

Communication Styles as Correlates of Marital Stability among Married Couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

This study is to find out the relationship among communication styles Assertive, Aggressive, Passive and Passive/aggressive styles of Communication- and marital stability among couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District with a view to providing its implications for marital counselling. The research study was a correlation type and has a total population of 1,241,205 married individuals. Two sampling techniques (purposive and proportionate sampling to select three local government areas from senatorial zone, proportionate sampling was used in choosing the number of samples to be selected from each local government area and couples to be selected at the field was used.) This will give the researchers chance to meet up with a sample size of 334 as determined by research advisors (2006) table for determining sample size from a given population. An adapted questionnaire, Communication Styles and Marital stability Questionnaire (CSMSQ) was used and it has construct and content validity as ascertained by the experts in test and measurement, The reliability of 0.72 which was obtained through test, re-test method of estimating reliability with the help of researcher's advisors. Four null hypotheses were formulated and was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula. This study examined the relationship among communication styles, marital stability and married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. It discovered a large percentage of married couples in Sokoto State are adequately adjusted in their marital relationship. This led to the conclusion that marital stability has a lead role to play in all marital relationship; it needs to be refined among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District and Nigeria at large with sole aim of having robust families. In other words, robust families in societies indicate existence of peace, security and success among couples in the study area and Nigeria at large. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were put

forward for married couples, pre- married couples, marital counsellors, guidance counsellors, parents, religious leaders, entire state and the nation at large.

Keywords: Marital Stability, Married Couples, Assertive, Aggressive, Passive and Passive/aggressive styles of Communication

Introduction

The condition of being in an intimate relationship as husband and wife is the bed rock of a good family. Marriage is part of culture which come in to being by formalization either religion or customs and laws. It is a means by which physiological, emotional, social and security needs of individuals are achieved (Tambawal 2021). To contract a marriage progress and retain it, shows stability and success while happenings of divorce show danger and in security in the society. Marriage is a human behavior that requires a man and woman to be united and live in an intimate relationship and develop together. Such a union may form the nuclear of the family. Marriage union is solemnized and last till death separate the spouses or when there is divorce, marriage may be brief or long. Successful or not; the standard of each marriage depends on what the partner brings into it, and what they make of it once they are together (Akinade 2015).

Marriage is viewed as social institution which involves a man and a woman with significant importance to a given society. However, most religions consider marriage as a sacred union rather than social institution (Esere, Ake & Oladun, 2014).

The Holy Qur'an 30 vs. 21 states And among his signs is that He creates for you mates from among your selves that ye may dwell peacefulness with them and he has put love and mercy between your hearts. Truly in that are signs for those who reflect The Holy Bible describes marriage as a union between a man and a woman in the Garden of Eden where Adam and Eve lived as husband and wife (Gen: 2:18). Nwoye in Ajayi and Esere (2019) described marriage as a partnership contract without an escape clause. This means that marriage should be an everlasting agreement between the couple. Marriage should be a permanent contract. Marriage has been defined by different authors according to their own perception of its functions. Olayinka (2000) defined marriage as a social institution for the union of a man and his wife in body and soul. Omari (2009) observed that since marriage involves the coming together of a man and woman to raise a family, the most important aim of this union is to meet the satisfaction of security and enduring affection and companionship, sexual relationship and the building of the home and the family.

Marriage depends on many different things to be successful: trust, love, time, friendship, understanding, honesty, loyalty sincerity and above all effective communication (Esere, Yusuf, & Omotosho, 2011). Although marriage has clear implications for individuals' general sense of well-being, the essence of the marital relationship lies in the day-to-day interactions in which married couples engage.

Communication is the expression of ideas for feelings. It is an act of conveying intended meaning to another entity through the use mutually comprehended signs and semiotic rules (study of signs and symbols as well as their meaning and use). Communication is needed in any human interactive without which the atmosphere was cloudy leading to understanding one another. (Idowu & Esere in Ibrahim 2016).

Communication can also be seen as the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs. It is a complex process whereby information is enclosed in a package and is channeled and imparted by a sender to a receiver via the medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender feedback. All forms of communication require a sender, a message, and an intended recipient (Montana & Charnov, 2008; Holmes, 2002). It is the way humans create and share meaning, both verbally and nonverbally (Olson & Defrain, 2000).

