Determinants of Marital Instability as Perceived by Academic Staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto

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Abstract
This study investigated the determinants of marital instability as perceived by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto: implications for marital counselling. The population comprises of 852 academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. A total of 265 academic staff was sampled. An instrument titled "Determinant of Marital Instability Scale" with reliability index of 0.76 was used in collecting relevant data. Frequency counts and percentages were used for descriptive data while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test were used to test the three null hypotheses generated. The findings revealed no significant difference in perception of the respondents based on their educational qualification, marital status and age at marriage. As a result of this, it was recommended among others that, Counsellors should explore public gatherings, conferences, seminars and symposia in reaching out to the public of different educational backgrounds on marital conflict resolution related issues with the view to promoting a blissful happily married home.
Keywords: Marriage, Divorce, Staff, Instability, Counselling

Introduction
The rampant nature of marital instability all over the world is deteriorating social values and consequently causing social stigma. This is evidenced in a study conducted by Duntoye (1995) where he reported that there was a rise in petitions for divorce filed in England and Wales. He stated that the divorce rate in England had tripled in three years. According to him a similar situation was observed in Denmark and Germany. Bagarozzi and Ranon were quoted in Duntoye (1995) to have stated that United States has the highest marriage/divorce ratio of all industrial nations. Similarly, in Africa the evidence of marital instability is seen in the cases of divorce. To establish this, Akinbode is quoted in Garba (2006) to have reported that in

Zambia there are about 19,000 divorces per year. Nigeria was also, according to him, reported of 12,000 divorce cases in 1975.

Broken homes have now become rampant in our contemporary days in which husband, wife and their children live apart. This is evidenced from the fact that, the law courts are, day in day out, crowded with people willing to disrupt their marriages, creating social stigma in the society, strengthening the rate of hatred among families, ethnic groups, religious affiliation and the likes. In view of this, Ahmad in Garba (2006) noted that the problem of marital instability in Nigeria needs immediate attention. He further disclosed that, marital discord negatively affects spouses' smooth relationship with the children. So, the major problem of the present research therefore, is to replicate the already identified factors responsible for marital instability such as age at marriage, child bearing and childlessness, marital communication style, financial status, parental interference, educational attainment, illogical thoughts, drunkenness and marital infidelity and see how they are perceived by the academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto for the purpose of proffering how it could be remedied through marital counselling tools. Another major concern of this work is to ascertain the opinion of the Academic Staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University with regard to major factors responsible for marital instability in their own perceptions.

Marital instability according to Yeh, Lorenz, Wickrama, Conger and Elder (2006) is affective and cognitive states along the related actions that are precedent to terminating a relationship and a situation in an intact dyad not to ones that have already been disrupted. Lesmin and Sarah cited in Oyafunke, Falola and Salau (2014) referred to marital instability as the process whereby marriages breakdown through separation, desertion or divorce. It is used interchangeably with concepts like disharmony, disequilibrium and marital maladjustment. He further stressed that marital instability is failure of one or more individuals to perform their role and obligation. He equated marital conflict and disorganization, perceived family with conflict as problem – ridden and divorce as a publicly recognized form of marital instability.

There are causes of marital instability among which are:

a) **Age at marriage**: Many researchers maintained that age of spouses influences marital stability. For instance, Sofoluwe as cited in Duntoye (1995) in his study of 57 consecutive cases of divorce during July to October 1964 found that women seeking divorce are generally younger than their former and prospective husbands and that most of them are illiterates.

b) **Child-bearing or childlessness:** According to Olayinka in Garba (2006), the normal expectation is that married couple should be able to produce a child within a year of their marriage and that a great emphasis is placed on child-bearing. He further stressed that, a couple without a child is looked at as an unhappy family.

c) **Marital Communication Style**: According to Usoroh, Ekot and Inyang (2010), several studies have found that overall marital satisfaction was higher among couples who rated their communication as good. This implies that an unstable family

is that where there is lack of love, dishonesty, lack of positive communication, lack of care and management where there is chaos, pride, irrational thinking and so on. To this end, Usoroh, Ekot and Inyang (2010) observed that lack of communication was high on women's reasons for divorce whereas for men it was insignificant.

