



Research Article

ATTACHMENT STYLE AND COPING STRATEGIES AS CORRELATES OF MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG UNEMPLOYED MARRIED WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The study examined attachment styles and coping strategies as correlate of marital satisfaction among unemployed married women. Participants were 100 in and out-patience's drawn from Iyi-enu Mission Hospital Ogidi and St Charles Borromeo Hospital Onitsha. They were all married women because of the nature of the study. Their age ranged from 18- 50, with a mean age of 34years, and standard deviation of 1.20. Three instruments were deployed for data collection: Index of marital satisfaction, attachment style questionnaire and brief cope inventory. Correlational design was adopted and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to analyze the data. Two hypotheses were stated. Result showed that attachment style have significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction at $r = .534, p < .001$ for secure attachment style, While coping strategies have significant and positive relationship with marital satisfaction at $r = .304, p < .05$ for approach coping strategy. It was recommended that married unemployed couples should confront the source of their problems in order to deal with them.

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INTRODUCTION

Current issues on divorce has been increasingly alarming. This problem has attracted the attentions of researcher from different areas of study. Most married couples approach marriage with lots of hopes. Not long afterwards some married unemployed couples find out that marriage is not a bed of roses. Some of the couples argue that most partner's characters were hidden before the marriage. Some others realize that the joy that propelled them was gone even before honeymoon became over. Soon after the marriage ceremony, family business which involves making plans for the future, with issues like where will the house be built? What kind of car should the couple buy first? Some find out that it becomes rather difficult to agree on some petty issues. However, little by little, it becomes obvious that the newly married couple realize that it becomes a norm to wake up from different rooms, while skipping meals among other things. The romance and joy that filled the home gradually becomes a thing of the past. At this point, pet names gradually becomes difficult to be assessed. In the light of these, happiness or marital satisfaction becomes a lofty idea. Scholars had studied aspects of marital satisfaction, despite their efforts it appears that in recent times, divorce and separation has hit new heights.

On these new heights of challenges rests the motivation of the scholars in the present study on attachment style and coping strategies as correlates of marital satisfaction among married unemployed couples.

Scholars define marital satisfaction as an acquired mood which is acquired through social interaction and the development of mental states relative to other individual (Rhoades, 2010), and subjective feeling of happiness, satisfaction and pleasure experience by couples when all aspect of their marriage are considered (Hawkins, (2014). This means that marital satisfaction could be defined as the level of happiness couples report when their marriage relationship is appraised. Some factors have been reported to relate positively with marital satisfaction: sex, age, religiosity, economic status, education, and cultural values (Doroewska, Groyecke_Bernard, & Sorokowska, 2020), other scholars report that these factors include occupation, length of marriage, number of children (Zahra, Hassan & Nordin, 2020), and openness and communication effects enhance women relationship satisfaction (Kielek-Rataj, Wendolowska, Kalus & Zyzowska, 2020). In spite of these factors identified as predictors of marital satisfaction, it appears that yet issues that bother on marital satisfaction still abound. Some negative consequences of marital satisfaction were identified as: depressive symptoms among spouses (Steven, Beach & Kim, 2003), and decreased in role support (Baldwin, et al 1999). On the contrary, other

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scholars hold that interpersonal communication skill enhance marital satisfaction (Aneesh, 2018) and openness (Kielek-Rataj, *et al* 2020).