Several studies have found that overall marital satisfaction was higher among couples who rated their communication as good. (Fowers; Gottman & Krokoff; Holman & Brock; Metts & Cupach cited in Ajayi & Esere (2019) all suggest that effective communication amongst other factors contribute to happy, satisfying and stable marriage. Tanner in Santrock (2006) observed that lack of communication was high on women's reasons for divorce whereas for men it was insignificant. Development lists have conducted less research on the quality of communication within families than on some of the other dimensions of communication, so they are a long way from understanding all the ramifications of communication styles (Bee and Boyd in Ajayi & Esere, 2019). Concerns about communication ability are becoming wide spread. More and more marital failures are being blamed on the inability of couples to communicate effectively (Orthner in Ajayi & Esere, 2019). What these and other studies seem to be saying is that good communication does not just involve periodic problem solving, it is a condition of the relationship that is continuously reinforced.

Understanding one's personal style of communication will go a long way towards helping to create good and lasting feelings on our companions. When married individuals have in-depth understanding of each other they can adopt more readily to their styles of communication. According to Anne in Tambawal (2021) there are four (4) fundamental communication styles these are assertive, aggressive, passive and passive/ aggressive styles.

Aggressive style of communication is a style in which individuals express their feeling and opinions as well as advocate for their needs in a way that violates the rights of others. Aggressive communicators are verbally and/or physically abusive. Aggressive style of communication is born out of low self-esteem often caused by past physical and/or emotional abuse, unhealed emotional wounds and feeling of powerlessness. Behavioural characteristics that can be found in couples using aggressive style of communication are bullying, intimidating, explosive as well as being hostile. If aggressive style of communication is adopted in a marriage it could lead to physical assaults and disrupt the peaceful co-existence of not only the marriage but the community at large. Children born into such marriages are usually exhibiting characteristics of achieving goals at the expense of others and are hostile in the community. Aggressive style of communication can lead to marital failure.

Passive communication style is the style in which couple developed a pattern of avoiding expressing their opinion feelings, protecting their rights, identifying and meeting their needs (Anne, 2011).

Passive/aggressive style of communication is exhibited when couples appear calm on the surface but are really acting out anger in a subtle indirect, or behind the scenes way (Anne, 2011). According to Joe (2013) passive/oppressive style of communication is common among women. Joe explained that many women sometimes find it difficult to express their feelings and make their opinion to their husbands instead they pretend that all is well but pass destructive or negative comments about their husbands to either friends or family. The stability of a marriage cannot be achieved through pretense.

In marital relationship, communication style could play a vital role in foreseeing marital stability since couples need to communicate almost every minute of their being together and the type of communication style adopted many makes or mar their marriage. Effective and clear communication

promotes healthy relationship while poor or ambiguous styles of communication could lead to marital distress. Thus, human emotions are closely linked with their mode of communication.

In view of the above discussion about these fundamental styles of communications as a professional guidance counsellor in the making with the experience obtained as a result of intervening in to marital conflict resolution in the study area, made the researcher to understand most of the marital problems originated from inadequate good and effective communication styles adopted by such couples.

Statement of the Problem

Many marital relationships started as origin of accomplishment and pleasure but unfavorably abolished due to loss of hope and annoyance. The occurrences of intolerance, brutality, lack of determination on faithfulness among married couple, spouse beating one another among others, make some people sacred and doubt existence of accomplishment and pleasure from marital relationship. Divorce is the trend in the study area, Sokoto State more specifically thus, the consequential effect on the social, physiological, psychological, and emotional life of the husband, wife and their children as well as indeed other challenging by product of the same roots. Marriage failure has no consideration for religion, economic status or ethnic group. Adeniran in Tambawal (2021) found that marital failure more endemic in Africa and Asia than Australia and Europe. High rate of divorce in Africa was traced to westernization and urbanization and industrialization and globalization. The extended family that used to resolve misunderstanding between husband and wife is active like in the past because of the shift towards nuclear family system distinguish by less involvement in the resolution in the marital conflict. According to Philips in Tambawal (2021) divorce rate in the United States and United Kingdom stood at 4.95% and 3.08% per thousand marriages respectively.

Another instance is the case Saadatu Umar of Danhili area sued her husband to Kanwuri Lower Sharia court with case number CV/61 2018 demanding for marriage dissolution due to inadequate and poor communication style to explain the current economic situation. Thus, plus many cases of marriage dissolution in Sokoto, Worries and disturbing to many stake holders. As such he felt the need to investigate the existence relationship among the above

variable with the aim of boosting marital stability and stability in Sokoto central senatorial district and state at large.