d) **Financial status**: Financial condition of the spouses always also contributes to the stability or otherwise of the marriage as maintained by many researchers. For instance, Olayinka (1987) asserted that the man is accepted as the head of the family and therefore, he is expected to shoulder the greatest financial responsibility in providing food and shelter; the wife can support him morally and financially but failure to play their roles results to marital instability.

e) **Parental Interference**: Parental Interference is also referred to as interference of in-law and this, according to Abubakar (2013), is regarded as one vital source of marital breakdown and it is traced to undue interference of parents. To her, this is made more prominent where any of the two partners makes it habitual to resort to using parents as a means of settling family conflicts.

f) **Marital Infidelity**: This, according to Garba (2006), is breaking of God's laws; behaviour that is against the principle of morality. Akanni (2011) maintained that infidelity leads to divorce and is probably the single most damaging thing that can happen to marriage.

However, Ahmed as reported in Garba (2006) averred that marriages are breaking day in day out. He cited, in buttressing his argument, Kwara State where he asserted that the issue of divorce has become a serious problem because many people are now seeking divorce. According to him, available records from one of the courts in Ilorin showed that 215 couples sought divorce in 1985 out of which 200 were granted by the court while 15 withdrew their applications. He further stated that, the same court recorded 700 cases of divorce suit in 1986 out of which 501 were granted. Also, in 1989, a total number of 616 people were seeking divorce in the same court in Ilorin and out of this, 335 were granted divorce. For the year 1990, from January to March as he reported, the court had registered 180 cases. In a more recent times, study conducted by Garba (2006) evidenced that there is higher rate of marital instability in Ilorin West and Offa Local Government Areas (LGAs), adding that it is because both of them are urban areas with higher population due to many governmental establishments, industries and large firms. He however asserted that the figures of divorce cases in other LGAs are high too, compared with their population and being rural settlements. The low divorce suit observed in some LGAs such as Ekiti LGA and the likes is because majority of the citizens of the areas reside in Lagos, Ilorin and other cities to pursue their businesses. So, it could be inferred from above stated evidences that there are many cases of divorce all over the world which are indicators of marital instability as opined by Akinboye (1982) and Duntoye (1995). These situations coupled with the researchers' experience arouse the curiosity of the researchers for an indepth knowledge in the area of marital relationship so that the appropriate marital counselling might be given.

Also, Ogwokhademhe and Ishola (2013) carried out a research titled "factors responsible for extramarital affairs in which 200 respondents were sampled and the

result of the finding indicated that, sex related factor was perceived by married adults in Lagos metropolis as the cause of infidelity. A study in which 200 respondents were sampled indicated that sex related factors was perceived by married adults in Lagos metropolis to be the highest factor responsible for extramarital affairs, Also gender, age, religion and educational qualification are the factors responsible for extramarital affairs, while family type of the respondents did not influence their perceptions.

Research Questions
The following questions are generated for the conduct of this study:
    1. What are the determinants of marital instability as perceived by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto?
    2. Is there any difference in the perception of determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their educational qualifications?
    3. Is there any difference in the perception of determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their marital status?
    4. Is there any difference in the perception of determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their age at marriage?

Research Hypotheses
The following null hypotheses are generated to guide the conduct of the study:
        Ho1: There is no significant difference in the perception of factors responsible for marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their educational qualifications.
        Ho2: There is no significant difference in the perception of factors responsible for marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their marital status.
        Ho3: There is no significant difference in the perception of factors responsible for marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their age at marriage.

Methodology
The research design employed was descriptive survey method. Descriptive research design according to Hassan (1995) is a broad area of research design that allows assessment of certain characteristics in a situation at one or more points in time. The population comprises of 852 academic staff in all the 11 Faculties, College and School of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto; according to the office of the Registrar, Establishment Division, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Also, the researchers employed proportional random sampling to draw 265 respondents from all the 11 faculties in the university to ensure a fair distribution of staff in the area of study.

