Contributing Factors of Marriage Dissolution in Oredo Local Government Area

By

Benedicta Osayamen Imudia
Department of Social work, Faculty of Social Sciences,
University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State. Nigeria
Email: benedicta.imudia@uniben.edu
08025856413

Abstract

Marriage is the oldest institution ordained by God. It is a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife thereby giving legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction. The objectives of the study were: to ascertain the impact of communication on marriage dissolution and to ascertain the impact of ethnicity on marriage dissolution in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo state. Social Learning theory was adopted for the study. The paper revealed that lack of communication is a strong factor to marriage dissolution and there is a significant influence of ethnicity/ unbalanced cultural development on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. The study recommended that communication is a catalyst to understanding among married couples and that cultural differences makes marriage beautiful where there love and understanding.

KEYWORDS: Communication, Dissolution, Ethnicity, Home, Marriage,

Introduction

Marriage is the oldest institution ordained by God. It is a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife thereby giving legitimacy to sexual relationship and reproduction (Sarker, 2007). Marriage is the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife for the purpose of companionship, procreation, maintaining a family (Gove, 2006). The joy of marriage knows no bound and it is the source of attraction for many entering into the institution but not all that enters into marriage are happy. In Nigeria, marriage is conceived as a sacred institution through which a man and a woman enter into some forms of contract for reciprocal obligation as husband and wife.

Marriage in Nigeria involves not only the individuals who enters into it but is seen as a social institution of mankind, which involves two families concerned and even beyond (Omeje, 2000). According to Aroh (2001), marriage has always been a partnership of survival with the preservation and improvement of the human species as its primary purpose. The importance of marriage as a social contract makes it a vital component of any

functioning society. Care and education of the young; the stability of the family; and the continuity of society upon which the survival of the human race depends. Marriage is an institution which is culturally and socially recognized.

However, marital dissolution has become a thing of concern in our contemporary societies and this is associated with marriage dissolution, separation, and divorce. Separation and dissolution are social phenomenon created by certain factors or eventual death of any of either the husband or the wife (Amina, 2008). In other words, marriage is predicated on the mutual consent of a man and a woman, to live together as husband and wife for life. In Nigeria, marriage dissolution is likened as "semi-hell" to the divorcees, their children and society (Epstein (2002), Omeje (2000) . Although the phenomenal upsurge of dissolved marriage in developing countries including Nigeria, during the decade has been stimulated by a growing acceptance of the principle that marriage dissolution is reasonable and at times a desirable alternative to an unhappy marriage, the problems associated with marriage dissolution are immeasurable. Obiadi (2003) listed the following as evil effects of marriage dissolution: The dissolved couples are likely to act like birds let loose from the cage.

Statement of the Problem

Ikwuji (2002), Mirror (2003) & Walter (2005) have observed that marriage dissolution appears to be on the increase and it is becoming increasingly stressful on the part of the dissolving couples, their children and the society. Epstein (2002), Omeje (2002) likened marriage dissolution as a "semi-hell" to the divorcee and children, when in the course of conflicting issues, the children are influenced negatively due to the problems that arise from the dissolution. The negative outcome of marriage dissolution may increase pre-existing difference in the family unit prior to the dissolution itself.

Marital relationship is one factor among several factors that have an impact on the society, if the emotional aspect of dissolution affects couple, the children's feelings of anxiety, depression, inferiority complex, guilt, and sometimes aggression thereby leading to crime and criminality in any society. (Hines, 2007). Dissolved marriages bring about unwanted expenses on both sides. This is true when litigation is involved. The individual from dissolved marriage may use his or her money to engage lawyers, corrupt the police and/or buy witness. Dissolved marriage creates enmity between individual and groups and strains existing relationships. The children of dissolved couples are likely to lack proper care from both parents and this may lead to breeding of misfits in the society.

When peaceful atmosphere is replaced with chaos in marriage, the consequences are usually grievous. It results in marital instability, marriage separation, divorce or even death of the couple. This has serious effects on the home, family, children of the marriage, society at large (Ojukwu, 2016). If the family is unstable it eventually translates into an unstable society, this study therefore focuses on factors that could foster marital instability among couples in Oredo Local government area.