Most of studies consulted earlier such as Tambawal (2021) Maikano (2019) Royo, Nurain and Afosared (2011), Isere, Yusuf and Omotosho (2011) among others were carried out either abroad, southern part of Nigeria and Sokoto state at large. However, it seems there are little studies carried out investigating relationship between communication styles and marital stability in Sokoto senatorial district. The main thrust of this study is to examine the relationship between communication styles and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto senatorial district as contribution to knowledge towards filling this existing gap.

Conceptual frame work

This research work on communication styles assertive, aggressive, passive and passive aggressive styles of communication as well as marital stability among marital couples in Sokoto senatorial district embrace certain

Psychological constructs concepts for which the study and its findings could only be effectively conducted and attend respectively when there is comprehensive understanding of constructs concepts involves. Therefore, the researchers extensively and carefully reviewed and highlight some set of these ideas, views, opinions, belief and process from which the topic was developed, for example what communication is?

Communication styles and its types, marriage and types of marriage as well as its theories among others were fully and carefully articulated to assist the researchers have the clear understanding on contextual meaning of the topic under investigation.

Objectives of the Study:

The following objectives were formulated to find out if a relationship exist between:

- i. To examine assertive style of communication and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto senatorial district

- ii. To examine aggressive style of communication and marital stability among married couple in Sokoto senatorial district
- iii. To examine Passive style of communication and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto senatorial district
- iv. To examine Passive aggressive style of communication and marital stability among married couple in Sokoto senatorial district

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised and tested on 0.05 level of significance

- H₁ There is no significant relationship between assertive communication style and marital stability communication style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto senatorial district
- H₂ There is no significant relationship between aggressive communication style and marital stability among marital couple in Sokoto senatorial district
- H₃ There is no significant relationship between passive communication style and marital stability among marital couple in Sokoto senatorial district
- H₄ There is no significant relationship between passive aggressive communication style and marital stability among marital couples in Sokoto senatorial district

Methodology

Descriptive research design of the correlation type was adopted in this study. A correlation study investigated the extent to which variation in which factors or subject corresponds with variations in one or more other factors based on correlation coefficient. Omore Guiwa in Tambawal (2012) As such this research will use correlation design to establish relationship between communication styles and marital stability with the prime aim of making prediction of marital stability among married couple in Sokoto central senatorial district.

The population of the study Sydney in Tambawal (2021) define population of the study as the entire group of persons, objects or events whose

characteristics are been studied the population of this study would comprise all married individual living in the central senatorial district implication for counseling. According to 2023 projected population and housing census of the Federal Republic of Nigeria there are 1,241,205 married people in the central senatorial district (NPC Sokoto)

The research advisors (2006) table for the determining sample size from a given population was used and arrived at 334 married individuals as sample of the study (334 married couple) the researchers was employ purposive sampling technique by using random generation application in the selection of married couples at the field with the aim of given all married individuals an equal chance of participation. It allows researchers to select participants or cases that are most relevant to the research question, leading to more focused and insightful data collection

The instruments that were used in collecting data for this research was a questionnaire, the instrument has three sections as follows: Demographic data of respondents, Couple communication styles indices developed by Tambawal to measure couples communication styles Marital stability scales to measure couples marital stability. Section A comprises demographic information of gender aged at marriage. Educational background among others Section B communication styles such as assertive, aggressive, passive and passive aggressive. Section C solicits information for marital stability. Section B and C using for Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA) Agreed (A), Disagreed (D) and Strongly Disagreed (SD)

An instrument is said to be valid if it measures what it supposed to measure Olayiwola in Tambawal (2021). As such a test or an instrument must adequately measure what it supposes to measure before it is considered valid. They scrutinize the items some were re-casted some were dropped and some were added. Finally, the experts judge that the instrument has content validity.

Omorogiwa in Tambawal (2021) defined reliability as the consistency with which an instrument measures what it sets out to measure. Reliability means trust worthiness of an instrument. The two sets or scores obtained was correlated using Pearson product moment correlation “r” (PPMC) formula for making the instrument reliable for this research work.

