Influence of Socio-Economic Factors on Marital Harmony among Couples with Visual Impairment in Osun State, Nigeria

Sunday Abimbola Abodunrin (Ph.D)

Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan
abosabim@yahoo.com

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Abstract: Marital harmony among couples with and without visual impairment is fundamental since marriage is one of the essentialities in human existence. Thus, this paper therefore, focuses on the influence of socio-economic factors on marital harmony among couples with visual impairment using Osun state as a case study to identify the relationship between the socio-economic factors and the marital harmony of couples with visual impairment as well as the joint contributions of the socio-economic factors to the marital harmony of couples with visual impairment and the relative contributions of the socio-economic factors to the marital harmony among couples with visual impairment. Sixty samples were purposively selected from the target population including the totally blind and the low vision drawn from Osun state. From the findings, it was revealed that socio-economic factors has a significant relationship with marital harmony among couples with visual impairment, also the joint contributions of socio-economic factors to marital harmony among couples with visual impairment was also significant and that the relative contributions of socio-economic factors to marital harmony among couples with visual impairment was also significant. The study therefore recommends that, couples should give room for peaceful co-existence in their home.

Keywords: Socio-Economic Factors, Marital Harmony, Couples, Visual Impairment.

Introduction
The visually impaired are not different from their sighted counterpart. They pass through all developmental stages that are expected of them, if they are not visually impaired, they grown up to
become an adolescent leading to adulthood and later married as husband and wife. Some of them marry sighted person as husband or as wife while some are fortunate to marry each other. Their impaired vision does not stop them from enjoying the dividend of human hood in life. The issue of marriage is as old as human existence. It can be traced to the Garden of Eden when God created Adam in His image out of dust and breath the spirit of life into him and was placed into the garden of Eden. God saw that it is not good for a man to be alone and God created Eve who was the first woman out of one of Adam’s ribs and became the wife of Adam. Marriage is a union between a man and a woman coming together as husband and wife (Abodunrin and Akinsola, 2019).

Marriage is a fundamental institution in every society. Marriage as a concept referred to a state of being married. It is specifically, a contract entered into by a man and a woman, to live together as husband and wife. Olusanya (1990) sees marriage as a social institution that is designed among other things, to ensure the happiness and fulfillment of men and women who agree to marry each other. Marriage is a sacred and permanent contract between a man and a woman who have consented to live a life of fidelity and caring for each other for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare throughout their lives.

Marriage is one of the most important social institutions that unite two individuals to share their entire lives together based upon vows to honor one another in sickness and in health. Successful marriage is a highly valued goal for couples irrespective of their conditions. In fact, most couples desire to have a happy marital relationship as one of their most important wishes after marriage. However, when sickness or disability casts over a couple’s life, a number of significant structural and emotional difficulties could ensue. While short term illness or disability can be stressful for the couple, a permanent physical disability could lead to sudden and profound effects on the marital relationship (Braithwaite and Harter 2000; Crewe and Althelstan 1985). Objectives, considering the fact that marriage is a lifelong commitment that should only be ended by death. However, despite this desires for a successful and blissful relationship by couples, the attempt to adjust to the frustrating economic, political, social, cultural and religious challenges of this 21st century by couples has made a lot of homes to experience a distressed and agonizing relationship. It is observed that some couples are overwhelmed with their desire to make end meet at the detrimental of establishing a more harmonious, dynamic stable and enterprising family relationship. This development has grave implications in a number of ways on the peace, safety and the development of the entire society.

The word, "harmony" comes from the Greek word, harmonia. The word "harmony" means an accord, or an agreement. When a couple is in agreement, then it ought to be expressed at every level of the soul: an agreement at the level of kindness, of understanding, and indeed, in all ten soul-powers. The codified Jewish Laws of marriage - include the drafting of a marriage contract, is to ensure marital harmony. In identifying how a
couple sing in harmony, and what it means to have harmony in the home, to answer, we need a little taste of music theory. First of all, the couple can be envisioned as a duet, singing a line of music. There are harmonious intervals of tone, of pitch, which create good chords, a good sound. The couple isn't necessarily singing the same note. The most harmonious sound in music is called a perfect fifth.

Wasson (2005) reported that the relationship between two people is not a destination, but rather a journey. Married couples and those in long-term relationships can learn to accept and appreciate their differences, effectively communicate their feelings and needs, and adjust their beliefs and habits. Creating happy, harmonious relationships requires commitment, the learning of new skills, and the effective application of that knowledge. The formula for marital harmony and success is not a mysterious secret. It is actually very straightforward, the "behind the scenes" part is the constant work that is required to keep the channels of love and communication clear from obstruction. Diligent spouses consistently spend time and energy addressing issues as they come up so that anger and hurt feelings do not accumulate. Spouses who want satisfying marriages also look for ways to keep their love strong, such as remembering to show affection and appreciation frequently. They know that the more they feel connected and bonded, the more motivated they will be to resolve problems and hang in there, when things are difficult.