Objectives of Study

The main aim of the study was to assess factors influencing marriage dissolution in Oredo Local Government area, Edo State. The specific objectives were;

1. To ascertain the impact of communication on marriage dissolution
2. To ascertain the impact of ethnicity on marriage dissolution

Literature Review

The Concept of Marriage Dissolution

It is pertinent to note here that marriage is the state of being united with a person of the opposite sex as husband and wife; the institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family; an act of marrying or rite by which the married status is effected (Gove, 2008). Marriage is considered to represent a life-long commitment by two people to each other and it is signified by a contract sanctioned by the state, marriage can only be dissolved with state permission (Borgatta & Edgor, 2000), in Nigeria for instance, every tribe recognizes some form of the institution of marriage, man or woman is considered to be incomplete without a spouse (Aiyetan & Kolapo, 2005, Smith, 2001). It must be noted that there are different groups, traditions and different marriages, but they have one specific thing in common and that is the changes of the weddings and marriages pattern, which are influenced by western culture societies (Holley, 2001). The influence of the western culture is making the traditional polygamous marriage fading away and gradually disappearing in this contemporary Nigeria society. (Aiyetan & Kolapo, 2005) in another development, marital dissolution is a situation whereby the couples deliberately decide to be separated for one reason or the other. The concept of marital dissolution is associated with separation. Separation and dissolution are social phenomena which are allowed or created by the husband or the wife or both of them. Meanwhile, widowhood is beyond the control of human being because it is related to death. (Lesmin & Sarah, 2008; Amina, 2010). Meanwhile, Dunkins (2000) posited, there are numbers of factors that are seriously threating stability of marriage in Nigeria and most of these factors are traceable to inherited behavior and thinking from the ancient African society and important ideas from other sources that are beyond the African concept of marriage. These factors are the significant

causes of marriage dissolution in Nigeria society; as a result of their function and effects within a home. In another development, Abu & Ardayfio -Schandorf (2000) noted that the conjugal family is weak in residential and economic terms when compared with the matrilineage. Asare (2005) also observed that families nowadays seem not to care about wards' marriages because in most cases, the choice of partner is made by the wards themselves contrary to tradition where a choice was made by parents.

Communication is a common source of discord in marriage due to the inherent differences in the communication styles of various cultures (Kreider, 2000). Patterns of communication are imprinted early and typically persist through adulthood. Miscommunication can occur because of the tendency to send and interpret message based on one's own cultural code and cues for communication and values related to child bearing are common examples of cross-cultural challenges experienced as an intercultural couple. The wife may want to inculcate her language to the child at an early age unconsciously or even consciously. The husband who may feel that his language should be the major language the child should learn. Furthermore, new survey confirms what pre-marital counselor knew all along; the trick to staving of dissolution lies in how effectively you and your spouse communicate.

Lifestyle website "yourtango.com" polled 100 metal health professionals and found that communication problems was cited as the most common factor that leads to marriage dissolution, followed by couples' inability to resolve conflict. The survey also found that men and women have different communication complaints. Seventy percent of the experts surveyed said that men cite nagging and complaining as the top communication problem in their marriage while women's top complaint was that their spouse does not validate the opinions of feelings enough, according to 83 percent of experts.

The findings may be interesting, but this is not the first time we have heard that communication could make or break your marriage. John Gottam – a professor emeritus from the University of Washington who conducted a research on couples' behavior for 40 years has suggested that there are four types of communication problem that can lead to divorce: criticism of partners, personality, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling (the refusal to communicate at all). Communication is one of the largest issues surrounding couples' dissolution after marriage, that couples can begin to argue more often over time. Some percentage of the dissolved married couples polled recently survey indicated that one of the greatest reasons for their dissolution came down to too much arguing.

The reasons why couples begin to communicate poorly or to argue too often is that partners are having difficulty understanding, validating or appreciating one another's

perceptive. It can be hard to see eye to eye with one another over time, communication issues are completely normal in relationships, but key is to find ways around these issues rather than allow them to destroy a marriage. Communication is crucial in marriage and not being able to communicate effectively quickly leads to resentment and frustration for both, impacting all especially of a marriage. On the other hand, good communication is the foundation of a strong marriage. Yelling at your spouse, not talking enough throughout the day, making nasty comments to express yourself are all unhealthy methods of communication that needs to be ditched in a marriage practicing mindful communication to change age-old marriages. It can be hard but it is well worth the effort to improve and save your relationship.

This simply refers to the Endogamy practice of marrying within a specific social group of family ethnic group, rejecting those from other as unsuitable for marriage or other close personal relationships. And is common in many cultures, and ethnic groups, cultures who provide endogamy require marriage between specified social groups, classes, or ethnicities. Endogamous marriage generally define marriage between persons within the same ethnic, race or religion (Zhand & Van Hook, 2009). Thus, ethno-endogamous marriage involves marriage between members of the same ethnic group.

