like absorption has a modest relationship to individual differences in hypnotic susceptibility. Openness has more modest relationships with aspects of subjective well-being than other Five Factor Model personality traits. On the whole, openness appears to be largely unrelated to symptoms of mental disorders.

Agreeability is a personality trait that has to do with being compassionate and cooperative instead of suspicious and antagonistic towards others. Conscientiousness is a personality trait of being thorough, careful vigilant. The work, competence, order, dutifulness, self-discipline and achievement oriented. For the purpose of this study, two variables, extraversion and openness to experience will be considered.

Marriage is supposed to be for pleasure, happiness and peace of mind where the couples have understanding of their personality traits which could enable them make necessary adjustment in their marriage thereby fulfilling their obligations harmoniously. On the contrary, where the couples do not have good understanding of their personality traits, they would be having constant conflict/violence such as nagging, quarrelling and fighting that could affect their marital adjustment and that of their families. In the midst of conflict, children raised in these maladjusted families become the authentic witness to adult behaviour which they copied from their parents [10]. The raising of successful children and their healthy development depends on healthy structure of families. The important roles marital adjustment of different of different families play in the stability of the society cannot be

overlooked. This is because the family is the foundation of human existence, thus, the family has become a topical issues widely discussed in recent time. Its importance led United Nations Declaration of 1994 as international year of the family [8]. The rate of disintegration, otherwise divorce, in many families has become a global issue affecting both the rich and the poor, from the royal families of princes and princesses down to the peasant farmers in our contemporary times [4]. The traumatic effects of this malfunctioning marital relational on the society could be attributed to poor level of adjustment [11].

[3] in their separate studies found that divorce had led to breakdown of

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The area of the study was public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population for the study consisted of 59 married practicing professional counsellors in the existing 33 Government owned Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population is small so no sampling was done. The instrument used for data collection was a 10 item questionnaire called Personality Trait as a Predictor of Marital Adjustment Scale (PTP-MAS). The instrument had a 4-point response scale with response category of Strongly Agree (SA)-4 points; Agree (A)--3 points; Disagreed (D)--2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1 point. The instrument was validated by three experts; two from Guidance and counselling Department and one from measurement and evaluation, all from Faculty of Education, Enugu State university of Science and Technology (ESUT), Enugu State, Nigeria. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate and it yielded a

traditional norms and decay in moral values of the affected families, resulting in increase in social problems/vices such as unwanted pregnancies abortions, sexually transmitted disease, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), abandonment as well as single parenthood. Divorce diminishes children's learning capacity and educational attainment. It also affects education, religion, health and well-being of family members, finances and government. Hence, it is against this background that the study sought to ascertain the Personality Trait as Predictor of Marital Adjustment among Professional Practicing Counsellors in Enugu State, Nigeria

reliability coefficient of .71 for cluster 1 and .63 for cluster 2. The coefficient for the entire instrument stood at .67. The study was carried out in the 33 Government owned Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Out of the 59 copies of the questionnaire that was distributed, only 57 copies were retrieved from the respondents representing 96.61 percent return rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and grand mean. Any mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as Agree while any mean below 2.50 was regarded as Disagree.

Presentation of Results

This section presents the results of the study according to the research questions that guided the study.

Analysis of Data

The data analyzed was presented in Tables 1-2

Research Question 1:

What are the extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table1: Mean (X̄) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Extraversion Personality Trait Scores of Married Practicing Counsellor in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items Decision	n=57	X̄ ₁	SD ₁
1.	Marrid practicing counsellors in public secondary schools are warmth Agree		3.35	0.81
2.	Marrid practicing counsellors in public secondary schools are sociable		3.00	0.93 Agree
3.	Marrid practicing counsellors in public secondary schools Are assertive		2.68	1.20 Agree
4.	Marrid practicing counsellors in public secondary schools gregarious		2.25	0.44 Disagree
5.	Marrid practicing counsellors in public secondary schools dynamics		3.60	0.83 Agree
Grand Mean			2.98	0.84 Agree

