COMUNICATION PATTERN AND INFIDELITY AS PREDICTORS OF MARITAL DESERTION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL INSTRUCTORS IN KWARA STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study looked at secondary school instructors in Kwara State's communication patterns and infidelity as potential indicators of marital desertion. The study employed an ex-post facto descriptive research design. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in order to choose 281 participants. Six state-selected secondary schools provided the respondents. The appropriate, standardised instrument was used to measure the responses, and the data collected was subjected to a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis. A pair of conjectures were developed and examined at the significance level of 0.05. The findings indicated that there was a significant correlation between infidelity and marital desertion (r=.736; p<0.05) and between communication patterns and marital desertion (r=.736; p<0.05). In view of these findings, the study stressed that Counseling psychologists should always provide marital counselling to couples before and after marriage as essential factors towards avoiding marital desertion.

INTRODUCTION

The institution of marriage dates back to the inception of humanity. It originates from the era of Adam and Eve. It is a fundamental occurrence in human existence, regardless of tribe, culture, or religious associations. According to Munroe (2003), marriage is considered a religious obligation and so serves as both a moral protection and a societal need. Marriage is seen as a moral protection since it provides a means to satisfy sexual demands and controls a person's sexual desire and expression, preventing them from being controlled by it. The social need of this assumption is based on the concept that it facilitates the establishment of families, which are considered the basic units of human society.

Individuals want to achieve lifelong happiness when they decide to get into matrimony. Their desire is to have a marriage characterized by affection, joy, and accomplishment. Once the initial excitement fades away, couples often realize that marriage requires ongoing effort and cannot sustain itself. Maintaining a successful marriage requires effort from both partners (Muraina & Udeh, 2019). Marriage is an intricate labyrinth that poses significant challenges and may easily lead individuals astray (Angel, 2008). Marriage might result in either great happiness or a sense of confinement (Muraina & Kamaldeen, 2022). The outcome is contingent upon an individual's interpretation and actions. A good marriage relies on several factors, including trust, love, time, friendship, understanding, honesty, loyalty, sincerity, and most importantly, efficient communication.

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Desertion, in a legal context, is the act of abandoning something or someone with no intention of coming back, particularly in cases involving family or marital obligations. Desertion often denotes the act of a spouse abandoning their partner without any intention of coming back, leading to notable legal consequences including child custody and visitation rights (Murain & Kamaldeen, 2022). The phrase has been used in legal settings for centuries, but its precise definition and ramifications have undergone changes over history. Historically, desertion was often seen as a more grave transgression, especially when the individual abandoning their responsibilities was the main provider for their family (Murain & Udeh, 2019). Nevertheless, due to the increasing prevalence of no-fault divorce and the establishment of uniform child support rights, the legal importance of desertion has partly lessened. However, the conduct of the partner who abandons their spouse might still have consequences for their legal rights and obligations after the marriage.

Desertion refers to the deliberate act of leaving a marriage with the purpose of making the separation permanent, notwithstanding the objections of the other spouse. It is important to note that desertion is not just going on a vacation. Voluntary separation is distinct from desertion. In order to establish desertion, it is necessary to demonstrate the deliberate intention of one spouse to terminate the marriage, establish that the abandoned spouse did not engage in any actions that might explain the other spouse's departure, and confirm that the departure occurred against the will of the abandoned individual. In order to establish desertion by one spouse, it is necessary for the other spouse to be completely innocent (Muraina & Busoery, 2023).

In order to maintain flexibility in your choices, it is advisable not to provide consent if your spouse informs you of their contemplation to go. If you are considering leaving the marital house, it is advisable to get legal counsel beforehand, if feasible. Although you may have valid reasons for leaving, it is important to note that moving out of the marital residence can potentially have adverse effects on a custody decision and may hinder your access to crucial financial records and other documents stored in the house. These are just a few factors that you should prioritize discussing with a lawyer before taking any action.

The success or failure of marriages may be determined by communication, which involves the development, exchange, and interpretation of significant signals. Communication is a dynamic process that involves the exchange of information (Muraina & Udeh, 2019). It may manifest in either spoken or non-spoken form. The term "verbal" pertains to speech, while "non-verbal" refers to facial expressions, body language, gestures, and similar forms of communication. Esere et al. (2011) assert that the success of a marriage depends on several factors, including trust, love, time, friendship, understanding, honesty, loyalty, sincerity, and, most importantly, efficient communication. The level of satisfaction experienced by a couple is heavily influenced by the efficacy of their communication. The manner in which a couple talks may either enhance or damage their relationship (Muraina & Gambo, 2017). Effective communication enables the couple to address areas of concern, meet their needs, prevent misunderstandings, and foster closeness throughout their relationship.

