

**ASSERTIVE AND AGGRESSIVE COMMUNICATION STYLES AS
PREDICTORS OF MARITAL INSTABILITY AMONG MARRIED
TEACHERS IN OTUOCHA EDUCATION ZONE ANAMBRA STATE**

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Abstract

This study investigated assertive and aggressive communication styles as predictors of marital instability among married teachers in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra state Nigeria. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The population of this study comprised of 421 married teachers in the 28 public secondary schools. The purposive sampling technique was used in the study to select all the 421 married teachers in the 28 public secondary schools. However, the total population was chosen as sample for the study because the population is not too large and also the population is accessible to the researcher. Three instruments developed by the researchers were used for data collection which includes Assertive communication style questionnaire, Aggressive communication style questionnaire and marital instability questionnaire with the internal consistency reliability of 0.88, 0.86 and 0.83 were obtained for the three instruments using Cronbach alpha respectively. Simple linear regression was used to answer the research questions 1 to 2 while research question 3 was answered using multiple regression. But regression ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that assertive communication style has a significant relationship with marital instability among married teachers. The finding also showed that aggressive communication style has a significant relationship with marital instability among married teachers. Based on these findings, it was recommended among others that married teacher should understand that communicating with anger is not good. And if what was discussed is not truly to his or her favour, it is important to express yourself.

Keywords: Assertive, Aggressive, Instability, Marriage, Teachers.

Introduction

There is an institution constructed, established and ordained by God. The institution is as old as the creation of man and originated at the time of Adam and Eve. This institution can be referred to as marriage. Hence, one can say that marriage is an important phenomenon in the history of man. Marriage is an essential experience in the life of an individual. (Ojukwu, 2013) stated that marriage can be defined as the legal and ethical union between two opposite sex such that the children born will be seen as the legal and rightful offspring's of both parents. According to Suleyman and Zewdu (2018), marriage can be defined as the process by which two individuals of the opposite sex are united and are called husband and wife. Marriage is the institution that brings men and women together which makes them to be legally and socially dependent of each other in funding and maintaining of their family. Ojukwu, (2013), pointed out that marriage as a concept is viewed differently by people based on their culture, tradition and philosophy.

However, the most central concept of marriage regardless of the culture, philosophy and tradition is that marriage is that social relationship, which permits or acknowledges intimacy and sexual intercourse among couples. According to Nwadinigwe and Anyama (2010), marriage is very wonderful when there is marital stability. Marital stability is the situation of remaining legally married without physical separation, legal separation or divorce. The merit of marriage and marital stability includes; family growth, charity, respect, love, tolerant, joy, togetherness and peace among couples. When there is love, progress and success among couples we could say there is stability in marriage and when the opposite occurs, it becomes instability; that is marital instability.

Despite the numerous merits of marriage and marriage stability, it appears that there are many broken homes or marital instability in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra state of Nigerian. Especially, among secondary schools teachers. According to statistical data obtained from social welfare unit in Otuocha Education Zone of Anambra State stipulated that the social welfare unit have handled about

120 marital problem cases and matrimonial conflicts of about 14 cases between the years 2017 and 2018 of which most are married teachers. Furthermore, the social welfare of Awka south local government also have interceded for about 90 marital problems and 9 complete divorces within the years 2018 and 2019, (Akuezuilo & Nwanna, 2021). These situations are common among almost all education zones in Anambra State including Otuocha Education Zone of Anambra State, Nigerian.

However, marital instability can be seen as the condition where there is lack of love and joy among couples in a particular place. Nwadinigwe and Anyama (2010), defined marital instability as the situation where there are disagreements in terms of issues, affection, accommodation of each other and intimacy between married couple. There are cases of marital instability in Otuocha Education Zone of Anambra State in 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. With a total number of 273, 322, 353 and 471 respectively. (Social Welfare unit Otuocha Education Zone, 2021). The information shows that there is consistent instability among married people including married teachers in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra State, Nigeria. Many homes have tear apart in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra State. Some couples are not stable in their marriage. Most of them have separated, some divorce, some are having problems because of unfaithfulness and childlessness. Couples refuse to give close attention to each other, which causes disagreement among couples and marital instability in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra State, (Social Welfare unit Otuocha Education Zone, 2021).

