



Research Article

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Psychological Well-being as a Predictor of Marital Stability among Employed Women in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

One of the globally acclaimed means of strengthening family relationship is marital stability. It is viewed as a very important and essential element in sustaining the growth of societal and engendering sustainable national development. Globally, marriage as an institution is facing unmatched instability, which is a threat to family life. Some elements have been acknowledged as prognosticators of marital stability. While some have been empirically tested, some are mere theoretical postulations. Therefore, this study explored the degree at which psychological well-being predicts marital stability among women in the study location. The study made use of the survey design. For data collection, a questionnaire form labeled Psychological Well-Being and Marital Stability Scale was used with 540 married female secondary school teachers and married female commercial bank workers randomly selected for the study. One research question and two research hypotheses were raised. Findings revealed a more occurrence of psychological well-being among employed women and a significant influence of psychological well-being on marital stability ($R=0.184$, $R^2=0.034$, $F=3.104$, $p<0.005$). In addition, there was no significant difference in participants' marital stability. Recommendations were made in line with the findings. We concluded that positive relation with others as an indicator of psychological well-being is positively related to marital stability. Also, the 69.8% prevalence of marital stability and 30.2% instability, as shown in the study, calls for public concern.

Keywords: marital stability, predictor, psychological well-being, employed women

1. Introduction

Marriage is the most essential and fundamental human relationship. It provides the basic structure that establishes a family relationship and raises the next generation (Nadar, 2018). Marriage is defined in this study as a close and intimate relationship between the man and female gender to transform to husband and wife. Cumming, Marrilee and George (2010) described marriage as a deliberate intimate relationship integrally ordered to procreation and sharing of family life, which calls for permanence and exclusive commitment in whatever way the couple decides. A good and stable marriage is a marital relationship based on love, mutual respect and the couple's satisfaction with the relationship (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). Healthy living is achieved due to stability in marriage. A Stable marriage is thus one of the preconditions necessary for having and nurturing responsible children (Lawrence, Rogers, Zajacova and Wadsworth, 2019). However, marriage becomes unstable when couples cannot manage conflicting issues that arise in the union. Approaches used by couples to handle marital challenges positively or negatively influence the intimate life (Shakarami, Zahrakar & Mohsenzadeh, 2016). Some factors such as education, age of marriage, employment status, physical health, and psychological well-being have been identified as predictors of marital stability (Adejori, Okolie, Musa & Shehu, 2019). The life of human beings consists of both physical and mental states. Therefore, an individual's health and well-being are dependent on the inter-relationship between the psychological and physical state (Kolappa, Henderson & Kishore, 2013). Scholars have proposed that marriage promotes general well-being and that psychological well-being promotes marital stability, giving a bi-directional relationship (Hazarika, 2019; Shmerling, 2016).

2. Statement of the Problem

As noted by Dammaraju and Agadjanian (2018); Udom, Annabuk & Umana (2022), separation, divorce and widowhood are common social issue caused by high incidence of marital instability. Findings (Whiteford, Degenhart, Rehm, Baxter, Ferrari, Erskine, Charlson, et al., 2013; World Health Organisation, 2020) show that more women than men experience depression and anxiety. Eaton, Kann, Kinchen, Shanklin, Flint, and Hawkince (2012) also indicated that women are prone to mood and anxiety disorders. Comez-Ikican et al. (2020) reported that women who suffer depressive symptoms show decreased marital satisfaction and experience challenges with sexual function. Studies have also indicated that marital stability affects psychological well-being. It is common in the literature, but can the psychological well-being of individuals affect their marital stability? The thrust of this study is to explore the influence of psychological well-being on marital stability.

3. Research Question

What is the prevalence of psychological well-being among the study sample?