The data collected was analyzed using tabulations and percentages for descriptive data while Pearson Product Moment was used to test 1-4 generated

hypotheses and Multiple Regression Analysis was used to test hypothesis 4 all the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha levels. The rationale behind subjecting hypotheses 1-4 to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), they were measuring two variables and hypothesis 4 were analysed with Multiple Regression Analysis formula because it has more than two variables measuring which variable is a better predictor of Marriage Stability among assertive, aggressive, passive, and passive/aggressive styles of communication.

Results

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between assertive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District.

Table 1: Summary of Relationship between assertive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	P-value	Decision
Assertive Communication Style	334	18.90	1.577	.276	.000	Rejected
Marital Stability	334	69.02	7.869			

Source: field work, 2025

From Table 1, it can be seen that the relationship between assertive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was positive with Pearson's $r = .276$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value} .000 < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between assertive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than .05 level of significance Therefore increase in assertive communication style is accompanied by an increase in assertive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. Thus, hypothesis which state there is no significant relationship between assertive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was rejected.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District.

Table 1: Summary of Relationship between Aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	P-value	Decision
Aggressive Communication Style	334	6.70	1.678			
				-.174	.001	Rejected
Marital Stability	334	69.02	7.869			

Source: field work, 2025

From Table 2, it can be seen that the relationship between aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was significant with Pearson's $r = -.174$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value } .001 < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, increase in aggressive communication style is accompanied by a decrease in marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. Thus, hypothesis which state there is no significant relationship between aggressive communication style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was rejected.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between Passive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District

Table 3: Summary of Relationship between Passive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	P-value	Decision
Passive Communication Style	334	14.30	1.794			
				-.037	.500	Retained
Marital Stability	334	69.02	7.869			

Source: field work, 2025

From Table 3, it can be seen that the relationship between Passive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District not significant with Pearson's $r = -.037$ which was low and statistically not significant with $p\text{-value } .500 > .05$. Thus, the hypothesis was retained. This indicates that there is no significant relationship between Passive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District because the $p\text{-value}$ is greater than $.05$ level of significance Therefore, decrease in passive communication style is accompanied by a decrease in marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. Thus, hypothesis which state there is no significant relationship between passive communication style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was retained.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between Passive/Aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District

Table 4: Summary of Relationship between Passive/Aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	r-Cal	P-value	Decision
Pass/Aggressive Communication Style	334	12.01	4.021	-.431	.000	Rejected
Marital Stability	334	69.02	7.869			

Source: field work, 2025

From Table 4, it can be seen that the relationship between passive/aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was significant with Pearson's $r = -.431$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value } .000 < .05$. Thus, the hypothesis is rejected.

This indicates that there is statistically significant relationship between passive/aggressive Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than $.05$ level of significance Therefore, increase in passive/aggressive communication style is accompanied by a decrease in marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. Thus, hypothesis which state there is no significant relationship between passive/aggressive

Communication Style and marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was rejected.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Analysis on Marital Stability

Variables	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE	F	B	T	P-value
Assertive	.062	.004	.002	.193	1.321	-.285	-7.391	.000
Aggressive	.003	.000	-.004	.148	.002	-.036	-1.149	.251
Passive	.033	.001	-.003	.137	.298	-.014	-.448	.655
Passive/aggressive	.054	.016	.012	.063	4.213	-.157	-4.869	.000
Marital stability	.082	.002	.000	.068	1.024	.896	22.378	.000

A look at the squared part correlations revealed that assertive communication style accounted for 06% of the variance in marital stability with $R^2_{adj} = .002$, $F(1, 328) = 1.321$, $p < .05$. And aggressive communication style accounted for 0.003% of the variance in marital stability $R_{adj} = -.004$, $F(2, 328) = .002$, $p > .05$. Passive communication style accounted for 0.03% of the variance in marital stability $R^2_{adj} = -.003$, $F(3, 328) = .298$, $p > .05$. Passive/aggressive communication style accounted for 0.05% of the variance in marital stability $R^2_{adj} = .012$, $F(4, 328) = 4.213$, $p < .05$. While marital stability accounted for 0.82% of the variance in marital stability $R_{adj} = .000$, $F(5, 328) = 1.024$, $p < .05$. Thus, the significant results of the procedure indicated that marital stability was able to account for significant amount of variance in the dependent variable (marital stability) while assertive communication style ($B = -.285$; $t = -7.391$; $p < 0.05$), aggressive communication style ($B = -.036$; $t = -1.149$; $p > 0.05$); passive communication style ($B = -.014$; $t = -.448$; $p > 0.05$); and passive/aggressive communication style ($B = .157$; $t = -4.869$; $p < 0.05$) were not significant. Therefore, the hypothesis was retained. This indicates that marital stability, ($B = .896$, $t = 22.378$, $p < .05$) emerged as the significant predictor. This indicated that marital stability is a better predictor of marital stability among married couple in Sokoto Central Senatorial District than assertive communication style, aggressive communication style, passive communication style and passive/aggressive communication style.

