



SELF-ESTEEM AS A CORRELATE OF MARITAL STABILITY AMONG MARRIED SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS, SOKOTO STATE, NIGERIA: IMPLICATION FOR COUNSELLING

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Abstract

This study examines self-esteem as a correlate of marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State, Nigeria: Implication for Counselling. Specifically, the study investigated the relationship between two components of self-esteem self-worth and self-efficacy and marital stability. Two research questions were answered and two null hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. A descriptive correlational research design was adopted. The population of this study was 2,372 married teachers and a sample size of three hundred and thirty-three (333) married teachers was drawn from a population of 2,372 using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using an adapted and validated questionnaire with a reliability index of 0.75. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. The findings revealed a significant but low positive relationship between self-worth and marital stability, and a significant moderate positive relationship between self-efficacy and marital stability. The study concluded that self-esteem, particularly self-efficacy, plays a significant role in the marital stability of teachers. It was recommended among others that school counsellors should organize workshops to help teachers build a healthy sense of self-worth and confidence in their abilities to handle marital challenges.



Keywords: Self-esteem, Self-worth, Self-efficacy, Marital Stability, Married Teachers

Introduction

Marriage is a complex social and legal union that plays a crucial role in individuals' lives and the social fabric of societies. It provides a framework for emotional support, companionship, and personal growth. Maintaining a fulfilling marital relationship, however, can be challenging, especially for those in demanding professions like teaching. The ability to navigate these challenges requires various personal attributes, one of which is self-esteem.

Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth and their belief in their own ability and value as a person. It is how we see and value ourselves based on our beliefs and opinions. William James, who introduced self-esteem as a major focus of study in psychology in (1890), defined it as the feeling of self-worth that results from consistently meeting expectations for personally valued activities.

Self-esteem is a critical psychological factor that can predict outcomes in marriage, such as happiness and satisfaction. A healthy self-esteem exists when one feels valued, competent, and worthy, while an unhealthy self-esteem is characterized by feelings of being unworthy, rejected, or unloved. People who value themselves are generally better able to resolve conflicts, overcome negative pressures, and enjoy their lives. In the context of marriage, self-esteem influences how partners treat each other, how much love they feel able to receive, and their overall satisfaction with the relationship (Lancer, 2019).

Self-esteem is an attitude about the self and is related to personal beliefs about skills, abilities, social relationships, and future outcomes. It refers to an individual's overall positive or negative evaluation of oneself. It

is a judgment of oneself as well as an attitude toward the self. According to Santrock (in Aliero, Kalgo & Muza, 2023), self-esteem is also referred to as self-worth or self-image. Baumeister (in Kalgo, Aliero & Muza, 2023) defines it as how favourably a person evaluates himself.

The key elements of self-esteem are:

- a) Self-worth: This is the sense of your inherent value as a human being, suggesting that you are deserving of love, respect, and happiness simply because you exist. It is the value and respect you give to yourself. Having a healthy sense of self-worth in a relationship enhances communication, trust, and emotional growth, fostering a balanced and respectful partnership (Johnson & White, 2021).
- b) Self-efficacy: This is your belief in your ability to perform specific actions required to achieve a particular goal or handle challenging situations. Believing in your ability to handle challenges directly impacts how you navigate marital issues. According to Bello & Musa (2023), high self-efficacy contributes to better conflict resolution and a more resilient marriage.

Judge and Borno (in Tambawal, 2021) define marital stability as the instinctive evaluation of the degree of happiness or pleasure experienced by an individual within a marital relationship. Research has well established the relationship between good self-esteem and relationship satisfaction, including marital relationships (Lancer, 2019). Self-esteem not only affects how we think about ourselves but also how much love we are able to receive and how we treat others, especially in intimate relationships.

Married couples with low self-esteem are often unhappy with each other and lack good relationship skills, healthy boundaries, and



conflict resolution abilities. In contrast, couples with high self-esteem are able to communicate their needs, wants, and feelings clearly and assertively. A strong marital relationship requires self-esteem, which gives an individual the ability to stand on their own while contributing to the partnership.

Taghizadi and Kalhori (2015) studied the relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction among employed women in Iran. Their results showed that the probability of marital dissatisfaction in individuals with low self-esteem was nine times higher than in normal people. This highlights the strong predictive power of self-esteem on marital outcomes.

Ada, Chinyelu, and Edith (2021) conducted research on self-esteem as a correlate of marital adjustment among married secondary school teachers in Anambra State, Nigeria. Their findings showed a non-significant, very low positive relationship between teachers' self-esteem and their marital adjustment. This presents a contrasting finding that this study seeks to examine in the Sokoto context.

Eze and Mba (2018) investigated emotional intelligence and self-esteem as predictors of marital satisfaction among married couples in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Their regression analysis indicated a positive prediction of both emotional intelligence and self-esteem on marital satisfaction, supporting the idea that self-esteem is a significant contributor to a happy marriage.

