



## SELF-ESTEEM AS CORRELATE OF MARITAL ADJUSTMENT OF MARRIED SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract:

Adjusting to the challenges in marriages is a critical factor in strengthening or weakening the foundation of their marriage. This study investigated self-esteem as a correlate of marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Three research questions were posed to guide the study while one null hypothesis was tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 1,408 married teachers was drawn from a population of 6,987 married teachers. A multi-stage sampling procedure was followed in selecting the study sample. Two instruments: The marital Adjustment Scale (MAS), and Self- Esteem Scale (SES) were used for data collection. The instruments were duly validated by experts in measurement and evaluation and Guidance and Counselling. The reliability coefficient was established thus; 0.85 for the Self-esteem questionnaire, and 0.74 for the Marital Adjustment Questionnaire. Data was collected through a direct delivery approach and was analysed using SPSS version 23. Range of aggregate scores and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to answer research questions and while a t-test was used to test the hypotheses. Findings of the study showed among others there is a non-significant very low positive relationship existing between married teachers' Self-esteem and their marital adjustment in secondary schools in Anambra State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended, among others that the school guidance counsellors should organise workshops and seminars for the married teachers that would be geared towards building healthy self-esteem for good marital adjustment.

**Keywords:** self-esteem, marital adjustment, married, teachers, secondary school

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## 1. Introduction

The foundation of the family is laid through the union of couples who pledge a lifetime commitment, faithfulness and fulfilment of responsibilities to each other, irrespective of their profession or status in the society. It is a union that could involve people of various professions, including teachers. This union, which is referred to as marriage could develop, crack and wither off possibly because many married persons may not have developed their personality mechanism or exhibited appropriate marital behaviour to cope sufficiently in the marriage. In such situation, they may encounter adjustment challenge and may perhaps not be able to adjust to the demands of living together in such supposed intimate and highly revered relationship called marriage.

In case of married teachers for instance, the professional knowledge, skills and competencies can be seen when the teachers take on challenging tasks directed at educational success and performance. However, many a time, that may not be the case when it comes to marriage. The adjustment of a teacher to the nature of her or his job may be considered more important than the adjustment to her or his marriage. So, adjustment between the teacher and the marriage partner to the point where there is companionship, agreement on basic values, affectionate intimacy, accommodation, euphoria, and some other factors may be lacking.

Adjustment is a process of interaction between oneself and the environment (Jaisri & Joseph, 2013). In this process one can either adjust to the environment or alter it. When such adjustment takes place in marriage, it is referred to as marital adjustment. Marital adjustment according to Sinha (2016) is the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other. Such feeling as Sinha noted depends upon the interaction between husband and wife meeting of the needs of each other.

When the married persons are able to satisfy the needs of each other, it would likely lead to growth in their marital relationship and compatibility between spouses thereby giving room for marital adjustment. Marital adjustment in this instance therefore calls for maturity that accepts and understands growth and development in the spouse. If this growth is not experienced and realized fully, death in marital relationship may become inevitable. Therefore, marital adjustment in the context of this study is defined as the presence of such characteristics in a marriage as the tendency to avoid or resolve conflicts, couples feeling of satisfaction with the marriage and with each other, the sharing of common interest and activities, and fulfilling of the marital expectation of the husband and wife.

Marital adjustment from the above definition could be perceived as a complex phenomenon. Social scientists (example, Spanier & Cole, 1976), have tried to find out the characteristics that might best assure marital adjustment and marital happiness. Not one major factor has been confirmed by the researchers as to correlate highly with marital happiness. Rather, the outcome of the studies like Vanover (2016) indicates that there are various factors which contribute to marital success and happiness. Some of these factors

according to Vanover include age at the marriage, age differences between the spouses, educational level, duration of marriage, personality factors (self-esteem and self-concept), complementary needs, sexual behaviour, compatibility, emotional stability, flexibility, attitudes towards roles, interests, values, mental health of the spouse, mutual affection, understanding of the spouse, willingness to give and take and cooperativeness.

