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**DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AS CORRELATES OF
MARITAL STRESS OF SELECTED FEMALE PUBLIC
WORKERS IN OSUN STATE.**

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Keywords: Marital Stress, Marriage type, Demographic variables

Abstract

The study examined the influence of age, religion, types of marriage, year of marriage and family background on marital stress experienced by the female public workers in Osun State. 1080 female public workers participated in the study by responding to the following research instruments; (1) Personality Type Questionnaire (PTQ) and (2) Marital Stress Inventory (MSI). These instruments gathered information on the marital stress experienced by the female workers in Osun State. Data were analyzed using Chi-square statistical analysis. Results

showed that none of the demographic variables of age, religion, types of marriage, year of marriage and family background had any significant influence on the marital stress experienced by the female workers in Osun State

Keyword: Marriage, Marital Stress, demographic variables.

Introduction

Marriage is a bond between two individuals in the ground of psychological and social coherence. It's a union in which two individuals from different background and personality traits interact and cohabit together for cause of establishing a family. It is the quality of relationship, in which both of the partners can enjoy life from their companionship. Marital strife and marital discord and unresolved emotional problems can negatively influence the development initiative motivation, productivity and effectiveness of the woman in community activities. Problems and frustration faced at home may disrupt enthusiasm in development projects.

Marital satisfaction is a complex process that has over time been thought to be influenced by many factors, including education, socio-economic status, love, commitment, marital communication, conflict, gender, length of marriage, the presence of children, sexual relations and the division of labor. Kyriacou & Peiyu (2004) were of the opinion that stress could be a feeling of anxiety, fear, inability to cope, frustration and happiness. Women and men appraise and respond to stressors in different ways. It is assumed that women are more often exposed to stressful situations than men and women seem to appraise stressors more stressful than men do. For example, women are more likely than men to appraise family life and interpersonal events, such as marital relationship which could be as stressful as ever.

The effects of stress could be devastating for women because it affects women's health not only through direct psycho physiologic processes but also modifies the behaviour affecting health namely physical exercise, smoking and life quality (Steptoe, Lipsey & Wardle, 1998). Most people see stress as negative although there might be an individual response to it. For instance, family stress experienced could depend on some associated factors as state of working, family issues or individual role issues (Sanlier & Arpaci, 2007). To this end, Sanlier & Arpaci, (2007) are of the view that marital stress is more prevalent among working women than non-working women because the working women have high levels of stress than their non-working counterparts.

Stress experienced by couples increases the risk of depression, heart disease and other problems, and there is a correlation between persistent poverty and family stress. For example, Kasper et al. (2008) maintain that persistent poverty was detrimental to funding at older ages as was persistent family stress, mothers appear to be more sensitive to troubled children, because it is the mothers who bear the children. They are more likely to feel responsible for a diseased condition, except in rare instances, it is the mother who will provide the extra-ordinary care required by a developmentally disabled child. Similarly, Zhao (2009) examined the dynamic relationship of distress levels between spouses when one is unemployed (and looking for a job) while the other is engaged in full-time employment. Other stressors (e.g., work-family conflict and negative job search experience) were also related to distress of the unemployed individuals and their employed spouses.

Marital satisfaction was found a little better among the dual career women than the single career women probably because of their financial independence and self-confidence. Arroba, & James, (2002) believed that while excessive role obligations can impair wellbeing, multiple

role occupancy generally tends to enhance wellbeing, among both men and women. Multiple roles tend to provide women with a set of social identities that in turn enhance their sense of meaning and purpose and reduce feelings of anxiety and despair. Furthermore, women may be more affected by the stress of those around them because they tend to be more emotionally involved in social and family networks than men (Turner, Wheaton & Lloyd 1995). Stress is a psychological and physiological response to events that upset our personal balance. The potential causes of stress are numerous. It may be linked to the outside factors such as the state of the world, environment in which one lives or works or the family. Kiecolt and Glaser et al's 2002 study of stress and the immune system categorically states that stress causes a reduction in the effectiveness of immune system.

Also the marital stress can be influenced by some sociodemographic variables like age, religion, year of marriage, types of family etc. The age of a woman can result to marital stress depending on how mature the woman is, her maturity can dictate how well she will likely cope with marital challenges. A young woman may not be able to handle some marital challenges the way a mature woman will do. Age of the female married women appear to be significant as they go through the stress as age was found to be significant to the level of stress experienced by women lecturers in Southwest Nigeria (Ogunsanmi and Omoniyi 2011). In handling marital stress women's maturity play a great role on how effectively she will handle marital issues in her family. Also many women are involved in religious activities of which their religious involvement can result greatly to the stress she will be grappling it. Women's religious involvements could have negative impact on the marriage if not well planned; women are more involved in religious activities that could result to marital stress when compared with men.