Olaoye (2012) was of the view that, husband obey that duty of maintaining harmony in marriage by adhering to three basic responsibilities in caring for their wives needs: Consideration, chivalry and companionship. First, husbands are to live with their wife's in an understanding way, which means they must be considerate. Understanding speaks of being sensitive and considering the wife's deepest physical and emotional needs, the word translated live means dwelling together and refers to living with someone in intimacy and cherishing them. Husband must constantly nourish and cherish their wives in the bond of intimacy.

It was revealed that the majority of persons who are visually impaired marry each other instead of getting married to a sighted person. Those who belong in this group argue that sighted spouses cannot be trusted and thus, it is better to be married to one who is equally visually impaired like themselves. On the other hand, the minority who marry sighted spouses argue that it is better to marry a sighted spouse because he or she would help in reading, driving (if they can), shopping, and simple domestic tasks.

Having paid attention to both sides of the argument, it has been resolved that: Those who agitate for marrying one just like themselves hold to that position in part for the following reason: They have low self-esteem of themselves and thus, have only had experience with sighted women or men that were not good for anyone. This is true when you see a person with visual impairment with a spouse that has other disability of some sort besides other than visual impairment have had a spouse that have cheated on them and thus led them to the belief that sighted spouses are bad. Sometimes those
visually impaired people who are successful think that sighted men or women want to be their spouses because of what they have and would resent marrying a sighted person.

For those who believe in marrying a sighted spouse is logical because this would be a help when it comes to helping them get to places (most especially those living in the country), helping with their cheque books instead of having someone else look at their personal matters. Whatever the argument is, the truth is, men with visual impairment find it easier to marry sighted women than ladies with visual impairment marrying sighted men. There are majority of persons’ with visual impairment that never get married whatsoever and again, that would be true of the general population whether visually impaired or sighted. Persons’ with Visual impairment, after all, are just normal people like any other person that are acting based on the recognition of their talents and anyone they can marry. Spouses of who are disable are not only the most affected family member, but they are also the most important source of support for the disabled individual (Emslie, Browne, MacLeod, Rozmovits, Mitchell, & Ziebland, 2009; Mann &Dieppe, 2006; Russell, 2009; Waite & Lehrer, 2003). Hence, the marital harmony is the central social context in which disablement occurs (Warner &Kelly, 2012).

The functional status of an individual is a major factor influencing relationships (Sandhu, Kemp, Ball, Burgess & Perkins, 2013). In the case of marital relations, when a spouse’s functional capacity becomes limited due to a disability the need for a healthy partner’s support may increase substantially. This increase in support could further cause a lack of reciprocity among the married partners (Yorgason, Booth &Johnson, 2008). This lack of reciprocity could also manifest into several other unique challenges depending on the type and severity of the disability as different types of disabilities may demand different types and levels of changes and adjustments (Braithwaite &Thompson 2000).

The economic factors also contribute immensely to having a harmonious home when the husband or wife is visually impaired but to an extent he or she is rich or having a wealthy family background, the couples enjoy themselves without any conflict that could leads to divorce or disharmony. This paper therefore, seeks to investigate the influence of Socio-economic factors on marital harmony.
among couples with visual impairment in Osun State.

**Purpose of the study**
The study examines the influence of socio-economic factors on marital harmony among couples with visual impairment in Osun state, Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of the study was to:

- Identify the relationship that exists between socio-economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment.
- Examine the joint contributions of socio-economic factors to the marital harmony among couples with visual impairment.
- Underscores the relative contributions of socio-economic factors to marital harmony among couples with visual impairment.

**Research Questions**
The following research questions serves as a guide to this study:

1. What is the relationship between socio-economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?
2. What is the joint contribution of socio-economic status to marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?
3. What is the relative contributions of socio-economic factors to marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?

**Methods**
The survey research design of the *ex-post facto* type was adopted for this study. The population consists of all couples with visual impairment in Osun State, 60 samples were purposively selected from the target population including the totally blind and low vision. Self-made questionnaire was used to collect data for the study, and the data were analysed using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analyses.

**Results**

**Research question one:** What is the relationship between socio-economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?