Among the factors which contribute to marital success and happiness is self-esteem which is a psychosocial construct that would likely predict certain outcomes like academics, happiness, satisfaction in marriage and relationships. Self-esteem is defined by Farid and Akhtar (2013) as an overall evaluation of oneself in either positive or negative way. It is the capacity for acceptance, tolerance, self-respect and personal satisfaction with regards to oneself while excluding feeling of superiority and perfection. It could equally be explained as the feeling people have about themselves. Some people tend to base their feeling about themselves on their self-knowledge, self-expectation and the expectations of others from them.

Orth and Robins (2014) posit that self-esteem is a factor that influences on comprehension, interpretation and emotional reactions of person and could be a determinant on scale of stress of events. Self-esteem is like a collection of outcomes and beliefs which has been stated in relation between person and his outer world. In other word, it is citation of confirmation or lacking confirmation of person into expectancy of success, accept and react into personal determinants. Based on this point of view, each person has needs in order to reach a suitable level of health which shall be satisfied, and self-esteem is one of the basic human needs which locates in emotional dimension.

Research by Erol and Orth (2013); Oprisan and Critea (2012); and Sciangula and Morry (2009) also suggested that self-esteem predicts higher marital satisfaction. For example, Erol and Orth (2013) study of actor and partner effects of self-esteem on relationship satisfaction noted that self-esteem predicted relational satisfaction for both partners. Erol and Orth finding thus shows that self-esteem is a factor that can have a positive effect in life problems and tension among couples and that a decline in self-esteem may cause stress and dissatisfaction with life which could lead to marital maladjustment.

Results of studies by Jaisri and Joseph (2013); Muraru and Turliuc (2013) have shown that married persons who are adjusted in their marriage have stable life; a satisfactory marital life; longer age and health and suitable nutrition. Similarly, Zandipour and Momeni (2011) stressed that marital adjustment have effects on satisfaction from life and income, academic success and satisfaction from occupation of couples. There is no gainsaying therefore that a successful marital adjustment could be the glee of marriage and occurrence of such glee would be the hallmark of a healthy marriage, where both couples take care of the needs of each partner and recognize the differences between their conceptual and social reality. Such could lead to a healthy embedment between the couples and have the tendency to change their marital outcome and the perception of marriage in the society in which they live.

Lack of marital adjustment could lead to a situation where supposedly peaceful atmosphere is replaced with chaos in marriage. The consequences are usually grievous and likely to result in marital instability, marriage separation, divorce or even death of the couple. These could have serious effect on the students, home, family, children of the marriage, society and the nation. Perhaps early marital adjustment could be attained through understanding of the relationship that exists between the personality factors (self-esteem and sexual behaviour) of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State. This would likely be of help in preventing problems that often accompany poorly adjusted marriages.

## **2. Statement of Problem**

Those with low self-esteem could quickly perceive signs of rejection thereby likely to distance themselves from their partners resulting to marital conflict. For married secondary school teachers in Anambra State secondary schools, adjusting to the marital challenges would be critical factor in strengthening or weakening the foundation of their marriage. Self-esteem for instance could be considered one of the key criteria in adjustment with their married partners according to each other's expectations. Self-esteem is as factor that influences on comprehension, interpretation and emotional reactions of person and can be determinant on scale of marital stress and adjustment.

Although a number of research efforts have been made investigate variables that bring about marital satisfaction and happiness, yet among teachers in Anambra State, not much has been done to investigate the contribution of self-esteem to the marital adjustment of teachers in secondary schools, hence, the motivation for this study.

### **2.1 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate self-esteem as correlate of marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State. Specifically, the study is set out to determine the:

- 1) The self-esteem scores of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State
- 2) The marital adjustment scores of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State.
- 3) Relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

### **2.2 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study will be beneficial to married teachers, practicing guidance counsellors, religious bodies and future researchers.

