

## IMPACT OF SEXUAL COMMUNICATION ON MARITAL STABILITY OF COUPLES IN UKUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE: COUNSELLING INTERVENTION

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples in Ukum local government area of Benue State. The variable examined in this study was sexual communication on marital stability of couples. A research question and hypothesis (at 0.5 level of significance) each was formulated to guide the study. The survey research design was used with 384 respondents randomly selected from a population of 70,360 married couples in the study area. A self structured, Marital Communication and Stability Inventory (MCSI) was used as an instrument to collect data for the study. The data obtained was analysed using frequencies, percentages and Chi-square statistics. It was found that, sexual communication have significant impact on marital stability of couples in the area of study. Based on the finding, the study therefore recommends among others, that counsellors should start organising pre-marital counselling discussions as well as lectures, at adolescent stage of secondary school years, so as to catch the pupils young for the rudiments of marital stability, so that when such children eventually get married, they will already be well equipped with the rudiments of happy marital life and live a life of peaceful co-existence.*

### Introduction

Marriages all around the world are becoming increasingly characterized by problems, such as stress and infidelity. Amao-kehinde (2002) described marriage as universally stressful, one of the causes of human misery and unhappiness. Unfulfilled expectations and hope in marriage often give rise to maladjustment, and unless the couples concerned face the reality of any given situation. To get married is to commit oneself to regular time of sexual intimacy. However, experience has shown that in our society today, we have difficult time talking about sex due to cultural inhibition, yes, we joke about sex, degrading it through filthy stories, movies and magazines but we never talk about marital sex in the way the Creator design it. For instance, it is a common knowledge that marital sex, the most important and only appropriate kind gets

ignored, and the consequence is that couples pay dearly for it, whenever this sad reality happens, (Leman 2005). Sex is the union of man and woman or husband and wife for enjoyment and procreation in marriage. Oniye (2004) opined that if you decide to become sexually adventurous as a couple, you are not going to do things perfectly. Marriage is institutionalized by God in human society with a view that it would afford the couples opportunity to meet their multidimensional needs, one of which is the legalized sexual relationship.

Sex is a powerful weapon which couples use to enhance effective communication with each other. Ingredients of good sex are possible where the couples have resolved to be sincere in their sexual relationship. Expressing affection, communicating likes and dislikes, negotiating and compromising, are

essential ingredients of good sexual life. This means, through sex, couples can communicate affection. According to Saatan (2011), it is possible to be sexually attracted, and this attractiveness is communicated through body language and eye contact. Affection is expressed through body language too, but needs to be backed up by talking about feelings. Communicating likes and dislikes are mutually interwoven, couples must be free and frank but fair to each other in terms of their feelings, experiences and expectations, couples get the best from their sexual communication. Leman (2005) opined that sex life colours marriage from top to bottom and is the most powerful marital glue a couple can have. He further opined, that a sexually fulfilled woman will have less stress and more joy in her life, and a sexually fulfilled man will normally be a better father and a better employee, such couples live a more stable and fulfilled life, even at the height of provocative issues, if not, a slight provocation makes the partner to overreact due to heightened emotion (Lasiele 2008). Sex is a powerful force in married life, hence it enhances more stability of couples when properly communicated.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In many Nigerian homes today, marital instability and domestic violence are very rampant especially in Ukum local government area of Benue State. This has brought about so many marriages living under separation, even some getting divorced, some that are still managing living together are nearly on the verge of collapse due to marital instability because of the denial of sexual relationship among couples, thereby, widening the gap more and

more. It is in view of this scenario that the researchers wish to empirically determine the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples in Ukum local government area of Benue State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the impact which sexual communication has on marital stability of couples in Ukum local government area of Benue State.

### **Research Question**

Has sexual communication any impact on marital stability of couples in Ukum local government area?

### **Research Hypothesis**

Sexual communication has no significant impact on marital stability of couples in Ukum local government area of Benue state.

### **Research Procedure**

The survey design was used for this study because the researcher is interested to find out the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples in Ukum local government area of the State. The population for the study consisted of all married couples living together in a matrimonial home in the selected wards of the area of study; with the population of 70,360. The male population is 40,496 while the female population is 29,864 (from the NPC 2006).

A sample size of 384 was selected from the population using Kreije & Morgan

(1970) statistical table for determining sample size from a given population. Ngazis proportional random sampling formula was used to select the 384 respondents. Simple random sampling was used to select individual respondent for the study.