Table 1  Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between socio-economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital harmony</td>
<td>12.0800</td>
<td>4.28495</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.964*</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio factors</td>
<td>13.8000</td>
<td>4.46757</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that, there is a significant relationship between socio-economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment (r = .964, n= 50, to be presented that p (.000) <0.05). It could be deduced that socio factors positively influenced marital harmony among couples with visual impairment in the study. Hence, there is a positive relationship between socio factors and marital harmony in the study that is an improvement in the socio factors yields an improvement in state of marital harmony.
**Research question two:** What is the relationship between economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?

Table 2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) showing the relationship between economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital harmony</td>
<td>12.0800</td>
<td>4.28495</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.979*</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic factors</td>
<td>11.7000</td>
<td>4.92495</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Sig. at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows that, there is a significant relationship between economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment (r = .979, n= 50, p(.000) <0.05). It could be deduced that economic factors positively influenced marital harmony among couples with visual impairment in the study. Hence, there is a positive relationship between economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment, that is, improvement in the economic factors yields an improvement in marital harmony in the study.

**Research question three:** What is the joint contribution of socio and economic factors on marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?

Table 3 Summary of Regression analysis showing joint contribution of socio and economic factors on marital harmony among couples with visual impairment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.984</td>
<td>.968</td>
<td>.966</td>
<td>0.78527</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>870.687</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>435.349</td>
<td>705.986</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>28.983</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>0.617</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>899.680</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the joint contribution of the independent variables (socio-economic factors) to the prediction of the dependent variable - marital harmony. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation (R = .984 and a multiple R² of .968. This means that 96.8% of the variance was accounted for by two predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at α = 0.05. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 705.986(significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not
included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

**Research question four:** What is the relative contribution of socio and economic factors on marital harmony among couples with visual impairment?

Table 4: Summary of regression analysis showing relative contribution of socio and economic factors on marital harmony among couples with visual impairment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficient</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficient</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>.423</td>
<td>2.269</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio factors</td>
<td>.315</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>3.744</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic factors</td>
<td>.579</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>7.584</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 reveals the relative contribution of the two independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights: socio factors (β = .328, p (.000) < .05) and economic factors (β=.665, p (.000) < .05) respectively.

**Discussion of findings**

The study reveals that, there is a significant relationship between socio economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment (r = .964, n = 50, to be presented thus p (.000) <0.05). It could be deduced that socio-economic factors positively influenced marital harmony among couples with visual impairment in the study. Hence, there is a positive relationship between socio factors and marital harmony in this study, that is, an improvement in the socio factors yields an improvement in state of marital harmony. This was so due to the fact that where there is stable and good economic status of both couples together with maximum support from the relatives irrespective of their condition, there would be harmonious relationship between the couples.

The findings also shows that, there is a significant relationship between economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment (r = .979, n = 50, to be presented thus p (.000) < 0.05). It could be deduced that economic factors positively influenced marital harmony among couples with visual impairment in the study. Hence, there is a positive relationship between economic factors and marital harmony among couples with visual impairment, that is, improvement in the economic factors yields an improvement in marital harmony in the study. The outcome of these findings could be describe to the fact that marital harmony among couples irrespective of their condition depend solely on good economic status of the couples.

The study also reveals that, the joint contribution of the two independent variables (socio-economic factors) to the prediction of the dependent variable, that is, marital harmony. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlation (R = .984 and a multiple R² of .968. This means that 96.8% of the variance was accounted for by predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the
composite contribution was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$. The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 705.986 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance. The functional status of an individual is a major factor influencing relationships (Sandhu, Kemp, Ball, Burgess and Perkins, 2013). The findings also shows the relative contribution of the two independent variables: socio factors ($\beta = .328$, $p (.000) < .05$), and economic factors ($\beta = .665$, $p (.000) < .05$) with economic factors being the more potent variable.

**Conclusion**

Marital harmony among couples irrespective of their condition is an important aspect of couple’s life. It was shown in this study that, marital harmony among couples with visual impairment can be influenced by socio-economic factors which include the family attitude and the financial status of both couples and it was revealed that impairment has little or no contribution to marital harmony provided the condition of the spouse was understood by themselves and their relatives and that money settles or bridges the gap that may exist between spouse with visual impairments and marital harmony.

**Recommendations**

The study therefore recommends that:

- The immediate families and relatives must ensure that marital harmony among the wards is achieved and they should try all within their reach to give room for harmonious relationships among their wards who marries someone who is having one disability or the other.

- Marital harmony among couples is a duty of both party, hence both of them must work together in resolving issues that may cause disharmony in their various homes and the society at large must not isolate or labelled couples who is having one disability or the other as someone who is irrelevant in the society but rather they should be incorporated into all family affairs in the society when need arises.

- Marriage counselling psychologist must also have close relationship with couples with and without impairment as this will provide bases for orientation and trainings on issues that may cause disharmony among couples.

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