Instability among couples can be said to be into existence where couples fail to build a sense of consideration for each other, lack love and tolerance (Umezulike, Nwadinobi & Afunugo, 2019). Marital instability creates problems in a family and most times destroy the family. According to Vakili, Baseri and Bazzaz (2014), Marital instability can be seen as divorce, disassociations, separation among couples, marital instability can also be seen as the dissatisfactions as well as misunderstanding arising among the couples or married people. Low income, financial stress, educational attainment, young age at the marriage, religiosity, serial

premarital cohabitation, dissimilarities to the couples, parental divorce, unemployment and communication style have been identified as the factors that could be associated with marital instability among married teachers (Vakili, Baseri & Bazzaz, 2014). When the situations of marital instability sets into a family, couples are separated in different areas of life while the children are affected in the area of educational pursuit, psychologically, security and most time are expose to human trafficking or trading. Marital instability among married teachers is extremely dangerous because it could leads to a very serious setback in nurturing and educating the children, as a result of these, lack of peace could set in, there could be increase in the rate of youthful lawbreaking and serious conflict in the society.

The factors that could be responsible for marital instability include sexual relations, fertility status, lack of affection by spouse, financial problems, in-laws, poor communication, inability to discuss problems between couples' family members and communication styles. Furthermore, some couples often complain of not having a male child in the family who will take over their landed and other properties and stand in the position of answering or standing in for their names in the society when they are no longer alive or not capable of taking care of those properties (Umezulike, Nwadinobi & Afunugo, 2019). Operationally, marital instability can be defined as the process by which teachers or a teacher who has a partner and are legally and constitutionally recognised as husband and wife are experiencing weakness in unity, love, charity and peace which leads to physical, emotional, social and psychological separation among the couples. Akuezuilo and Nwanna (2021) addressed that factors that can demote marital instability and promote marital stability are the type of communication style which includes; manipulative, aggressive and assertive communication style.

Assertive communication style is a communication style that permits an individual to go for his heart desire without violating the right of other person. Pânișoarăa, Sandua, Pânișoarăa and Duțăa (2015), were of the view that assertive communication style is a communication style where individuals vividly spell out

their feelings, opinions and clearly seek for their needs, desire and rights without offending or hurting others. Centre for Clinical Intervention (CCI). (2021) defined assertive communication style as the process by which an individual expresses his or her view in a direct and clear way and still be in a position to respect others. Operationally, assertive communication style is a communication style where married teachers in secondary schools are very free to open up their feelings, thought, opinion while communicating with their spouse and at the same time allow their spouse to echo out their view and desire. Furthermore, Suleyman and Zewdu (2018) who conducted a study on determinant factors of couple communication and marital stability among adults in Assela Town, Oromia Region, Ethiopia. The result also that there is a significant different between aggressive communication style and marital stability. Again, Esere, Yusuf and Omotosho, (2011) conducted a study on influence of spousal communication on marital stability: implication for conducive home environment. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital stability. Kidshealth Behavioural Health experts (2021), explained that some people can communicate in a way that look very passive, while others have a communication style that is too aggressive.

Aggressive communication style is the communication style where an individual expresses his or her needs, want and desire and crossing their boundaries in the process. Hwang (2016) defined aggressive communication as a process by which an individual expresses his or her opinion and feeling strongly which characterise yelling, commanding, shouting, blaming and verbally abusive. Nicole (2017) was of the view that aggressive communication style is when a person points his needs in a way that others will not be allowed to express their own need. Aggressive Communication can damage a relationship which means marital instability may be resultant outcome of aggressive communication. Operationally, aggressive communication style is a communication method where married teachers in secondary schools increases their voice very loud and points at the opposition when explaining their desire, want and need to their spouse. And they always want

to win in argument at all cost. Consequently, a study was conducted by Suleyiman and Zewdu (2018) on determinant factors of couple communication and marital stability among adults in Assela Town, Oromia Region, Ethiopia. The result shows that there is a significant difference between aggressive communication style and marital stability. More also, Justin, Benjamin and Thomas (2017) conducted a study on the influence of communication on marital stability among couples in Surulere Local Government Area of Lagos Metropolis. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between aggressive communication and marital stability among married couples.

However, considering the danger of aggressive communication and the importance of assertive communication in marriage, the researchers deemed it necessary to investigate more on assertive and aggressive communications among married teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the;

1. Relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra state of Nigerian.
2. Relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra state of Nigerian.
3. Relationship between assertive communication style, aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra state of Nigerian.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers?
2. What is the relationship between aggressive communication style and marital stability among married teachers?

3. What is the joint relationship between assertive communication style, aggressive communication style and marital stability among married teachers?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

H₀₂: There is no joint significant relationship between assertive communication style, aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Methods

This study adopted a correlation research design. Correlation research design is that design which permits a researcher to ascertain the relationship between two or more variables (Nworgu, 2015). This design is appropriate for this study in that the study tries to establish the relationship that exists between assertive, aggressive and marital instability among married teachers in Otuocha Education Zone Anambra state. The population of this study comprised 421 married teachers in the 28 public secondary schools in Otuocha education zone Anambra State. Source: (Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC) headquarters P.M.B 5033 Awka Administrative Department, 2022). The population of the married teachers in each of the three L.G.A. that made up of Otuocha Education Zone includes; Anambra East L.G.A. 213, Anambra West L.G.A. 110 and Ayamelum L.G.A. 98. Making a total of 421.

