

Extraversion and Neuroticism Personality traits as Predictors of Marital Adjustment among Married Teachers in Awka Educational Zone

Veronica Nkiruka Nkechukwu, Ngozi E. Anyikwa

Department of Guidance and Counselling, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Akwa, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract: The inability of couples to understand and appreciate the individual differences associated with personality traits which account for variation in behaviours tend to worsen the problem of adjustment in many marriages. The purpose of this study is to investigate extraversion and neuroticism personality traits as predictors of marital adjustment among married teachers in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 822 married teachers was drawn from 31 out of 61 public secondary schools in the zone (with a population of 1252 married teachers) through simple stratified random sampling of disproportionate nature. Two instruments: Structured personality trait assessment questionnaire (PTAQ) and marital adjustment scale questionnaire (MASQ) were used for data collection. The reliability coefficient of the Restructured Personality trait Assessment scale (SPTAS) facets was extraversion, 0.878; neuroticism, 0.859, while that of marital adjustment scale was 0.92. Simple regression analysis was used in answering the research questions and testing of null hypotheses. The findings of the study showed that extraversion and neuroticism personality traits are not significant predictors of married teachers' marital adjustment. It was recommended, among others, that premarital counselling and workshop/seminars be organized from time to time for intending and married couples, for the understanding of individual personality traits and marital adjustment and also to assist couples to be well adjusted in their marriages.

Key words: personality traits, extraversion, neuroticism, married teachers, marital adjustment, students

I. INTRODUCTION

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 make-up and socio-economic background to form a family. Ghoroghi and Baba (2015) defined marriage as a formally-written, verbal or traditional long-term agreement between individuals, usually a man and a woman for the production of children, food and other commodities in a domestic context. Through marriage, a man and a woman are attracted to each other by the power stemming from their instincts; that is, compassion and love through which they commit themselves to each other freely and wholly in order to establish a dynamic unit.

The original purpose and plan for marriage is primarily companionship and procreation whereby each of the couples would complement one another. The originator of marriage (God) also gave the recipe for successful and harmonious marriage, whereby it is stated clearly in holy book the Bible, in the letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians, chapter 5 verses 22-25, enjoining the wives to be submissive to their husbands as the heads of the families, while husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies.

Marriage between adult male and female often starts with expressive friendship or courtship which eventually results to life partnership where the duo will live together as husband and wife, sharing common lifestyles and resources (National Association of Directors of Religious Education, NADRE, 2012). Where such a couple is compatible, have respect and love for one another, that marriage will likely be a happy one. This however may depend on how the couples are able to adjust while meeting the marital demands.

Adjustment is the efforts 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. Weiten, Iloyd, Dunn and Hammer (2009) defined adjustment as the psychological process through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Aluja, Barrio and Gracia (2006) 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. From the above definitions, one can infer that marital adjustment may 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, marital adjustment involves tolerance on the part of all parties (in this case husband and wife).

One important area of 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 marriage will likely lead to maladjustment.

Batool and Khalid (2012) observed that for a marriage to be adjusted, husband and wife are required to show tolerance and

agreement in handling chief issues of family called 14 model assumptions of important family matters, namely: handling family finances, recreation, religion, demonstration of affection, friends, intimate relations, caring for baby, table manners, matter of conversationality, philosophy of life, ways of dealing with in laws, wife working, sharing of household tasks and politics. The ability of the married couple to study, understand, tolerate and accept each other as he or she is and be in agreement in handling some or more of the above mentioned chief family issues could abate conflicts in the family and save marriage from disintegrating.

Marital adjustment influences many dimensions of human life; social and individual lives. A well-adjusted marital relationship tend to be associated to the basis of a good family functioning, facilitate parental role, and increases the wife and husbands life time (Combs, 2010). Other positive effects on the survival of the family according to Ahmadi, Ashtiani and Navabinejhad (2004) are healthy life, economic development, more satisfactory life, reduction of psychological problems, better communicative skills, better management of any conflict and better skills of conflict resolution. Mankinde (2004), agreeing with the above, added that love, acceptance of one another, good communication skills, appreciation of each other, relaxation and faithfulness are among the factors that facilitate marital adjustment.

