

# Factors Influencing Marriage Stability among the Working Class: A Case Study of an Institution of Higher Learning

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**Abstract:** Marriage is an approved social institutions, whereby persons establish a family. It involves more than procreation, including other obligations and benefits and has a ripple effect on the society at large. In essence happiness in marriage is far reaching, affecting the couples, offspring, influencing their behaviour at workplace, sustaining their health and ensuring a balanced development of the children. However, a number of factors can mediate marital stability. The study examined factors influencing marriage stability among the working class: A case study of an Institution of Higher Learning among a sample of 120 respondents. A cross-sectional design was used, research questions were raised and data were collected using questionnaire as instrument for data collection. The study revealed a significant influence of family background on marital stability, while spending some leisure time together is positively related to stability in marriage. Observation of religious rituals, such as devotion influences marriage, while attending same religion with spouse has no significant influence on stability in marriage

**Keywords:** Leisure time; family background; marriage stability

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is usually seen as an act that involves a man and a woman who love each other and have agreed to leave together as husband and wife usually with a legal backing, which could be in the contemporary way or through traditional rites. It commonly involve the privileges of sexual intimacy and responsibility of procreation. Studies have shown that having a long-lasting marriage is very important to people and has a great impact on health and general life satisfaction. (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007; Schoenborn, 2004). Invariably stability in marriage is tantamount to overall wholeness, while marital instability could be quite shattering to evolve into crisis (Carr & Springer, 2010; Hughes & Waite, 2009).

However marital stability does not always mean satisfaction, persons can stay in marriage and be enduring, rather than enjoying the union. While most people enter into marriage with the expectation of living happily ever after, it is noteworthy that many marriages end in divorce, (Campbell & Wright, 2010). Carr, Freedman, Cornman and Schwarz (2014), asserts that the relationship between marriage and health and well-being is based on quality of marriage and not primarily on marital status. Although there is a relationship

between marital stability, marital contentment and personal well-being, however, the influence is subjected to diversities, such as individual, cultural and environmental conditions (Proulx, Helms & Buehler, 2007).

It is important to consider factors that would enhance marital relationship, because of the increasing separation and divorce rate, (Cherlin, 2010). It is also relevant because staying in an unhappy marriage affect overall happiness, result in lowered self-esteem and debilitate physical and mental health (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). Marital satisfaction is one of the most important predictors of subjective well-being and health (Diener, 1984; Kamp Dush, Taylor, & Kroeger, 2008). Couple leisure time has been identified as a factor in marital stability. Zabriskie, and Hill (2006) found that leisure satisfaction promotes marital satisfaction and prevent divorce. A study by Hill (1988) has shown that when couples spend leisure time together, it brings about contentment in marriage.

Societal view of what constitute leisure vary according to people and individual, Russell, (1996) gave three different definition of what leisure time mean to people, namely : leisure as "free time," leisure as a "recreational activity," and leisure as an "attitude" or "state of mind". Leisure has also been related to benefits for couples (Hill, 1988; Johnson Zabriskie, & Hill, 2006; Orthner, 1975). Because individual concept of leisure time might vary, for instance Ahlstrom, Lundberg, Zabriskie, Eggett, & Lindsay (2012) affirm that couples who constantly argue about a preferred form of leisure activity, have lowered marital satisfaction. Fortunately, couples with more similar leisure interest tend to express marital satisfaction while enjoying activities that are homebased or close by, inexpensive and carried out frequently (Crawford, Houts, Huston, & George, 2002). Numerous studies have shown apposite influence of Leisure satisfaction on is satisfaction in marriage in particular and family life in general (Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill, 2006; Poff, Zabriskie, & Townsend, 2010; Zabriske & McCormick, 2003).

This correlation was evidenced through findings from Zabriske and McCormick (2003) assertion that when compared with other life domains, "satisfaction with leisure, rather than other life has a notable influence on life

satisfaction or mental well-being. Religion is without doubt a major part of human existence, thereby having a role to play in marriage. Dollahite, & Marks, (2009) posit that early marriages improve with increased religiosity. Chinitz & Brown (2002) reports that same religion between married couple result in marital and it will mediate the level of marital conflict. Therefore married couples with heterogeneous religion leads to disagreements on religious issue, resulting in increased marital conflict and less marital stability. People who believe that marriage is sacred may also be more likely to remain committed to marriage because they have made a promise to God, they want to abide by God's guidelines for marriage and they believe their marriage is part of God's will (Nelson, Kirk, Ane, & Serres, 2011). Goodman and Dollahite (2006) report that a belief in sacred marriage that includes a belief that marriage is part of God's plan and that God is involved in the marriage results in marriages that exhibit more stability and unity, increased growth and motivation and higher levels of happiness and peace. Kyambi, Michael, & Michelle (2017) the aim of the study was to explore how religiosity impacted the participant's marital satisfaction. Results indicated that specific attributes related to religiosity like individual and partner prayer, reading the Bible, church attendance, impacted participants and their spouses lives positively and in turn their experiences in marriage. Participating in religious practices made individual to develop strength in human relationship, such as was reported by the participants as eliciting qualities like perseverance, forgiveness and humbleness and it translated to assets in their marriage, thereby bringing about marital satisfaction, leading to marital stability. Religion is believed to provide meaning to commitment in marriage because it has a sacred purpose and provides people a perspective that helps them stay together during stressing events (Goodman, Dollahite, Marks, & Layton, 2013; Lambert & Dollahite, 2008). Sullivan (2001) found that while religiosity was unconnected to marital satisfaction, it ensure conventional belief about divorce, improved married couple help seeking behaviour during marital distress and entrench the sacredness of marriage. Religious dialogue among couples who believe their marriage is sacred has also been linked to positive marriage outcomes. According to Kusner, Mahoney, Pargament, & DeMaris, (2014) increased levels of religious discourse between spouses, coupled with a shared belief in the sanctification of marriage, decreased the likelihood of negative interactions during periods of conflict. Another notable factor for consideration in marital stability is the family background of each spouse in the marriage.