The length of years in marriage could also contribute to what can result to women's marital stress. The exact levels of the stress experienced and the influence of age, years in marriage and level on the programme on stress among the women are not clearly defined. Therefore, this study is attempting to examine the influence of age, years in marriage; types of marriage and length of marriage as it affect women's marriage.

Marital stress can also be caused by the year in marriage. The number of years spent in marriage could lead to marital stress; there could be the stress impact of having a child. When a woman is pregnant, she can experience a whole range of emotions due to the changing of interpersonal relationship with husband and the building of a new relationship with the unborn child. For example, the building of a new interpersonal relationship with the child can be very tasking and become a major stressful life event that can cause a mood disorder to develop (O'Hara, Lewis, Schlechte, and Varner, 1991). Also age, religion and types of marriage of a woman can add to their stress if not maturely handled. Persons of the same age born during the same time/period (thus putting them into a birth cohort that is different from persons of another age); in all cross-sectional analyses chronological age is inevitably confounded with age cumbersome but more accurate phrase 'age/cohort combination'.

Similarly, the socio-economic status is another factor that may possibly result to marital stress in women's marriage. Socioeconomic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When analyzing a family's socioeconomic status, the household income, earners' education, and occupation are affected, as well as combined income versus with an individual income, when their own attributes are assessed. Ugwu, (2010) maintain that many working married women, particularly those whose formal jobs interfere with performance of their domestic work such as food service, domestic house helps, retail sales work, etc. return home at night feeling emotionally frustrated as well as physically tired. They are often concerned about the effects of job-related stress on other family members. If the family is coping with the care of elderly relatives as well

as children, interpersonal stress is intensified. The exact levels of the stress experienced and the influence of age, years in marriage and family background of women how possibly for it to lead to stress among the women are not clearly defined. Therefore, this study examined the influence of age, years in marriage; types of marriage and length of marriage of female public workers on women's marriage.

When the home is in turmoil, with no peace and is bedeviled with conflicts between spouses, they can never be peace and progress in that family. Incessant conflicts result in broken homes, which consequently breed criminals and juvenile delinquents in the society. Children from broken homes also experience educational backwardness and sometimes drop out of school because they cannot cope with conflict at home and academic challenges. When the home or the family is confused and bedeviled by inter-personal conflicts, you do not expect children to develop sound personality due to family socialization at home. Omeje, (2000) rightly observed that conflicts could lead to couples separation, divorce and maltreatment of various sorts that affect the children socially, morally, physically and emotionally. According to him no marriage is a bed of roses; hence some couples try to tolerate one another to avoid marital conflicts in their home while others don't tolerate each other hence the conflict in marriage.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to determine the influence of each of the demographic variables of age, religion, type of marriage, year of marriage and family background of female workers that are associated to marital stress.

Research Question

What is the prevalence of marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between sociodemographic variable such as age, religion, types of marriage, years of marriage and marital status) on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State.

Research method

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study population consisted of all married female public workers in Osun State. One thousand and eighty (1,080) female workers selected from the three senatorial districts in Osun State through multistage sampling were used in selecting the participants. Five schools, banks, hospital, police stations and civil service were randomly selected and from each of the five selected sectors (Military, Bank, Teaching, Civil Service and Medical), 24 public female workers were selected from the five sample groups using purposive sampling technique. An instrument titled Marital Stress Inventory (MSI) by Beck (1988) was adopted to collect information on female public workers marital stress. The data collected were scored using Micro Excel and SPSS.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State?

To answer this research question, the responses of the female public workers to the section C of the questionnaire were examined and analyzed using simple percentages as presented in Table 1. To achieve this, the norms i.e interpretive data or mean scores of Marital Stress Inventory (MSI) in section C of the instrument was determined. The norms or mean scores are basis for interpreting the scores of the respondents. Scores higher than the norms or mean scores indicate high stress level or reaction while scores lower than the norms indicate low stress level. To determine the norms of the instrument, the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores of the instrument were computed and the scores categorized into three as low, moderate and high marital stress levels respectively. The mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum scores of marital stress were computed

Table 1: The prevalence of marital stress, the mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentages of marital stress of female public workers in Osun State

Female public workers	Frequency	Percent	N	\bar{X}	SD
Female public workers with low marital stress level	122	14.40	848	2.01	0.54
Female public workers with moderate marital stress level	598	70.50			
Female public workers with high marital stress level	128	15.10			
Total	848	100.00			

The results from Table 1 shows that moderate marital stress level (70.50%) was the most prevalent marital stress level experienced by most of the female public workers in Osun State.

Table 2: Prevalence of Female public workers' marital stress in some selected public sectors (Military, Teachers, Bankers, Medical personnel and Civil servants).

