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Relationship between Marital Dysfunction and Occupational Maladjustment of Civil Servants in Anambra State

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Abstract

The study set out to determine the level of relationship between marital dysfunction, and occupational maladjustment among civil servants in Anambra state. It focused on ascertaining the level to which marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment exist among civil servants in Anambra state and how these have affected the civil servants in this state. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. The design for the study was co relational survey as to determine the level of relationship existing between the two variables. Out of the identified married workers totally 3120, the sample size of 581 males and females who were experiencing marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment were used for the study which emerged from the pilot survey sample of 3120. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled; Civil Servants Marital Dysfunction and occupational maladjustment Questionnaire (CSAMOM). The questionnaire was validated and the reliability index calculated was .78. Data were analyzed using Pearson product moment, to determine the co-relational relationship between marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment among civil servants. The independent t-test was used to test the comparison of, marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment among male and female civil servants at the significance level of 0.05 (1) that majority of the civil servants in Anambra state experience

high level of marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment. (2) That there is significant relationship existing between the subject marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment. (3) Civil servants marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment are significant predictors of their task performances. Based on the above findings, conclusions were made, implications were identified and relevant recommendations were proffered.

Key words: Dysfunction, Maladjustment, and Civil Servants

Introduction

In most countries of the world as in Nigeria, the civil service remains the hallmark of policy implementation as it is charged with the responsibility of taking actions on policy enunciated by policy makers and politicians. Any nation without a virile civil service is doomed to fail and so for the Nigerian nation to succeed or be removed from the list of failed nations, its civil service must rise up to the challenge of discharging its duties without fear or favour.

According to Hornby (1989), the civil service refers to all government departments other than the armed force and the civil servant is a person employed to work in the civil service. These government departments otherwise called ministries include Education, Health, Works and Housing, Agriculture among others. By the definition of Hornby, everyone that works for the government aside from the armed forces is a civil servant. Though this may not be totally true as some parastatals of government ministries like tertiary institutions, PHCN among others do not see themselves as civil servants. This distinction has tended to make occupational analysts classify civil servants into core civil servants and non-core civil servants. For the purpose of this study the loose definition of the term as given by Hornby is adopted. In Anambra, the Civil Service Commission Annual Report (2006) recognizes three categorizations of the civil service in the State namely: ministries (13), Non-Ministries and Departments such as office of the Executive Governor and the Government House (10) and Non-civil Service Bodies which have civil servants posted to them such as Post Primary School Service and Judicial Commission among others (7). The Report further categorized the staff ranks into Senior Management (GL13- above), Middle Management Staff (GL 07-12) and Junior Cadre (GL 01-06).

Generally, civil servants require skills, procedures and insights that are peculiar to their occupation which the worker needs to master to perform

efficiently. For example, there must be a willingness to work, cooperate, dependability, sincerity, promptness, a constructive attitude, responsibility and loyalty among others. These are traits that will ensure an efficient and virile civil service. These skills according to Obi (2001) permeate the different categorizations of the civil service namely; Administrative, Executive and Managerial officers of various departments; clerical workers which encompass secretaries, typists, accountants, clerks, reporters and; professionals like the medical doctors, engineers, lawyers, nurses and teachers among others.

In Anambra State, the civil service has lately come under severe criticism of non-performance. Amongst the most commonly cited acts of civil servants in the State that show non performance are absenteeism, late coming to work, unending school run, non-involvement in tasks assigned to them and utter lack of interest in their day-to-day duties (Aroh, 2001). Infact, according to Aroh, these civil servants tend to show symptoms of occupational maladjustment.

Occupational Maladjustment

Amato (2000) defined occupational maladjustment as a psychological condition in which there exists a significant impairment in the capacity to work caused either by the personal characteristics of the employee or by an interaction between those characteristics and working conditions. Organizations vary in the extent they create or ameliorate stress. Jobs can be badly designed; supervisors can be ogres or behave very aggressively in an attempt to meet their own needs. Co-workers can be petty, vindictive, and antagonistic. Work conditions, particularly those characterized by high levels of responsibility with limited opportunities for control, can have demonstrable effects on an individual employee's health and well-being. On the other hand, maladjusted workers themselves may not be aware of, or accept responsibility for, the extent to which their own shortcomings and personal characteristics may contribute to problems on the job. Occupational maladjustment is often a precursor to disability proneness. Integrated disability management programs can be instrumental in identifying work maladjustment and truly assisting individuals who may manifest it through poor work performance, interpersonal conflict, or absenteeism.

