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LOVE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL ADJUSTMENT THROUGH
FIVE STAGES OF THE MARITAL LIFE-CYCLE
IN PROTESTANT NIGERIAN SOCIETY

DISSERTATION

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By

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This study examined the relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment across five stages of the marital life-cycle in Nigerian society. The subjects for this study were 202 volunteers from six protestant churches representing six cities in the southern part of Nigeria. An average of 20 couples were representatives of each of the five marital life-cycles. Each of the subjects completed the Love Attitude Inventory (LAI), and the Marital Adjustment Test (short form) (MAT).

Wilk's multivariate analysis revealed no significant differences between husbands' and wives' love attitude and marital adjustment across the five stages of the marital life cycle. Multivariate analysis split-plot 5.2 with repeated measures revealed no significant difference for the total sample among the groups, but indicated a significant difference between love attitude and marital adjustment for the total sample using sex as a factor. A univariate test of the MAT and LAI indicated that the MAT accounted for the difference. A canonical correlation

indicated a significant positive relationship between husbands' and wives' marital adjustment and love attitude within each of the five groups.

The findings suggest that husbands and wives included in this study have a good understanding of their roles in the marriage relationship and that the partners have general agreement regarding those roles. The marriage partners apparently have strong influences on each other's perceptions of love attitude and marital adjustment.

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INTRODUCTION

Counseling has been defined as a formal relationship between two or more people for free and full communication at the verbal symbolic level under safe conditions based on an internally consistent theory of personality and procedures consonant with the theory for the purpose of improving the clients' thinking, feeling, and behaving (Manaster & Corsini, 1982). Counseling has been in use extensively in the United States and the Western World in general since the early 1900s. Nigeria, however, has begun to accept the use of counseling with families, couples, individuals, and groups only during the past 10 years and professional counseling is still in its developmental stages there.

For decades Nigerian society has depended on elders, chiefs, priests, and village rulers to settle marital misunderstanding and give pre-marital and career guidance to young people. The society has not had the opportunity to use the services of professionals in the field of counseling until recently when the Christian churches, primarily located in the South of Nigeria, began to open counseling offices, train ministers in pastoral counseling, add professional counselors to their staff, and most

importantly, encourage members to seek professional counseling when in need. It is important to note that in Nigerian society the Church always has been the most effective medium of communication. It is, therefore, not surprising that Christian Churches now are taking the lead in providing counseling, and particularly the churches in Southern Nigeria.

The development of counseling has been brought about, in part, because a majority of young Nigerians are getting college educations and some are traveling to and receiving educations in other countries. Some of these young people are meeting mates and marrying while in college, and, therefore, many issues, including those related to love attitudes and marital satisfaction, outside of the traditional Nigerian cultural responses are being raised.

According to Knox (1985), love is the reason most Americans get married and lack of love is the reason many obtain a divorce. This statement appears to be true also for Christians in the Nigerian society. However, there is little research that deals with Nigerians and their marriages and the research that has been done was completed during the last decade. The research primarily has dealt with assessment of societal perception and attitude towards marriage (Musa, 1981), attitude toward utilizing counseling services (Akiwowo, 1982), and attitude toward husband-wife relations (Ugwuegbu, 1981). No research dealing with love

attitude and marital adjustment in Nigerian society was found in the literature.

The research on marital adjustment in the Western world has examined love attitudes (Broderick, 1980; Faire & Swenson, 1977; Knox & Sporkowski, 1968; Lawson, 1981), economic factors (Renne, 1970; Knox 1980), sexual values (Reiss, 1976), and role theory (Winch, 1958) as they relate to marital adjustment. Only Lawson (1981) has examined love attitude and marital adjustment through stages of the marital life-cycle. The subjects in Lawson's study were from an American church population, a population that would appear to be similar to the Nigerian population of church members who are the Nigerians most likely to be involved in counseling.

A limited number of studies have compared American love attitudes with love attitudes of people from other countries (Chia, Chong, Cheng, Castellow, More, & Hayes, 1985; Simmons, Vom Kolke, & Shimizu, 1986; Philbrick & Opolot, 1980). All of these studies found differences between American attitudes and attitudes of those from other countries. These findings indicate that a more dominant attitude toward marriage roles exists in other countries than in the United States, and that romantic love is valued more in the United States than in other countries. Although none of these studies looked at marital adjustment through stages of the marital life-

cycle, Philbrick and Opolot (1980) compared Ugandan and American love attitudes in three areas, romantic idealism, romantic power, and conjugal love. They found differences in all three areas between American subjects and the subjects from Kampala Uganda University. On romantic idealism the Ugandan students scored a lower mean than their counterparts in the United States. Higher mean scores were obtained from Ugandan subjects on romantic power as opposed to a lower score from those in the United States. The biggest difference was in conjugal love, the mean scores of the American samples were much higher than the mean scores of the Ugandan samples. The researchers suggested that additional cross-cultural research on love attitudes is needed to ascertain the universality of the components of romantic love among other populations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although professional counseling is increasing rapidly in Nigeria and the Church organization is leading the way in an attempt to understand and help people answer growing concerns related to establishing and maintaining satisfactory marriages, there remains a dearth of information that deals with marital love attitudes and marital adjustment in Nigerian society. Therefore the problem for this study was the exploration of attitudes toward love and marital adjustment of married Nigerians and whether Nigerian attitudes are similar to those of Lawson's United States population as a first step toward gaining culture specific information to be used in pre-marital and marital counseling in Nigeria. The purpose of this study was the investigation of the relationship between love attitudes and marital adjustment through five stages of the marital life-cycle in Nigerian society.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Research concerning love attitudes and marital adjustment throughout the stages of the marital life-cycle is limited and none was found that examined these variables in Nigerian society. However, research studies have examined families and attitudes toward marriage in different tribal parts of Nigeria and other African countries and the love attitudes and marital adjustment in Western culture.