Family systems theory serves as the theoretical foundation for the field of marriage and family counseling (Murray, 2006). The family is the bedrock of the society. According to Guez and Allen (2000), the family is the basic unit of socialization and cultural transmission, since children acquire their fundamental values and attitudes from their families. It is the social cell in which human beings are born, and where they learn to become members of a wider human society. The

family, however, is also where many interpersonal conflicts occur, problems develop, and individuals suffer. According to Kumar (2011) marrying someone from the same cultural background or ethnic group is positively associated with marital stability.

The underlisted research questions necessitated this research work.

1. What is the influence of leisure time on marital harmony among Babcock University Staff Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State?
2. What is the influence of religion on marital harmony among Babcock University Staff Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State?
3. What is the influence of family background on marital harmony among Babcock University Staff Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State?

## II. METHODOLOGY

### *Study Design*

The study design used for this research is a descriptive cross-sectional study design.

### *Population and Sample*

The study population for this assessment comprises of Babcock University faculty and staff, both teaching and non-teaching

### *Sample Size Determination*

The sample size is 120 respondents . The sample size of this study is limited to the selected members of Staff of Babcock University who have responded to the questionnaires for this research work. The sample technique employed in this study was Random Sampling Method..

### *Validity and Reliability of the Instrument*

Questionnaires were distributed among Babcock university staff both married and unmarried. The instruments was standardized and was designed in such a way that it will focus on my research objectives and goals. This was done in order to determine the clarity/validity of the questionnaire and consistency of results derived from the questionnaire

### *Method of Data Collection*

The research instrument was questionnaire, to measure Factors Influencing Marriage Stability among the Working Class. The instrument was used to concretely establish the factors influencing marital stability. The questionnaire consisted of the following sections; Section A: Demographic characteristics Section B: Predisposing Factors Scale (PFS).

### *Data Analysis*

The technique of data analysis employed is simple descriptive statistical analysis using mean and percentage and Pearson Moment Correlation.

III. RESULTS

Research Question One: What Is the Influence of Leisure Time On Marital Stability Among Babcock University Staff Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State.

| S/N | QUESTION  | A         | D         | SA        | SD      | Mean | S.D |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|------|-----|
| 1   | Couples with little or no leisure time tend to have difficulty in developing a marital harmony        | 75(62.5%) | 26(21.7%) | 15(12.5%) | 4(3.3%) | 1.57 | .84 |
| 2   | Married couples who spend all their time together often have issues maintaining their marital harmony | 52(43.3%) | 59(49.2%) | 4(3.3%)   | 5(4.2%) | 1.68 | .73 |
| 3   | Couples that go out together, spend time together have better marital harmony                         | 18(15%)   | 59(49.2%) | 31(25.8%) | 12(10%) | 2.31 | .85 |

Result shows that over 47% of the respondents revealed that, couples who spend all their days together often experience marital disharmony (X=1.68, S.D=0.73) while over 62% of the respondents agrees that, Couples with little or no leisure time tend to have difficulty in developing a marital harmony (X=1.57, S.D=0.84).

Research Question Two: What is the Influence of Religious Affiliation on Marital Stability Among Babcock University Staff

|   |  |           |           |           |           |      |     |
|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------|-----|
| 1 | Couples who observe daily devotion in their homes ends up having marital harmony.                | 65(54.2%) | 32(26.7%) | 13(10.8%) | 10(8.3%)  | 1.73 | .96 |
| 2 | Attending same church denomination with your spouse strengthens marital harmony.                 | 29(24.2%) | 55(45.8%) | 22(18.3%) | 14(11.7%) | 2.18 | .93 |
| 3 | Spouses who are workers in church have smooth relationship that leads to strong marital harmony. | 40(33.3%) | 45(37.5%) | 21(17.5%) | 14(11.7%) | 2.08 | .99 |
| 4 | Couple with different religion are able to sustain marital harmony.                              | 36(30%)   | 61(50.8%) | 16(13.3%) | 7(5.8%)   | 1.95 | .82 |

Based on the results of analysis , over 45% of the respondents disagree that attending the same church denomination with your spouse strengthens marital harmony (X=2.18, S.D=0.99)., more than 37.5% also disagree that, spouses who are workers in church have smooth relationship that leads to strong marital harmony (X=2.08, S.D=0.99), more than 50% of the staff also disagree that couples with difference in

religion are able to sustain marital harmony (X=1.95, S.D=0.82). also 54.2% of the staff agree that, couple who observe daily devotion in their homes ends up having marital harmony (X=1.73, S.D=0.96).