Okorie and Ezeji (1988) further stressed that every action of an employee in his work situation tends to be a reaction to previous experiences or as a result of his inner adjustment to many life forces. In effect, when the home is

conflict and pressure free, the worker can operate more effectively. This is supported by Cummings, Davies and Campbell (2005) who opined that good relationship with family members serves as work stress buffers. This they stress, is because, the home is viewed as a sanctuary.

Okorie and Ezeji (1988) reported that were cases of marital conflict in Anambra. The data collected from Welfare Office, between 2000 and 2006, indicate that there were 948 cases of marital problems; 58 of them were for the first 5 months of 2005 and 267 of them ended in divorce. There were 46-recorded cases of divorce from the courts within the same period of time. Discussions with some indigenes of Anambra state revealed that those reported cases in the courts were the few who could withstand public exposure of their marital ineptitude. This means that there may be over thousands of cases unreported especially as Africans, people would want to portray themselves as good whereas, they have already been eaten up by marital conflicts. Marital conflicts render marriages incapable of fulfilling the supportive function expected from the marital relationship, which requires them to love each other, care for each other and help the other person to grow. From this point of view, conflict can be said to contribute to marriage dysfunction.

Marital Dysfunction

Marital dysfunction means dissolution, starting all over alone, setting off without the partner on whom one has relied on perhaps for many years. It may also mean loneliness and isolation. For instance, couples do have opportunity most days after work, to share experiences (both pleasant and unpleasant), when the relationship is functional. If for any reason, the relationship becomes dysfunctional, the joy of sharing pleasant experiences and the support, insight and encouragement gained from sharing unpleasant ones is lost. Each partner bears the burden alone and displays the anger at the least opportunity, on the children, spouse, relations, co-workers or any person he/she comes in contact with for no justifiable reason (Ezeokana, 1999). Marital dysfunction exists where a given marriage is devoid of these basic elements such as mutual love and sharing, reciprocity, tolerance, unity and cohesion necessary for achieving the primary essence of the union. Where a given marriage lacks the presence of the psychological bond of intimacy, it is then described as being at risk irrespective of whether or not the couples have known each other from childhood (Okoye, 2001).

Marital dysfunction is typically influenced by a variety of predisposing, precipitating, maintaining, and contextual factors. Predisposing factors include both constitutional (e.g., congenital illness, anatomical deformities) and prior life experiences, such as problematic attachments, neglectful or critical parents, restrictive upbringing, sexual and physical abuse and violence. Such predisposing factors are often associated with a greater prevalence of marital dysfunctions and emotional difficulties in adult life. While some individuals appear less vulnerable and more resilient in the face of stressors, others are more susceptible. An individual's vulnerability to a particular set of circumstances can precipitate marital dysfunction. For instance, repeated humiliation from one's spouse may cause one to perform poorly at office. While initially a precipitating event may be problematic and distressing, it need not necessarily lead to a diagnosable dysfunction in the long term. However, repetitive or traumatic problematic sexual experiences damage self-confidence and ultimately result in marital dysfunction, even in reasonably resilient individuals. They include such things as a conflict, separation or divorce or unsatisfying sexual experiences.

Ezeokana (1999) viewed marital dysfunction as an unfavorable condition in marriage that is created by lack of virtues such as stability, reciprocity, harmony, cohesion, and unconditional love, which is manifested in forms of violence, mistrust, constant bickering, neglect and sometimes violence. Marital disintegration is also a manifestation of marital dysfunction. Marriage dysfunction in this study is taken as a condition in the married relationship where conflict and disagreement exist frequently over family issues and responsibilities such as handling of finances, sex, taking major decisions, mistrust and lack of cohesion.