4. Research Hypotheses

1. There will be no statistically significant influence of psychological well-being on marital stability of participants
2. There will be no statistically significant difference in marital stability of the study sample based on place of work

5. Literature Review

5.1 *The Concept of Marital Stability*

The term stability is the quality, state of being consistent, and firmly established. Marital stability is a

concept that shows whether a marriage relationship stayed intact or not (Stanley, Amato, Johnson, & Markman, 2006). Marital stability is continuing being legally married. This indicates a scenario devoid of both physical or legal separation and divorce (Mitchel and Plauche, 2016). Marital stability thus presents when couples stay together, engage in tasks and endlessly sustain one another. Dubose (2015) opines that if partners do not make a conscious effort to make their relationship successful, they may face the risk of being neglected. Therefore, a stable relationship is achieved by the positive contribution of both couples. The marital relationship's stability leads to a well-functioning and balanced family life, which consequently leads to a well-adjusted and progressive society (Ajayi, Olakunle, Ahmed & Adegunrin, 2021; Adekeye, Gesinde & Abimbola, 2014)). Marital stability is different from but closely related to marital quality and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction leads to marital stability. It is a crucial part of family life and life satisfaction, and couples who have stable and fulfilled marriages are healthier, happier, and enjoy longevity (Whisman, Gilmour & Salinger, 2018).

5.2 *The Concept of Psychological Well-Being*

The World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) posits that good mental health is psychological wellbeing. It defines psychological well-being as a state where an individual can accomplish a task, cope with life's challenges, being productive at work, and contributes to the growth and development of one's community. The term psychological well-being is used synonymously with mental health. It is defined from the eudaimonic approach's philosophy, which defines psychological well-being as the optimal functioning of individual and social life (Huppert, 2017; Keyes et al., 2002). Ryff examined the meaning of psychological well-being and perceived that well-being would be more meaningful when broken into six components viz mastery of the environment, personal growth, possessing autonomy, displaying good and positive relationship, having a clear commitment to life and learning to accept the self.

They are briefly explained as follows:

5.2.1 *Autonomy*

Autonomy means the ability to be in control of one's behaviour. A fully functioning person can assess and evaluate his or her achievements and not depending on the judgment of other people. He/she must be well behaved, make personal decisions, and not be carried away by other people's ideas.

5.2.2 *Personal Growth*

Personal growth refers to the capacity to grow and develop oneself in various areas of human endeavours, be self-actualised, achieve a set goal, excel in one's field of career, and arrive at a point of being a productive, fully functioning person. Personal growth requires a continuous struggle to solve life 's problems, leading to increased acquisition of skills and knowledge.

5.2.3 *Environmental Mastery*

Environmental mastery is an individual's ability to manipulate one's environment through mental and physical activities (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). A person who can control his or her situation, interact effectively with different people in different situations, adjust to other demands, and face life challenges is a psychologically healthy person.

5.2.4 *Purpose in Life*

In this perspective, an individual who knows the reason for his or her existence, set achievable goals and works towards the actualisation of this goal to live a meaningful and productive life is

psychologically well. When somebody realises his purpose in life, he makes a self-directed effort and intentional moves to achieve the same goal. Having a purpose in life is critical for implied psychological well-being.

5.2.5 *Positive Relation with Others*

Positive relationships with others is a crucial element in building a trusting and long-lasting relationship and, at the same time, getting involved in communication and support networks. When an individual can work with others, trust, love, care, calm and polite in his or her approaches, effective communication and interpersonal relationship with others are promoted.

5.2.6 *Self-acceptance*

Self-acceptance is a basic form of mental health and the fundamental power of ideal functioning. It is the most common expression of psychological well-being. An individual who expresses self-acceptance is optimistic, generally happy, and satisfied with life (Ryff 1989). These six dimensions cover a broad level of wellness, which is summarized as the outright assessment of oneself, being determined, focused, having an excellent inter-personal relationship, emotional intelligence, having a sense of purpose, and meaningful life (Ryff, 1985).

5.3 *Psychological Well-being and Marital Stability*

One of the crucial factors that promote marital stability is the couples' ability to know the state of their psychological health because poor psychological well-being reduces the chance of marital satisfaction (Ghazivakili, Norrouzina, Kabir, & Karimi (2014). Randall & Bodenmann (2017) postulated that people who had poor psychological well-being experienced stressful situations and engaged in hostile conversations with their spouses, and this could lead to marital crisis, instability, and reduced psychological well-being. This is earlier supported by Oginyi, Ofoke, and Francis (2015), who found a correlation between marital stability and psychological wellbeing. Similarly, Azimain, Piran, Jahanihashem, and Dehshankar (2017) found that depression ($p < 0.012$) and anxiety ($p < 0.001$) had a significant relationship with marital satisfaction. A study reported a correlation between marital satisfaction and psychological well-being, and that 64% of participants had marital satisfaction (Azimian, Piran, Jahanihashem, and Dehshankar, 2017). On the other hand, Mamun, Clavarino, Najman, Williams, Callaghan, and Bor (2009) found a strong bidirectional relationship between depression and matrimonial relationships among women. Women who reported depressive symptoms reported poor marital relationships, while those without depressive symptoms reported high-quality marital relationships.