The sample size of 421 married teachers in post primary schools in Otuocha education zone was used for the study. This was done using purposive sampling procedure. The purposive sampling techniques was used in the study to select all the 421 married teachers in the 28 public secondary schools in Otuocha education zone in Anambra state. However, the total population was chosen as sample for the study

because the population is not too large and also the population is accessible to the researchers.

Three instruments developed by the researchers were used for data collection in this study they are as follows; married teacher's Assertive Communication Styles Questionnaire (ASCSQ), Aggressive Communication Styles Questionnaire (AGCSQ) and Marital Instability Questionnaire (MIQ). Communication Styles Questionnaire was developed by the researchers. The instruments comprises of two clusters which includes Assertive communication style questionnaire and Aggressive communication style questionnaire. They comprised of 20 items. However, each cluster contains 10 items related on a four-point Likert scale. 4-Strongly Agree, 3 -Agree, 2 -Disagree and 1 – Strongly Disagree. The instrument was used to measure married teachers' communication styles.

Marital instability questionnaire (MIQ) was also developed by the researchers. (MIQ) contains 20 items. The 20 items were constructed on a four-point Likert scale. 4-Strongly Agree, 3 -Agree, 2 -Disagree and 1 – Strongly Disagree. (MIQ) was used to measure married teachers' marital instability. The instruments (ASCSQ), (AGCSQ) and (MIQ) were given to three experts for face validity, one expert from Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation unit) and two experts from Educational foundations (Guidance and Counselling). The experts were required to validate the instrument with respect to unambiguity of items, clarity of items, proper numbering, items appeared only once, clearly stated items, accurate spelling, items were adequately sampled, and more significantly, the items were measuring what they were designed to measure for quality assurance. One of the expert suggested that the demographic data found in the instrument should be removed since they are not part of the study. Again, the experts were of the view that the married couples should be changed to married teachers. The comments, suggestion and observation of the three experts were affected in the new version.

Trial testing was conducted in the study to determine the reliability of the instruments by administering the instruments to 30 married teachers in 6 public

secondary schools in Obolo-Afor Education Zone Enugu State which is not part of the sampled Education Zone in Enugu State. This place was chosen because it has the same characteristics (marital instability) with the location of the study. The internal consistency reliability of the instruments (ASCSQ), (AGCSQ) and (MIQ) were established using Cronbach-alpha method. The use of Cronbach-alpha is because the instruments were polytomously scored; which implies instruments with no right or wrong answer. The reliability co-efficient of 0.85 (0.88 and 0.86) and 0.83 were obtained for the three instruments.

The researchers took a letter of permission from department of educational foundation, faculty of education in University of Nigeria Nsukka Enugu State, to the respective schools of the entire population. The letter was presented to the school principals for permission to carry out a research using married teachers. The researchers created a good relationship with the teachers and the management. And demanded they should be assisted by the head teachers in each of the schools. This request was granted by all principals in the schools. The researchers alongside the research assistant (head teachers in each of the participating schools) used face-to-face method of data collection and administration of the instruments to the respondents. The researchers administered the two instruments to the respondents with the help of research assistants. The research assistants were briefed by the researchers on the purpose and how to administer the instruments. To ensure sufficient return of the instruments, the researchers and the research assistants administered copies of the instruments to the respondents and collected them back instantly.

The data in this study was analysed using simple linear regression and multiple regression analysis. Simple linear regression was used to answer research questions 1 and 2 while multiple regression was used to answer research question 3. And regression ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. correlation co-efficient of 0.00 to 0.39 was considered low, 0.40 to 0.8 was considered moderate while 0.80 and above was considered high (Nworgu, 2015).

Results

Research Question One: What is the relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers?

Table 1: Linear regression analysis of the relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Model	N	r	R ²	Adj R ²	Std Err.	Est
Assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers	421	.146 ^a	.021	.019	18.48	658
Predictors (constant) Assertive						

Table 1 above shows the regression analysis of the amount of relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers. The result indicates that a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.15 was obtained. This implies low relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers. The coefficient of determination (R²) associated with the correlation coefficient of it was 0.021 was obtained. This means that 2% of variation in marital instability among married teachers is attributed to assertive communication style. The result indicates that, 98% of variation in marital instability among married teachers is attributed to other factors order than assertive communication.

Hypothesis One; There is no significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Table 2: Regression ANOVA result of assertive communication style and its relationship with marital instability among married teachers.