**Instrument**

An instrument called Marital Communication on Marital Stability of Couples (MCSI) was used for data collection; on issues that surrounds research questions and hypotheses concerning impact of sexual communication on marital stability.

The instrument consists of five items which elicit information on the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples. The instrument was validated by experts in research methods

and statistics at the Benue State University, Makurdi. Its reliability was ascertained through a pilot study which involved 50 respondents who were part of the study but outside the sample for the main study. Split half method was used to determine the reliability which showed an overall scale of 0.88 considered high enough to be used for the study. Three hundred and eighty four questionnaires properly completed and returned were used for the analysis. Frequencies tables and percentages were used for analysis of research questions. Chi-square test of goodness of fit was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**Data Analysis and Results**

The findings of this study with particular reference to research questions and hypotheses are presented as follows:

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex**

Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Male	196	51.0	51.0
Female	188	49.0	49.0
Total	384	100.0	100

Table 1 indicates that out of the 384 respondents 51% were male, while 49% were females.

**Research Question 1**

Has Sexual communication any impact on marital stability of couples?

**Table 2: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Sexual Communication on Marital Stability of Couples.**

Responses	N	Mean	Std Dev.
Sex gives room for growth of intimacy in marriage	384	3.42	0.75
Sex encourages dialogue between us	384	2.62	0.99
My spouse is always happy whenever the demand for sex is met	384	2.90	0.81
Regular sex enhances marital satisfaction and stability	384	3.31	0.87
My spouse demands for sex almost every night for satisfaction	384	2.92	0.80

Table 2 shows the respondents opinions on the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples. The statement that sex gives room for growth of intimacy in marriage scored 3.42, while that of sex encourages dialogue between us scored 2.62. Similarly, that of my spouse is always happy whenever the demand for sex is met scored 2.90. The item that, regular sex enhances marital satisfaction and stability scored

3.31 while the item on, my spouse demands for sex almost every night for satisfaction scored 2.92. The implication is that sexual communication has impact on marital stability of couples.

#### **Test of Hypothesis**

Here chi-square statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

**Table 3: Impact of sexual communication on marital stability.**

Observe	Expected	DF	$X^2_{Cal}$	$X^2_{Crt}$	Sig at 0.05 level
Agree 294	192		108.375	3.84	Sig
Disagree 90	192	1			

$X^2_{Cal} = 108.375, df = 1, P < 0.05$

Table 3 shows that the chi-square calculated value of 108.375 at df 1 with critical value of 3.841 above the acceptable level of 0.05 was significant.

This implies that sexual communication has significant impact on marital stability of couples.

#### **Discussion of Finding**

The result of hypothesis 1 revealed that sexual communication impacts positively on marital stability of couples. This is in line with Oniye (2004) who observed that sex is an essential ingredient in marriage, and that couples should handle it with care. The ability to share feelings, thoughts and information

between the couples is a measure of the degree of intimacy. This view is in line with Lasiele, Yahay: & Esere, (2008) who maintained that couples can use sex to communicate different things in and about their relationship to enhance marital stability. Sexual pleasure gives room for growth of intimacy in marriage. The researcher is of the view that, though, discussion about sex in marriage is often avoided, yet, without it, everything in marriage disintegrates. Sexual pleasure is an exclusive right of married couples, and sex is the major distinction between married and single persons. Spouses must find time to engage in sexual pleasures with the partner and never claim to be too busy for that. The researcher therefore is in consonance with sexual pleasures in marriage exclusively.

### Conclusion

This study has found a significant impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples in Ukum Local Government Area of Benue State.

### Counselling Interventions

1. Counsellors should start organizing pre-marital counselling right from secondary schools, catch them young for marital stability, when such children eventually get married, they will already be well equipped with the rudiments of happy marital relationship.
2. Marriage counselling should be organized by counsellors in schools beginning from the secondary schools during Parent Teachers Associations (PTA) meetings, graduation and price giving day celebration for parents and teachers,

during that time, lectures will be given on the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples.

3. Churches and mosques (para-counsellors) should help to disseminate information also on adverse effects which sexual communication has on marital instability of couples, (e.g. HIV/AIDS, separation and divorce).
4. Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) should emphasize marital communication and what impact it has on marital stability on the school curriculum.
5. Mass media should create special time for discussion on the impact of sexual communication on marital stability of couples on the Television and Radio broadcast to disseminate information on this topic.
6. Counsellors should devote time in discussions on what sexual communication has on marital stability during individual and group counselling sessions, discussions on the impact of sexual communication on marital stability must not be forgotten in the course of their interactive sessions.

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