An attachment style refers to relational behavior that occur between individual and their caregiver to get primary need met and then to develop schema for interacting with the social world, (Bowlby 1982). The development of attachment style has been described as a "womb" for the psychological birth of the infant and necessary for the health of a child (Ainsworth and Bowlby, 1967). Attachment style is the system referring to human innate ability to establish significant emotional and strong relationship with one's caregiver, (Levy, 2017). It appears that children's early relationship are considered as prototype for the next relationship. According to Lisa, (2018), much of empirical research suggest that attachment is considerably important in adult relationship with others, particularly their romantic and marital relationship. Moreover, recent researches on attachment styles showcase that it affect different aspect of our lives. According to Mahboobeh and Kamran, (2017), the manner of regulating the couple's emotion which is affected by attachment style account for their degree of marital satisfaction and psychological health, people with ambivalent attachment style and avoidance attachment styles fret being rejected by others and have difficulty in emotional regulation. Firestone, (2013), argues that our style of attachment affects everything from our partner selection to how well our relationship progress to sadly, how they end. Perhaps this is why recognizing our attachment pattern can help us understand our strength and vulnerabilities in a relationship. Also a model of attachment may influence how each of us reacts to our needs and how we go about getting them met. Accordingly Shaver and Hazan, (2013), found that about 60% of people have secure attachment, while 20% have avoidance and 20% also have an anxious attachment. Similarly, Bowlby (1982), concurs that we have four patterns of attachment and they are as follow secure Attachment Styles: securely attached adult tends to be satisfied in their relationship, children with a secure attachment style see their parent as a secure base from which they can venture out and independently explore their world. Alex *et al* (2001) report that attachment style predicts coping strategies.

According to Landen and Wang (2010), when an individual is placed in a new environment, it creates stress causing individual to react by evaluating the situation and then using existing stress coping strategies to help her adapt. According to Lazarus and Folkman, (1984), describe this process as "the constantly changing cognitive and behavioral effort to manage specific external and internal demand that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person ". This process seems to focus on two roles: problem- oriented role and the role of self-regulation of emotions associated with reduction of emotional tension there. According to Carver, (2009), individual who are in threatening situation undertake different strategies including; active coping, planning, positive reinterpretation, acceptance, a sense of humor, a turn to religion, seeking of emotional and instrumental support. Similarly, Endler and Parker, (1990), point out that these approaches to stressful situation can be classified into two types which are; problem- focused coping strategy which are effort to do something active to alleviate situation or circumstances and emotional-focused coping strategy which are attempt to regulate the emotion associated with the

stressful or potential stressful events. It appears that people focus their stress coping strategy on emotions, and use their own experience on reducing emotional tension and self-blame their own helplessness, which as a consequence usually intensifies their negative mood and increases stress (Mroczkowska, 2013). According to Ognistia-Bulik, Langer, (2007), turning to religion, dealing with something else, denial, venting of emotions, using psychoactive substance and suppression of activities are all indicated as less strategies to cope with difficult situation. Similarly, Huber (2010), postulated that escape strategies may, as a consequence lead to addictive behavior like alcohol abuse, using drug or stimulants. Each individual respond differently to stress, some women are better than other in dealing with hardship of life both in economic and social interaction. One of the mediating factors for marital satisfaction is attachment that the woman formed with her husband, peers, and other adult who are able to provide support (Vogel & Wei, 2011). For instance an adult who has secure attachment styles facing stress will seek out other adult for support and comfort. Similarly Caldwell and Sharver, (2012), hold that an adult who is in secure relationship tend to have more confidence, report high level of self-esteem and tend to be more optimistic when faced with stress. Since marital satisfaction is a noble goal in marital relationship, it is evident that every married adult hopes that this will be experienced, however, as most human endeavors come with challenges in form of stress, individuals with attachment styles may deploy different skills in dealing with marital challenges. This is the core motivation for scholars in this study.

In a study by Sorokowski, Randal, Groyecka, and Frackowiak (2017), marital satisfaction was measured with two Scales to ensure that results were not dependent upon the applied questionnaire. In the first step, participants completed the Marriage and Relationships Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by Russell and Wells (1993), specifically, the 9-item version of the MRQ ("Love Scale") was used because it has been found to be appropriate satisfaction scores, and planning slowed husbands" (but not wives") postpartum declines. Results revealed that, parenthood hastens marital decline-even among relatively satisfied couples who select themselves into this transition-but planning status and pregnancy marital satisfaction generally protect marriages from these declines. In a related study, Abdolvahab and Ghaziri (2016), conducted an empirical research using statistical population included all employees at Bandar Abbas oil refining and distribution company (Iran), which consisted of 3500 employees. The sample size was determined using the following formula (is the multiple correlation coefficient). The sample size was calculated as 290. In this study, the single-stage cluster random sampling method was used. For this purpose, all employees were divided into 5 clusters (groups) based on their location of residency (the employees lived in five districts proportional to their working experience). Then, 86 subjects (43 couples) were selected in each cluster using the simple random sampling method. The research tools included the revised adult attachment scale (RAAS), life style questionnaire (LSQ), and the marital satisfaction scale. The results showed that the early relationship within the family environment supports a certain attachment style (avoidant insecure and ambivalent insecure) and this affects couples' interpersonal relations in adulthood. In a related study conducted by George, Kaplan, and Main (1985), on adults' internal working models through the use of