On the contrary, Katagulle et al. (2017) reported no correlation between marital satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. In support of this finding is Kamp-Dush, Taylor, and Kroeger's (2008) study, which found that the respondents who had poor marital happiness had the highest psychological well-being level. Yadav and Kumar's (2015) found that female banker, compared to the teachers, especially those in their early adulthood, experience more instability at home and poor psychological well-being, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas. Teachers were also found to have better mental health when compared to bankers. Similarly, a study by Goel, Narang, and Koradia (2013) show there was no significant variation in mental health and marriage adjustment of study participants.

5.4 *Prevalence of Psychological Well-being*

As note by the Mental Health Leadership and Advocacy Programme (2012), the prevalence of poor psychological well-being is about twenty per cent. African Polling Institute and EPIAFRIC, (2020) also

reported that 20%-30% of Nigerian Population suffer from one mental disorder or the other. In a study on exploring the elderly in Nigeria, Ibitoye, Sanuade, Adebowale, and Ayeni (2014) found that more than half of the respondents (53.3%) had poor psychological well-being. A more significant number of them were women (65.20%), and (71.3%) were married. Similarly, Ghayas, Shamim, Anjum, and Hussan's (2014) study found that the prevalence of depression was (53.43%) for males and (61%) for females. In the same vein, Bakare, Ibrahim, Isah, and Yunusa (2017) reported that 54.2% of participants were psychologically distressed, and 38.7% reported little fulfilment as it relates to their psychological wellbeing. Adejuwon et al. (2015) noted that women have the ability to derive strength from the family and others in order to manage stressful events and maintain positive wellbeing. In a study by Velmuuruugan and Maheswari (2015), it was revealed that most of the women (63.5%) had an average level of psychological well-being, 27.1 % had a low level, while 9.4% had a high level of psychological well-being. Molina, Fialho, Bach, Amaral, Rocha, and Souza's (2017) study found a high prevalence of psychological well-being among the teachers. Out of 575 teachers, 460 (79.5%) experienced good psychological well-being. On the other hand, Pandey and Srivastava (2003) found that teachers had a moderate psychological well-being level than the bankers.

6. Methods

The current study used a descriptive survey research design. The study sample consisting of 540 women was drawn from a population of 22,025 married women working in secondary schools and commercial banks. The location and respondents for this study were selected through the multi-stage sampling process. Data was collected through the administration of a two-section structured questionnaire. The 18-item Psychological Well-being scale (Ryff and Keyes, 1995), covering the six dimensions of well-being with a reliability coefficient of .81-.88, and the 25-item Marital Stability scale, with a reliability coefficient of .912 were used for data collection. The questionnaire satisfied the prescriptions of Odukoya, Adekeye, Igbinoba & Afolabi (2018). Frequency counts and percentages were used to answers the research question while simple linear regression and independent sample t-test were used to test the hypothesis.

7. Results

7.1 Research Question

What is the prevalence of psychological well-being among women in Lagos State?

Table 1: Frequency distribution of the Prevalence of Psychological Well-being among women in Lagos State

Psychological well-being	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
High	535	99.1
Low	5	0.9
Total	540	100

This question investigated the prevalence of psychological well-being among the participants. The result shows that 535(99.1%) out of 540 respondents score high on the psychological well-being scale, and 5(0.9%) score low. It indicates that most women had good psychological well-being, accounting for a high prevalence of psychological well-being.

Hypothesis One states that there is no significant influence of psychological well-being on women's marital stability in Lagos State.