In a study in rural Togo, Locoh and Thiriat (1995) observed that ethnic endogamy has a positive effect on marriage stability. According to the authors, the findings suggest that ethnic endogamous marriages to be more securely embedded in existing social relations and normative prescriptions which make such marriages less likely to dissolve. Rose Kreider (2000) on her part studied the dynamics of marital dissolution in the American Society, but she did not look at it from an ethnic dimension. Instead, she focused on race and looked at the dynamics of marriage between races. The author observed that while some characteristics typical of inter-racial couples predict that they should be more stable, others predicts less stability. In a study that involved the analysis of the national survey of family growth in the United State of American in 1995, it was found that inter-racial first marriage are 1.4 years shorter on the average than ethno-endogamous first marriage (Kreider, 2000). The study further revealed that inter-racial couples who married young are more likely to divorce than those who married later. Overall, the study demonstrate clearly that inter-racial couples are 50 percent more likely to divorce than endogamous couples and this suggests the way in which exogamy reflects how social distance affects social interaction within the context of marriage. In general, there is unanimity among family and marriage scholars that exogamous marriages are less stable than endogamous one (Milewski & Kuku, 2014; Tzong, 2000; South &Spitze, 1986; Zhang & Van Hook, 2009). However, some of the studies appear to have concentrated more on the relative, marital

stability of endogamous and exogamous marriages. In other words, they did not reveal the internal dynamics of these marriage patterns but rested contact by stating that exogamous marriages are less likely to be stable than endogamous marriages (Kreider, 2000).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted a social learning theory because it best explains the topic under investigation hence it was selected for the study.

The social learning theory model otherwise known as behavioral family therapy has Albert Bandura as its chief proponent. Bandura (1997) assumed that human behavior is, in general, a function of the person plus the environment. By the term person here, Bandura essentially means cognitive factors, while by the term environment he means the social models around as well as the circumstantial contingencies pressing upon the individual. The three elements, the person, the behavior and the environmental situations are highly interrelated variables, with each being capable of influencing the other.

According to Bandura (1997), all facets of human behavior are learnt from the environment with or without immediate reinforcement. Most behaviors of a child represent carbon copies of the manifestations of what exists within the society. The model, which the child observes in his environment, plays two important roles in social learning. The first is that model's behavior may serve to elicit some responses in an observer that are already in his repertoire. This occur when the behavior is socially prescribed or deviant behavior (Chauhan, 1990). It has been observed that children may identify with a person whom they dislike if his behavior is successful.

Nwoye (1999) presented the theory thus B = FCP and E. FCPE means = Factor, cognitive, Person and Environment. By the term (P) Person, here, Bandura essentially means cognitive factors while by the term (E) environment, he means the social models around as well as the circumstantial contingences pressing upon the individual. The three elements - the person, the behavior (B) and the environmental situations are highly interrelated variables, with each being capable of influencing the other (Bandura, 1983).

Applied to life in marriage, the theory assumes that when two individuals interact, they become part of each other's environment and the behavior of the other when marriages fail, therefore, the two individuals in the interaction can at times be liable to be blamed equally for the failure, since each can by his or her respective neglect of his or her roles contribute immensely to generating the crisis at hand. This implies that the traditional African practices as well as legal proceeding where a spouse is declared guilty and the

other exonerated during disputes (or what Nwoye 1991 referred to as mono-causality) does not hold with marriage counseling using the social learning theory model. Some dimensions of personality theories have attempted to explain how and why people react and adjust as they do. Gilbert (2001) summarized the personality issue by highlighting that traits are influenced from behavior, but the traits are properties of a personality. Consequently, individuals are characterized by their outstanding traits - gentle, belligerent, nervous, bright and cheerful.

In dealing decisively with these other factors of marital dysfunction, therapists functioning within the framework of the social learning principle emphasize the role of helping their adult clients to achieve cognitive behavior modification; in the course of the treatment process (Epstein, 2000 and Jacobson, 2000). The social learning theory hinges on environmental correlates of maladjustment. It stresses on the reinforcing factors within the environment, which can cause divorce or maladjustment. In the same vein, the environment can be manipulated to bring about a desired change in behavior. According to Mgbodile (2000), as the iroko trees resists and withstands the violent storms, of the forest, so will a sweet home resist and withstand the pressures and attacks of outside invaders.

