
NEGOTIATION SKILLS AND MARITAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The study investigated the impact of negotiation skills on marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. It employed quasi-experimental design, consisting of one treatment group and one control group. Two research questions were posed, and two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study population comprised 80 secondary school teachers, out of which a sample of 20 participants was purposively selected from 10 secondary schools within Sokoto metropolis. A 20-item researcher-developed questionnaire titled Marital Conflict Adjustment Instrument (MCAI) was used for data collection. The items were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from Always (1) to Never (5). Participants were divided into treatment groups (Negotiation Skills and SST) and a control group. The instrument was administered with the help of two trained teachers. Data analysis was carried out using means and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while ANCOVA was employed to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed that negotiation skills were effective in resolving marital conflicts among secondary school teachers. Consequently, it was recommended that couples be encouraged to adopt negotiation skills in resolving marital conflicts, as this would foster positive outcomes both in schools and in the wider society.

Keywords: Marital, conflict, negotiation, resolution, skill

Introduction

Marriage is a legally sanctioned contract between a man and woman. Entering into a marriage contract changes the legal status of both parties, giving husband and wife new rights and obligations. It is the relationship that exists between a husband and a wife where they are joined legally, culturally and religiously as one. Chen and Li (2007) see marriage as an institution designed to meet certain vital needs of the participant. However, marriage is the union between man and woman as husband and wife. It is a social institution that is designed among other things to ensure the happiness and fulfillment of the men and woman who contract into it (Jay, 2013).

Marriage, according to Makinde (2012), is the relationship that unites a man and a woman. Indeed, such relationship requires an honest and voluntary consent between the two mature persons involved which will enable them to accept and overcome all the hooks and crooning

of marriage life. In the same vein, Olusanya (2012) posited marriage to be a sacred and permanent contract between a man and a woman who have consented to live a life of fidelity and caring for each other for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare through their lives. The institution is however not without its problems. As Kehinde (2012) puts it, marriage is like a house, while new, it sparkles with fresh smells with lots of surprises, romance and new discoveries about those involved, which makes each the exciting to both partners but experiences have shown that not long after a family is established, both partners become major sources of individual's problems, hence conflict arises.

The term 'conflict' can be described as a state of opposition. According to Hornby (2016), conflict means a disagreement and a quarrel. Sotonade (2018) also defined conflict as the struggle for control over another person's behavior or action. A disagreement in marital relationship becomes a conflict when it goes beyond the normal intellectual difference that characterizes marital relationships to the emotional realm involving feelings of anxiety or anger and followed by abusive language and hostile actions. In as much as conflict exists, the two parties at least still have a relationship, no matter how bad it may be. The conflict may lead them to hurt each other or to forgive and forget but the conflict shows that something about the relationship is still important to the people involved.

Marital conflicts according to Makinde (2012), can be classified into three basic types namely: acute, progressive and habituated conflicts based on when and how they develop and what functions they serve; acute conflicts grow out of the couple's need to establish a successful method of dealing with difficulties in marriage. According to him, such conflicts occur frequently in marriages. Examples of such are conflicts arising from arguments on how much money is reasonable to spend on cosmetics, food, drinks clothing and entertainment. Other examples include problems of adjustment connected with in – laws, sex, money, which may lead to acute conflicts in new marriage.

Conflicts become progressing when couples fail to focus upon current issues affecting the family and resolve them. Each conflict that is unresolved becomes progressive, the partners tend to challenge each other's weakness and find fault in the least things done or said. Habituated conflicts are most of what remains after couples have worked out basic adjustments and learned to avoid progressive conflicts. For most couples, there remain certain areas where agreement will never come and where accommodation is the best that can be achieved. Secondary school teachers are perceived to be learned and since marital conflict is unavoidable, they are expected to handle it in a mature way when it arises. Unfortunately, majority of married teachers are reportedly having issues of marital conflict which may be extended to either their students or other staff ranging from; reluctant in delivery his or her teaching subject effectively, withdrawal attitude, nagging behavior and even poor health condition. In this study, the researcher used two treatment packages; negotiation skill and

contingency management to see if they can assist secondary school teachers resolves their marital conflicts.

Negotiation Skill (NS) can be defined as the usual bargaining exercise where two or more people are involved and required to demonstrate competencies in all aspects relevant to the issue at stake (Makinde, 2012). Research has shown that money, housework and sex are the common conflict areas among couples (Bradbury, Rogge & Lawrence, 2010). However, no matter the areas or cause of conflicts, it must end to pave way for a peaceful coexistence. Corolla, Amass and Higgins (2013) study revealed more positive and more productive strategies on negation skill among which are cooperation, agreement, assertion, reasoning, active listening, rational argument and supporting the opponent/partner are pertinent to conflict resolution. To use negotiation skill effectively, three sub-skills are necessary according to Deutsch (2015) namely agreement, bargaining and coexistence.