Over view of the Topic

Can the home be conflict free? Many ask. Hornby (2003) noted that it would be strange to find a marriage without disagreement or conflict. Nwoko (2004) stated that conflict and hostility characterize some couples from the beginning. He felt that no home is conflict free. While Hornby (2003) on the other hand, felt that the issue is not freedom from conflict but how effectively the conflicts are resolved; for while some couples resolve their conflict, others do not. He also points out that there are occupational group variations in divorce rates. For instance, among professional occupations like editors, medical doctors, accountant, lawyers, lecturers, physicians and auditors differences exist (Gottman, 2005).

On the foregoing therefore, there is a feeling by many researchers that if marriages are troubled, the members of such troubled marriages and by implication the workers are not likely to perform well owing to the divided attention they are faced with. In addition, reports from researches tend to show that marital quality depends on the position of a worker in an organization. For example, Kenneth and Linda (2005) opine that managers and clerical workers among others have lower rates of marital disharmony. In recent study, Aroh (2001) reports that job status- what one does for a living and the level of command, rank, prestige and honor associated with the work areas, influence whether a marriage will end in divorce or not. Used as a variable, would the higher cadre civil servants report lower incidence of marital conflict and hence better performance? Since there is no known research to this effect, only the present study will tell. Furthermore, many researchers and authors (Aroh, 2001; Ifelunni and Asogwa, 1999; and Weiss, 1975) tend to show that the agony of marital conflicts appears not to be felt by couples in the same way. Infact, they went further to report that more males than females are able to handle the “agonizing” situation of marital breakdowns. If this is so, one would expect that more males than females in troubled marriages may perform better in their jobs. However, this is a speculation that this present study will also address hence the inclusion of gender as a variable.

If the civil service must live up to its bidding of charting the development of a prosperous and virile Nigeria, and by implication, if Anambra State is to be reckoned with as a pillar of development in Nigeria, its civil service must be rid off all those factors that tend to distract it from performing. It is against this background that the present study sets out to investigate the relationships that exist among marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment of civil servants in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The civil service remains the only structure that will ensure that policies of government are implemented so as to enable the generality of Nigerians experience the “fall-outs” from governance. Of recent however, there has been nation-wide outcry against the occupational maladjustment among civil servants, Anambra State inclusive (Aroh, 2001). Commonly alleged misdeeds include absenteeism; late-coming, unending school runs among others. These deeds according to Okorie & Ezeji, (1988) are the symptoms of maladjusted work force which they blame on many factors including the home. They opined that every action of an employee in his work situation

tends to be a reaction to previous experiences. Put more succinctly, when the home is conflict and pressure free, the worker can operate more effectively. But the workers do not appear to be giving in their best. The same characteristics of maladjusted workers are being manifested by the civil servants to the extent that rather than promote good governance and services to the people they have become great obstacles.

As one begins to wonder why the lackadaisical attitude of the civil servants, one is confronted with the grave concern of the rising cases of marital dysfunction in the State. For example, between 2000 and 2006, the welfare office indicated that there were well over 948 cases of marital dysfunction, most of them among the state civil servants. Given the importance of the civil service structure in the socio-economic development of the state and borrowing a leaf from Okorie and Ezeji who indicated that once peace is lacking at home, the worker cannot give in his best, the researcher is worried about the possible link among marital dysfunction and performance of these civil servants. It is against this backdrop that the research asks, what are the relationships among marital dysfunction and performance of civil servants in Anambra State?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the relationship among marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment among civil servants in Anambra State. It is specifically aimed at establishing the relationship between civil servants' level of marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment.

Significance of the Study

The study will reveal the level of marital dysfunctions and occupational maladjustment among civil servants in Anambra. These data will be of benefit to (vocational and family counsellors in their counselling duties, as these data will form a basis for their management or counselling duties. The management of this vice (marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment) will ensure better healthy individuals and by implications healthy civil servants with little or no distractions.

On the part of employers, data from the study will go a long way to generating awareness on the possible links between marital dysfunction, and occupational maladjustment. This will enable them to create better workplace welfare system including the possible employment of workplace counsellor.

The import of this is that such workplace counsellor may go beyond the work place to families in distress. The likely effect of this is that there is likely going to be a crop of civil servants with manageable family crisis, less incidence of occupational maladjustment and by implication increased performance of the civil servants.