Table 2: Influence of Psychological Well-Being on the Marital Stability of Female Teachers and Bankers in Lags State

Selected Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	53.538	3.222		16.618	.000
Autonomy	.350	.229	.077	1.529	.127
Environmental Mastery	-.408	.240	-.086	-1.702	.089
Personal Growth	.249	.252	.048	.989	.323
Positive Relation	-.549	.224	-.134	-2.449	.015
Purpose in Life	-.256	.234	-.058	-1.093	.275
Self-Acceptance	.324	.260	.065	1.247	.213
R=.184, R²=0.034, F=3.104, p=0.005					

The hypothesis tested the influence of psychological well-being on marital stability. The dependent variable is marital stability, while six indicators were used as an index of psychological well-being. The results show that mastery of the environment, having good relations with others and purposeful life are negatively related to marital stability. However, relations with others are statistically significant to marital stability at ($\beta=-.549, p=0.015$). Notwithstanding, autonomy, personal growth, and self-acceptance are positively related to marital stability, but the three components are not statistically significant ($p>0.005$). Overall, those six components of psychological well-being would exert a 3.4% change on marital stability, implying that all other things being equal, the combination of all psychological well-being would only bring about a 3.4% change in marital stability. Hypothesis one was therefore rejected ($R = .184, R^2 = 0.034, F = 3.104, p > 0.05$).

Hypothesis 2 states that there is no significant difference in the marital stability of teachers and bankers.

Table 3: Independent Sample t-test showing the Difference in the Marital Stability of Teachers and Bankers in Lagos State

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	T	Df	P
Marital Stability	Teachers	291	52.531	9.336	.54730	2.751	538	0.03
	Bankers	249	50.261	9.889	.62671			

In table 3, t. test for the independent sample was performed to determine the differences in the marital stability of female married teachers and bankers. The result revealed a higher mean score of teachers ($M = 52.54, SD = 9.34$), than bankers ($M = 50.26, SD = 9.89$). The hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the marital stability of female married teachers and bankers was retained ($t(538) = 2.751, df = 538; p=0.030$). This implies that there is no significant difference in the marital stability of teachers and bankers.

8. Discussion

The result of the research question shows that out of 540 participants, 535 (99.1%) have high psychological well-being, while 5(0.9%) have low psychological well-being. This implies a high prevalence of psychological well-being. This present finding agrees with Molina, Fialho, Bach, Amaral, Rocha and Souza (2017), who reported a high prevalence of psychological well-being among teachers. The study revealed that out of 575 teachers, 460 (80%) experienced psychological well-being. In a similar survey by Srimathi and Kumar (2010), it was reported that women in the teaching

profession showed the highest score in psychological well-being, followed by bankers who had moderate scores and women in industries who had lower psychological well-being scores. On the contrary, Bakare, Ibrahim, Isah and Yunusa (2017) reported that 54.2% of the study participants were psychologically distressed, and 38.7% had low satisfaction with their psychological well-being. Similarly, Somoye, Babalola and Adebawale (2015) showed the prevalence of anxiety disorder and major depressive symptoms among the bankers in southwest Nigeria. The first hypothesis, which was tested using linear regression analysis was rejected ($R=.184$, $R^2=0.034$, $F=3.104$, $p=0.005$). The results show that the combination of the six dimensions of psychological well-being influenced marital stability. The finding agrees with earlier studies (Okojide, Adekeye, Adejumo, Osore, Adeusi, Odukoya et al., (2020); Okojide, Adekeye, & Adejumo, 2021). Also, Roslan, Ahmad, Nabilla and Ghiami (2017) found a high level of psychological well-being among the participants and Khajeh, Goodarzi and Soleiman (2014) found a significant correlation between psychological well-being and marital stability.

However, this result is not consistent with Karagulle et al. (2019), who found that psychological well-being had no significant relationship with marital satisfaction. The second hypothesis, which was tested using the independent sample t-test, was accepted ($t(538) = 2.751$, $p>.05$). It implies that teachers and bankers do not significantly differ in their marital stability. The study's result is in agreement with Sinha (2016) also found no significant difference between marital adjustment of college teachers and school teachers but contradicts Yadav and Kumar (2015) reported that female bankers experienced higher marital instability compared to the teachers.

9. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concluded that positive relations with others as an indicator of psychological well-being is positively related to marital stability. Psychological well-being and family life programmes should be incorporated into organizations' policies through counselling interventions to improve the well-being, marital life and job satisfaction of women in Lagos State. Differences in the marital stability of participants could be explained by different coping strategies, which the women have devised to manage their work roles and family responsibilities.

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