Data in Table 1 indicates that of the extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria, the respondents agreed with 4 items (1, 2, 3 and 5) as they recorded mean scores of (3.35, 3.00, 2.68 and 3.68) which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. They however disagreed with 1 of the items (4) with a mean score of (2.25). The standard deviation for all the items are small signifying that there is homogeneity in the responses of the respondents. The Table also shows that the respondent's

grand mean score for the items raised is (2.98). From the foregoing, the answers to research question one indicates that the extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are warmth, sociable, dynamics and assertive.

Research Question 2:

What are the openness to experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean (x̄) Rating with Standard Deviation of the Openness to experience Personality Trait Scores of Married Practicing Counsellor in Public Secondary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	n=57		
Decision		X ₁	SD ₁	
6.	Married practicing counsellors in public secondary schools are open to new ideas (creative)	3.25	0.09	Agree
7.	Married practicing counsellors in public secondary schools have general appreciation for art(imagination)	3.48	0.67	Agree
8.	Married practicing counsellors in public secondary schools are generally emotional	1.43	0.59	Disagree
9.	Married practicing counsellors in public secondary schools are intellectually curious	2.83	0.49	Agree
10.	Married practicing counsellors in public secondary schools are attentiveness	3.68	0.74	Agree
Grand Mean		2.94	0.70	Agree

Data in Table 2 indicates that of the openness to experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria, the respondents agreed with 4 items (1, 2, 3 and 5) as they recorded mean scores of (3.35, 3.00, 2.68 and 3.68) which are above the cut-off point of 2.50. They however disagreed with 1 of the items (4) with a mean score of (2.25). The standard deviation for all the items are

Discussion of the Findings

The first research question sought to determine the degree of extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The result in Table 1 indicates that the extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are warmth, sociable, dynamics and assertive. The study is in accordance with [10] who held that married practicing counsellors with extraversion personality traits are well adjusted in their marriages. Contrary to the findings, [5] held that extraversion strongly predicted marital adjustment. The second research question sought to determine the degree of openness to

small signifying that there is homogeneity in the responses of the respondents. The Table also shows that the respondent's grand mean score for the items raised is (2.98). From the foregoing, the answers to research question two indicates that the openness to experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are creativity, imagination, intellectually curious and attentiveness.

experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. The result in Table 2 indicates that the openness to experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are creativity, imagination, intellectually curious and attentiveness. [9] found that openness to experience was positively related to marital adjustment but was not significant. The result suggests that couples who have openness personality traits may adopt a more intellectual approach to problem solving and possibly more flexible attitude towards change, and may be more willing to analyze their marriages. These

behaviour and attitudes would likely facilitate the constructive management of conflict in marriage. The findings also agreed with [3] since many married practicing counsellors have openness to

Ani experience personality trait which indicates that they have variety of experience that would make their marriages succeed.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature implies that:

Extraversion personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are warmth, sociable, dynamics and assertive. Secondary, openness to experience personality trait scores of married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria are creativity, imagination, intellectually curious and attentiveness. This suggested that most of the married professional practicing counsellors in public secondary schools in Enugu State are well adjusted in their marriages.

Educational Implication of the Finding
The finding of this study holds implication for practicing counsellors. Practicing counsellors who are in the field of marriage counselling should lay emphasis on the study of individual partner personality trait before going into marriage or already married couples that are having problems of adjustment. The marriage counsellors should give them proper orientation on the study of the individual partner personality traits by providing relevant information to assist married couples adjust properly in their marital relationship and assist intending couple in matchmaking

RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve this mission, the following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study. They are:

Married practicing counsellor in public secondary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria should be given orientation on how to improve their personality dimension in all

places. The extraversion personality trait and openness to experience personality trait should be encouraged through counselling, training or behaviours modification in order to enhance their personality type towards extroversion and openness to experience.

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