African Studies

The effect of cultural group, educational orientation, and sex attitudes on the wife-husband relationship was investigated by Ugwuegbu (1981). He studied the influences of regional-cultural differences and fields of university study on students' attitude toward the husband-wife relationship of 170 female and 287 male undergraduate students from three cultural regions of Nigeria. Female students in the social science field and Northern students evidenced traditional bias against Western-type education for women, arguing that women who have more than eight years of education would not be good homemakers.

In another study that looked at societal perceptions and attitude toward marriage and educated Hausa women, Musa

(1981), using data from a 36-item questionnaire administered to 500 Hausa people selected at random, found a majority of the respondents were in favor of Hausa women going for higher education. The general Hausa population, however, believed educated Hausa women encounter difficulties in marrying and also agreed that marriage allows women to achieve respected roles in the society and to develop their potential fully.

In a comparison of African and American love styles, Philbrick and Opolot (1980) administered the Munro-Adams Love Attitude Scale to 25 males and 25 females in a Kampala Uganda university. The subjects represented a diversity of tribal groups, had a mean age of 19.7 years, and were enrolled in a variety of academic majors. The scores of their sample indicated a wide range of beliefs about love and its components. The researchers stated that although slightly lower than the American sample used to standardize the Munro-Adams sample, the African group scored in the upper range of norms on attitude toward love. These findings suggest a relatively strong endorsement of the notion of the power of love and of the belief in conjugal love as well as moderate endorsement of romantic idealism in Ugandan students when results are compared with other norms.

Western Studies

Simmons, Vomkolke and Smimiza (1986) studied attitudes towards romantic love among American, German and Japanese students. The students completed the Hobart (1958) and Knox-Sporakowski (1968) scales that measure attitude toward love and romance. The results of this study confirmed Goode's (1959) theory that romantic love is valued highly in less traditional cultures with few strong, extended-family ties and is less valued in cultures where kinship influences and reinforces the relationship between marriage partners. Japanese subjects reported significantly lower agreement with the attitude valuing romantic love than did West German subjects. Responses from American subjects fell between those of the other two cultures.

To study romantic love and idealistic sex differences among Australian adults, Hong (1986) administered a 9-item questionnaire to 274 men and 294 women between the ages of 20 and 30 years from a provincial city of Queensland, Australia. Results showed that women were less idealistic in romantic love than men. Men and women, however, did not differ on pragmatic views of romantic love. The researcher suggested that these results may be a reflection of the functional roles of people between the early 1970s and mid-1980s or variation in cross-cultural social values toward romantic love.

The effect of personality and psychophysiological factors in marital adjustment and sexual satisfaction were examined by Davis (1986). Using the Zuckerman Sensation-Seeking Questionnaire, Eysenck Psychoticism, Extroversion-Introversion, Neuroticism and Lie Scale, the Farley-Davis Questionnaire, the Locke Marital Adjustment questionnaire, and Sweet Bottle measure of physiological arousal, the researcher tested 154 married couples from the University of Wisconsin and concluded that there existed a "significant positive assortative mating on the Sensation-Seeking Motive and physiological arousal measure, and negative assortative mating on the Neuroticism Personality Dimension" (Davis, 1986). When women were extroverted, higher sexual satisfaction was reported. When males were extroverted and females introverted, the lowest sexual satisfaction occurred.

To investigate the differences between the love relationship in functional and dysfunctional marriages, Foire and Swenson (1977) compared the expression of love in marital relationships using 35 functional and 35 dysfunctional couples. Insignificant differences existed between the two groups in their expectations of expression of love in marriage, but the functional couples expressed significantly more love than the dysfunctional couples. Functional couples were found to encourage each other, show more affection, and provide moral support more than the

dysfunctional couples. The dysfunctional couples received even less love than they had expected from each other. These findings were similar to Kajdan's (1972) and suggest that the major failure and disappointment in expression of love within dysfunctional couples is verbal and that the significant source of failure in dysfunctional marriages is in the communication of positive affection and concern.

Broderick (1980) examined attitudinal and behavioral components of marital satisfaction and found that behavior is a stronger determinant of satisfaction for men than for women, and that the more distressed men and women were, the more their satisfaction ratings were influenced by their spouses' behavior. Thirty distressed couples who were in marital therapy and had an average of 8.3 years of marriage and 25 couples in the community with an average of 15 years of marriage completed a 109-item spouse observation checklist for 7 days. Indices of negative and positive behavior were received through the daily checklist of marital activities. The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale was used to measure love commitment and exchange orientation.

Knox and Sporakowski (1968) administered the Love Attitude Inventory to 100 male and 100 female college students in a study geared toward ascertaining tendency to be romantic or conjugal in attitude toward love. Their findings indicated that males were more romantic and

females more realistic in their attitude toward love. Males, however, as they move up to their Junior and Senior years, tended to become more realistic in their love attitude. Males who were engaged to be married had more realistic attitudes toward love than those males who were not engaged.

One study by Lawson (1981) investigated the relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment in American society and looked at seven stages of marital life cycle. Lawson's study had a total of 228 subjects, with an average of 16 couples in each of the seven stages of the marital life cycle. The subjects completed the Love Attitude Inventory and the Marital Adjustment Test. Multivariate analysis showed significant differences between groups for marital adjustment and love attitude. There was an overall tendency toward an increase in romantic love and marital adjustment as length of marriage increased for males and the total sample. Females showed a significant increase in romantic love attitudes from the middle years to the latter years of marriage. Other research similar to Lawson's either considered love attitude in the marital life cycle in a limited fashion, e.g., Knox (1970), Driscoll, Davis and Lipety (1972) or considered love attitude in family life cycle without marital adjustment, e.g., Munro and Adams (1978).

