



SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF DIVORCE AMONG COUPLES IN TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated social studies teachers' perception of the psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Gassol, Takum and Wukari education zones of Taraba State. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The study was guided by a research question and hypothesis respectively. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting a sample of 316 for the study. The instrument for data collection was Social Studies teachers' Perception of Psychological Determinants of Divorce among Couples Questionnaire. The instrument was validated by experts and tested for both validity and reliability. The validity and reliability of the instrument were determined through trial testing and Cronbach Alpha statistic procedures. A reliability index of 0.92 was obtained which was considered appropriate for the study. Data collected were analysed using percentages to answer the research question and Mann Whitney U-test at 0.05 level of significance to test the hypothesis. The findings showed among other things that, the most prevailing psychological determinants of divorce among couples were inadequate or excessive request for sexual intimacy, extra marital affairs, childlessness, emotional depression and domestic violence. It was also found that there was no statistically significant difference ($p > 0.05$) between the mean ratings of male and female social studies teachers with respect to psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State. Based on the findings and discussions, it was recommended among others that increased commitment among couples, trust, reduced parental hostility, improved mutual understanding and sense of responsibility should be encouraged by couples and other stakeholders to mitigate rising cases of divorce among couples in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Divorce, Couples, Psychological determinants, Social Studies Teachers, Perception

Introduction

Marriage is generally acknowledged as one of the oldest social institutions globally. Marriage leads to the establishment of a home or family where two or more people come to live together through mutual agreement and commitment to each other, leading ultimately to sharing of intimacy, resources, decision making and values, (Fura, 2018). In Nigeria, the marriage institution is conceived as a basic socio-cultural institution where a man and a woman could assume a sense of responsibility or form of contract for reciprocal obligations as husband and wife (Uddin, 2015). In view of this position, marriage is explained by Omoro (2018) as a social institution of matrimony legally defined with rights and duties that are regulated by the state and sanctioned in many religions and traditions through rites and ceremonies.

The above implies that marriage is a cultural and socially recognized institution. In other words, marriage is a legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife with the underlying purposes of procreation, sexual and emotional gratification or companionship, economic dependence and social stratification within and across cultures for survival (Reynoso, 2018). This suggests that, it is in marriage that the purpose of existence as husband and wife was defined and expressed. Thus, Cherlin (2019) describes marriage as a social institution that entails the joining of two people into a recognized union by law, culture or traditional ceremonial means. This implies that marriage is a social practice and interactions that occur between man, woman and

their relatives within an immediate environment or sometimes across regions, tribes, religions, etc (Cherlin, 2019).

In Nigeria marriage is regarded as a major cultural and social institution that varies from one custom to the other and from one ethnic group to another. In Taraba State, North - East Nigeria, marriage rituals are frequently influenced by cultural and traditional norms that cut across different communities (Ogofotha & Elugah, 2020). In Taraba State, the practice of polygamous marriage (a man having numerous wives) is very predominant (National Population Commission, 2014). Marriage institution in Taraba state is therefore, a basic structure upon which the family relationship is based with the purpose of meeting the needs and necessities of life (Reynoso, 2018; Uddin, 2015). Taraba State is a multicultural state with about twenty-three tribes living together and mainly dominated by Christians, Traditionalists and an average number of Muslims (Ogwumu et al., 2020). In Taraba State, marriage is culturally cherished among the indigenous people while divorce is conceived abominable to them, especially within the extended family system (Ogwumu, et al., 2020). However, there are numerous factors or aspects of marriage in Taraba State that could affect marital stability. These factors range from religious, cultural to psychological issues (Cinzia & Claudio, 2019). Indeed, some of these issues such as religious, cultural and traditional beliefs have been investigated (Amato & James, 2018; Omoro, 2018). However, the impacts of social, economic and psychological background of couples seem not have been given adequate scholarly attention in Taraba State. Similarly, in the context of Nigeria's experience, divorce cases are not yet receiving proper documentation (Cinzia & Claudio, 2019). Invariably, other incidents of conflicts among couples such as violence, mistrust, constant bickering, neglect, emotional disturbances and distress, etc require extensive investigation because of their serious psychological implications Balestrino (2020). Indeed, these factors if not genuinely handled can increase divorce among couples (Amato & James, 2018).