the Adult Attachment Interview, an interview designed to measure parents' state of mind with respect to attachment. Results indicated that four specific and distinct patterns emerge that show that the assessment of mothers' attachment security consistently corresponds to the attachment classification of their children. In fathers this relation is less clear, which indicates that care giving is the determining factor, not heredity.

However, Geneviève Bouchard, (2003), investigated the factors related to the choice of coping strategies, distancing/avoidance and painful problem-solving, in the context of marital relationships. The role of cognitive appraisals of marital difficulties, and personality traits of neuroticism and openness, in the choice of coping strategies used to solve marital difficulties was investigated with a sample of 200 couples (women aged 18-60 yrs.; men aged 19-69 yrs.). Results of standard multiple regression analyses showed for both genders that neuroticism was positively associated with distancing/avoidance, whereas openness was positively associated with painful problem-solving. In addition, results indicated that an individual who appraised his or her marital difficulties as threatening, compared to his or her resources, was more likely to use distancing/avoidance as coping strategy. In a related study, Charvoz, Annette, and Widmer, (2001), on cognitive behavioral prevention program which is based on stress and coping research in couples with focus on improving important skills with an 18-hr course. The effectiveness of the approach is examined with respect to 143 couples over a period year. Participants ranged in age from 22 to 76 yrs. The results show that couples participating in the program benefit in terms of a significant increase in marital quality and that intervention couples appraise their relationship even after 1 year as substantially improved in a number of domains (quality of marital communication, intimacy, etc.). These results support the importance of prevention for couples with low marital satisfaction even if they have been living together for many years.

Studies on marital satisfaction has been an age long one. For instance, scholars had engaged in marital satisfaction studies aimed at increasing marital satisfaction. Despite these efforts, the rate of separation and divorce in the society only goes to point out one thing clear that the problem still persists. In the contemporary time, scholars had focused on attachment styles, parenthood and marital satisfaction Sorokowski *et al* (2017), attachment life satisfaction and marital satisfaction Abdolvahab & Ghaziri (2016), and adult internal working model, adult attachment and parent's state of mind George *et al* (1985). Other researchers examined factors related to coping strategies and marital satisfaction Genevieve & Bouchard (2003), and cognitive behavioral prevention program which was focused on stress and coping strategies (Charvoc, 2001). Despite these contributions the issues with marital satisfaction still toll new heights. However, it appears that from these studies above that researchers have not yet availed themselves to the study of attachment style and coping strategies on marital satisfaction among married unemployed women.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant and positive relationship between attachment styles and marital satisfaction among unemployed married women.

2. There will be a significant and positive relationship between coping strategies and marital satisfaction among married unemployed women.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Cognitive Self-Disclosure by Edward (1988), the theory claimed that the way to build intimacy is through self-disclosure. It's a bit like the Newlywed Game. The board game includes a series of questions. These allow you to disclose information in a non-threatening, fun way. Couples can play alone using only the questions and explore as much as they are Comfortable. Each person shares something about their wants, needs, aspirations, attitudes, beliefs, and desires. Now the theory of cognitive self-disclosure appears to share some elements of attachment style. For instance, married unemployed women who are securely attached may find it quite easy to disclose personal information because of their type of attachment style. In as much that the goal of cognitive disclosure is about happiness, every partner strives to air views which will make each partner feel levels of openness that will usher in the feelings of satisfaction in marriage. However, those who are insecurely attached may not be quick to disclose personal details to their married partners. Also, with respect to coping strategies, the cognitive self-disclosure shares a link in the aspect of perceived stress coming from marital challenges. Now a married unemployed woman who perceives self as securely attached may freely disclose self and the level of self-disclosure may relate with coping strategies that make up her personal attributes. Therefore, each attachment style appears to relate with type of coping strategy a married unemployed woman adopts in marital challenges.