In summary, studies in Western literature have examined attitudes, personalities, behaviors, romantic and conjugal love, and sex role identity in functional and dysfunctional relationships. Only Lawson (1981), however, has compared the relationship between attitude toward love and marital adjustment of couples across the marital life cycle in the United States. Although some studies have compared the views of love in America and other cultures, no studies were found that examined love attitudes and marital adjustments of Nigerians. In African literature, studies have focused on the attitude of husband-wife relationships, the factors that affect mate selection, the cultural husband and wife roles, and the effects of women's education on marital relationships. The research does not include studies on love attitudes and marital adjustments.

PROCEDURES

Research Questions

Due to the exploratory nature of this study, the following research questions were investigated.

1. Is there a significant difference between the mean scores for husbands in each of the five stages of marriage on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test and (b) the Love Attitude Inventory.

2. Is there a significant difference between mean scores for wives in each of the five stages of marriage on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test and (b) the Love Attitude Inventory.

3. Is there a significant difference between mean scores for the total sample at each of the five stages of marriage on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test and (b) the Love Attitude Inventory.

4. Are there significant relationships between each couples' scores (husband and wife) on the Marital Adjustment Test and the Love Attitude Inventory for couples married:

- a. 0 to 1 year
- b. 2 to 12 years
- c. 13 to 21 years

- d. 22 to 32 years
- e. 33+ years.

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 101 couples ($n = 202$) obtained from Protestant churches in the six cities of Lagos, Ilorins, Aba, Ibadan, Enugu, and Owerri, representing the Southern part of Nigerian society. All couples were volunteers.

The 101 couples were representative of five different stages of the marital life cycle as purported by Carter and McGoldrick's (1980) family life cycle and based upon Nigerian family structure. Group I was composed of 20 couples married 0 - 1 years with no children. Group II was composed of 21 couples married 2 - 12 years with young children. Group III was made up of 20 couples married 13 - 21 years who had young children and teenage children. Group IV had 20 couples married 22 - 32 years who had teenage and adult children. Group V was made up of 20 couples married 33 years or more who had adult children no longer living at home. All of the subjects were Nigerians in a legal, one spouse marriage who had not been previously married. According to Blaw and Duncan's (1967) outline of education and occupational level, the subjects were predominately middle class in Nigerian society.

Instrumentation

This study employed two instruments. The Marital Adjustment Test (short form) (MAT) (Locke & Wallace, 1959) was used to measure overall marital adjustment of the subjects. The Love Attitude Inventory (LAI) (Knox, 1967) was used to measure the subjects' attitude toward love.

Because no research has been conducted on marital adjustment and love attitudes in Nigerian society, there have been no instruments especially designed for Nigerians. However, both the LAI and MAT have been widely used in research with minority and majority groups over two decades and use of the instruments with a Nigerian population seems appropriate because both the LAI and MAT instruments are written in simple English language which is understandable to the average educated person in Nigeria, which applies to the subjects for this study. Therefore, it would appear that the instruments will provide reasonably valid and reliable data.

The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test (short form) MAT (Locke & Wallace, 1959) measures overall marital adjustment through the use of 15 forced-choice items that have proven to be accurately discriminatory of marital adjustment (see Appendix A). The Locke-Wallace instrument is scored using a weighted linear response which provides one overall score of marital adjustment for each person. The total range of possible scores on the MAT is 2 to 158

points, with a higher score indicating a higher level of marriage adjustment. The weighted response values were determined according to the degree of differences between the percentages of happily married and divorced people who responded to a given category for each test item (Lawson, 1981; Locke, 1951).

The MAT has been widely used in research in the Western culture that relates to marital adjustment. The MAT has been the most frequently used marital adjustment scale. It has also been evaluated as one of the better instruments in evaluating marital adjustment (O'Leary & Turkewitz, 1978). Since no instrument has been designed for use with the Nigerian population, the MAT appeared to be the most appropriate for use with Nigerian subjects.

Normative data on the instrument were obtained from a sample of 236 middle-class couples. The sample was divided into matched groups that were viewed by close friends as well-adjusted and maladjusted. The mean adjustment score for the well-adjusted group was 139.9, whereas the mean score for the maladjusted group was only 71.7. Only 17% of the maladjusted group, as compared to 95% of the well-adjusted group, achieved a score of 100 or higher (Locke & Wallace, 1959). A reliability coefficient of 0.90 was obtained using the split-half techniques and the Spearman-Brown correlation formula (Locke & Williams, 1958).

The Love Attitude Inventory (LAI) (Knox, 1967) was designed to measure love attitudes. LAI has 30 forced-choice questions with responses based on a five point continuum. A value of one represents a very high romantic response, whereas a value of five represents a high conjugal (realistic) response. A combined score under 90 indicates a more romantic attitude toward love, and a combined score over 90 indicates a more conjugal attitude toward love. The higher the score (150 is the highest possible score) the greater the tendency to be conjugal in one's love attitude. The lower the score (30 is the lowest possible score) the greater the tendency to be romantic in one's love attitude.

The LAI was developed through constructing 200 items after a review of the literature. Test items were selected from materials written about love in the area of psychology, psychiatry, marriage and family, and sociology. The items were judged by 10 professionals in the area of marriage and family. Eighty-five of the 200 items were retained based on a minimum acceptability of 70% agreement. In determining the romantic or conjugal attitude of each item, a 70% or greater agreement per item was attained.