Female Public Workers in some selected Public Sectors	Marital Stress Level			Total (%)
	Low	Moderate	High	
Military	29	120	6	155 (18.28%)
Teachers	22	145	56	223 (26.30%)
Bankers	15	34	39	88 (10.38%)

Medical	17	87	5	109 (12.85%)
Civil servants	39	212	22	273 (32.19%)
Total	122	598	128	848 (100.00%)

The results from Table 2 shows that 155 (18.28%) of military, 223 (26.30%) of Teachers, 88 (10.38%) of Bankers, 109 (12.85%) Medical and 273 (32.19%) of Civil Servants took part in this study. The results also showed that most of these female public workers in some of these selected public sectors experienced moderate marital stress level for instance 212 (77.65%) out of 273 Civil Servants experienced moderate marital stress level except the Bankers where 39 (44.32%) out of 88 of them experienced high marital stress level while 34 (38.64%) and 15 (17.04%) experienced moderate and low marital stress level respectively.

Hypothesis 1a: There is no significant influence of age on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State.

To achieve this, the influence of age on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State was examined using Chi-square statistical analysis.

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Table 6: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
	117	13.8
20yrs	2	.2
21yrs	3	.4
23yrs	1	.1
24yrs	1	.1
25yrs	13	1.5
26yrs	8	.9
27yrs	9	1.1
28yrs	22	2.6
29yrs	13	1.5
30yrs	53	6.2
31yrs	8	.9
32yrs	23	2.7
33yrs	17	2.0
34yrs	12	1.4
35trs	1	.1
35yrs	62	7.3
36yrs	30	3.5
37yrs	20	2.4
38yrs	29	3.4
39yrs	25	2.9
Valid 40yrs	81	9.5
41yrs	12	1.4
42yrs	24	2.8
43yrs	10	1.2
44yrs	11	1.3
45yrs	40	4.7
46yrs	14	1.6
47yrs	13	1.5
48yrs	30	3.5
49yrs	18	2.1
50yrs	52	6.1
51yrs	6	.7
52yrs	15	1.8
53yrs	6	.7
54yrs	15	1.8
55yrs	13	1.5
56yrs	6	.7
57yrs	6	.7
58yrs	4	.5
59yrs	4	.5
Total	849	100.0

Table 7: Chi-square Statistics of the Influence of age on marital stress

	χ^2	Df	P
Age Marital stress	87.43	80	>0.05

Table 7 showed a chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 87.43$, $df = 80$ & $p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is a no significant influence of age on marital stress. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2b: There is no significant influence of religion on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State.

To achieve this, the influence of religion on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State was examined using Chi-square statistical analysis.

Table 8: Table: Chi-square Statistics of the Influence of religion on marital stress

	Marital Stress			Total	χ^2	Df	P
	Less	Moderate	Extreme				
RELIGION CHRISTIANITY	103	490	110	703	7.04	4	>0.05
ISLAM	14	76	19	109			
OTHERS	2	1	0	3			
Total	119	567	129	815			

Table 8 showed a chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 5.35$, $df = 4$ & $p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant influence of religion on marital stress. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted

Hypothesis 2c: There is no significant influence of types of marriage on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State.

To achieve this, the influence of type of marriage on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State was examined using Chi-square statistical analysis.

TYPES OF MARRIAGE * add marital category Cross tabulation

	Marital stress			Total
	Less	Moderate	Extreme	
TYPES OF MARRIAGE MONOGAMY	103	499	117	719
POLYGAMY	9	50	13	72
Total	112	549	130	791

Table 9a: TYPES OF MARRIAGE

	Frequency	Percent	Mean	SD
Valid MONOGAMY	720	84.8	1.09	0.29
POLYGAMY	72	8.5		
Total	792	93.3		
Missing System	57	6.7		
Total	849	100.0		

Table 10: Chi-square Statistics of the Influence of types of marriage on marital stress

		Marital Stress			Total	χ^2	df	P
		Less	Moderate	Extreme				
TYPES OF MARRIAGE	MONOGAMY	103	499	117	719	0.23	2	>0.05
	POLYGAMY	9	50	13	72			
Total		112	549	130	791			

Table 10 showed a chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 0.134$, $df = 2$ & $p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant influence of type of marriage on marital stress. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2d: There is no significant influence of year of marriage on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State.

To achieve this, the influence of year of marriage on marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State was examined using Chi-square statistical analysis.