However, couples seem to share different opinions in family problems that may often result in conflict or argument and this may have negative effects on their marital adjustment. Ghaemian and Gholami (2010) listed legion of challenges that are associated with negative outcomes on marital adjustment of married persons. Some of the challenges include: individual differences of the couples (personality traits) division of labour, gaps between couples in their roles expectations, lack of compromise in management of finances, disagreement in sexual matters, recreation, drug use, religion and childlessness. Others could include lack of male child, couples educational level, career engagement and inadequate communication.

These problems have been found to be associated with negative outcomes, not only for the couples, but also their family members. For instance, Hawkey and Cacioppo (2010) observed that family of couples experiencing marital adjustment problems is associated with increased rate of depression, alcoholism, physical health problems, domestic violence, and emotional as well as behavioural adjustment problems. Being able to manage such adjustment problems could be dependent on the individual's personality traits.

Personality in this context refers to totality of a person's behaviour which encompasses his thoughts, feelings and observable behaviours. Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn and Hammer (2009) viewed it as individual unique constellation of consistent behavioural traits. Personality is the impression one makes on people he has encountered. This means that it accounts for consistent and persistent behaviours of

individuals. For instance one can be said to be intelligent, cheerful, hopeful, outgoing or friendly. An impression any of such people have about an individual is interpreted as his personality. Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn and Hammer (2009) noted that personality traits helps to explain why married couples do not all act alike in the same situation.

Ofole (2015) noted that marital compatibility could be affected by the personality traits that two people bring to their marriage which can affect the survival or dissolution of the marriage. Personality characteristics of couples that are well-adjusted in their marriages are different from those found among couples that are not well-adjusted in their marital relationship. No two married partners are alike, even though there are mutual interest, shared likes and dislikes and common taste between the couples; there will likely be difference of opinion that sometimes lead to nagging, quarrel or even fighting which may eventually lead to separation and divorce in extreme cases.

Personality traits that have received much attention here is the "Big Five" model by McCrae and Costa (2006) which consists of five aspects of personality, namely: extraversion, neuroticism, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Weiten, Lloyd, Dunn & Hammer, 2009). The traits of extraversion and neuroticism will be investigated in this study to determine its contribution to marital adjustment of married secondary school teachers in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State.

Extraversion is a personality trait that depicts warmth, sociability, likeliness, dynamism, friendliness, assertive and gregarious. Individuals who score high in this trait are referred to as extraverts. Extraverts enjoy being with different types of people. They are comfortable speaking in front of people. They often take initiative and pleasure in parties and social groups. They are full of energy and experience positive emotions. They tend to be enthusiastic, action-oriented individuals. They grab opportunities for excitement in groups. They like to assert themselves, talk and draw attention to themselves in gathering.

People who score high in neuroticism tend to experience unpleasant or negative emotions. They tend to be anxious, hostile, self-conscious, insecure, and vulnerable to stress. Individuals with this trait lack the ability to think clearly make decisions and cope effectively with stress. They are in bad mood often lasting long periods. Individuals that score low in neuroticism are less likely to become easily upset or be emotionally reactive. They tend to be calm, emotionally stable and free from persistent negative feelings. They are not easily disturbed, irritated, stressed out or upset. They do not have frequent mood swings or worry about things very often.

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 social obligations harmoniously. On the contrary, where the couples

are not appreciative 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 (children). Children raised in such midst of conflict tend to become the authentic witness to adult behaviour which they copied from their parents. In effect, Papp, Cumming and Geokemorey, (2009) noted that they would become more aggressive with peers and other people outside their parents.

Married teachers who are not adjusted in their marriages and family life could reflect these problems in their working environment which might decrease their productivity. This low productivity may result in student's life like poor academic performances, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and dropping out of school, which inevitably conflicts with Nigerian educational objectives which advocates for total development of the individual, physically, emotionally, psychologically for the common good of the society.

Quite a number of studies have been carried out on marital failure, marital adjustment in relation to some psychosocial factor, personality traits and marital adjustments in Nigeria and other countries of the world, but no research known to the researcher has been carried out on personality traits and marital adjustment of married teachers in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State. This situation therefore leaves a gap in knowledge that needs to be filled empirically through research study, hence, the justification for this study.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate extraversion and neuroticism personality traits as predictors of marital adjustment among married secondary school teachers in Awka educational zone. Specifically, the study is set out to:

1. Find out how extraversion personality traits of married teachers predict their marital adjustment in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone.
2. Find out how neuroticism personality traits of married teachers predict their marital adjustment in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to many people such as married couples including teachers, practicing guidance counsellors, church and religious leaders and researchers.