A sample of 300 senior high school and college students was used to obtain the normative data on the instrument. When the item analysis was compiled on the 85 original items, 30 were found statistically significant at

the 0.01 level. A chi-square analysis identified items which discriminated between high and low scoring participants. A test-retest procedure employed to measure reliability yielded a 78.4 percent of agreement over a one week time interval (Knox & Sporakowski, 1968). Adams and LaVoie (1974) stated that the LAI has construct validity.

The measuring of attitudes toward love was accomplished by judging love to exist on a continuum from romantic to realistic. A romantic-conjugal love continuum was found to be the predominant conceptual scheme used in the study of love attitude (Knox, 1971).

Data Collection

One church in each of five cities, Lagos, Owerri, Enugu, Aba, and Ibadan, representing the geographical areas of Southern Nigeria, was chosen for data collection. A letter requesting permission to use volunteer members of the selected protestant churches in the southern part of Nigeria as subjects for this study was sent to the pastors of the five churches (Appendix B). The letter explained the reasons for the study and asked the pastors to make an announcement in their Sunday School classes for those who might be interested in volunteering for the study to sign up at the church office. There were 20 couples who volunteered from Lagos, 24 from Owerri, 22 from Enugu, 18 from Ibadan, and 21 from Aba.

Each of the volunteers from each city was contacted through a personal visit from the investigator within two days before the testing date. During the visit, the participants were informed of the time, date, and place of the meeting to obtain the data (Appendix C). Because only 185 of the 210 volunteers completed the questionnaires in the original five cities, a sixth city, Ilorin, was chosen so that more volunteers could be obtained. The researcher contacted the pastor of the protestant church in Ilorin, and asked him to help get couple volunteers for each group following the same procedure that was used to obtain volunteers in the original five churches. There were 12 couple volunteers, 8 ($n = 16$) of which completed the instruments.

The instruments were administered to the subjects in a group on the premises of each church. As each couple came in for testing, a 3" x 5" card was given to the husband and to the wife with assigned numerical codes. Couple number one (#1) husband was designated 1A; the wife was designated 1B and so on. Husbands and wives were seated separately.

The investigator instructed the subjects to put their code number on each questionnaire and to place their name on the coded card. The coded cards with names on them and the questionnaires were handed to the investigator separately after the last questionnaire was completed. Participants interested in obtaining the results of the

study were asked to write their mailing address on the reverse side of the coded card.

An explanation of the study was given to the subjects (Appendix D) and each subject was asked to complete the Informed Consent Form (Appendix E) and the Demographic Data Sheet (Appendix F). Before administering the instruments, a brief explanation of the questionnaire was given by the researcher and there was an opportunity for the subjects to ask questions. One-half of the husbands and one-half of the wives were given one instrument to complete and the remaining wives and husbands were given the other instrument to complete. After completing the first instrument they recieved, which took about 45 minutes, the subjects were given the second instrument. Completion of both tests took about one hour and 30 minutes. The answer sheets were collected by the researcher after each session.

The same procedure was used in all six churches. The data collection took two weeks. Data were returned to the United States where it was processed at the University of North Texas Computing Center.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Data

Research Questions 1 and 2 were tested using Wilk's multivariate analysis to determine if there were significant differences across the five stages of marriage for husbands and wives in regard to marital adjustment, and love attitude. Research Question 3 was tested through the use of multivariate analysis of variance split-plot 5.2 with repeated measures to determine if there were significant differences between scores for the total sample across the five stages of marriage on the Marital Adjustment Test and Love Attitude Inventory. Research Question 4 was tested using canonical analysis to determine whether there was a significant relationship between husbands' and wives' scores on the Marital Adjustment Test and the Love Attitude Inventory across the five stages of marriage. The .05 level was established as the level of significance.

Research Question 1 asked whether there is a significant difference between the mean scores for husbands in each of the five stages of the marriage on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test, and (b) Love Attitude Inventory.

MAT and LAI mean scores and standard deviation for husbands in each of the five groups are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

MAT and LAI Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for Husband in Each of the Five Groups

| Groups | N | MAT | | LAI | |
|----------------|----|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| 1) 0 - 1 yrs | 40 | 116.29 | 17.49 | 79.17 | 15.50 |
| 2) 2 - 12 yrs | 41 | 121.60 | 17.68 | 82.36 | 17.30 |
| 3) 13 - 21 yrs | 40 | 126.42 | 18.20 | 83.68 | 16.08 |
| 4) 22 - 32 yrs | 40 | 116.75 | 31.86 | 76.25 | 15.90 |
| 5) 33+ yrs | 40 | 109.30 | 24.78 | 75.35 | 14.83 |
| Entire Sample | | 118.21 | 22.93 | 79.47 | 16.05 |

The overall equality of mean score for husbands on the MAT and LAI revealed a non-significant Wilks lambda $F(8,190) = 1.326$, $p > .05$, indicating no significant difference between mean scores for husbands across the five marital life stages.

Table 2 displays the F value and probability factor obtained by univariate analysis for husbands on the MAT and LAI.

Table 2

F Values and Probability Factors for Husbands on MAT and LAI

| Variable | Mean Square | <u>df</u> | <u>F</u> Value | <u>P</u> |
|----------|-------------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| MAT | 513.980 | 4 | 1.58 | .184 |
| LAI | 257.04 | 4 | 1.06 | .378 |

Data in Table 2 indicate there is no significant difference in husbands' group means on the MAT and LAI between the five groups. Because no significant difference was found, multiple comparisons were not conducted.