Tambawal (2021) studied emotional intelligence, self-esteem, and communication styles as correlates of marital success among married couples in Sokoto State. This foundational study for the current dissertation established a positive relationship between self-esteem and marital success, providing a strong basis for this more focused extraction

on the specific components of self-esteem among teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Many couples begin their marital life with romance and enjoyment, but these feelings can fade over time, sometimes leading to separation or divorce. Issues such as quarrelling, intolerance, and abuse are common. Reports from local media and Sharia courts in Sokoto indicate numerous cases of marriage dissolution due to conflicts stemming from an inability to cope with challenges.

Research suggests that married individuals with low self-esteem often struggle to adjust to life's challenges, including economic pressures, leading to frustration and conflict. While many factors contribute to marital problems, this paper focuses specifically on the role of self-esteem. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no study has specifically isolated and examined the relationship between the components of self-esteem (self-worth and self-efficacy) and marital stability among secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.

Research Objectives

This paper was guided by the following objectives:

1. To find out if a relationship exists between self-worth and marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.
2. To find out if a relationship exists between self-efficacy and marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between self-worth and marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis?



2. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance:

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between self-worth and marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.
2. H_{02} : There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and marital stability among married secondary school teachers in Sokoto Metropolis.

Methodology

A descriptive research design of the correlational type was adopted for this study. The population of this study comprised all married secondary school teachers in Sokoto metropolis. According to the Teachers Service Board, Sokoto (2024), there were 2,372 married teachers from sixty-nine (69) secondary schools in the metropolis. The sample for this study was 333 married teachers. This was determined using the Research Advisors (2006) table for sample size from a given population. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. First, purposive sampling was used to select 20 public secondary schools within the researcher's reach. Proportionate sampling was then used to determine the number of respondents from each selected school based on its population of married teachers. Finally, simple random sampling was used to select the individual participants from each school.

The instrument used for data collection was an adapted questionnaire, originally developed by Tambawal (2021) and titled "Emotional Intelligence, Self-esteem and Marital Stability Questionnaire (EISEMSQ)." For this paper, the sections relevant to self-esteem and marital stability were used.

Self-Esteem Scale: This section was divided into two subscales: Self-Worth (10 items) and Self-Efficacy (10 items).

Marital Stability Scale: This section contained 20 items measuring dimensions of marital satisfaction, cooperation, trust, and procreation.

Responses were based on a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The instrument was validated by experts. Using a test-retest method, a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Means and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) at a 0.05 level of significance.

Answering Research Questions

Research Question one: What is the relationship between Self-Worth and Marital Stability among married teachers in senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation for Self-Worth and Marital Stability**

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference
Self-Worth	333	3.5101	0.2448	0.3112
Marital Stability	333	3.1989	0.2088	

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The results show a mean difference of 0.3112, suggesting a relationship exists between the two variables.

Research Question two: What is the relationship between Self-Efficacy and

Marital Stability among married teachers in senior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation for Self-Efficacy and Marital Stability

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference
Self-Efficacy	333	3.1149	0.2767	0.0840
Marital Stability	333	3.1989	0.2088	

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The negligible mean difference of 0.0840 indicates a high level of similarity, suggesting a strong relationship between self-efficacy and marital stability.

Hypotheses Testing

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between Self-Worth and Marital Stability.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation for Self-Worth and Marital Stability

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Self-Worth	333	3.5101	0.2448	0.119*	0.001	H ₀₅
Marital Stability	333	3.1989	0.2088			Rejected

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The analysis revealed a significant low positive relationship ($r = 0.119$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that higher levels of

self-worth are associated with low levels of marital stability, suggesting that while the relationship is positive, it is weak.

H₀₂): There is no significant relationship between Self-Efficacy and Marital Stability.

Table 4: Pearson's Correlation for Self-Efficacy and Marital Stability

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev	r-Cal	p-Value	Decision
Self-Efficacy	333	3.1149	0.2767	0.519**	0.001	H ₀₅
Marital Stability	333	3.1989	0.2088			Rejected

Source: Field Survey (2026)

The analysis revealed a significant moderate positive relationship ($r = 0.519$, $p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with moderate levels of marital

stability. Teachers who believe in their ability to handle challenges report more stable marriages.



Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn regarding self-esteem and marital stability: Self-worth has a significant but weak positive relationship with marital stability. While feeling valued contributes to marital happiness, its influence is less pronounced than other factors in this specific demographic. Self-efficacy has a significant moderate positive relationship with marital stability. This indicates that a teacher's confidence in their ability to perform specific actions and handle challenging marital situations is a more critical factor for a stable marriage.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Counselling programs should focus on building healthy self-esteem among married teachers, promoting self-confidence and self-worth.
2. School counsellors should help couples understand how cultural beliefs interact with self-esteem and provide strategies to adapt positively.

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