Table 11:

Year of marriage	Frequency	Percent
	125	14.7
1yr	16	1.9
1yrs	1	.1
2yrs	36	4.2
3yrs	38	4.5
4yrs	29	3.4
5yrs	36	4.2
6yrs	22	2.6
7yrs	31	3.7
8yrs	46	5.4
9yrs	18	2.1
10yrs	71	8.4
11yrs	8	.9
12yrs	35	4.1
13yrs	14	1.6
14yrs	14	1.6
15yrs	53	6.2
16yrs	12	1.4
17yrs	21	2.5
18yrs	25	2.9
Valid 19yrs	9	1.1
20yrs	49	5.8
21yrs	12	1.4
22yrs	6	.7
23yrs	8	.9
24yrs	5	.6
25yrs	27	3.2
26yrs	14	1.6
27yrs	11	1.3
28yrs	9	1.1
29yrs	5	.6
30yrs	15	1.8
31yrs	4	.5
32yrs	5	.6
33yrs	2	.2
34yrs	4	.5
35yrs	9	1.1
37yrs	2	.2
38yrs	1	.1
45yrs	1	.1
Total	849	100.0

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Table 11: YEARS OF MARRIAGE * add marital category Cross tabulation Count

	Add marital category			Total
	1.00	2.00	3.00	
	17	91	17	125
10yrs	7	48	16	71
11yrs	1	7	0	8
12yrs	8	22	5	35
13yrs	1	10	3	14
14yrs	5	9	0	14
15yrs	9	36	8	53
16yrs	0	11	1	12
17yrs	3	16	2	21
18yrs	3	20	2	25
19yrs	2	6	1	9
1yr	4	11	1	16
1yrs	0	0	1	1
20yrs	4	40	4	48
21yrs	1	8	3	12
22yrs	1	5	0	6
23yrs	3	5	0	8
24yrs	1	4	0	5
25yrs	4	19	4	27
26yrs	1	9	4	14
27yrs	2	9	0	11
28yrs	2	7	0	9
29yrs	0	5	0	5
2yrs	5	21	10	36
30yrs	2	12	1	15
31yrs	0	4	0	4
32yrs	0	4	1	5
33yrs	0	2	0	2
34yrs	1	1	2	4
35yrs	0	9	0	9
37yrs	0	1	1	2
38yrs	1	0	0	1
3yrs	6	19	13	38
45yrs	0	1	0	1
4yrs	4	21	4	29
5yrs	5	22	9	36
6yrs	5	14	3	22
7yrs	7	20	4	31
8yrs	4	32	10	46
9yrs	3	12	3	18
Total	122	593	133	848



Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	91.189 ^a	78	.146
Likelihood Ratio	99.463	78	.051
N of Valid Cases	848		

a. 73 cells (60.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .14.

Table 12: Chi-square Statistics of the Influence of year of marriage on marital stress

	χ^2	df	P
YEARS OF MARRIAGE *	91.19	78	>0.05
MARITAL STRESS			

Table 11 showed a chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 91.19$, $df = 78$ & $p > 0.05$). This indicates that there is no significant influence of year of marriage on marital stress. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Discussion of the Findings

The first issue addressed by this study was the prevalence of marital stress of the female public workers in Osun State and the result revealed that female workers are experiencing marital stress but moderate marital stress level (70.50%) was the most prevalent marital stress experienced by most of the female public workers in Osun State. The stress they are experiencing was moderate level which means they may still cope with their marital stress and this result agreed with (Kessler 1995) who was of the opinion that women may have marital stress because they tend to be more emotionally involved in social and family networks than men. Also Ferstanding, (2001) argued that expectation of responsibilities placed on women might have great impact on the amount of time dedicated towards their home and marriage, alongside with Muaono & Kinnunen, (1999), who said that spill-over from work for instance may affect the home beginning with the job stressor that is affecting individual's wellbeing as that of her spouse marital wellbeing. The implications of this findings is that female public workers with moderate stress level are likely going to cope more with their marital stress level if they apply the right coping strategies since their stress level is moderate.

The hypothesis was posted to determine the influence of age, sex, religion, year of marriage, length of marriage etc on marital stress, the result revealed that none of these variables significantly influence the marital stress experienced by the female workers. Meanwhile it should be borne in mind that no significant influence does not mean that there is no influence at all, rather it means that the influence is just not significant on female workers stress. This result therefore makes other factors apart from the sociodemographic variables examined could lead to marital stress experienced by female public workers.

Conclusion

The major findings of the study showed that moderate marital stress is prevalent among female public workers and no sociodemographic variables have any influence on marital stress experienced by the female workers in public organizations. Meanwhile it should be borne in

mind that no significant influence does not mean that there is no influence at all, rather it means that the influence is just not significant on female workers stress.

Recommendation

This study revealed, that the demographic variables of age, sex, religion, year of marriage, length of marriage have no influence on marital stress experienced by the female workers in public organizations. Therefore, further work should focus on other factors that may likely cause marital stress among women in the public sector.

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