Findings of the study will be beneficial to the Guidance Counsellors. The findings will likely guide married teachers towards examining themselves to take decision that will make their marriages succeed by working on their self-esteem and sexual practices in order to avoiding conflict in their marriages, improve in their lapses towards their

partners by practicing ways of achieving marital satisfaction and happiness in their marriages. This could be achieved when the content of this work is made available to the public or possibly through seminars and conferences. Through these processes, married could also learn about self-esteem and how it relates to the marital issues they are having.

### **2.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study:

- 1) What are the self-esteem scores of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
- 2) What are the marital adjustment scores of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
- 3) What is the relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State?
- 4) What is the relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State in their later years of marriage?
- 5) How do self-esteem, sexual behaviour and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State jointly relate with their marital adjustment?

### **2.4 Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- The relationship existing between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State is not significant.

## **3. Materials and Methods**

This section is concerned with the procedures which the researcher used for the study.

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopted a correlational research design. The design sought to determine the extent and direction of relationship between two or more variables.

### **3.2 Research Setting**

The study was conducted in Onitsha Education Zone of Anambra State, located in the South East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria. Anambra State was chosen for the study because the researcher is also a married teacher in one of the secondary schools, resides in the state and has observed that a good number of teachers in the secondary schools in the state seem to have issues of adjustment in their marriages.

### 3.3 Participants

The sample size of this study is 1,408 married public secondary school teachers. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample from a population of 6,887 married secondary school teachers in Anambra State.

### 3.4 Instrument for Data Collection

The questionnaire will be the research instrument that would be used by the researcher in eliciting response from the respondents in this study. The questionnaires include; Sexual Behaviour Scale (SBS) and Self- Esteem Scale (SES). Marital Adjustment Scale Questionnaire (MASQ) by Locke and Wallace (1959) was adapted and was used to assess the respondents (married teachers) marital adjustment. The instrument is a 15-item scale used to ask questions related to their marriage.

Self- Esteem Scale (SES) was adapted from Rosenberge (1965) with little modification by the current researcher. The instrument has 21 structured items with a positive and negative scoring on four point rating scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instruments were adapted and revalidated by experts to determine its face validity. A pilot study was conducted to determine the internal consistency reliability of the instrument. The resulted yielded a coefficient alpha of 0.85 for the Self-esteem questionnaire.

### 3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire instruments were directly administered on the respondents by the researcher and six research assistants. The data collected from the respondents were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Research questions 1 and 2 were answered using summated scores, research questions 3 was answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient while the null hypothesis was tested t-test of correlation.

## 4. Results

Results from the field of study are presented in tables as follows:

**Research Question 1:** What are the self-esteem scores of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

**Table 1:** Distribution Scores of Married Secondary School Teachers in Anambra State Based on their Self-esteem

Range of scores	N	%	Remarks
21.0 – 52.5	655	57.4	Healthy Self-esteem
53.0 – 84.0	487	42.6	Low Self-esteem

Table 1 reveals that 655(57.4%) of the teachers in secondary schools with the scores ranging from 21.0 and 52.5 healthy self-esteem, while 487(42.6%) of the teachers who scored between 53 and 84 have low self-esteem.

**Research Question 2:** What are the marital adjustment scores of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

**Table 2:** Distribution Scores of Secondary School Teachers in Anambra State Based on their Marital Adjustment Ratings

Range of scores	N	%	Remarks
20.0 – 49.5	78	6.8	Marital Maladjustment
50.0 – 80.0	1064	93.2	Marital Adjustment

Table 2 reveals that 78(6.8%) of the teachers in secondary schools with the scores ranging from 20.0 and 49.5 indicated they are maladjusted in their marriages, while 1064(93.2%) of the teachers who scored between 50.0 and 80.0 indicated marital adjustment.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State?

**Table 3:** Pearson r on Self-Esteem and Marital Adjustment of Married Secondary School Teachers in Anambra State

Variables	N	Self-esteem r	Marital Adjustment r	Remark
Self-esteem	1142	1.00	0.035	Very Low
Marital Adjustment	1142	0.035	1.00	Positive Relationship

Table 3 shows that there is a very low positive relationship of 0.094 existing between married teachers' Self-esteem and their marital adjustment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

#### 4.4 Testing of Null Hypothesis

The relationship existing between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State is not significant.