	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3113.324	1	3113.324	9.110	.003 ^b
	Residual	143194.761	419	341.754		
	Total	146308.086	420			

Result in table 2 shows (F (1,420) = 9,110 p = 0.003) the relationship between assertive communication and marital instability among married teachers. Since the p-value of 0.003 is less than alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, the researchers conclude that there is a significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Research Question 2; What is the relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers?

Table 3: Regression analysis of the relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Model	N	r	R ²
Aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.	421	.221 ^a	.049

Table 3 above shows the regression analysis of the of the relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers. The result indicates that a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.22 was obtained. This implies a positive low relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers. The coefficient of determination (R²) associated with the correlation coefficient of it was 0.05. This means that 5% relationship of marital instability among married teachers is attributed to aggressive communication style. The result indicates that, 95% of relationship with marital instability among married teachers is attributed to other factors order than aggressive communication.

Hypothesis Two; There is no significant relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Table 4: Regression ANOVA result of aggressive communication style and its relationship with marital instability among married teachers.

	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7117.149	1	7117.149	21.424	.000 ^b
	Residual	139190.937	419	332.198		
	Total	146308.086	420			

Result in table 4 shows (F (1,420) = 21,424 p = 0.000) the relationship between aggressive communication and marital instability among married teachers.

Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the researchers conclude that there is a significant relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Research Question three What is the relationship between assertive communication, aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers?

Table 5: Regression analysis of the relationship between assertive communication, aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers.

Model	N	r	R ²
Assertive communication, aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers.	421	.26 ^a	.068

Table 5 above shows the regression analysis of the relationship between assertive communication, aggressive communication and marital instability among married teachers. The result indicates that a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.26. This implies a positive low relationship between assertive communication, aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers communication style. The coefficient of determination (R²) associated with the correlation coefficient of it was 0.68. This means that 68% variations of marital instability among married teachers is attributed to assertive and aggressive communication. The result indicates that, 32% of variation with marital instability among married teachers is attributed to other factors order than assertive and aggressive communication styles.

Hypothesis Three; There is no significant relationship between assertive and aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers.

Table 6: Regression ANOVA results of assertive and aggressive communication styles and their relationship with marital instability among married teachers.

	Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10618.843	2	5309.421	15.277	.000 ^b
	Residual	145273.452	418	347.544		
	Total	155892.295	420			

Result in table 12 shows ($F(1,420) = 15.277$ $p = 0.000$) the relationship between assertive, aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers. Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the researchers conclude that there is a positive significant relationship between assertive, aggressive communication styles and marital instability among married teachers.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability. The finding is not quite surprising because when the married teachers and other married people communicate to their spouse using assertive communication styles it will enable the couples to point out their problems in relationship and be in a position to address the challenges adequately and peace will reign. This finding agrees with Suleyiman and Zewdu (2018) that there is a significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability. Again, this finding is in consonant with Esere, Yusuf and Omotosho, (2011) who reported that there is a significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

The findings of the study revealed that aggressive communication style has a positive relationship with marital instability. Further analyses showed that aggressive communication style predicts 5% of marital instability among married teachers. This implies that the level of aggressive communication style of the married teachers' go a long way to determine the degree of marital instability that

could be present in their home. The outcome of the analyses was not far from the truth because when married teachers communicate aggressively it will definitely result to marital instability among couples and even among married teacher. However, if the married teachers and other married people can control their aggression in terms of communication, it will help to ameliorate marital instability among couples. The finding agrees with Justin, Benjamin and Thomas (2017) that aggressive communication style has a positive relationship with marital instability among married teachers. The finding is also consistent with Suleyman and Zewdu (2018) result which reported a significant positive relationship between aggressive communication style and marital instability among married teachers.

Conclusions of the Study

The findings of the study indicated that assertive communication and aggressive communication styles are predictors of marital instability among married teachers. The following conclusions were made; since assertive communication and aggressive communication styles has a relationship and can predict marital instability among married teachers. One can conclude that if married teachers can communicate with their spouse with a clear and open mindedness and not showing any element of annoyance marital instability will be reduced.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made base on the findings of this study,

1. Parents should monitor their married teachers and ensure they communicate freely, openly and not hiding anything by so doing the marital instability of the married teachers will reduce.
2. Married teacher should understand that communicating with anger, not really unfolding each others' interest among their spouse will not help the marriage.
3. The staff and management of schools should ensure they create a favourable environment for married teachers so that they can engage in any form of in-service training particularly on communication styles in order to improve their marriage.

4. State Ministry, education stakeholders as well as federal government should ensure that free conferences and workshops are organized for married teachers on the best communication styles that are appropriate at a particular period of time.

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