



DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF MARITAL CONFLICT INVENTORY (MCI)

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is an important institution that provides social support for effective human functioning. However, the same institution has been threatened by series of conflicts from all angles in Nigeria. In a bid to address the problem of conflict in marriage, there is need for an effective indigenous instrument that would identify and measure the problem. Therefore, the present study was aimed at developing and validating Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI). The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative research designs which were divided into two parts with part one using Focused groups discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Depth Interviews (IDIs) for item generation based on three broad themes of communication, sexual satisfaction and third-party interference. Part two utilised a structured instrument for data gathering. Part one purposively selected 21 participants who were all married, or had been married, while part two sampled a total number of 490 participants all in Lagos State. Adopting a principal component analysis (PAF) with varimax rotation for factor analysis, the 25 items generated were adequate for factor analysis with KMO criterion of 0.907 and Barlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2(300) = 7443.170, p < .01$). After extraction, the result showed that the items loaded on 4 factors with a total variance of 41.97%. Internal validity showed that all the seven factors correlated significantly with each other and all the factors reports good alpha coefficient ranging from .67 - .92. Convergent and concurrent validities showed that the new scale correlated significantly with existing related scales as indicated - marital conflict scale ($r = 0.015$), Relationship Qualities Scale (third party interference) ($r = 0.756$), Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) (sexual satisfaction) ($r = -0.219$) and Communication Pattern Questionnaire CPQ-SF (communication) (-0.028). The MCI is a promising psychometric instrument that can be used as a whole or with the subscales after proper categorisation and labelling for screening for, and research on, marital conflict and other family issues.

Keywords: Marital conflict, Marital satisfaction, Third party interference, Communication, Marital Conflict Inventory

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Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most important sources of social support for the identity of an individual as an adult (Shakerian, 2014 & Tasew, et al, 2021). It is a revered institution involving two or more individuals having a stable and enduring arrangement to live together and having some forms of sexual bond. It regulates sexual behaviour, provides social identity for children and forms the basis for the institution of family. Marriage could be said to be a normative, private life adult experience that comprises the cohabitation of two individuals possessing varying features and desires (Sevinc & Garip, 2010). Omari (1989) describes marriage as the coming together of a man and a woman as husband and wife in order to satisfy their needs, such as, sexual, security, and psychological needs, while Nwoye (1991) defines marriage as a mutual contract between a man and a woman for the purpose of promoting growth and development in the society. However, marriages have been bedevilled by conflicts from within and without the family setting. Marital conflict refers to open antagonism between spouses that is identified by both or either of them as disagreement or a source of difficulty in the relationship.

Edward (1987) discloses that the interaction of two separate personalities with each having a relatively heterogeneous values and need systems can lead to confrontations. Alhassan (1988) and Eisenman (1980) view marital conflict and misunderstanding as essential for the growth of all marriages. However, marital conflict is a major factor with a detrimental effect on psychological well-being (Yogita, 2023). But Adegoke and Esere (1998) and Sotonade (1998) argue that conflicts and hostilities create 'scars' on the partners. Abekhale (2010), Dada and Idowu (2006) and Meyer (2011) identify finance, children, sex, sexuality problems, time apart, friends, expectations, personality conflicts, cultural differences, infidelity, family and in-laws as major causes of marital conflicts. Marital conflict has been linked to poorer parenting (Erel & Burman 1995), conflict between siblings (Brody et al 1994), the onset of depression, alcoholism (Fincham, 2001), poorer health (Kiecolt-Glaser et al 1988), cancer, cardiac disease, chronic pain (Schmaling & Sher 1997) delinquency, children maladaptive behaviour (Abekhale, 2010; Formby & Charlin, 2014) and divorce (Adegoke & Esere, 1998).

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

Marital conflict has been in existence as long as the institution of marriage itself. It has become quite endemic in our society, such that several married couples now live as strangers within the same home. Virtually every day the social media platform is inundated with stories of celebrity marriages that are going through conflicts, separation, or divorce. These marriages make headlines basically because those involved are (or one of them is) popular. Many marriages of other professionals break down by the day as well, but those ones do not make headline news nor do those of the lower classes unless these are reported as judgements from customary, magistrate and high courts. The conflicts, separations and divorces dispensed in families under native laws and customs are out of the view of popular media as well. The prevalence of these problems in the larger society has to some extent been attributed to home-related crises arising from unresolved marital conflicts (Uwe, 2000).