A questionnaire titled Determinants of Marital Instability Scale (DMIS) was developed by the researchers from the reviewed literature to elicit information on the factors responsible for marital instability. The questionnaire comprises of introductory statement and two sections. Section A seeks information about the respondents' bio-data, while section B seeks information on the probable determinants of marital instability and consists of 10 sub-headings in which 4 items are under each sub-heading making 40 items in all. The respondents were required to simply tick strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree against their correct response. To ascertain the content and construct validity of this instrument, it was given to experts in the field of education from Faculty of Education and Extension Services, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto. Reliability of the DMIS was obtained through test re-test method. A total number of 30 questionnaire forms were administered twice on 30 lecturers in the Kwara State College of Education Ilorin with an interval of six (6) weeks. After the scoring, the two sets of scores were subjected to the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Procedure (r). The correlation coefficient of the instrument was obtained to be 0.76. Based on this, the instrument is deemed to be reliable enough for the study. The data generated was analyzed using frequency count, percentages, mean, ranked order, t-test and ANOVA.

Presentation of results
The analysis of the data was made by using both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Research question 1: What are the determinants of marital instability as perceived by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto?

Table 1: Ranking of the Determinants of Marital Instability as Perceived by Academic Staff

	Factor	**Mean**	**Rank**
1	Age at Marriage	10.59	7th
2	Religion	11.43	6th
3	Child Bearing and Childlessness	9.86	9th
4	Marital Communication Style	12.05	3rd
5	Financial Status	9.96	8th
6	Parental Interference	11.85	4th
7	Educational Attainment	9.45	10th
8	Illogical Thoughts	11.73	5th
9	Drunkenness	12.81	2nd
10	Marital Infidelity	12.98	1st

Result from table 1 showed the ranking of determinants of marital instability as perceived by academic staff. Result showed that the factor of marital infidelity ($\bar{x}$ = 12.98) was ranked as the strongest factor leading to marital instability, then followed

by drunkenness ($\bar{x}$ = 12.81) as second strongest factor and then followed by the factor of marital communication style ($\bar{x}$ = 12.05) as the third strongest. Furthermore, it was revealed that parental interference ($\bar{x}$ = 11.85), illogical thoughts ($\bar{x}$ = 11.73) and religion ($\bar{x}$ = 11.43) are other important factors that lead to marital instability as they were ranked 4th, 5th and 6th respectively. Other important factors that lead to marital instability as perceived by the academic staff were age at marriage ($\bar{x}$ = 10.59) ranked 7th, financial status ($\bar{x}$ = 9.96) ranked 8th and child bearing and childlessness ($\bar{x}$ = 9.86) ranked 9th. Finally, it is interesting to note that the academic staff ranked the factor of educational attainment ($\bar{x}$ = 9.45) as the last in leading to marital instability.

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the perception of the determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their educational qualification.

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the scores of the respondents to a one-way ANOVA test analysis. The results of the analyses are presented in tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's Degree	64	24.2
Master's Degree	149	56.2
PhD	52	19.6
Total	**265**	**100.0**

Table 2 presents the data based on the educational qualification of the respondents. It shows that out of 265 respondents, sixty-four (64) representing 24.2% hold Bachelor's degree, one hundred and fourty-nine (149) representing 56.2 per cent hold Master's degree while fifty-two (52) representing 19.6 percent hold PhD degree.

Table 3: One-way ANOVA showing the response of academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto on the determinants of marital instability on the basis of Educational Qualifications

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	69.730	2	34.865	.134		
					.875	
Within Groups	68071.528	261	260.810			Ho Retained
Total	68141.258	263				

The result of table 3 revealed that the difference in the perception of academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto on determinants of marital instability

based on their educational qualification is not significant. It is shown on the table that there is no significant difference in their perception based on their educational qualifications since the p-value (.875) is more than .05 level of significance. Hence, the Ho1 which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto on the determinants of marital instability based on their educational qualifications was retained.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the perception of the determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on marital status.

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the scores of the respondents to a t-test analysis and presented in tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Single	14	5.3
Married	251	94.7
Total	**265**	**100.0**

Table 4 presents the data based on the marital status of the respondents. It shows that out of 265 respondents, only fourteen (14) representing 52.3 per cent are not married (i.e. single) while two hundred and fifty-one (251) representing 94.7 per cent are married.