Theories such as marital conflict resolution/adjustment, communication, Bateson and social learning theories that are related to marital conflicts were reviewed. Conflict theories are based on three major assumptions namely: that human are self-interested, that societies operates under long-lasting scarcity of resources and that conflict is persistent and unavoidable within social group. In the area of marriage, the theorist see marital conflict as involving inequalities and discrepancies in power and authority as they are reflective of the larger social structure.

Statement of the Problem

Marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis poses serious implications for both their professional performance and personal well-being. Teachers who are married and experiencing marital discord often report diminished happiness, strained interactions with colleagues and students, and difficulty delivering lessons effectively. Empirical evidence supports the existence of marital and family-related challenges among this group. For instance, Yaro's (2022) descriptive correlational study found that married female secondary school teachers in Sokoto face both home- and work-based stressors, with affectionate factors and social support coping strategies significantly related to managing marital challenges. This concern underscores the need to explore effective strategies for managing marital conflict. Negotiation skills and social skills training have been identified as potential interventions that could enhance conflict resolution, improve interpersonal relationships, and promote emotional stability. Therefore, this study seeks to examine whether the application of negotiation skills and social skills training can provide viable solutions to marital conflicts among secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.

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Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the effect of negotiation skills on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the effect of negotiation skill on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis
2. Examine the effect of social skill on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the effect of negotiation skill on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis at pre-test and post-test?
2. What is the effect of social skill training on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis at pre-test and post-test?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

- Negotiation skill has no significant effect on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers treated with negotiation skill at pretest and post-test.

Methodology

The study examined the effect of negotiation skills on marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. The study adopted quasi experimental design, involving two treatment groups. Two research questions were raised while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The population of the study consists of all secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis totaling to 581 teachers. The sample of the study comprised of 20 teachers who were selected using purposive sampling technique from selected secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. The victims of marital conflict were identified through a 20-item researcher-constructed questionnaire titled: Marital Conflict Adjustment Instrument (MCAI). The items were weighted on a 5-point scale of Always (1), very often (2) Sometimes (3), Rarely (4), and Never (5).

The pre-test involved administering the instrument to be assured to the presence of marital conflict. Then the number of participant was selected and assignment into groups. Rules were made meeting days and venue were fixed and agreed on. Treatment stage involved the

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treatment sessions. There were eight sessions and this was done in a period of one month. Each session lasted for 45 minutes. The researcher considered that the clients were teachers therefore, the time and days did not encroach on their teaching job. The control group did not reserve any treatment rather; they were kept busy on how to prepare the lesson notes for effective teaching the post – test stage was carried out after two weeks of treatment.

The post – test score was collected, scored, and used for the analysis to ascertain the effects or possible changes in the group. The independent variable was manipulated which are thought to be contaminated by uncontrollable environmental factors. However, measures were used to control possible extraneous variables: To control the environmental effects, the researcher carried out all the treatment packages in the counseling room of the school used. To control the test weaknesses, the same items of test were used for pre-test, post-test though the items were re-arranged before administering them again. The data were analyzed using means and standard deviation to answer the research questions while ANCOVA was used to test the hypotheses.

Results

Research Questions One: What is the effect of negotiation skill on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teacher in Sokoto Metropolis

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on Resolving of Marital Conflict among Teachers in Sokoto State Metropolis Treated with Negotiation skill.

Group	N	Pre-test	S.D	Post-Test	S.D	Mean Diff
Negotiation Skill	10	51.93	6.11	63.09	7.09	11.16
Control	10	52.84	6.15	52.69	6.30	0.15

The data presented in table 1 indicated that secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis exposed to treatment had mean score of 51.93 and a standard derivation of 6.11 in the pre-test and a mean score of 63.09 and a standard deviation of 7.09 in the primary school teachers exposed to control had a mean score of 52.84 and a standard derivation of 6.15 in the pre-test and a mean score of 52.69 and a standard deviation of 6.30 in the post-test, making a pre-test post-test gain to be 0.15. Thus, this implies that negotiation skill was effective in resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Questions Two: What is the effects of social skill on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis at post –test.

Table 2: mean and standard Deviation on Resolving of Marital Conflict among Teachers in Sokoto Metropolis treated with negotiation skill

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Group	No	Pre-test	S.D	Post-test	S.D	Mean Diff
Social Skill Training	10	50.78	5.97	60.09	7.02	9.3
Control	10	51.39	6.03	51.07	5.95	0.32

The data presented in Table 2 indicated that secondary school teachers exposed to treatment (Negotiation Skill training) had mean score of 50.78 and a standard derivation of 5.97 in the pre-test, a mean score of 60.08 and a standard deviation of 7.03 in the post text gain to be 9.3. The data also revealed that secondary school teachers exposed to control has a mean score of 51.39 and a standard derivation of 5.95 in the post-test, making a pre-test post-test gain to be marital conflict among secondary school teachers is Sokoto metropolis.