METHOD

Participants

A total number of 100 in and out-patience's of Iyi-enu hospital in Ogidi, Idemmili local government area in Anambra state, and in and out-patience of St Charles Borromeo Hospital Onitsha south local government area in Anambra state participated in this study. Their age is from 18-50 years with mean age of 26years and standard deviation of 1.2. All the participants were married unemployed women with marital duration ranging from 1-20 years with academic qualifications ranging from O'level, BSc, and Master's degree. The participants were only females. A probabilistic sampling method was employed,(simple random sampling technique).

Instruments

Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS) is a 25-item inventory that measures the degree and severity or magnitude of the problems one spouse or partner perceives to behaving in the marital relationship with his or her partner, developed by Walter W. Hudson, (1998). Respondents had to indicate on a 5point score scale depending on what is appropriate for them. The focus is on current problems that have reduced marital satisfaction. Direct scoring (1items 2, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 22, 24, 25) and reverse scoring (1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 13, 10, 1, 19, 20, 21, 23) of the items. The scale utilized a Likert scoring scale which ranges from rarely or none of the time (1) A little or none of the time (2) Sometimes (5) A good part of the time (4) and Most of the time (5). After this, all the scores were summed up. The final score is obtained by adding together the result of the direct scores and the reverse scores to obtain the client's raw

score. The IMS was derived from subtracting 25 from the raw total score. A score below 30 was indicative of satisfaction with the relationship, while a score above 30 was indicative of dissatisfaction. Hudson reported a Cronbach's alpha of 0.96 and two-week intervals of test-retest reliability of 0.96. The reliability coefficients reported by Hudson (1982) are: Cronbach alpha internal consistency of .96, two hour test-retest = .96. A concurrent validity coefficient of .48 was obtained by Anene (1994) by correlating IMS with Marital Stress Inventory (MSI) (Omoluabi, 1994). Schaefer & Olson, (1981) reported alpha coefficients reliability of 0.70. For the purpose of this study a pilot study was conducted using a sample size of 30 participants, and a Cronbach alpha of $r = .866$ was obtained.

The Attachment style questionnaire is a broad-based self-report measure developed by Feeney & Noller, (1994), to clarify the dimensions underlying adult attachment, regardless of the adult age of respondents or their experience with adult romantic relationships. The 40 items of the measure are scored using a six-point Likert scale ranging from 1= "totally disagree" to 6 "totally agree." which targets the respondents views of self and other, and are conceptually compatible with Bartholomew's (1990) and Hazan and Shaver's (1987) understandings of attachment. Both internal consistency, measured with Cronbach's alpha, and test-retest reliability were calculated by Feeney *et al.* (1994) using a sample of college-age young adults. Cronbach's alphas were calculated with 470 participants. Pilot study conducted reveal a Cronbach alpha of Secure = 0.891, Avoidant = 0.856, Anxious = 0.915. A face validity of the scale was obtained by a lecturer in the department of psychology Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Brief cope inventory is designed to measure the type of coping strategies used by human during stressful situation. Brief Cope Questionnaire was developed by Carver (1997). It consists of twenty-eight (28) items design to identify an individual's coping strategies. The items assess respondents coping strategies into fourteen (14) area components of coping strategies that include self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance abuse, use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, behavioral disengagement, venting, positive reinterpretation planning, humor, acceptance, religion and self-blame. Muhamad (2011), reported reliability of .83 using Malaysian secondary school adolescents. Also, Carver (1997) as cited in Macdonald (2011), reported internal reliabilities for the fourteen (14) subscales with Cronbach alphas ranging from .57-90 using sample of elderly patients in Australia. Again, Benson (2009), as cited in Macdonald (2011), reported reliabilities of the fourteen (14) subscale with Cronbach alphas ranging from .54 -93 using population of parents of children with Autism spectrum disorders. A pilot study was conducted to validate this instrument for use in the present study because reliability and validity properties of this instrument have not been determine in Nigeria Hope, (2018). One hundred and eleven (111) orthopedic in-patient caregivers from Bishop Shannahan Hospital Nsukka and University of Nigeria, Nsukka Medical Center was administered the instrument and a Cronbachs alpha of .79 was obtained.