Research Question 2 asked whether there is a significant difference between mean scores for wives in each of the five stages of marriage on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test, and (b) the Love Attitude Inventory. The MAT and LAI mean scores and standard deviation for wives in each of the five groups are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

MAT and LAI Means and Standard Deviation for Wives in Each of the Five Groups

| Groups | <u>N</u> | MAT | | LAI | |
|----------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| | | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
| 1) 0 - 1 yrs | 40 | 116.70 | 17.88 | 82.60 | 14.78 |
| 2) 2 - 12 yrs | 41 | 111.76 | 23.88 | 77.90 | 18.79 |
| 3) 13 - 21 yrs | 40 | 111.05 | 17.78 | 77.20 | 15.09 |
| 4) 22 - 32 yrs | 40 | 112.94 | 29.09 | 78.26 | 19.12 |
| 5) 33+ yrs | 40 | 97.47 | 35.38 | 77.95 | 13.81 |
| Entire Sample | | 109.85 | 26.11 | 78.77 | 16.22 |

The overall equality test of means for wives on the MAT and LAI indicate a non-significant Wilk's lambda $F(8,190) = 1.011$, $P > .05$ indicating no significant difference between wives' scores across the five stages of marriage on either marital adjustment or love attitude.

Data in Table 4 indicate the F value and probability factor obtained through univariate analysis for wives on the MAT and LAI.

Table 4

MAT and LAI F Values and Probability Factors for Wives

| Variable | Mean Square | <u>df</u> | <u>F</u> Value | <u>P</u> |
|----------|-------------|-----------|----------------|----------|
| MAT | 664.324 | 4 | 1.67 | .163 |
| LAI | 270.358 | 4 | 0.35 | .844 |

The results in Table 4 show there is no significant difference in wives' group means between the five groups on either of the two variables. Since no significant difference was found across the five groups for wives, multiple comparison analyses were not conducted.

Research Question 3 asked whether there is a significant difference between mean scores for the total sample at each of the five stages of marriage on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test and (b) The Love Attitude Inventory.

The F value and probability factors obtained through multivariate analysis split-plot 5.2 for the total sample on the MAT and LAI for the five groups are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

MAT and LAI F Value and Probability Factors for the Total Sample for the Five Groups

| Test | Value | <u>F</u> Value | <u>P</u> |
|--------|-------|----------------|----------|
| Wilk's | .891 | 1.406 | .196 |

Data in Table 5 indicate no significant difference across the five groups, $\underline{F} (8,190) = 1.400$, $\underline{P} > .05$, on marital adjustment and love attitude for the total sample.

Table 6 shows the \underline{F} value and the probability factors obtained through split-plot 5.2 analysis for the total sample on MAT and LAI with sex as a factor.

Table 6

MAT and LAI F Value and Probability Factors for the Total Sample with Sex as a Factor

| Test | Value | <u>F</u> Value | <u>P</u> |
|--------|-------|----------------|----------|
| Wilk's | .873 | 6.85 | .002 |

Data in Table 6 indicate a significant difference with $\underline{F} (2,95) = 6.85$, $\underline{P} < .05$ with husbands showing a higher mean score on both variables than wives. Although using sex as a factor revealed a significant difference, using a univariate test to assess the sex effect is problematic

because the Bartlett's test of sphericity rule states that when a significant difference exists as in this case, $F(40,20119) = 1.49$, $P < .05$, a univariate analysis should not be applied. However, in order to find which of the variables may have accounted for the significant difference between sex, a separate analysis was conducted for MAT and LAI. Table 7 shows the F value and probability factors obtained from a univariate analysis split-plot 5.2 using sex as the only factor.

Table 7

F Value and Probability Factors on MAT Using Sex as a Factor

| Source | F Value | P |
|--------------|---------|------|
| Sex | 13.85 | .00 |
| Group by Sex | .71 | .586 |

Table 7 data indicate a significant difference between husbands' and wives' using MAT only for the total sample.

Table 8 presents the F value and probability factor obtained from univariate analysis split-plot 5.2 on LAI using sex as the only factor.

Table 8

F Value and Probability Factors on LAI Using Sex as a Factor

| Source | F Value | P |
|--------------|---------|------|
| Sex | 23.8 | .685 |
| Group by Sex | 851.98 | .214 |

Univariate analysis split-plot 5.2 on the LAI reveals no significant difference between husbands' and wives' MAT and LAI scores. Since a significant difference was found between husbands' and wives' scores using the MAT and not the LAI, it appears that the MAT has greater weight on the sex effect than does the LAI. The Bartlett's test suggests that the univariate tests are suspect, therefore we cannot, as in this case, conclusively say that the difference on MAT between the sexes are actually true in the population. However, the F value for the univariate test is strong enough to suggest that there is a difference between the MAT and the LAI.

Research Question 4 asked whether there are significant relations between husbands' and wives' scores on the (a) Marital Adjustment Test and (b) the Love Attitude Inventory for couples married (a) 0 - 1 years, (b) 2 - 12 years, (c) 13 - 21 years, (d) 22 - 32 years, and (e) 33+ years.

Tables 9 through 13 display the canonical correlation of LAI and MAT scores for husbands' and wives' within each of the five stages of the marital life cycle. Root 1 is used to find the first canonical correlation functions which represent the combination of MAT and LAI scores for wives and the MAT and LAI score for husbands. Root 2 explains the relationship between husbands' LAI and MAT scores and wives' LAI and MAT scores which are independent of the first root. One or both root must be significant at the .05 level in order to establish a relationship. Table 9 presents the canonical correlation, and the probability factors obtained from the canonical correlation coefficient analysis for Group I.