Summary of the major findings

In view of the hypotheses tested and interpreted the following summaries were generated;

- i. Assertive communication style was significantly related to marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. This has revealed that married couples can succeed in their marital relationship if they adopt a communication style in which they express their feelings, opinions and advocate for their rights without violating the rights of others.
- ii. Aggressive communication style was significantly related to marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. This has shown that a communication style in which people express their feeling, opinions and advocate for their needs in a way that violate the right of others has negative relationship with marital stability.
- iii. Passive communication style was not significantly related to marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. This means that marital stability of married couples have nothing to do with their communication style of avoiding their opinion with a view of pleasing and avoiding conflict with their spouse.
- iv. Passive/aggressive communication style was significantly related to marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. This shown that a communication style in which people appear passive on the surface but are really acting out of anger inside has negative relationship with marital stability.

Discussion

This section presents a discussion on the major findings of this study. The finding from null hypothesis one revealed that there was significant relationship between assertive communication style and married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. The analysis revealed a Pearson's correlation index of $r\text{-Cal}=.276$ with $p=0.000$ which was statistically significant. This means that assertive style of communication positively influences married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. The findings of this result could be as a result of the fact that without communication people cannot be heard and understood. This finding is in line with the findings of Tambawal (2021) who reported that assertive communication style was significantly related to marital success. Yusuf in Tambawal (2021) stated

that love and cordial relationship are enhanced when couples communicate assertively with each other. The findings of this study were in line with the findings of Batool and Khalid in Ibrahim (2016) revealed that positive relationship was found between effective communication and marital success. Mayer, Salovey and Caruso in Tambawal (2021) found that accuracy in expressing feelings correlates with marital stability.

The result of null hypothesis two has shown that aggressive communication style and marital success with Pearson's correlation coefficient of $r = -0.174$, $p = 0.001$ were significantly negative related. This indicates that there was negative relationship between aggressive communication style and marital stability because the P-Value is significantly less than level 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the relationship between aggressive communication style and married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District was negative related. This means that aggressive communication style has negative influence on married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. This finding is in line with the findings of Ibrahim (2016) who posited that that aggression or excessive anger is one of the major sources of marital failure. This finding also in congruence with that of Tambawal (2021) who reported that aggressive communication style has negative influence on marital success of married couples in Sokoto State.

Another finding from analysis of null hypothesis three revealed that the relationship between passive communication style and marital stability among married couples was negative with Pearson's $r = -.037$ which was low and statistically not significant with p-value $.000 > .05$. This means that there was no significant relationship between passive communication style and married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District This finding contradict the work of Berger and CalAbrisein Tambawal (2021) whose study characterized passive communication style as uncertainty reduction theory of communication and self-disclosure theory which encourage married couples to lower their level of uncertainty in order to increase level of intimacy among them. This is because if uncertainty exists among couples, it was very difficult to attain stability in their marital relationship. The finding of this study also disagreed with that of Tambawal (2021) who reported that passive communication style has significant positive influence on marital success of married couples in Sokoto State. The disagreement in this study could be as a result of the fact that academicians who are the subject of this study are not known for shielding their opinions.

The finding of the null hypothesis four shown that the relationship between passive/aggressive communication style and marital stability among married couples was negative with Pearson's $r = -.431$ which was high and statistically significant with $p\text{-value} .000 < .05$. This indicates that there is statistically negative significant relationship between passive/aggressive communication style and marital stability among married couples because the $p\text{-value}$ is less than .05 level of significance This means that an increase in passive/aggressive communication will lead to a decrease in marital stability. This finding concurs with that of Furnham, in Ibrahim (2016) which revealed that couples who did not avoid discussion of relationship problems were most succeeded couples.