Procedure

All the hospitals in Idemmili and Onitsha south local government area both in Anambra were listed, which include the following Spring City Hospital (Late Dr. Emmanuel Obiora Awduche Memorial Hospital), General Hospital Ogidi,

Iyi-Enu Mission Hospital Ogidi, Blessed Hospital Obosi all in idemmili local government area Anambra state and Christ The King Specialist Children Hospital, Holy Rosary Specialist Hospital and Maternity Waterside Osha, Gozie Hospital, LandMark Hospital And Maternity and St. Charles Borromeo hospital, all in Onitsha south local government area in Anambra state. Having listed all hospitals in aforementioned local government area in Anambra state, and the researchers took all of them in his hand and shake them properly to avoid bias. The researchers then poured on the floor the wrapped papers. He then picked randomly two hospitals which were Iyi-enu mission hospital and St. Charles Borromeo hospital. Haven done this the researcher obtained letters from the department that will enable him to carry out research in the selected hospitals. The researchers first went to Iyi-enu mission hospital. When they got to the hospital they met with one of the doctor who took him to the committee that is in-charge of research in the hospital. When the researcher met with them, they told him that he has to pay for sum of one thousand naira (#1000) only in the account or hospital research committee which the researcher did. After the payment the committee requested for our chapter one, chapter two and questionnaires which they accessed to check if it would cause any psychological trauma to their patients according to them, while assessing it different types of questions were asked to the research concerning his topic and while he choose their hospital among the rest. After they have assessed the questionnaire, they approved the letter and assigned one of them to help our and shared the questionnaires which was shared to all the patience both out and in-patience of fifty (50) in number. The questionnaires was successful shared and collected. Similarly the same processes was taken at the St. Charles Borromeo hospital the upper week, which was also successful.

A total number of 150 questionnaires were distributed and, a total of 130 were returned, while total number of 100 were eventually used for this study, others were discarded for improper completion of the questionnaires. Below are number of questionnaire collected from the two hospitals; 50 from Iyi-enu mission hospital Ogidi and 50 from St. Charles Borromeo hospital Onitsha.

Design and Statistics

The design of the study was correlational. This deal with evaluation of relationship between variables. Statistics adopted was zero order correlation coefficient and statistical package for social sciences version 2.0 was used for data analysis.

RESULTS

This chapter contains the result summary of the analysis on the relationship between attachment style and coping strategies on marital satisfaction.

Table 1 Summary table of the descriptive statistics for the variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N.
Secure attachment	34.81	7.739	100
Anxious attachment style	49.08	10.801	100
Avoidance attachment style	53.88	10.508	100
Approach coping strategy	36.20	7.259	100
Avoidance Copping Strategy	26.81	5.669	100
Marital Satisfacation	54.81	17.935	100

Table 2: Summary table of Attachment Style and coping strategies correlating with Marital Satisfaction. From above calculation secure attachment has a mean score of 34.81 with standard deviation of 7.739, anxious attachment style has 49.08 with standard deviation of 10.801, and avoidance attachment style has mean score of 53.88 with standard deviation 10.508. While approach coping strategy has mean score of 36.20 with standard deviation of 7.259, avoidance has mean score of 26.81 with standard deviation of 5.669. And marital satisfaction has mean score of 54.81 with standard deviation of 17.935.