Divorce is described as the dissolution of an existing marriage through legal means (Kendall, 2015). It implies that, divorce is the only legally acceptable means of dissolving any properly instituted marital union. To Stent (2014), divorce is a legal procedure that dissolves a marriage or ends couples' legal obligations and responsibilities to each other. Divorce seems to have social, emotional, and financial effects on the well-being of both partners, their children and even relations and society at large.

In recent times, incidents of divorce and related marital conflicts are becoming more rampant among couples (Lawpadi, 2018). Indeed, while some of the divorce matters are officially reported, most cases of divorce remain either under reported or unreported (Mustapha & Odediran, 2019). Available evidence show that most divorce problems are based on cultural, religious and psychological factors (Idris, 2020).

The psychological perspective on divorce whether due to emotional trauma, constant quarrels, bickering, temper, nagging, infidelity, revengefulness, lack of love, still need further investigation (Fura, 2018; Mojtabai et al., 2017). Indeed, it is not yet very clear whether these psychological issues are the distinct determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State. Against this backdrop this study investigated the psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State.

Marriage and related marital conflicts and issues constitute important topics in Social studies contents at the Basic Education level in Nigeria. At this

level, Social studies teachers are expected to teach unique contents, skills and values on the benefits of stable families and marriages to students (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2008). Indeed, the teaching and learning of Social studies at the basic education level can help to foster balanced information on reciprocity of interactions and relationships in the society. Social Studies is described as a subject of instruction at the elementary or junior secondary school level that teaches about human relationships and the way society works with a view to instilling in pupils or students the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and actions they require to become



functional citizens in the society (Nwaubani& Okafor, 2015). It is issue-focused, inquiry-based inter-disciplinary in nature and value-laden. It is a subject that draws contents from the Social Sciences and humanities such as History, Geography, civics Education, Ecology, Economics, law, Philosophy , Political science, etc. (Nwaubani, 2022).

Social Studies based on the foregoing, contribute significantly to content areas such as marriage, family life and other issues that border largely on mutual relationship. Thus, Social studies education provides practical survival skills needed by citizens to function effectively in their environment as well as manage conflictual issues that could affect marriages in order to prevent divorce among couples (Idris, 2020). This position makes it imperative that the way and manner teachers of Social Studies perceive psychological determinants of divorce should be of immense research concern. This study was therefore conceived to investigate Social studies teachers' perception of the psychological determinant of divorce in Taraba State.

The issue of gender was considered as an intervening variable in this study. Indeed, UNDP (2018) affirms, that gender of teachers could influence knowledge and perception on marital issues and challenges. However, in contrast Tahseldar (2018) reported that gender had no statistical significance difference with respect to beliefs, practices, and awareness of teachers on possible causes of divorce among couples. This seeming contradiction, justified why this study explored the influence of gender as a possible moderating variable on social studies teachers' perception of psychological determinant of divorce among couples in Taraba State, Nigeria.

Research Question

- 1 What are Social studies teachers' perception of the psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception of male and female social studies teachers on the psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State.

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in three education zones namely; Gassol, Takum and Wukari respectively. The population of the study consist of 1,608 Social studies teachers (1,058 males and 550 females) with public secondary schools in Taraba state (Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Taraba State Post Primary Schools Management Board, 2023). The sample size for this study was 502 Social studies teachers made up of 293 male and 209 female teachers from selected from Gassol, Takum and Wukari Education Zones of Taraba State using multi-stage sampling technique. The sample size for this study was equivalent to 69% of the entire population of social studies teachers in Taraba State. Instrument for data collection was a structured Questionnaire titled "Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of the Psychological Determinant of Divorce among Couples Questionnaire" (SSTPPDDCQ). The instrument was validated by three experts from University of Nigeria, Nsukka whose opinions and corrections helped to improve the final version of the instrument for the purpose of data collection. The reliability of the instrument was done through trial testing and administered on 20 social studies teachers outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha statistic was used in estimating the reliability of the instrument and a reliability index of 0.92 was obtained which was considered appropriate for the study. Data collected were analyzed using percentages to answer the research questions while the null hypothesis was tested using Mann Whitney U-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: What are Social studies teachers' perceptions of the psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State?