The result from the analysis that marital stability accounted for 0.82% of the variance in marital success $R \text{ adj} = .000$, $F(5, 328) = 1.024$, $p < .05$. Thus, the significant results of the procedure indicated that marital stability was able to account for significant amount of variance in the dependent variable (marital success) while assertive communication style ($B = -.285$; $t = -7.391$; $p < 0.05$), aggressive communication style ($B = -.036$; $t = -1.149$; $p > 0.05$); passive communication style ($B = -.014$; $t = -.448$; $p > 0.05$); and passive/aggressive communication style ($B = .157$; $t = -4.869$; $p < 0.05$) were not significant. This indicates that marital stability, ($B = .896$, $t = 22.378$, $p < .05$) emerged as the significant predictor. This indicated that marital stability is a better predictor of married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District than assertive communication style, aggressive communication style, passive communication style and passive/aggressive communication style. This result is not surprising because everyone who goes into marriage relationship expects to be happy in it, irrespective of communication styles (assertive, aggressive, passive or passive/aggressive). It is therefore the personal determination of the spouses to make their marriage a success that makes the difference

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship among communication styles, marital stability and married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. It discovered a large percentage of married couples in Sokoto State are adequately adjusted in their marital relationship. This led to the conclusion that marital stability has a lead role to play in all marital relationship; it needs to be refined among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District and Nigeria at large with sole aim of having robust families. In other words, robust

families in societies indicate existence of peace, security and success among couples in the study area and Nigeria at large.

On the communication styles, the findings reveal that out of four basic styles of communication that is assertive, aggressive, passive, and passive/aggressive, only passive style has no significant relationship with marital stability among married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District. While assertive, aggressive and passive/aggressive communication style has significant relationship with married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District in the study area. Thus, communication is the life wire of human existence as no individual can exist in isolation as such style adopted by individuals determined their success in relationships marital inclusive, in conclusion married couples should always respect the styles of communication they use when communicating to their spouses as many married individuals are not aware of styles of communication and their implications to relationships. In order to attain success in marital relationship a special training on such styles and when to use appropriate style or styles can create peaceful, healthy and stable marriages in Sokoto State and Nigeria at large.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were put forward for married couples, pre – married couples, marital counsellors, guidance counsellors, parents, religious leaders, entire state and the nation at large.

- i. Married couples in Sokoto Central Senatorial District should be more assertive in their style of communication to be able to resolve issues and challenges on time in their marriage.
- ii. Married couples should avoid using aggressive style of communication to achieve success in marital relationship.
- iii. Couples should not use passive communication style of communication to enhance marital stability.
- iv. Passive-aggressive style of communication should not be adopted where necessary to ensure marital stability.

Implications for Marital Counselling

The findings of the study revealed that of all the communication styles such as assertive, aggressive, passive and passive/ aggressive, only assertive was related significantly to marital stability. Apart from being passive communication style, all other styles of communication such as assertive, aggressive, passive/aggressive have significant relationship with marital stability among married couples of Sokoto Central Senatorial District. Married couples can enhance their marital relationship through proper understanding of inappropriate communication styles that can lead to marital crisis and social skill which can reduce the feelings of either the husband or the wife that he/she is superior over the other.

The counsellors are seen as individuals who have acquired those special skills and techniques through a professional training in strategies for modifying marital behaviour which enable them give counselling within and beyond matrimonial homes. Counsellors have a crucial role to play in organizing, coordinating and managing marital relationships and issues for premarital and married couples. In this regard, the counsellors should help the intending and married couples to understand themselves in relation to situations and environment they live, let them comprehend the better ways they can communicate that is verbal and non-verbal expressions in whatever situations they find themselves in life. Counsellors in Sokoto State and Nigeria at large should intensify effort in giving the intending and married couples proper and clear articulations of what marital life is as it is an intimate relationship with sole aim of development. It is the duty of counsellors to make couples have good understanding of when to be assertive and when to be passive or passive/aggressive during communicating with spouse. Marital counsellors in their various capacities should assume more active role in encouraging positive cordial relationship especially in the area of communication and marital stability. They should enlighten married couples on the consequences of marital stability in marital relationship that could lead to marital failure and help them to be more positive in their thoughts and behaviours which they (marital counsellors) can achieve through counselling sessions, workshops, seminars and da'awah programmes if condition warranted.

Guidance counsellors, parents, religious leaders who may serve as para-marital counsellors in the society should guide married and pre-married couples on the need to have in-depth understanding of each other and counsel

the married couples on the need to be assertive when communicating with each other to be able to resolve marital challenges as soon as possible. Counsel couples on the multiplier effects of marital failure on the children, society and entire nation at large.

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