He further noted that those who are quick in believing and acting on all they hear about their marriage partners are quick in chasing away the peace and tranquility of their home as gossips and tale bearers are dangerous war mongers who often direct the nozzle of their guns against family pew stability. That a marriage is sure to come to brinks of disaster, if a woman be careful of what she hears from other women about their own marriage and homes, and that a man that wants to keep his home intact must beware of other women. Supporting that outside environmental factors contribute to marriage breakdown, Mgbodile (2000) posits that when a home (marriage) goes in shambles, there is usually the finger of another man or woman in it and that no home (marriage) should consider itself so stable that it cannot be pulled down by determined gossips and intriguers. A home that is tele-guided from outside dances to the music of the enemy and him or her who wants to keep his or her home or marriage must beware of bad advisers and bad company. A good home never invites an outside judge because the marriage problem presented to the public suffers the fate of the 'Okro' fruit which often returns from the market with wounds from finger nails. For him, marriage cannot be the same again when family secrets become public property through the flippant tongue of the husband or the wife because when either of the couple starts telling tales about his or her marriage and family life, he or she is indirectly opening the floodgate that will eventually rock the foundation of his or her marriage.

Social learning theory stresses on environmental correlation of maladjustment and on the reinforcing factors within and outside the environment which can cause divorce or maladjustment in a marital union. In the same way, the environment can be manipulated to bring about a desired change in behavior. It is in this light that the present study examines the correlates of Adjustment Problems of Divorcees.

Research Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design. The design is best suitable for the study because of the nature of the study. Research survey design gives room for generation of results from sample to larger population. Survey design is appropriate for the study; this was because the study seeks the opinion of various categories of people living in Oredo Local Government Area. Survey design is deemed the most appropriate for gathering the data required for the study because it centers on people and their beliefs, opinion, attitude, motivation and behaviours.

The study population included all marriage couples from 18years and above in Oredo Local government Area. This was irrespective of ethnic background, sex or colour, religion and occupation. Oredo LGA has a population of 110,238 couples; Oredo also has a projected population of 534,206 couples. (The Oredo LGA statistical department) the projected population figure therefore constituted the study population.

The study adopted a simple random sampling technique, systematic sampling technique and stratified sampling method. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique in the selection of participants for the study; the researcher randomly selected five Wards from the 13 wards in the area. The wards selected are Ward 1, Ward 7, Ward 11, Ward 9, and Ward 3. 10 Streets were selected from the 5 wards using the lucky-dip method, while systematic sampling was adopted in the selection of households, 10 Houses were evenly selected from each of the street selected. The household were selected at certain intervals using the "kth" element represented as

$$k = \frac{N}{n}$$

Where k= sampling interval

N= population size

N= sample size

To determine the sample size; Solvin's formula for calculating sample size adopted.

It is represented as thus: $n = \frac{N}{(1+N\,(e)^2)}$

Where n= sample size
N=Population of the study
E=Degree of freedom
1=Constant
Therefore
N= 534206
E=0.05

$$n= \frac{N}{(1+N\,(e)^2)}$$

$$n= \frac{534206}{(1+534206\,(0.05)^2)}$$

$$n= \frac{534206}{(1+534206\,)(0.0025)}$$

$$n= \frac{534206}{(1+1335.51\,)}$$

$$n= \frac{534206}{1336.51}$$

n= 399.7
n= 400
From the analysis above, the sample size was 400

By the virtue of the nature of the study, survey method was used as a method of data collection. This is necessary because the study required that not all the individuals within the study population would be involved in the study. Hence, there is need to select a sample that is representative enough to represent the entire population. A one-time survey method was used in the study. This enabled the researcher to go to the field once to collect data for the purpose of analysis. For the qualitative data, three research assistants were trained on the qualitative data. While the researcher was asking the interview questions, one research assistant was taking note and tape recording the interview section, and the research assistant observed the proceeding.

Table 1. Impact of communication on marriage dissolution

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Lack of communication affects marital stability and results in marital conflicts.	SA	195	48.8
	A	150	37.5
	D	30	7.5
	SD	25	6.2
	Total	**400**	**100**

Non-validation of opinion/aspiration may lead to marital instability	SA	200	50.0
	A	100	25.0
	D	90	22.5
	SD	10	2.5
	Total	**400**	**100**
Compelling spouse against his or her personal will for a particular need causes marriage crisis	SA	116	29.0
	A	200	50.0
	D	60	15.0
	SD	24	6.0
	Total	**400**	**100**