Table 9

Canonical Correlation and Probability Factors for 0-1 Years of Marriage (Group I)

| Roots | Canonical Correlation | Wilk's | F Value | P |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| 1 | .778 | .389 | 4.822 | .004 |
| 2 | .102 | .989 | 0.179 | .678 |

Table 9 data indicate that root 1 of the canonical functions is significant of the .05 level. The relationship is positive because the created variable for male and female on the LAI and MAT for Group I is .60. Thus, there is a significant positive relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment for couples in Group I.

Table 10 presents the canonical correlation, and the probability factors obtained from the canonical analysis for Group II.

Table 10

Canonical Correlation and Probability Factors for 2-12
Years of Marriage (Group II)

| Roots | Canonical Correlation | Wilk's | F Value | P |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| 1 | .704 | .366 | 5.532 | .002 |
| 2 | .521 | .728 | 6.710 | .018 |

Table 10 data indicate that root 1 of the canonical functions is significant at the .05 level. The relationship is positive because the created variable for male and female on the MAT and LAI is .69. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment for couples in Group II.

Table 11 presents the canonical correlation, and the probability factors obtained from the canonical analysis for Group III.

Table 11

Canonical Correlation and Probability Factors for 13-21
Years of Marriage (Group III)

| Roots | Canonical Correlation | Wilk's | F Value | P |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| 1 | .767 | .397 | 4.694 | .004 |
| 2 | .186 | .965 | 0.615 | .445 |

Data in Table 11 indicate that root 1 of the canonical functions is significant at the .05 level. The relationship is positive because the created variables for males and females on the MAT and LAI is .62. For Group III there is a significant positive relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment.

Table 12 presents the canonical correlation and probability factors obtained from the canonical analysis for Group IV.

Table 12

Canonical Correlation and Probability Factors for 22-32
Years of Marriage (Group IV)

| Roots | Canonical Correlation | Wilk's | F Value | P |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| 1 | .788 | .323 | 5.686 | .002 |
| 2 | .382 | .853 | 2.743 | .117 |

Table 12 data indicate that root 1 of the canonical functions is significant at the .05 level. The nature of the relationship is positive because the created variable for male and female on the LAI and MAT is .71. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment for couples in Group IV.

Table 13 presents the canonical correlation and probability facators obtained from the canonical analysis for Group V.

Table 13

Canonical Correlation and Probability Factors for 33+ Years
of Marriage (Group V)

| Roots | Canonical Correlation | Wilk's | F Value | P |
|-------|--------------------------|--------|---------|------|
| 1 | .786 | .337 | 6.123 | .001 |
| 2 | .340 | .884 | 2.355 | .142 |

Table 13 data show that root 1 of the canonical functions is significant at the .05 level. Group V also shows a positive relationship because a canonical correlation of .53 was obtained from the created variable for male and female on LAI and MAT. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between love attitude and marital adjustment couples in Group V.

Discussion

This study examined love attitude and marital adjustment through five stages of marriage in Nigerian society and found no significant differences between husbands' and wives' love attitudes and marital adjustment across the five stages of marriage in the group studied. In addition, significant relationships between husbands' and wives' love attitude and marital adjustment were found within each of the five stages of marriage. These findings

seem to indicate a congruence in beliefs and love and marriage relationships throughout the marital cycles.

The finding of this study that there are no significant differences between husbands' and wives' love attitude and marriage adjustment across stages of marriage disagrees with Lawson's (1981) finding in the American population he studied that husbands' and wives' love attitude and marital adjustment across seven stages of the marital life cycle did differ significantly during some stages. This study's finding that there is a significant positive relationship between husbands' and wives' love attitude and marital adjustment in each of the five stages of marriage partially supports Lawson's (1981) finding of such a relationship in two of the seven stages of marriage in his study. The apparent congruence between husbands' and wives' love attitude and marital adjustment in all stages of marriage in this study seems to indicate that the Nigerian couples have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in the relationship. Couples in each stage of marriage apparently have a strong influence on each others perception of love attitude and marital adjustment and from the onset of marriage through the later years are supportive of each other, thus the expression of similarity in their love attitude and marital adjustment.

One difference between the relationships in the two studies is that in Lawson's study only subjects in Groups I

(married 0 to 2 years) and III (married 5 to 9 years) showed a positive relationship between love attitude and marriage adjustment and those subjects had a conjugal love attitude and poor marriage adjustment. In contrast, Nigerian subjects in this study reveal a romantic love attitude in each of the five stages of the marital life cycle. The Nigerian couples show a mean score under 90 on the Love Attitude Inventory for all groups, indicating a romantic attitude toward love. It would appear that American couples in the early stages of marriage and during the time there are young children in the home have a pragmatic, realistic view of love as defined by the LAI while Nigerian couples maintain a romantic, affective view of love. The romantic love attitude found in this study seems to indicate that husbands and wives in Nigeria have the same understanding and interpretation of love throughout their marriage. The couples seem to know what each expects of the other, and to be willing to fulfill these expectations in order to satisfy their partner in the marriage, indicating that there is no role confusion among the couples.

In this study the subjects' mean score on the Marital Adjustment Test is above 100 indicating overall well adjusted marital relationship for the Southern Nigerian couples. This finding is also in partial agreement with Lawson's (1981) finding of a mean score above 100 on

marital adjustment for five of the marital stages of his American population, although Lawson's Groups I and III showed a mean score below that for well adjusted marriages.

While it is not possible to point to the exact reason why the couples in this study demonstrated romantic love attitudes and well adjusted marriages, two possible reasons may explain this result. One, the Nigerian couples, relatively speaking, are more conservative Christians who seem to strictly obey and follow the rules established in the Bible. Two, the Bible from which they take their example for living teaches loving your spouse, respecting each other's feelings, forgiving and forbearing each other. Therefore, since the couples adhere strictly to the Biblical principles of marriage, since they firmly believe in it, their score on any marital adjustment or marital harmony test would be expected to be high. Therefore, the Nigerian responses may be more a reflection of their basic Christian beliefs about marriage responsibilities than an individual attitude toward love.