Marital communication has been studied from a variety of angles, including how couples interact with each other in daily life and to resolve conflicts, how this affects the quality of their marriages, how important communication skills are, and how couple relationships are affected by communication skills training. One important element that directly affects the quality of romantic relationships is communication (Munroe, 2003). Positive communication is associated with feelings of pleasure and contentment in a relationship, according to research findings presented by Gottman and Silver (2002). On the other hand, poor communication results in unhappy people, less intimacy, weaker bonds, and eventually divorce. Couples break up for communication reasons most of the time (Munroe, 2003).

Marriage has significant importance in an individual's life. The surge in divorce rates is a prominent and easily observable transformation in modern family dynamics. The rise of novel kinds of instability in contemporary marriages necessitates a thorough examination of these new phenomena to comprehend their origins and the subsequent impact on the welfare of those who have separated or divorced. Marital disagreement and family disintegration are often linked to social unrest, delinquency, crime, and disease. The fall in the concept of marital commitment and stability has resulted in individuals being less inclined and less capable of making the necessary commitments, sacrifices, and investments of time, energy, and missed opportunities that are required for successful marriages.

Unstable marriages lead to unstable families, resulting in the production of unhealthy children who subsequently contribute to social unrest in society. It is not surprising that cases of armed robbery and kidnapping have recently been on the rise in many states in Nigeria. Almost every day, the mainstream media in Nigeria reports on incidents of robbery or abduction. Marriage counsellors, ministers, and social scientists may have valuable insights into achieving and sustaining a happy and stable marriage. However, it is important to note that their
knowledge is not backed by systematic research. This study therefore examines communication pattern and infidelity as predictors of marital desertion among secondary school Instructors in Kwara State.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate communication pattern and infidelity as predictors of marital desertion among secondary school instructors in Kwara State. Specifically, the study sought to make findings on:

- To determine the relationship between communication pattern and marital desertion among secondary school Instructors in Kwara state.
- To examine the relationship between infidelity and marital desertion among secondary school Instructors in Kwara state.

There are two Research Hypotheses

- There is no relationship between communication pattern and marital desertion among secondary school Instructors in Kwara state.
- There is no relationship between infidelity and marital desertion among secondary school Instructors in Kwara state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent research proposed that when both couples have identical relationship norms, there is a higher probability of constructive communication (Muraina & Busoery, 2023). The study findings indicate that couples that engage in more constructive communication had lower levels of demands/withdrawals and mutual avoidance, as compared to couples with less shared relationship norms (Muraina & Gambo, 2017). The research has found that communication has a significant role in indirectly influencing marital satisfaction among couples. The impact of nonverbal communication on relationship satisfaction has also been investigated. Non-verbal communication encompasses the various means by which individuals convey messages without using words. This can include gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice, and other forms of body language, which may either accompany or occur independently from verbal communication.

Idowu and Esere (2017) found that over 50% of broken relationships may be attributed to a significant deficiency in communication between partners. Exceptional communication abilities are essential for establishing an enduring and meaningful connection with another individual. One must possess the ability to express one's feelings and ideas, as well as the capacity to comprehend and assimilate one's partner's emotions and thoughts. According to Muraina and Gambo (2017), the skill of hearing is likely to be even more crucial than the skill of speaking. Couples may enhance their personal development within their relationships by engaging in active listening and refraining from overwhelming their partners with a barrage of ideas. However, it should be noted that individuals are still able to express their viewpoints. However, it is important to attentively heed the viewpoints of others and duly examine them.

Infidelity, sometimes referred to as adultery, cheating, unfaithfulness, extramarital affair, or marriage betrayal, is a term used to describe the act of being unfaithful in a committed relationship (Barbare, 2012). The many terms linked to infidelity suggest that it is not a recent issue; rather, it is one of the most significant and longstanding issues that have caused distress to couples for many years, across several cultures. Infidelity, on its own, presents significant difficulties for couples and ranks as the second most prevalent and challenging problem that marital counselors and therapists face while assisting their clients (Barbare, 2012).

Adultery may have a far-reaching impact on both spouses and the whole immediate family, particularly when there are children. Negash and Morgan (2016) said that adultery has a devastating impact on social structures, with the nuclear family being particularly vulnerable to its consequences. Decisions done unilaterally by a single person may cause irreparable harm to social structures, such as the nuclear family.

Discussions throughout society about faithfulness often see adultery as a morally complex matter. Infidelity is prevalent, with around 20% to 40% of marriages in North America being impacted by it. Idowu and Esere (2017) indicates a widespread rise in divorce rates among married Nigerians over the previous thirty years. According to Milan (2013), over 18.9% of males and 21.6% of women in their late fifties in Nigeria were divorced or separated in 2011. Statistics from Nigeria's data on divorce in 2009 reveal a total of 71,241 documented divorce cases (Idowu & Esere, 2017). Among the many causes for divorce, infidelity ranked highest, accounting for 2,218 instances or 3.1% of the total. The incidence of mental abuse accounted for 1.2% of the total cases, with a total of 878 recorded incidents. Physical cruelty ranked third, with 0.86% of reported instances, totaling 619 incidents in the same year (Muraina & Busoery, 2023).