Table 3: Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) for Mean Scores on Resolving Marital Conflict with Negotiation Skill of experimental Group and Control among Secondary School Teachers in Sokoto Metropolis at Post-test

Sources of variation	Type III sum of Square	Df.	Mean sum of square	F.	Significance
Correlated Model	6218.388a	2	2109.14	44.827	.000
Intercept	1645.100	1	1645.100	23.718	.000
Pre-test	3675.478	1	3675.478	52.991	.000
Teaching Method	599.322	1	599.322	8.641	.000
Error	5895.601	43	69.360		.004
Total	412929.000	48			
Corrected Total	12113.989	47			

a. R Square = .515 (adjusted R squared = 0.502)

Dependent variable = Post – test

The data in Table 3 shows that the null hypothesis which states there is no significant effect of negotiation skill on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis treated with negotiation skill at post-test was rejected. This was indicated by the p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is a significant effect on marital conflict as a result of treatment received on negotiation skill among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

Discussions

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The study determined the effects of negotiation skills on resolving marital conflict among secondary teachers in Sokoto metropolis. Result of research question I shows the effect of negotiation skill on resolving marital conflicts among secondary teachers in Sokoto metropolis finding of the study revealed negotiation skill as a veritable tool for resolving marital conflict. The corresponding hypotheses which stated that there is no significant effect on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers treated with negotiation skill at post-test was rejected.

The study confirmed a significant effect on the negotiation skill marital conflicts as a result of treatment received on negation skill among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. The hypothesis was rejected. This was indicated by the p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 at 0.05 levels of significances. This recommends that there is a significant effect on marital conflict as a result of treatment received on negotiation skill among secondary school teachers. The result of the present study is in agreement which the study of Kieren, Maguire and Hurlbut (2010) who revealed more positive and more productive strategies on negation skill among which the cooperation agreement, assertion, reasoning active listening, rational argument and supporting the opponent/Partner and pertinent to conflict resolution.

Research question 2 examined the effect of negotiation skill training on resolving marital conflicts among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. The finding of the study revealed negotiation training skill to be effective in resolving marital conflict among secondary teachers in Sokoto metropolis. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant effect on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis treated with negotiation skill training was also rejected. The study revealed significant effect on the resolution of marital conflict as a result of treatment received on negotiation skill training among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

Hypothesis two which stated that there is no significant effect on resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis treated with negotiation skill training at post-test was rejected. This was indicated by the p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 at 0.05 level of significance. This implies that there is a significant effect on marital conflict as a result of treatment received negotiation training skill among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

The finding of the study is also in agreement with the findings of Okpara (2010) who carried out study on marital conflict and conflict resolution using survey research design among married working mothers in Anambra State. The study revealed that some employment life banking marketing business ventures that closes late in the night, hotel management influence the role of married working mothers. It was concludes that mothers should opt for an employment that would not negatively influence their marriage which cause marital conflicts in various homes.

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Conclusion

The study investigated the effects of negotiation skill training on resolving marital conflicts among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. Findings revealed that negotiation skills significantly enhance the ability of teachers to manage and resolve marital conflicts. Specifically, both negotiation skills and negotiation skill training had a positive and significant effect on conflict resolution, as confirmed by the rejection of the stated null hypotheses. The study therefore concludes that negotiation skills are effective tools for resolving marital conflicts among secondary school teachers. Teachers who acquired and applied negotiation skills demonstrated improved communication, cooperation, active listening, reasoning, and mutual understanding, which contributed to healthier marital relationships. Furthermore, negotiation skill training was shown to strengthen teachers' capacity to adopt constructive strategies that reduce conflict and promote marital harmony. The findings are consistent with previous studies (Kieren, Maguire & Hurlbut, 2010; Okpara, 2010) which emphasize the importance of negotiation and conflict resolution skills in sustaining stable family life. This confirms that equipping married individuals, particularly teachers, with negotiation skills can mitigate the negative effects of marital conflicts and enhance overall well-being within the family and society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The use of negotiation training skills in resolving marital conflict among secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis is effective.
2. The teachers should be encouraged to visit the counselors whenever they have any family issues. Thus, the counseling office is not only meant for the students.
3. Counselors should organize seminars and workshops to incorporate married teachers and not only students. The aforementioned seminar or workshop will address the causes, effect and management of marital conflict among married couples

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