Table 1: Percentage ratings of Social studies teachers' perceptions on psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State

S/N	Items	Frequency		Percentage %		Decision
		SD+D	SA+A	SD+D	SA+A	
1	Barrenness/infertility	20	351	5.4	94.6	Agree
2	Infidelity/flirting/cheating in marriage	20	351	5.4	94.6	Agree
3	Suspiciousness of one's own spouse	75	296	20.2	79.8	Agree
4	Emotionally depressed and traumatized	87	284	23.5	76.5	Agree
5	Marital dissatisfaction	76	295	20.5	79.5	Agree
6	Failure in marital expectations after marriage	71	300	19.1	80.9	Agree
7	Loss of interest in the marriage/basic unhappiness at home	59	312	15.9	84.1	Agree
8	Personality characteristics such as excessive aggressiveness	67	304	18.1	81.9	Agree
9	Constant nagging and quarrelling	54	317	14.6	85.4	Agree
10	Anger and hot temper	15	356	4.0	96.0	Agree
11	Shifting of blame among couples	103	268	27.8	72.2	Agree
12	Bickering /backbiting	117	254	31.5	68.5	Agree
13	Compulsive/pathological liar	28	343	7.5	92.5	Agree
14	Un-forgiving mind-set	50	319	14.0	86.0	Agree
15	Revengeful heart to get back at other partner	53	318	14.3	85.7	Agree
16	Verbal abuse/full of poisonous words	3	368	0.8	99.2	Agree
17	Domestic violence (physical assault)	39	332	10.5	89.5	Agree
18	No division of house cores/team spirit	125	246	33.7	66.3	Agree
19	No sense of family love and affection	60	311	16.2	83.8	Agree
20	Lack of courtesy/value conflict	102	269	27.5	72.5	Agree
21	Feeling of un-safe with him/her	84	287	22.6	77.4	Agree
22	Partner's prolonged illness	157	214	42.3	57.7	Agree

Note: N = 371, SD = Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, SA = Strongly Agree & A=Agree; Any item with rating point < 50% = Disagree & item with rating point >50% = Agree.

Table 1 shows the percentage level at which Social studies teachers perceived the following items as psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State; barrenness or infertility (94.6%), infidelity or cheating in marriage (94.6%), suspicion of one's spouse (79.8%), depression (76.5%), marital dissatisfaction (79.5%), failure in marital expectations (80.9%), loss of interest in the marriage or unhappiness at home (84.1%), excessive aggression (81.9%), constant nagging and quarrelling (85.4%), anger and hot temper (96.0%), intolerance (72.2%), bickering or backbiting (68.5%), pathological lying (92.5%), unforgiveness (86.0%), revengeful (85.7%), verbal abuse (99.2%), domestic violence (89.5%), loss of team spirit (66.3%), no sense of family love and affection (83.8%), lack of courtesy (72.5%), feeling of unsafe (77.4%) and partner's prolonged illness (57.7%). Thus, Table 1 shows that all the items scored above 50%. This implies that social studies teachers perceive psychological issues as being responsible for divorce among couples in Taraba State

Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female social studies teachers on psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba state.



Table 2: Mann-Whitney U-test between the perception of male and female social studies teachers on psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State

S/N	Item	Gender		Mean Rank	Mann Whitney U	Z	p-value	Decision
		M	F					
1	Barrenness/infertility	201	170	186.55	26974.00	0.123	0.90	NS
2	Infidelity/flirting/cheating in marriage	201	170	189.65	16351.00	0.813	0.41	NS
3	Suspiciousness of one's own spouse	201	170	192.92	15694.50	1.473	0.14	NS
4	Emotionally depressed and traumatized	201	170	182.86	16453.50	0.666	0.50	NS
5	Marital dissatisfaction	201	170	185.49	16983.00	0.106	0.91	NS
6	Failure in marital expectations after marriage	201	170	189.08	16465.50	0.649	0.51	NS
7	Loss of interest in the marriage/ basic unhappiness at home	201	170	192.74	15731.00	1.446	0.14	NS
8	Personality characteristics such as excessive aggressiveness	201	170	191.91	25898.00	1.256	0.20	NS
9	Constant nagging and quarrelling	201	170	191.13	16053.50	1.095	0.27	NS
10	Anger and hot temper	201	170	188.79	16524.50	0.622	0.53	NS
11	Shifting of blame among couples	201	170	184.16	16714.50	0.388	0.69	NS
12	Bickering /backbiting	201	170	185.42	16968.00	0.121	0.90	NS
13	Compulsive/pathological liar	201	170	182.53	26388.50	0.801	0.42	NS
14	Un-forgiving mind-set	201	170	188.16	16650.50	0.461	0.64	NS
15	Revengeful heart to get back on the other partner	201	170	181.91	16262.00	0.875	0.64	NS
16	Verbal abuse/full of poisonous words	201	170	187.06	16871.00	0.247	0.80	NS
17	Domestic violence (physical assault)	201	170	183.49	16579.50	0.437	0.66	NS
18	No division of house cores/team spirit	201	170	184.43	16770.00	0.325	0.84	NS
19	No sense of family love and affection	201	170	181.61	16203.00	0.935	0.35	NS
20	Lack of courtesy/value conflict	201	170	188.06	16671.00	0.433	0.66	NS
21	Feeling of un-save with him/her	201	170	188.93	16495.50	0.612	0.54	NS
22	Partner's prolonged illness	201	170	183.06	16495.00	0.604	0.55	NS