Married teachers in secondary schools and in all levels of our educational system will be guided by the findings of this study to understand the aspects of personality traits that predict marital adjustment or maladjustment in their marriages. This will help them determine to accept the behaviours of their spouses the way they are, by developing a positive attitude towards marriage, take decision to make their marriages succeed by avoiding conflict all cost in their families. Married couples will also be guided to improve in

their lapses towards their partners by practicing ways of achieving marital satisfaction and happiness in order to be well-adjusted in their marriages.

Practicing guidance counsellors will gain from the findings of this study to improve in their marriage counselling practices.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does personality trait of extraversion predict marital adjustment of married teachers in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone?
2. How does personality trait of neuroticism predict marital adjustment of married teachers in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Personality trait of extraversion does not significantly predict marital adjustment of married teachers in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone.
2. Personality trait of neuroticism does not significantly predict marital adjustment of married teachers in public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone.

II. METHOD

The research design for this study is correlational research. The design is used in accordance to Akuezilo and Agu (2015) that correlational research design studies the extent and direction of relationship between two or more variables. This study was carried out in Awka Educational Zone of Anambra State, Nigeria. The population of the study consists of 1252 married teachers in the 61 public secondary schools in Awka Educational Zone in Anambra State. The sample size of 825 married teachers was chosen for the study, through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Two questionnaires were used in collecting data from the teachers for the study, namely; Restructured Personality Traits Assessment Questionnaire (RPTAQ) and Marital Adjustment Scale Questionnaire (MASQ) developed by Locke Wallace (1959) which was adopted and used to collect data for the study. The restructured personality traits questionnaire was given to three experts in Guidance and Counselling and Educational Foundations for vetting on the face and content validity.

A sample of 30 married teachers was drawn through disproportionate random sampling for the pilot test. The data collected from the pilot study were then tested for reliability using split-half method. The reliability coefficient of personality trait Assessment scale (PTAS) facets were extraversion, 0.878; neuroticism, 0.859. The questionnaire instrument was personally administered on the respondents by

the researcher and research assistants. The data collected was analysed using a simple regression analysis.

III. RESULTS

Data collected from the field for this study were analysed and the summaries were presented in tables to highlight the findings as follows:

Table 1: Regression analysis of extraversion as predictor of marital adjustment of married teachers

Variable	r	R ²	R ² Change	B	BETA	% variance added	Cal. F	df	Crit. F	Remark
Extraversion	0.17	0.00	0.001	0.027	0.017	0.1	0.23	788	3.84	NS

Table 1 above reveals that extraversion personality trait of married teachers had R² change of 0.001. This indicates that extraversion had the predictive power of 0.1 percent for married teachers’ marital adjustment. Also at 1df numerator, 788df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated F value 0.23 is less than the critical F value of 3.84. Therefore, married teachers’ extraversion personality trait is not a significant predictor of their marital adjustment.

Table 2: Regression analysis of neuroticism as predictor of marital adjustment of married teachers

Variable	r	R ²	R ² Change	B	BETA	% variance added	Cal. F	df	Crit. F	Remark
Neuroticism	0.041	0.002	0.000	0.071	0.041	0.00	1.36	788	3.84	NS

In Table 8 above, it was observed that neuroticism personality trait of married teachers had R² change of 0.000. This indicates that neuroticism had the predictive power of 0.00 percent for married teachers’ marital adjustment. Also at 1df numerator, 788df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated F value 1.36 is less than the critical F value of 3.84. Therefore, married teachers’ neuroticism personality trait is not a significant predictor of their marital adjustment.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

The findings of the study showed that the personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism are not significant predictors of marital adjustment of married teachers in Anambra State as their contribution to the married teachers marital adjustment is almost zero. The findings of this study is in agreement with the result of karney and Bradbury (1995) which held that there is no association between the traits and marital adjustment. The findings also seems to be in line with findings of Heller, Watson and Ilies (2004) which indicated indirect association with marital adjustment and partially supported by the previous study by Lester, Haig and Monello (1989) which showed that extraversion was linked to low marital adjustment.

