

**INFLUENCE OF INTIMACY ON MARITAL SUCCESS
AMONG BAPTIST WOMEN IN WARRI**

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This research was designed to find the levels of intimacy and marital success among Warri Baptist women, the relationship between intimacy and marital success, and whether educational qualification, age and type of marriage have any significant relationship on intimacy and marital success. The sample was 200 married women from the two Baptist Associations in Warri and its environment. The instrument was self designed questionnaire with some adaptation from Gager, et al (2004) and Lattaye (1975). It has three major sections with biodata as section one, areas of intimacy as section two (touch, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, eating together, and financial care, as subheadings), while the third section is areas of marital satisfaction such as communication, spending time together, reading together, sex finance, etc. The findings were that the level of intimacy was about 60% high and success was 73% high on average. There was a relationship between intimacy and marital success as the former promotes the later and vice versa. Age groups, educational qualification, and types of marriage did not affect intimacy and marital success significantly on the overall. Below are recommendations.

Couples need to know when their intimacy is intact (high) and when it is loose (low). By sleeping together, bathing together and sitting together to communicate and putting off all elements of solitude or variances or any psychodrama, couples can keep intimacy and marital success growing.

Married women in Warri and other Christian wives should use intimate attitude to satisfy their husbands who in turn will be much more closer (intimate) to them than ever. Couples could plan their leisure time together and able to do some reading together, adjust to their differences as well as empower each other on any area intimacy needs improvement. Since educational qualification differences in marriage are non factor of marriage intimacy and success, age or qualification of marriage should be handled in a peculiar psychosocial level. The government, non-government and traditional rulers need to be helped to interpret their policy on transfer, law of divorce and number of partners in marriage.

Conclusion

This study shows that there is a relationship between intimacy and marital success. Where intimacy was high, marital success was higher. Intimacy which is 60% in this study could be higher with teaching from the Scripture. It is the basis for marriage and marital success that can be heightened through teaching on factors that help marriage to be happy, satisfactory and successful including intimacy in marriage. Heightening marital success through teaching is essential because the study shows that the more intimacy is practiced the more successful marriages become, and vice-versa.

The 60% intimacy found among Warri Baptist married women could be a result of effective teaching on marriage life of the Baptist denomination held firmly through Bible teaching by founding fathers and mothers of the area. Such persons may include: Revd. & Ms. M. K. Whonana, Revd. & Mrs. F. P. Boyo, Revd. & Mrs. J. A. Orikri, Rev. & Mrs. S.A. Akakporo and Revd. & Mrs. J. E. F. Akunu. Another reason could be the culture that honours married women and regards an unmarried women as a taboo or suspected prostitute.

The Urhobos, for instance, call a divorced woman who lives in her parental home *omotogbe*, meaning, an odd daughter. Although the percentage of marital success is high, it can still be improved upon by constant preaching, teaching and prayers. Seminars to enrich marriages, build better homes, through book teaching on sex and health in marriage and other fora can improve both intimacy and marital success.

Recommendations

First of all, the importance of levels of intimacy and marital success should be taught to couples. They need to know when their intimacy is intact (high) and when it is loose (low). By sitting together to communicate, they can improve their satisfaction in marriage. As they put off all elements of solitude or variances or any psychodrama, couple can know that intimacy in marriage and marital success are possible as each one plays his role. The pastor and church need to uphold a practice of regular examination of this survey. Such survey will be the use of anonymous questionnaire passed, filled and the data be analyzed for theological teaching on marriage.

Secondly, the relationship between levels of intimacy and marital success was found to be significant in this study. Therefore married women in Warri and other Christian wives should use intimate attitude to satisfy their husbands who in turn will be much more closer (intimate) to them than ever. By this closeness they will satisfy themselves intimately in both verbal and nonverbal communication. They could plan their leisure time together and

able to do some reading together, adjust to their differences as well as empower each other on any area intimacy needs improvement.

In the third place, age differences in marriage is seen as non factor of marriage intimacy and success. Therefore this research recommends that people be well taught to understand that each stage of marriage is peculiar. So each stage/age of marriage should be handled in a peculiar psychosocial level. Each age level should be psychoanalyzed before teaching is done. Each pastor needs to study and teach in the affective domain of marital satisfaction based on biblical truth and psychological discovery. This system should be applied to the findings across the levels in educational qualification which has no significant difference. The wrong assumption that the higher the qualification the better the intimacy and marital success should be corrected in teaching. It is the church pastor who can help the church and the society by using the cognitive domain level of teaching to convince them. Pastors need to write more books on marital intimacy in relation to marital success after surveys.

Fourthly, types of marriage was found to have no significant effect on levels of intimacy and marital success. Therefore men could be taught to abstain from the desire of acquiring more women for better marital satisfaction. This research will assist the biblical teaching on monogamy and true love as means of enhancing satisfaction which can restore intimacy and confidence of the couple on each other. This is why the government, non-government and traditional rulers need to be helped to interpret their policy on transfer, law of divorce and number of partners in marriage. Since there is

need for couples to be close, it is essential that working hours, places and distance where couples work apart should be put into consideration before posting or transfer of persons. Judges and traditional authorities need to call on pastors to help couples with low intimacy and less marital satisfaction. Besides, couples should be counseled for possible restoration of intimacy by teaching all areas that lead to marital satisfaction. Both church and government should be encouraged to build good libraries for couples to study about marriage. Besides, prayer conference is highly recommended for couples/family regularly. This will build spiritual intimacy and spiritual strength for love, honesty and satisfaction in marital life. Women can be organized to pray more regularly with youths for homes to be more stable so that Satan will not use human weakness to reduce marital intimacy and success.

Suggestions for Further Studies

The possibility of having leisure time including eating together, by couples can be examined further to find out reasons why people shy away from leisure time. Secondly, financial management as priority in homes should be taken up as a course for seminary studies to enable them teach members in the churches. Finally, a systematized biblical/socio-cultural theology on marital success and failure should be developed through colloquia and theses in seminaries.