

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION SKILLS AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AMONG STAFF OF YUSUF MAITAMA SULE UNIVERSITY KANO

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## ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between communication skills and marital adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano. Three objectives were formulated and translated to research questions and hypotheses to guide this investigation. The research design adopted for this study was a correlational design. Population of the study is nine hundred and fifty-two (952) staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano. Two hundred and eighty-six (286) staff were purposively sampled and used for the study. The instrument used in this study is Marital Adjustment, Assertiveness, and Listening (MALEQ). Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of percentages for demographic data and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the three (2) hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding revealed that, there is significant relationship between Communication Skills and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano Based on the findings, it was recommended that counseling units or center should be establish in Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano where staff could be taught how to be assertive in order to enhance marital adjustment.*

**Keyword:** *Communication Skills, Marital Adjustment, Assertiveness & Listening.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a social institution under which a man and a woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitment through religious and traditional ceremonies. One ultimate thing that must be born in mind is that marriage institution is not accidental; it is purposeful a goal-directed meant to achieve certain purposes. Marriage according to Okwun (2016) is 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 throughout their lives. It is an interpersonal relationship in which two adult opposite sex make decision to live together as husband and wife. Marriage being a social institution fosters the coming together of two different individual with different personality trait, psychological make ups and different socio-economic backgrounds to form a family. Probably because of these differences, the institution of marriage is seen to breed more conflict than most institutions (Ezere, 2018).

Marriage is a process in which a constant interaction of husband and wife occurs, and they mutually react to a never-ending sequence of new stimuli. Marriage means making adjustments to different aspects of life (Muazzam, 2013). The focus of couple after marriage is to have a smooth and successful journey, which connotes caring, tolerance, endurance, perseverance and kindness. The inability of couples to achieve this incapacitates the individual and tends to lead to marital maladjustment. Soon after marriage, the period of marital adjustment begins.

Listening is giving attention to what someone is saying so that you understand what the person is saying and respond accordingly. Some couples do not communicate with words; they communicate through actions. If one pays close attention one will get what he or she wants from his or her spouse. But the problem is most couples do not pay close attention to each other, thereby causing marital maladjustment. Couples at times, experience poor listening attitude. It means that they do not create a space for listening to each other.

The breakdown of marital relationship has become a global phenomenon affecting both the rich and the poor, from the royal families of princes and princesses down to the peasant farmers in our contemporary time and this bring about educational inequality. Tanimu, Umar, & Fatima (2022) mentioned that Educational inequality is the unequal distribution of academic resources. Inequality leads to major differences in the educational success or efficiency of these individuals and ultimately suppresses social and economic mobility. Inequality in education is broken down in different types: Regional inequality, inequality by sex, by social stratification, by parental income, by parent occupation, and many more. The happenings among Nigerian married persons in the present day make one fear and doubt if any joy is really attached to marriages. This is because married persons frequently nag, quarrel or fight, which may eventually lead to marital maladjustment. A close look at the implications shows that family life and marriage are in for serious trouble. Researchers, religious leaders and educators working with the families, have expressed concern about the difficulties that marital maladjustment has created in establishing an egalitarian society. There is definitely crisis when marital maladjustment occurs. Infatuation wears off, sexual misbehavior sets in, communication problem develops and children deliver a whole new set of maladaptive behavior. Statistics have shown that in America, for example, one out of every two marriages contacted end in marital maladjustment (National Centre for Health Statistics 2015).

## 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research addressed the following objectives, thus to:

- i. Evaluate the relationship between Assertiveness and Marital Adjustment among staff Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano
- ii. Determine the relationship between Listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano

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

**Ho1:** There is no significant relationship between Assertiveness and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano.

**Ho2:** There is no significant relationship between Listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano

## 3. MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

The research study employed correlational design in investigating relationship between communications skills and marital adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. This design according to Agu and Akuezuiilo (2014) discovers co relationships between two or more variables. The idea here is that whatever is found on the sample will be applied to the larger group. The total population for the study comprised nine hundred and fifty-two (952) staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano and these staffs are spread across the six faculty and 20 departments in Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. This stands as the entire population.

### 3.2 Instrumentation

The instruments used for this study are; Marital Adjustment, Assertiveness, Listening and Empathy Questionnaire (MAALEQ). These instruments were adapted.

#### 3.2.1 Marital Adjustment Questionnaire

This instrument was developed by Locke and Wallace (2015) to give spouses better insight into the degree and patterns of communication in their marriage. The questionnaire consisted of 13 items, and agreement or disagreement to each item was measured on a four-point Likert scale.

#### 3.2.2 Assertiveness Questionnaire

The AQ was developed by Chalvin (2012) in order to measure the level of assertiveness among married couples. In this questionnaire, 14 items were used to assess the level of assertiveness among couples. The questionnaire includes 14 questions with different ranking scales. 1=Never, 2= Occasionally, 3=Sometimes, 4=Usually, 5= Always.

### 3.2.3 Listening Assessment Questionnaire

The instrument was developed by Bones (2012). It was especially designed to measure spousal listening ability. The LAQ consists of 20 items with Likert-Type measure having 5-step response format – Always (5), Usually (4), Sometimes (3), Occasionally (2), Never (1).

### 3.3 Validation of the Research Instrument

A pilot testing was conducted with thirty respondents in Aliko Dangote University of Science Technology Wudil studies was used for pilot testing because it shares similar characteristic with those of the sample. The choice of using the school for the pilot study was based on the recommendation of Haralambos and Holborn (2008) that pilot test should be carried out on members of the relevant population, but not on those who formed part of the final sample. This was because it may influence the later behavior of research subjects of the sample population since they have already been involved in the research. The researcher distributed the questionnaire after obtaining permission from the head of department. The instruments were collected within two days. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis to test for the internal consistency of the research instrument.