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

Table .1 shows that 195 (48.8) of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of communication can lead to marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State, 150 (37.5) of the respondents agreed that lack of communication can lead to marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State, while 30 (7.5) and 25 (6.2) of the respondents disagreed/strongly disagreed that lack of communication can lead to marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State, this is a clear indication that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that communication is a vital tool in the sustainability of any marriage and that lack of it can lead to marriage dissolution in the study area. The table also shows that 200 (50.0) and 100 (25.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that Non-validation of opinion/aspiration may lead to marital instability, while 90 (22.5) and 10 (2.5) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that Non-validation of opinion/aspiration may lead to marital instability in oredo local government of Edo State. This shows majority of the respondents strongly agreed to the opinion that Non-validation of opinion/aspiration may lead to marital instability. The table further shows that 116 (29.0) and 200 (50.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Compelling spouse against his or her personal will for a particular need causes marriage crisis, while 60 (15.0) and 24 (6.0) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that Compelling spouse against his or her personal will for a particular need causes marriage crisis, looking at the table above it can be said that majority of the respondents agreed that Compelling spouse against his or her personal will for a particular need causes marriage crisis.

Table 2. Assessment of the impact of ethnicity on marriage dissolution in oredo Local Government Area of Edo State

Variable	Response	Frequency	Percentage %
Ethnicity influence marital stability and success	SA	200	50.0
	A	120	30.0
	D		
	SD		
		50	12.5
		30	7.5
	Total	**400**	**100**
Intra-family crises cause couples dissolution	SA	150	37.5
	A	100	25.0
	D		20.0
	SD		17.5
	Total	80	**100**
		70	
		400	
People of different ethnicity have more issues in marriage	SA	170	42.5
	A	110	27.5
	D		17.5
	SD		12.5
		70	**100**
		50	
	Total	**400**	

Source: Fieldwork, 2021

The table.2 shows that 200 (50.0) and 120 (30.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Ethnicity influence marital stability and success, while 50 (12.5) and 30 (7.5) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that Ethnicity influence marital stability and success, the table also shows that 150 (37.5) and 100 (25.0) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that Intra-family crises cause couples dissolution, while 80 (20.0) and 70 (17.5) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that Intra-family crises cause couples dissolution, the table went further to reveal that 170 (42.5) and 110 (27.5) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed that People of different ethnicity have more issues in marriage, while 70 (17.5) and 50 (12.5) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that People of different ethnicity have more issues in marriage in oredo local government area of Edo state from the findings above, majority of the respondents

strongly agreed that Ethnicity influence marital stability and success, Intra-family crises cause couples dissolution and that People of different ethnicity have more issues in marriage in oredo local government area of Edo state respectively. The findings revealed that that there is significantly influence of ethnicity/ unbalanced cultural development on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. This also agrees to the response given by one of the interviewee

> *Ethnicity can cause a marriage to collapse, due to the fact that these persons come from different background and therefore have different values, norms, upbringing etc. all these if not properly put together by the couples in terms of compromise can lead to the fall of any marriage.* ***(IDI-18-6-21)***

This study assessed the factors influencing marriage dissolution in Oredo Local Government area, Edo State. The findings from the analyses of the data in the study are: there is a significantly influence of communication on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. There is a significantly influence of ethnicity/ unbalanced cultural development on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. There is a significantly influence of income on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. There is a significantly influence of religion/adultery on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. There is a significantly influence of childlessness/ family interference on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State. There is a significantly influence of combination of communication, ethnicity/ unbalanced cultural development, income, adultery, childlessness/ family interference, on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State.

Implication of the Findings to Social Work Practice

The findings of this study have great implications for social work practice and other helping professions, particularly in the area of measures to reduce family violence and maintenance of marital stability. The results obtained from this study would enable us to understand the broader context and complexities of the family problems with particular reference to the issues of marital instability and divorce rates and also the ways in which this issue can be resolved that bring divorce to the barest minimum or eradicated completely

Based on the findings from this study, it is concluded that the individual and combination of factors such as communication, ethnicity/ unbalanced cultural development, income,

adultery, childlessness / family interference do have positive influence on marriage dissolution among couples in Oredo Local government area, Edo State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. Couples should participate in premarital education before getting married.
2. The policy makers should advocate for the strengthening of marriage by reforming divorce laws to make divorce harder to obtain. In most cases, these measures are designed to make break up harder to do by requiring proof of faults (e.g. adultery, abuse) or extending the waiting period require before divorce is granted.
3. Divorcing couples should be encouraged to participate in 'divorce mediation'. In divorce mediation, the divorcing couples will meet with 'a neutral third party', a 'mediator', who helps them reduce issues of property division, child custody, child support, and spousal support in a way that minimizes conflict and encourages cooperation.

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