The findings of this study that romantic love predominates in the marriage of the Nigerian couples studied do not support the Simmons, Vomkolke, and Smimiza (1986) findings which showed that samples of American, German, and Japanese students supported Goodes' (1959) theory that romantic love is valued highly in less traditional cultures with few strong, extended-family ties,

and is less valued in cultures where kinship influences reinforce the relationship between marriage partners.

Even though this study used the same instruments, same Christian related population, and basically asked the same question as those found in Lawson's study (1981), there are differences in the findings. These differences could be due to different cultural roles and expectations. One possible explanation is that the instruments might have been perceived differently. What is regarded as conjugal love to an American couple may actually be seen as romantic love to a Nigerian couple.

The meaning of love, body signals, marriage and divorce have been well defined in American society, as opposed to Nigerian society. For example, in American society certain looks, touches, kisses and hugs mean certain different things, which are understood by almost every one living in the society. A young lady may look directly in the eye of a young man, she may hug and kiss him, and it could simply be an expression of understanding and caring, which is understood by both parties. However, for a Nigerian, such behavior may send a "I am in love and ready for marriage" signal.

One of the areas of misunderstanding for most American counselors attempting to counsel Nigerians in American universities has been the area of eye contact. In American society maintaining eye contact when talking with someone

is important. It sends a message of "I am there with you." For a Nigerian, such eye contact sends a disrespectful signal, especially when the person doing the talking is older, more educated, or richer than the person listening. In one instance, an American counselor considered referring a Nigerian couple to another counselor because the counselor believed the couple refused to establish rapport with him. When asked why he thought there was no rapport, the counselor replied that the couple did not maintain eye contact during sessions.

Also in American society, taking a spouse out for a candlelight dinner, with a dozen roses, holding hands and verbalizing "I love you" several times signals romanticism and deep commitment. In Nigerian society, however, couples don't need to say "I love you" to each other, go out to eat, buy flowers or hold hands to make a romantic statement. The signals which most Nigerian women seem to understand as romanticism and deep commitment are for their husband to provide the basic needs such as food and clothing, and to be there for them.

A second possible explanation for the difference in the findings of the two studies is the couples' religious beliefs. Although there is no cause to question the sincerity of responses of the participants, it is possible that their biblical beliefs about love, marriage, and relationships in general played a part in each person's

response to the materials. An understanding of how religious beliefs are adhered to in both societies will reveal that Christians in Nigerian society are relatively more conservative than Christians in America. Several possible reasons need to be considered.

First, while Nigeria is emerging as an economic power, Christians in America live in a country that is already wealthy. Although not all are wealthy, on the average they are wealthier than the Christians living in Nigerian society. Therefore, Nigerian Christians live in an economic and religious environment similar to the more conservative beliefs in the United States 40 years ago.

Second, not only are the Americans materially more well-to-do than Nigerians, they are also intellectually and theologically richer than Nigerian Christians. Currently, 80% of the missionaries in Nigeria are Americans. Most of the Bibles and literature which Nigerian Christians read are written and printed in America. Because of their knowledge and experience, Americans tend to take the beliefs for granted while Nigerian Christians still hunger for more knowledge and will do whatever it takes to hang on to what they have.

Three, Christians in America seem to be able to live independently according to their personal beliefs. It seems that the values and freedom in American society makes independence easier and something people enjoy. From a

very young age people in America are taught to live independently through the "I can do it myself" syndrome. Many Christians, because of such upbringing, believe that they can grow in their faith without others. On the other hand, Nigerian Christians depend upon each other for spiritual, emotional and in most cases, financial support. The close family ties, different dialects, and the uneven balance of wealth makes such closeness necessary. Most grown adults without jobs have to live and eat at their parents or wealthy uncle's tables in order to survive. Such closeness and watching out for others helps encourage and keep people straight to their faith.

And fourth, there is the possible influence of the culturally established roles of husbands and wives in Nigeria. Regardless of educational attainment, religious beliefs, and modernization, many Nigerians still strongly believe that there are absolutely things a man does in a relationship which a woman should not even consider doing, and things which only a woman does which a man dare not do. For example, a woman is not expected to conclude any major decisions concerning the family; while a man has no right in the woman's kitchen. It is possible that these established roles played a part in the couples' responses to the materials. In addition, cultural influences have a strong effect on marital relationship. For example, the dowry which is settled before a marriage is consummated

helps to clarify the expectation of each marriage partner and also helps define their respective roles.

This study points out that there are differences between American and Southern Nigerian Protestant responses regarding love attitude and marital adjustment. However, because this is an exploratory study focused on the Protestant oriented Christian people of southern Nigeria, and as yet the only study done along these lines, it is not possible to generalize the findings of this study to the entire population of Nigeria. More work needs to be done in love attitude and marital adjustment in order to give this area its needed attention in the Nigerian society. Future study that will include the Northern part of Nigeria is necessary. A study that will look at the non-Christian population of Nigeria is also needed. Moreover, future study should include the development of instruments designed for the Nigerian people.