Research Question Three: What is the Influence of Family Background on Marital Stability Among Babcock University Staff Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State?

| S/N | QUESTION  | A         | D         | SA        | SD      | Mean | S.D |
|-----|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------|------|-----|
| 1   | When a man is from a wealthy background and marries a lady from a non-wealthy family, this disparity will threaten their marital harmony. | 44(36.7%) | 65(54.2%) | 11(9.2%)  | 0(0%)   | 2.10 | .83 |
| 2   | Differences of culture and other mixed family intricacies between married couples will hinder their marital harmony.                      | 30(25%)   | 54(45%)   | 30(25%)   | 6(6%)   | 2.14 | .68 |
| 3   | Married couples who accommodates in-laws in their home will have a strong marital harmony.  | 19(15.8%) | 66(55%)   | 34(28.3%) | 1(0.8%) | 2.18 | .81 |

The results presented above showed that, there was a significant influence of family background on the marital harmony of staff in Babcock University less than 55% of the

respondents disagree that, married couples who accommodate in-law in their homes will have a strong marital harmony (X=2.18, S.D=0.81) followed by, over 45% of the respondents

disagree that, difference of culture and other mixed family intimacies between married couples will hinder their marital harmony ( $X=2.14$ ,  $S.D=0.68$ ). About 54% of the respondents disagree to the fact that, when a woman is from a wealthy background and marries a lady from a non-wealthy family, this disparity will threaten their marital harmony ( $X=2.10$ ,  $S.D=0.83$ ).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The result showed the influence of leisure time to improve marital harmony among staff of Babcock University, the result is supported by the findings of Hill (1988) and Johnson, Zabriskie, & Hill, (2006), when couples spend their leisure time together, it gives them a feeling of contentment, which in turn leads to marital stability at a level that is higher than that of couples, without couple leisure time. Additionally, Couples who have leisure interests more similar to each other are less likely to pursue activities only one spouse enjoys (Crawford, Houts, Huston, & George 2002) satisfaction, particularly satisfaction with core activities – activities that tend to be done at home or close to home, are inexpensive, are done somewhat regularly. Furthermore, Sanderson and Cantor (2001) looked at 44 couples who completed measures examining their own intimacy goals, their perception of their partner's goals, marital interaction patterns like social support or time spent together, and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was associated with the intimacy goals of both partners. It was also found to be mediated by the perceptions of both spouses.

Research question two reveals that observation of religious rituals, such as devotion influences marriage, while attending same church with spouse has no influence on marital stability, this is corroborated by Mullins (2016) the study includes qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with 43 married, Christian couples, couples testified to four major (prayer, worship services and sermons, first-rite rituals and communion) made marriage to be a revered, gave their marriages a purpose and meaning and strengthened their union. Also, Ahmadi, Azad-Marzabadi & Ashrafi. (2008) research sought to examine the relationship between a married individual's religiosity level and its impact upon his or her level of marital satisfaction. The results showed that heterosexually hetero-sexually couples who observe religious beliefs have higher rate of marital satisfaction. Thus, with the increase in religiosity, marital satisfaction rate will increase and vice versa. It can be concluded that religiosity develops the grounds for marital commitment.

Research question three results presented above showed that, there was a significant influence of family background on the marital harmony of staff in Babcock University. A number of other family environmental factors have been found to be related to marital stability, Whyte (1990) posit that the social class of origin of a spouse influence marital quality. In a similar study on communication in marriage, (Omozuwa, 2010) affirms that in-laws are one of the major problem areas in marriage. Silvestri (1992) found that men from divorced

families validated a higher occurrence of dysfunctional beliefs regarding intimacy and closeness. This is understandable when one considers that families are interrelated and interconnected, they exhibit coherent behaviour, they have regular interactions, and they are interdependent on one another (Morgaine, 2001).

#### V. CONCLUSION

The ever increasing challenges of stress in marriage and family system have caused a lot of marriages to exist without enjoying fun times and leisure. The quest and ambition to make more money is making it impossible for families to come together and plan family outings and vacations together. Relationship is the most important social-spiritual capital among human beings.

The study established that, leisure time, religion and family background have significant influence on marital harmony of couples. The study concludes that, marital stability is anchored on some factors within the relationship.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, it is hereby recommended that;

1. People should be educated more on family background, cultural background and peaceful coexistence with extended family.
2. Inter religion marriage should not be ventured into without proper counselling and willingness to compromise by both husband and wife.
3. Couples should spend more time together since this research shows that leisure time enhances marital harmony.

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