Scope of the Study

The study is focused on determining the relationship between marital dysfunction and task performance of civil servants located in and around Awka metropolis in Anambra State. The subjects used for the study were the civil servants in Anambra state, who were experiencing marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment with due cognizance taken of their gender.

Research Question

The following research question will guide this study:

- What relationship exists between civil servants level of marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis was formulated to help the researcher have more insight into the study. It was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- (1) The civil servants' level of marital dysfunctional does not relate significantly with their occupational maladjustment

Methodology

The design for the study was co-relational survey. In this study data on marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment among of civil servants were correlated to determine the extent their relationship. The study was carried out in Anambra state. The state has a total of thirteen ministries, ten non- ministerial departments of civil service and other bodies outside the civil service with civil servants posted to them. All these ministries and departments had their headquarters in the city of Awka where more than 90% of the employees were then working. Consequently, Awka where the headquarters of the various ministries are located is chosen as the particular area since it has a representative sample of the target population and it provided a good blend of people with marital problems like is typical of any city with concentration of people.

The population for the study consisted of the married males and females who were civil servants working at the state level in Anambra State. Consequently the population estimate for this study is 3,120.

The total sample for the study consisted of five hundred and eighty one civil servants who were married and are experiencing marital dysfunction. The procedure used in arriving at the sample size was as follows: By stratified sampling. And since it was not easy to identify those with marital dysfunction, the researcher decided to have a pilot survey of the 3,120 civil servants from where a sample, size of 581 subjects emerged as those having marital dysfunction after they filled the marital dysfunction questionnaire. The stratification is based on gender.

The instrument for data collection was titled *Civil Servants Marital Dysfunction and Occupational Maladjustment Questionnaire (CSAMOM)*. In compiling the items on the instrument (CSAMOM), items from Spanier's (1976) subscale on adjustment level and Conflict that are on family issues, personal relationships and general feelings about marriage were critically examined and those considered relevant for this study were pulled out and put in the subscales, B and C. Section B of CSAMOM contains 21 items, and deals with experiences which a husband or wife may have with the spouse. It includes such issues as insolence, verbal abuse, sexual hurt, sexual abuse, mistrust, and lack of demonstration of love. The respondents were requested to indicate, on a 4-point rating scale the extent they experience these from their spouses. Section C of CSAMOM contains 15 items and is geared towards eliciting information on the level of satisfaction/ dissatisfaction of the workers in their relationships with co-workers, boss or supervisor, promotion matters, duties assigned to them and conduciveness of the working place. The response pattern ranged from very low extent to very high extent and has assigned values of 1,2,3 and 4 respectively.

The draft copies of the instrument, together with the research topic, purpose of study, research question and hypothesis were given to three experts. These experts' suggestions and recommendations were utilized by the researcher to reorganize, restructure and modify the draft instrument. The modified instrument was then deemed valid and was subsequently used to collect data.

The reliability coefficient of the instrument was established by the use of Cronbach alpha statistic. A total number of 30 civil servants from different ranks in Imo State Ministries were used for they also having similarity marital dysfunction and performance problems. After the workers had responded to the instruments the completed copies were collected and analyzed. An alpha coefficient of 0.78 was obtained for section B and 0.78

for section C. According to Nunnally (1978:20) “there is not a generally agreed cut off for Cronbach’s alpha but usually 0.7 and above was considered acceptable”. Therefore, the present instrument with coefficient alpha as stated above, was deemed reliable and was used in the study.

Direct delivery approach was adopted in the administration of the instrument. By this method, copies of the questionnaire were taken to the respondents’ offices and administered personally with the help of four trained research assistants.

The product-moment correlation coefficient was used to answer research questions 1. Hypothesis 1 was tested using t-test of correlation coefficient.

Results and Findings

Research Question 1

What relationship exists between civil servants level of marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment?

Table 1 indicates that with the correlation coefficient of 0.84, there is very high positive relationship existing between civil servants’ marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment.

Null Hypothesis 1

The civil servants’ level of marital dysfunctional does not relate significantly with their occupational maladjustment

Table 2 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 579 df, the calculated t (37.28) is greater than the critical t (1.96). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, showing that there is significant relationship existing between civil servants’ marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment.