The rate at which marriages are breaking down nowadays, has become a source of concern to society bearing that families are the building blocks for a good society. The prevalence of these problems in the larger society has to some extent been attributed to home-related crises arising from

unresolved marital conflicts (Uwe, 2000). According to Oyeyemi (1993) marital conflict is one of the most pressing and pervasive social problems of this generation. Some other researchers (Bramlett & Mosher, 2002; Rogers, 2004; National Vital Statistics Reports, 2009) found that about half of the marriages in United States terminates in divorce. Gonzalez and Viitanen (2009) also opined that more than 50% of re-married persons are going to divorce again, a trend that is apparent in other nations of the world. Although the actual rate of divorce in Nigeria is not available, Oniye, et al (2008) and Adegoke and Esere (1998) indicate that media reports and evidences from customary courts and Social Welfare Offices reveal high rate of divorce.

The high prevalence of marital conflict has been said to be related to a number of factors such as level of education of the married couples (Kreager et.al, 2013), maturity (Olayinka, 2000), sexual satisfaction (Ezeukwu, 1988), communication patterns and interference of in-laws (Yagoob, 1984).

The marital conflict has implications for mental, physical, and family health; it has been connected with the beginning of depression, alcoholism, eating disorders, binge drinking, out-of-home drinking and

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

episodic drinking in varying groups of individuals (Fincham, 2001 and Tasew et al, 2021). In fact most societal misfits identified in urban Nigeria are offspring of broken homes (Katu, 1988). Lambert (2021) and Tasew (2021) noted that marital conflict can result to desertion, separation, depression, grief, worry, feeling of despair, hopelessness, divorce and/or death of spouses. It is not that we did not have marital problems before. It is just that now, spouses are applying the extreme in terms of expressing their anger and emotions. Spousal killings have been on the rise in recent times. It has become a critical issue. In fact, there have been several instances of spousal murder resulting from intense marital conflict reported in literature all over the world (Singh, 2016; Fraser, 2016; Houde, 2016; Wainaina, 2016). In addition, recent report revealed that between 2016 and 2020, incidences of suicide have increased due to dysfunctional marital relations and discord resulting in divorce-related and unhappy marital issues (Rampal, 2021). If we do not stem the tide or halt the flow, it may become a norm in the society.

Previous measurement scales for marital conflict were not developed to capture communication patterns and third-party interference together with sexual

satisfaction, which have been found to be possible causes of marital conflict in our society. Therefore, the researcher intends to fill in this gap by developing and validating marital conflict inventory that will capture these factors in one inventory.

Theoretical and Empirical Review

The study is anchored on three theoretical pillars - the Role Theory, the Marital Communication Theory and the Social Learning Theory.

The role theory propounded by Mangus (1957) proposes that in any marital conflict situation or discontentment, the causative factor is due to role conflict. This emerges in a situation where there is a disagreement between partners on their different role expectations. The theory assumes that: Each partner in any marriage usually enters the marriage not only with some ideas or perceptions as to how he or she should behave but also with certain expectation as to how the other should behave. Equally, each partner in a marriage, harbours not only expectation as to what should be done by the other in marriage, but also how the roles expected of the other should be executed. Therefore, problems in marital adjustment usually arise when these interpersonal role expectations conflict or

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

disagree. And disagreements in marital role expectations actually arise due mainly to the fact that two parties in the marriage come from different family / social backgrounds and usually lack the opportunity (before or after marriage) to sit down to discuss and harmonize for themselves what each is expected to do in the marriage. Because these expectations are fashioned from different social backgrounds there is therefore the tendency for such roles to conflict, leading in practical terms to the crisis of role strains among the parties concerned. Also, conflicts often arise where a partners perception of self, differs significantly or is critically opposed to what the other partner perceives him or her to be. Finally, sanctions in married life are the rewards or punishments, which each partner administers to the other to the degree to which each meets or fails to meet the others expectations in the relationship in question. Thus, where a husband's role performance deviates from the wife's expectations, the wife may be forced to apply negative sanctions like crying, quarrelling, nagging or withdrawal of affection to protest against the husbands.