APPENDIX A
MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST

MARITAL ADJUSTMENT TEST
Locke and Wallace

1. Check the dot on the scale line below which best describes the degree of happiness, everything considered, of your present marriage. The middle point, "happy," represents the degree of happiness which most people get from marriage, and the scale gradually ranges on one side to those few who are very unhappy in marriage, and on the other, to those few who experience extreme joy or felicity in marriage.

| | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|---|-------|----|-----------------|----|
| 0 | 2 | 7 | 15 | 20 | 25 | 35 |
| . | . | . | . | . | . | . |
| Very Unhappy | | | Happy | | Perfectly Happy | |

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your mate on the following items. Please check each column.

| | | | | | | |
|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|
| 2. Handling family finance | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 3. Matters of recreation | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 4. Demonstration of Affection | 8 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 5. Friends | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 6. Sex relations | 15 | 12 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| 7. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct) | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

Marital Adjustment Test
Page 2

- | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. Philosophy of life | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| 9. Ways of dealing with in-laws | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
10. When disagreements arise, they usually result in: husband giving in (0), wife giving in (2), agreement by mutual give and take (10).
 11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interests together? All of them (10), some of them (8), very few of them (3), none of them (0).
 12. In leisure time do you generally prefer: to be "on the go" _____, to stay at home _____? Does your mate generally prefer: to be "on the go" _____, to stay at home _____? (Stay at home for both, 10 points; "On the go" for both, 3 points; disagreement, 2 points.)
 13. Do you ever wish you had not married? Frequently (0), occasionally (3), rarely (8), never (15).
 14. If you had your life to live over, do you think you would: marry the same person (15); marry a different person (0), not marry at all (1)?
 15. Do you confide in your mate: almost never (0), rarely (2), in most things (10), in everything (10)?

APPENDIX B
LETTER TO THE PASTORS

Dear Pastor,

I am a doctoral candidate at University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, USA, currently researching the love attitudes and marital adjustment through five stages of marital life-cycle in Nigerian society. The reason for the study is two fold: (a) to investigate the differences, if any, that exist in love attitudes and marital adjustment of couples in our society, and (b) to fulfill my degree requirements. The results of the study are expected to aid Nigerian counselors and family educators in understanding the needs of couples.

I plan to use a church population for this study, and am, therefore asking your permission to use some married couples in your Sunday School classes who have been married only one time to participate in the study. From your church I will need a minimum of four couples who have been married 0-1 year with no child; four couples who have been married 2-12 years with one or more children; four who have been married 13-21 years with children; five couples who have been married 22-32 years with adult children; and four couples who have been married 33+ years whose children are grown and living on their own.

The volunteer participants will be asked to complete two questionnaires, the Love Attitude Inventory and the Marital Adjustment Test. All responses will be kept confidential and no individual's responses will be identified.

Assuming this first request is granted, may I also request that you make the attached announcement in the Sunday School classes. If you will make this announcement, will you also arrange for those interested in participating to sign up at the church office.

I would be most grateful if you would keep the list of volunteers names and addresses until I arrive in Nigeria and can collect the list from you.

I also need your permission to use the church premises for about one hour and 30 minutes on either a Sunday or Wednesday after evening services for the completion of the questionnaire.

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Onyebuchi S. Acho, Doctoral Candidate
University of North Texas

Attachment

Dear Church Member:

I am a Nigerian presently completing my doctoral degree in counseling at University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, USA. Currently, I am investigating the relationship between love attitudes and marital adjustment through five stages of the marital life cycle in Nigerian society.

Because professional counseling is rapidly growing in our society and the churches and currently leading the way in providing counseling services to the community, I deem it wise to use a church population for my study. I am, therefore, requesting married couples who may be interested in participating in the investigation to sign up at the church office.

I will be contacting all of the volunteers through personal visit as soon as I arrive in Nigeria during the month of May, 1988. Any questions you might have concerning your participation will also be answered during my visit.

Thank you in advance for volunteering.

Onyebuchi S. Acho
Doctoral Candidate
University of North Texas

APPENDIX C
NOTICE OF MEETING FOR COLLECTING DATA

NOTICE OF MEETING FOR COLLECTING DATA

Meeting Time: _____

Meeting Date: _____

Meeting Location: _____

APPENDIX D
EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY

Dear Couple,

I am a Nigerian presently completing my doctoral degree in counseling at University of North Texas in Denton, Texas, USA. Currently I am investigating the relationship between love attitudes and marital adjustment through five stages of the marital life-cycle in Nigerian society.

As professional counseling is rapidly growing in our society, the results of this study will benefit counselors and educators as they attempt to understand the family dynamics in our society. Since the churches are currently leading the way in understanding and working with our families, I deem it wise to use church people as subjects of this study. I am grateful that you are participating in this study. As a participant in this research, you will be spending only one hour and 30 minutes of your time one Sunday or Wednesday after the evening services. You will be asked to fill out two questionnaires, the Love Attitude Inventory and the Marital Adjustment Test. Information received from your questionnaires will be kept confidential. The questionnaires are written in simple understandable English. The researcher will answer any questions you might have before filling out the questionnaire. A summary copy of the research results will be available to you upon request.

Onyebuchi S. Acho
Doctoral Candidate
University of North Texas

amk

APPENDIX E
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Notice of Consent

I hereby agree to voluntarily participate in the research project of Onyebuchi Acho. I am aware that I will be completing two questionnaires, the Love Attitude Inventory and the Marital Adjustment Test. I also understand that I may withdraw from participating at any time. I further understand that the information received from my questionnaire will be kept confidential. I have read and understand the procedures and purpose of the investigation, and give my permission for the use of my responses in this study.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

APPENDIX F
DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

1. Your sex M _____ F _____
2. How many years have you been married? _____
3. Have you been married before? _____
Yes No
4. How many children do you have? _____
Please list each child below: _____

[illegible]

5. How long were you married before the first child entered the family?

6. Circle the number which represents the highest grade of school you have completed up to the present time.

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 2 3 4 5 6 | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 |
| <u>Elem. School</u> | <u>High School</u> | <u>College/ University</u> | <u>Post Graduate</u> |

7. Occupation:

Husband:

Wife:

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