Summary of Findings

From the analysis the following findings were made

1. There is very high positive relationship of 0.84 between civil servants marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment;
2. There is significant relationship existing between the subject marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment
3. Civil servant marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment are significant predictors of their task performances.

Discussion

Relationship between Civil Servants level of Marital Dysfunction and their Occupational Maladjustment

The results show that there is a very high positive relationship existing between civil servant marital dysfunction and their occupational maladjustment and that civil servants marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment differ significantly. This means that marital dysfunction affects occupational adjustment negatively. This finding supports Aroh (2001) who in the process of exploring similar phenomenon pointed out in his study that marital dysfunction increases or decreases as occupational maladjustment increases or decreases. He however concluded that there is a relationship between the two variables. Weinstein (2006) also revealed that there are marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment among workers. Obi (2002) observed that transferred aggression from married couples to their colleagues in the offices also decreases the efficiency in the supervisory work roles, resulting in excuses from duty; alcoholism, with its sleeping on duty syndrome.

Kenneth and Linda (2000) in their contributions on maladjustment behaviours opined that occupational maladjustment is seen among workers. He suggested that the expected relationship between marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment is a positive one in that marital dysfunction results in increased occupational maladjustment.

An understanding of state of mind of victims of marital dysfunction as put forward by Nwoko (2004) may be of immense assistance for one to appreciate the incompatibility of distressed family life with positive behaviours expected of workers in any given occupation.

Implication of the Study

The findings on the relationship between marriage and occupation implies that in a country where there is a growing marital disharmony and increasing occupational maladjustment, there should be a progressive move by school counsellors and other social reorganization to, help in molding the behaviours of young ones towards realizing their goals in the future especially to make a better choice of job opportunity and a better choice of marriage relationships. There is no doubt that marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment affect government and organizational progress. This study now highlights the need for government intervention in reducing marital distress through policies that will make available social welfare services to every local

government under their jurisdiction to enlighten couples and intervene in problematic marital situations.

Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, it was found from this study that marital dysfunction is real and is of high incidence among civil servants in Anambra state; that occupational maladjustment does exist due to marital dysfunction and that this affects negatively the out-put of task performance. This points out the fact that the civil servants in Anambra state who are married experience this marital dysfunction, the ugly incidence that many of them do not know how to share. It manifests itself through their lateness to work, false sick leave, fighting, smoking, drinking alcohol, depression, absenteeism, yelling and aggression in the work place. These have negative influence on the work force of the state, for it leads to setbacks in the task performance.

It is also observed from the study that majority of marriages are no longer serving as a support body due to conflict over finances and sex related problems. Then in work arena, it was discovered that maladjustive behaviours such as truancy, lateness to work, strikes and false sick leave takes the upper hands.

Recommendations

Considering the far-reaching prevalence of marital dysfunction and occupational maladjustment;

1. Counsellors, workers, labours and supervisors should be equipped with up-to date knowledge of the phenomenon and how to handle the problems.
2. Couples should be assisted to develop interest in his/her partner's occupation.
3. Counselling services should be extended to various government and non-governmental organizations to help workers grapple with their marital and occupational problems.
4. The counsellors in the schools should enlarge their career and vocational guidance programmes to include relationship between work, marriage and other aspects of life for the students who are the prospective civil servants and future parents.
5. Government should introduce safety and wellness programs such as ergonomics, smoking cessation, relaxation and meditation

methods; stress management techniques, nutrition classes, and other such prevention strategies to be a regular part of the operational process

6. Public enlightenment or public relations units, of ministries, non-ministries and bodies which are currently in existence, should be utilized in conjunction with family counsellors to organize workshops and seminars for employed and unemployed married people on the relationship between work and non-work life activities for better adjustment.

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Table 1: Correlation Matrix for Marital Dysfunction and Occupational Maladjustment.

Source of Variation	Marital Dysfunction	Occupational Maladjustment
Marital Dysfunction	1.00	0.84
Occupational Maladjustment	0.84	1.00

Table 2: t-test of Correlation Between Marital Dysfunction and Occupational Maladjustment.

N	r	df	Ca.t	Crit.t	P*
581	0.84	579	37.28	1.96	.05

*P<.05