**Table 4:** t-test on the Relationship Existing between Self-Esteem and Marital Adjustment of Married Teachers in Anambra State Secondary Schools

N	cal.r	df	Cal.t	Pvalue	Remark
1142	0.035	1139	1.072	0.284	Not Significant

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance and 1139df, the calculated t 1.072 have Pvalue 0.284 which is more than 0.05 which is the stipulated level of significance. So, the second null hypothesis is accepted. The relationship existing between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State is not significant.

## **5. Discussion**

The findings of the study are discussed as follows:

### **5.1 Self-Esteem and Marital Adjustment of Married Secondary School Teachers in Anambra State**

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the married teachers in secondary schools have healthy self-esteem. This means that married secondary school teachers in Anambra State perceive themselves as better, more capable and of greater worth and have a subjective appraisal of his or herself as inherently positive in thought, feeling and action. Going by this, it is possible that those who have healthy self-esteem are less susceptible to social pressure to achieve at a higher level and more persistent, and are more capable of forming satisfying relationships.

The findings also revealed that majority of the married teachers in Anambra State secondary schools have good marital adjustment. This means that majority of the teachers are happy and satisfied with their marriage, and that they are able to modify, adopt or alter individual and couple's pattern of behaviour and interaction to achieve maximum satisfaction in the relationship.

Moreover, the marriage probably involves a relationship in which the attitudes and actions of the married teachers produce an environment which is highly favourable to the proper functioning of the personality structures of the couple especially in the areas of personal relations. In this case they could come to an adjustment of interest, objectives, and values by which they are in agreement in demonstration of affection, sharing confidence and having fewer or no serious complaints about their marriage.

### **5.2 Relationship Existing between Self-Esteem and Marital Adjustment of Married Secondary School Teachers in Anambra State**

Findings of the study revealed that there is a very low positive relationship existing between married teachers' Self-esteem and their marital adjustment in secondary schools. The findings further revealed that the relationship existing between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Anambra State is not significant. This means that though a low positive relationship exists between self-esteem and marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers, the relationship is not substantial, indicating that self-esteem contributes little to marital adjustment of the school teachers.

The above finding is consistent with Onabamiro, Owoyele and Elijah (2017) whose study examined self-esteem, emotional intelligence and coping skills as predictors of marital adjustment among couples in Abeokuta metropolis. The results from the study show that there is a low positive relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment, and no significant relationship between self-esteem and marital adjustment. The finding is also consistent with Johnson and Galambos (2014) study, in whose finding in a longitudinal study with a large sample of young adults, self-esteem prospectively



predicted the quality of their romantic relationship. On the other hand, a similar study conducted by Schaffhuser, Wagner, Ludtke and Allemand (2014) did not find evidence for prospective effects between a person's self-esteem and his or her relationship satisfaction.

A possible explanation for the above findings could be linked to the notion that self-esteem is generally in the form of approval or disapproval and tend to indicate the extent to which people believe themselves to be capable, significant, valuable and worthy. The value one attaches to self and the process by which individuals adapt successfully to the demands and opportunities of marriage could be a positive or a negative one.

### 5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that majority of the married teachers have healthy self-esteem and good marital adjustment. The study concludes that there is a non-significant very low positive relationship existing between married teachers' Self-esteem and their marital adjustment in secondary schools in Anambra State.

### 5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

- 1) Joint collaborative effort should be made by the school management with the school guidance counsellors to ensure that the teachers maintain and sustain a good healthy self-esteem.
- 2) Guidance and counselling programs should be organized by the school Guidance Counsellors for married teachers that are not well-adjusted in their marriage. These approaches include building healthy self-esteem for marital satisfaction.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors hereby state that they are not affiliated with or involved in any organisation or individual that has a financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter covered in this article.

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