Correlate Variable: Marital Satisfaction

VARIABLES	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.S.A.S	1					
2.A.A.S	-.138	1				
3.AV.A.S	-.216*	.238**	1			
4.A.C.S	.183	-.043	.85	1		
5.AV.C.S	-.156	-.102	.327**	.046	1	
6.M.S	.534**	.218*	-.210*	.304*	-.239*	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

S. A. S: this means secure attachment style.

A. A. S: means anxious attachment style.

AV. A. S: means avoidance attachment style.

A. C. S: this means approach coping strategy.

AV. C. S: means avoidance attachment style, while

M. S: means marital satisfaction

According to research result finding, attachment styles has a significant relationship with marital satisfaction, secure attachment style had a significant positive correlation with high marital satisfaction at ($r = .534, p < .05$). This connote that increase in secure attachment style lead to high marital satisfaction. From the result finding we see that presence or high secure attachment style relate with high marital satisfaction. In other hands, anxious attachment style had a significant negative correlation with marital satisfaction at ($r = -.218, p < .05$). This entails that increase or high anxious attachment style leads to low marital satisfaction, in the sense that high anxious attachment style relate to low marital satisfaction. Similarly, avoidance attachment style had a significant negative correlation with marital satisfaction at ($r = -.210, p < .05$). Approach coping strategy had a significant positive correlation with marital satisfaction at ($r = .304, p < .05$). This entails that increase or high approach coping strategy leads to high marital satisfaction. That is high approach coping strategy relate to high marital satisfaction. Avoidance coping strategy had a significant negative correlation with marital satisfaction at ($r = -.239, p < .05$). This means that increase or high avoidance coping strategy lead to low marital satisfaction. The first hypothesis which stated that attachment styles will relate to marital satisfaction was accepted.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the relationship between attachment style and coping strategies on marital satisfaction among married unemployed women. The result finding shows that the first hypothesis was confirmed. The first hypothesis stated that attachment style have a significant and positive relationship with marital satisfaction among unemployed married women. This result was in confirmation of the findings of Abdolvahab and Ghaziri (2016). The finding of the first hypothesis was also in congruence with Bowlby and Ainsworthy, (1991).

Also, the study May find explanation in the cognitive self-disclosure theory which stated that each married partner engages in mutual self-disclosure of self in order to higher levels of openness with the aim achieving marital satisfaction. In hypothesis one, result confirms a significant and positive association between attachment style and coping strategies. Theoretical explanation is that couples who acknowledge secure attachment style may disclose more because they have higher levels of interpersonal trust according to the attachment theory by Bowlby. As the married unemployed women, disclose more of self, they in turn hope the reward that will come to them may marital satisfaction.

Similarly, the second hypothesis which stated that there will be significant relationship between coping strategies and marital satisfaction was accepted. This result finding was in confirmation of research by Geneviève Bouchard, (2003). He investigated on the choice or coping strategies by married women, Genevieve Bouchard, (2003), confirmed that those women who adopted approach coping strategy experience more marital quality or satisfaction more than those that subscribed to emotional focused coping strategy or avoidance coping strategy. According to the cognitive self-disclosure theory, the result of hypothesis two may be explained as follows. For instance, when marital stress occurs, married women with type of attachment already knows how to deal with these stresses. Meanwhile, the secure attachment style would go to the source of the problem and figure out ways she can deal with it. However, married women who advocate for insecure attachment style may adopt a coping pattern such as emotional which involves praying, avoidance, and withdrawal from the stressors.

Limitations of the Study

Utmost care should be taken in making inferences with the result of this study, this is because of the fact that the sample were drawn only from only two hospitals which are Iyi-enu mission hospital and St. Charles Borromeo hospital.

Recommendation for Further Studies

The researchers therefore makes the following recommendations. That proposed couples should seek for psychological counselling before embarking on their marital life. Psychologist should enlighten parents on the important of early attachment styles on the child development and later life outcomes. Psychologist should educate unemployed married women on problem focused techniques to enable them deal with marital stress.

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