Note: N = 371, M =Male, F=Female, S=Significant, NS=Not Significant, p-value < 0.05 (level of significance)

Table 2 shows significant levels of all the items perceived by Social studies teachers as psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State. These are barrenness or infertility ($0.90 > 0.05$), infidelity or flirting or cheating in marriage ($0.41 > 0.05$), suspiciousness of one's own spouse ($0.14 > 0.05$), emotionally challenges and depression ($0.50 > 0.05$), marital dissatisfaction ($0.91 > 0.05$), failure in marital expectations ($0.51 > 0.05$), loss of interest in the marriage or unhappiness at home ($0.14 > 0.05$), excessive aggressiveness ($0.20 > 0.05$), constant nagging and quarrelling ($0.27 > 0.05$), anger and hot temper ($0.53 > 0.05$), intolerance ($0.69 > 0.05$), bickering or backbiting ($0.90 > 0.05$), compulsive or pathological liar ($0.42 > 0.05$), intolerance ($0.64 > 0.05$), revengeful ($0.64 > 0.05$), verbal abuse ($0.80 > 0.05$), domestic violence ($0.66 > 0.05$), no sense of family love and affection ($0.35 > 0.05$), lack of courtesy/value conflict ($0.66 > 0.05$), feeling of un-save with him/her ($0.54 > 0.05$) and partner's prolonged illness ($0.55 > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. This signifies that there are no significant differences in the ways male and female Social studies teachers, perceive psychological determinants of divorce among couples in Taraba State.

Discussion

The finding of this study with respect to research question 1 and hypothesis 1 showed that majority of Social study teachers perceived psychological determinates as major factors of divorce in Taraba state. This could be as a result of the fact that most of the issues that worry couples in marriage have some serious psychological implications especially such issues that bother on social background, personal psychology, emotional attachment and other related psycho-social issues. This implies that social studies teachers strongly agreed that psychological determinants are the major factors that contribute to divorce among couples in Taraba State. The findings with respect to the hypothesis show that the male and female teachers did not significantly differ in their perceived psychological determinates of divorce among couples in Taraba state. This suggests that both male and female teachers share similar psychological, emotional and motivational disposition with respect to causes of divorce among couples in Taraba state. This finding is in line with that of Mojtabai et al. (2017) which reported that infidelity, childlessness, emotional challenges, depressed, trauma, marital dissatisfaction, loss of interest, excessive aggressive, verbal abuse, domestic violence, constant quarrels, hot temper, lying, unforgiveness, etc constitute causes of divorce and other marital problems in the society. In addition, the findings of Fura (2018) supports the position on psychological determinates of divorce among couples.

Conclusion

The study concluded that some major psychological issues such as domestic violence, unforgiveness, intolerance, etc contribute significantly to marital conflict and possible cases of divorce among couples in Taraba state. Significantly, both male and female Social studies teachers seem to agree on the role psychological factors play in causing divorce among couples in Taraba state.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Government should provide in-service capacity-building trainings for both male and female teachers on better ways of handling marital issues and contents in Social studies curriculum.
2. Textbook writers for Social studies programme at the basic education level should encourage the participation of teachers who teach the subject in the classroom by inviting them to contribute to textbook writing through workshops and other relevant academic engagements. This could help to enrich topics on marital conflict in Social studies textbooks at the Basic education level.



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