The reliability of the instrument has been determined by the statistical analysis of the data collected from the pilot testing. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability method was used to test the reliability of instruments. The reliability coefficient was 0.898 for Assertiveness skill, for Listening skill 0.798, for empathy 0.897 and for Marital Adjustment 0.891 respectively. This reliability coefficient was considered reliable for the internal consistency of the instrument.

## 4. RESULTS/FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the data collected, the following findings were obtained, presented and discussed in the following tables

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between Assertiveness and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano.

Table 1: *Relationship between Assertiveness and Marital Adjustment among staff of YUMSUK*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	df	P
Assertive	280	68.14	20.21	.113	278	0.002
Marital Adjustment	280	35.35	13.05			

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed). Corr index  $1 > r$ -val at df 278*

The p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha levels of significant. This correlation is positive, that is the higher the Assertiveness level the higher their marital adjustment. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Assertiveness and marital adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano is therefore rejected. Implying there is significant relationship between assertiveness and marital adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano

Table 2: *The relationship between listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of YUMSUK*

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	df	P
Listening	280	2.75	0.44	.113	278	0.002
Marital Adjustment	280	35.35	13.05			

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), corr index  $r > r$ -val at df 278*

The outcome of the (r) computation on Table 5 shows that the calculated p value of 0.002 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance, at 278 degree of freedom. That is the higher the listening level the higher their marital

adjustment. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano is therefore rejected. Hypothesis 3, there is no significant relationship between listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that there exists a significant relationship between Assertiveness and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. The findings of this study are consistent with the findings of Michael (2010), Mahboubeh et al (2017) and Animashahun and Oladeni (2012) who found that there is significant correlation between assertiveness and marital adjustment. According to these studies, assertiveness increases marital adjustment and it has also been approved that assertive people have higher levels of marital adjustment, which corresponds to the results of the present study. Akanji and Yunus (2009) opined that in marital relationship assertiveness can help spouse to express themselves in a clear, open and reasonable way, without undermining the other right. In addition, this finding could be explained using the theory of Reciprocal inhibition which posits that People who have mastered the skill of assertiveness are able to greatly reduce level of interpersonal conflict in their lives. This implies that assertiveness reduces the negative effect of conflict.

Thus one's levels of assertiveness or non-assertiveness could influence one's preference for conflict resolution styles, and consequently accounts for the resolution of conflict or its aggravation. Assertiveness enables individuals to act in their own best interests, to stand up for themselves without undue anxiety, to express honest feelings comfortably and to express personal rights without denying the rights of others. This is an indication that the couples made significantly gain after mastering assertive skills. It also showed that married couples that could express themselves freely with their spouse, have better interpersonal relationship and effective communication. Assertiveness is very important in human interaction, especially in marital interaction.

Marriage involves two people that generally are from different psychosocial background; as a result, it becomes necessary for the couple to express themselves clearly to avoid misunderstanding. It makes sense that couples who express their feelings, emotion, ideas without being aggressive in this study report higher in marital adjustment compared to couples who lack communication skills. Communication flow provided an additional explanation of changes in marital adjustment. It is also a crucial index and element of a healthy relationship. This finding also agrees with Okoh (2011), who found that there is a positive association between marital communication and adjustment. According to him, communication involves the art of passing information, feelings or whatever (verbal and non-verbal) to somebody, without which the family's progress, unity, happiness and stability would be at a standstill. The value of communication in a marital relationship cannot be down played. It is considered as the blood of any marital relationship without which adequate interaction cannot be achieved.

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant relationship between Listening and Marital Adjustment among staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. The findings of this study revealed that significant relationship exists between listening and marital adjustment. This corresponds with the findings of Adamu (2010) and Ahmad and Reid (2008) who revealed that listening skills were effective in enhancing marital adjustment. This meant that listening skills are effective in reducing marital maladjustment. This finding is also in line with the findings of (Dagari, 2009) who found that there is significant difference between married couples exposed to listening skills and their control groups in communication improvement. Rostami and Hammed (2012) opined that listening is a skill that helps promote better communication and understanding. It involves partner doing thing to encourage one another to continue speaking, giving a chance to clarify what they are saying expressing that they are listening and having and have understood why their partner sees a situation in a certain way. Active listening involves a gift of attention and interest to a partner. Being able to make gestures of encouragement is only helpful if they are backed by a wiliness to give attention. Feeling denied, not listening to and overlooked are the major feelings that contribute to relationship disintegration. This meant that couples could adjust to marital relationship by using listening skills.

That special quality is the ability of the partners to listen to each other in ways that allowed them to collaborate and accommodate each other's role harmoniously as a unit. Doell and Reid (2015) found that high scores on listening to understand and low scores on listening to respond predicted higher scores on relationship satisfaction. Based on this finding, Reid and colleagues (2006) developed and applied listening to understand versus respond as an intervention to couples' therapy where partners learn to be more aware of them operating in both listening modality and attempt to do more of listening to understand rather than respond in their relationship. They found this enhanced each partner's levels of interpersonal mutuality, wellness, and relationship satisfaction.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that significant relationship exists between assertiveness and marital adjustment among the staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. Also significant relationship exists between listening and marital adjustment among the staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano. Finally, significant relationship exists between empathy and marital adjustment among the staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano.

In light of the findings, the following recommendations were made.

- a) Counselling unit or clinic should be established in Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano, where staff could be taught how to be assertive in order to enhance marital adjustment.
- b) The state government should organize workshops and seminars on premarital counselling and family life on listening skills to promote marital adjustment for all staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano
- c) It is recommended that empathy skill should be included in premarital counseling and marital counseling programs for all staff of Yusuf Maitama Sule University Kano

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