Each instance of infidelity shown in the aforementioned data results in several individuals experiencing adverse consequences after the first revelation or acknowledgment of the extramarital relationship. Adultery has a
detrimental influence on the mental well-being of those involved. After the first discovery or disclosure, it is typical for both spouses to go through periods of depression characterized by anxiety, suicidal ideation, and a profound feeling of grief (Fincham & May, 2017). The spouse who has been cheated may first suffer intense stress, which may quickly lead to the development of symptoms associated with acute stress disorder (Fincham & May, 2017).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The ex post facto research design was used in this study. The entire Kwara State secondary school teacher population is the study's population. The multistage sampling approach was employed by the researcher to carry out this investigation. In the first phase, five Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Kwara State were selected using a random sample technique. Next, secondary schools in each of the identified LGAs were selected at random. Furthermore, ten instructors in total were chosen at random from each of the designated Local Government Areas (LGAs). A total of 281 of the 300 instructors who completed the questionnaires were returned for data processing.

Three research instruments were employed in this investigation. The "Communication Pattern Scale" (CPS) was the first instrument adopted. Using this tool, information about the respondents' communication level was extracted. The respondents were asked to list the degree of communication within their family. The Marital Desertion Scale (MDS) and the Infidelity Scale (IS) are two more. The respondents' demographic data was contained in Section A, and the variables-related items were found in Sections B through D. Ten items each in the Likert-Type formats of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD), and Disagree (D) were included in each segment of the variable. This allows the participants to express how much they agree or disagree with the items.

Expert in Guidance and Counseling and Educational Test and Measurement validated the instrument. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the same instruments were applied to same set of students from population outside the area of study after two week (2) interval. The finding revealed that the study was reliability coefficient obtained on analysis was 0.82. The instruments were administered by the researcher on the respondents in the sample schools. Data obtained in the study were analyzed statistically using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient to establish relationship among the variables, and to test the hypotheses formulated at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between communication pattern and marital desertion among secondary school Instructors in Kwara state.

Table 1. Relationship communication pattern and marital desertion among secondary school Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>r-cal</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Pattern</td>
<td>22.74</td>
<td>10.28</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>.736</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Desertion</td>
<td>47.49</td>
<td>25.13</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 indicates a substantial correlation (r=.736; p<0.05) between secondary school instructors' communication patterns and marital desertion. This indicates that the degree of desertion among secondary school instructors in Kwara State is influenced by communication patterns.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between infidelity and marital desertion among secondary school instructors in Kwara state.

Table 2. Relationship peer pressure and infidelity and marital desertion among secondary school instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>r-cal</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infidelity</td>
<td>27.13</td>
<td>12.46</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Desertion</td>
<td>47.49</td>
<td>25.13</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>.671</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates a substantial correlation (r=.671; p<0.05) between marital desertion and infidelity among secondary school teachers. This indicates that among secondary school instructors in the state of Kwara, adultery has an impact on marital desertion.
DISCUSSIONS
The result of first research hypothesis showed that there was significant relationship between communication pattern and marital desertion among secondary school instructors. This means that communication pattern influences the level of marital desertion among secondary school instructors. This pertains to the discovery made by Idowu and Esere (2017), who observed that couples get pleasure and satisfaction from their relationship when they engage in good communication, while experiencing dissatisfaction while engaging in negative communication.

The result of second research hypothesis revealed that there was significant relationship between infidelity and marital desertion among secondary school instructors. This means that infidelity influences the marital desertion among secondary school instructors in Kwara state. These results align with the research conducted by Fincham and May (2017), which shown that infidelity has a detrimental effect on the psychological well-being of those involved. Following the first revelation, it is typical for both partners to have episodes of depression characterized by anxiety, suicide ideation, and a profound feeling of bereavement. The following counseling intervention strategies are recommended for the purpose of this research.

- Couples should engage in efficient communication and make an effort to understand each other's preferences and aversions in order to have a stable and harmonious marriage.
- Cultural authorities, institutions, and organizations focused on family matters may mitigate marital infidelity by arranging seminars that explore the ramifications of adultery on the married lives of couples.
- Providing before and post-marital counseling services to couples is crucial in order to prevent marital abandonment. Regular organization of marriage seminars and symposia is necessary.

CONCLUSIONS
Marital desertion is a consequence of infidelity and bad communication between spouses, as shown by the findings. A prominent theme developed suggesting that in cases of infidelity, whether it be sexual or emotional, the betrayed spouse undergoes adverse consequences such as intense anger, erosion of trust, reduced personal and sexual self-assurance, damaged self-esteem, and a fear of being abandoned. The study's results indicate a clear recognition that insufficient communication is a pathway to marital instability and issues inside a marriage. The primary cause of marital issues is often attributed to a deficiency in communication between spouses.


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Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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