Table 5: t-test analysis showing the difference in Academic Staff Perception Based on Marital Status

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-Cal	P-value	Decision
Single	14	118.34	11.00				Ho
				262	1.34	.18	Retained
Married	251	112.25	16.27				

From the result of table 5, difference in the perception based on marital status showed that staff members that are single recorded a higher mean of 118.34 (SD=11.00) over those staff members that are married (Mean=112.25, SD=16.27) but the difference was not significant, because t-cal (262) = 1.34, p = .18. This indicates no significant difference in the perception of the factors responsible for marital instability based on marital status of academic staff members because the p-value is more than the .05 level of significance. Therefore, Ho2 which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of the determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto based on marital status was retained.

Ho3: There is no significant difference in the perception of the determinants of marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their age at marriage.

This hypothesis was tested by subjecting the scores of the respondents to analysis of variance and presented in tables 6 and 7.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Age at Marriage

Age	Frequency	Percent
20 – 35 Years	64	24.1
36 – 45 Years	168	63.4
46 years and above	33	12.5
Total	**265**	**100.0**

Table 6 presents the data based on the age at marriage of the respondents. It shows that out of 265 respondents, sixty-four (64) representing 24.1 per cent are between the ages of 20 – 35 years, one hundred and sixty-eight (168) representing 63.4 per cent are between the ages of 36 – 45 years while thirty-three (33) representing 12.5 percent are of the age of 46 years and above.

Table 7: One-way ANOVA showing the response of academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto on the determinants of marital instability on the basis of Age at marriage

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Between Groups	771.294	2	385.647	1.494		
Within Groups	67369.964	261	258.122		.226	Ho Retained
Total	68141.258	263				

The result of table 7 revealed that the difference in the perception of academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto on determinants of marital instability based on their age at marriage is not significant. It was shown in the table that there was no significant difference in their perception since the p-value (.226) is more than .05 level of significance. Hence, the Ho3 which states that there is no significant difference in the perception of academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto on the determinants of marital instability based on their age at marriage was retained.

Discussion of the Findings
The findings of the study from hypothesis one proved that the differences in the perception of factors responsible for marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their educational qualification was not significant. This was informed from the fact that the P-Value is more than the .05

level of significance. The finding is in contrary with that of Ogwokhademhe and Ishola (2013) which stated that, educational qualification on the other hand influences married adults in Lagos metropolis' perception on the factors responsible for extramarital affairs.

The finding from hypothesis two indicated that the difference in the perception of factors responsible for marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on marital status was not significant. This was because t-cal= 1.34 and P = .18. This indicated no significant difference in their perception, because the P-Value is more than the .05 level significance. But this is in contrary with the work of Garba (2006) who reported differences among teachers across their marital status in their perception of the determinant of marital stability.

The finding from hypothesis three showed that the difference in the perception of factors responsible for marital instability by academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto based on their age at marriage was not significant. This is because P = .226. This indicated no significant difference in their perception because the P-Value is more than the .05 level of significance. This is not in conformity with the work of Ogwokhademhe and Ishola (2013) who ascertained that different age groups of married adults in Lagos influence their perception on the factors responsible for extramarital affairs, citing Olayinka (2000) to have opined that mature individuals can cope with what marriage demand, than those that are too young.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that the academic staff of Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto irrespective of their educational qualification, marital status and age at marriage acknowledged that age at marriage, religion, childbearing and childlessness, marital communication style, financial status, parental interference, educational attainment, illogical thought, drunkenness and marital infidelity are important factors responsible for marital instability among couples. Among all these factors, marital infidelity emerged as the most prominent factor responsible for marital instability, while educational attainment was seen as the least factor.

Recommendations

1. Counsellors should explore public gatherings, conferences, seminars and symposia in reaching out to the public of different educational backgrounds on marital conflict resolution related issues with the view to promoting a blissful and happily married home.

2. Since marital status of the respondents had no significant influence on their perception of the factors responsible for marital instability, counsellors should not discriminate between single and married individuals in the provision and delivery of marital instability counselling programmes among the public.

3. An all-inclusive periodic marital orientation should always be embarked on by the counsellors for couples regardless of their ages at marriage in order to equip them with skills and strategies of resolving marital issues.

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