However, the findings of this study differs with the findings of Ofole (2015), Chen, Tanaka, Uji, Hiramura and Fujihara (2007), Claxton, O’Rourke, Smith and Delongis (2011) and Nell, Geist and Gilbert in Aluja, Barrio and Garcia

Research question 1 and Testing Null Hypothesis 1

How does personality trait of extraversion predict marital adjustment of married teachers? While null hypothesis 1 started that extraversion personality trait of married teachers is not a significant predictor of their marital adjustment.

Research Question 2 and Testing Null Hypothesis 2

How does personality trait of neuroticism predict marital adjustment of married teachers?

while null hypothesis 2 stated that neuroticism personality trait of married teachers is not a significant predictor of their marital adjustment.

(2006).The studies found extraversion and neuroticism to be significant predictors on marital adjustment of married couples.

Although the findings of the current study is surprising, the reason for the difference with some recent studies might be attributed to both cultural and geographical differences where people’s marital experiences and challenges tend to differ. There is also the possibility that poor exposure to understanding and management of personality differences may have also played a role.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study suggest that personality traits of extraversion and neuroticism, nd agreeableness are not significant predictors of married teachers’ marital adjustment in Anambra State.

Implication of the Study

The findings of the study have some implications for counselling. The study has shown that marital adjustment is an important factor for the stability of marriages. Therefore marriage counsellors could be adequately equipped with necessary tools; both material and intellectual to enable them assess married and intending couples, and to render useful counselling services that would go a long way in preventing marital maladjustment.

Marriage counsellors could also lay emphasis on the study of individual partner personality trait before going into marriage, or already married couples that are having problem of adjustment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and implications of the study.

1. Marriage counsellors should counsel couples not only to understand their own personality traits but also the personality traits of the other person involved in marital relationship. This will enable them appreciate their individual differences which will likely enhance marital adjustment.
2. Premarital counselling should be organized for intending couples. This will no doubt help them prepare for marriage. During premarital counselling, they could be assisted to identify personality traits that could become problems during marriages.

REFERENCES

[1]. Ahmadi, K., Ashtiani, F. & Navabinejhad (2004). An analysis of mutual background: Interpersonal and communicative factors in marital adjustment. *Family Analysis (3)1*, 221-237. Accessed online, July 23, 2015.

[2]. Aluja, A., Barrio, V. & Garcia, L.F. (2006). Personality, social values, and marital satisfaction as predictors of parents' rearing styles. *International Journal of Clinical and Health*

Psychology. Retrieved from <http://www.answer.com/Q/whataresocialvariable10/8/2015>.

[3]. Batool, S.S. & Khalid, R. (2012). Emotional intelligence: A predictor of marital quality in Pakistan couples. *Journal of Pakistan Psychological Research, 27(1)*, 65-88

[4]. Combs, R. (2010). Marital status and personality well-being: A *Literature Review of Family Relations*, 40, 97-102.

[5]. Ghaemian, A. & Gholomi, J. (2010). An investigation into the relationship between personality types and interpersonal problem styles with marital adjustments in the married students at Islamic Azad University. *The Arab Journal of Psychiatry*, 21(1) 70-84.

[6]. Ghoroghi, S., Hassan, S.A. & Baba, M. (2015). Marital adjustment and duration of marriage among postgraduate Iranian students in Malaysia. *International Education Studies*, 8(2). Retrieved from URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ies.v8n2p50>.

[7]. Hawkey, L.C., Cacioppo, J.T. (2010). Loneliness matters: A theoretical and empirical review of consequences and mechanisms of behavioural medicine (2). Accessed online, July 23, 2015.

[8]. McCrae, R.R., & Costa, P.T (2006). *Personality in Adulthood: A Five-Factor Theory Perspective 2nd ed.* New York: Guildford press.

[9]. National Association of Directors of Religious Education (NADRE) (2012). *Challenges to Christian Marriage Catechetical week 7th – 14th October*.

[10]. Ofole, N.M. (2015). Determinant of Marital Satisfaction among young couples in Lagos State: *Nigeria the Counsellor, Vol.34*. No (1), 2015.

[11]. Papp, L.M. Cumming, E.M. & Goeke-Morey, M.C. (2009). For richer, for poorer: Money as a topic of marital conflict in the home. *Family Relations, 58(1)*.

[12]. Weiten, W., Lloyd, M.A., Dunn, D.S. & Hammer, E.Y. (2009). *Recent Trend in Marital Disruption. Psychology Applied to Modern Life: Adjustment in the 21st Century, 19th ed.* USA: Wadworth Cengage Learning.