According to Mangus, role theory equally stipulates that in a situation of marital union where the husband assumes superior

position to that of the wife, there is usually role conflict because of disagreement and lack of compromise between the two. Such conflict is always a devastating type in a situation where the misperceived partner in the marriage fails to see and understand in clear terms the basis for his or her being misperceived. The role theory model of marital conflict assumes that in any marriage union, if couples are not able to meet up with the expected roles they set for one another in the marriage, marital conflict must ensue.

Based on these formulations, the role theory model assumes that human interaction in general move along smooth lives only where (a) parties in such interaction agree clearly on their norms and on what to expect from each other in marriage; (b) parties involved, agree among themselves as to the role definition and expectations each holds about the other, and (c. positive sanctions are used on a regular basis to reward role performance of one partner that the other agrees with the role expectations of the other.

Marriage partners enter into marriage with divergent opinions about what to expect of each other in their marriage. The theory holds that, when couples fail to reach a consensus in the roles each party has to play

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

in the family, such couple usually have problem in their home.

Further, the marital communication theory was propounded by Weakland (1956). According to him conflict in marriage is due to inappropriate communication. The theory stipulates that conflict ensues in marriage relationship in a situation where there is confusion and lack of clarity in communication pattern of husband and wife. This is a situation when the partner who is receiving the message of the communication finds it very difficult to make a meaning out of the communication.

When there is such confusion and lack of understanding in the communication between couples, the tendency is for the confused partner to reject the communication thereby creating a vacuum, which leads to conflict. Also the presence of noise in the communication network leads to conflict in marriage. However, research found that ineffective communication among couples is a key source of marital issues (Adebiyi & Adebiyi, 2022, Esere, M. O, 2008 and Filani, 1985). This could be traced to the fact that lots of things are repressed, leading to bitterness, frustration and tension within on the partners.

According to the theory there are three levels in human communication where conflict can arise. Such levels are at the syntactical level, the semantic level and the pragmatic level in communication network. The syntactical level refers to the way the information is transmitted; the semantic aspect refers to when the information, is received by the receiver while the pragmatic aspect has to do with the effect of the information on one another. The marital communication theory model stipulates that problems arise in marriage when couples fail in their relationship to understand information conveyed by each other clearly.

Finally, the social learning theory model was propounded by Bandura (1977). The theory assumes that when conflicts result in any marriage, it is the responsibilities of both husband and wife. It proposed that when conflict arose in a marriage the couples that are in interaction have to be blamed for such. What this implies is that the root cause of the problem may be from friends, peer group, neighbours, colleagues in the same religion or from in-laws.

The theory equally proposes that when marriage fails to function effectively the cause may be traced from the parents where parents were models to their children. This is based on the grounds that people learn

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

through imitation. The tendency is that after imitation and the partner, who acquires such tries to exhibit the behaviour in his or her marriage, there is likelihood that it may not be accepted by the second. This may result in conflict.

Based on the above, the social learning theory model stipulates that marital conflict results from interaction of couples as well as the influence of significant others in their life. Their actions or activities are product of their interaction with the environment as well as the behavior of the individuals / couples.

These various theories discussed in this study are in relation to marital conflict and stability. The present study is anchored on marital communication theory model and social learning theory model. This is because the marital communication theory model is explicit on what could cause marital conflict, which is inappropriate communication between couples. Weakland formulated this theory based upon the assumption that in any marriage relationship where there is confusion and lack of clarity in communication pattern of husband and wife, conflict is bound to ensue in such marriage or when the partner who is receiving the message of the communication finds it very difficult to make a meaning out of the communication.

Discord will ensue if each of the partner sees his /her position as being superior to the other. In a situation where the couples fail to understand each other due to gender difference, age, educational qualification or occupational status, conflicts will definitely arise. The theory made it clear that when there is lack of communication in any marriage, there is bound to be frustration and situation of hate within either of the partner.

Also the social learning theory which assumes that when conflicts occur in any marriage, it is the responsibilities of husband and wife and the couples have to be blamed for such. For Bandura, the root cause of the problem maybe from friends, peer group, neighbours, colleagues or from in laws. This has to do with the age of the couples, length of marriage especially as concerns in law influence, educational qualification and occupational status. The influence from their colleagues in school and office, the role each of the partners play according to the theory results from interaction of couples with the significant others in their life. The theory emphasizes imitation as a major means of learning and when one of them exhibits such learnt negative behaviour there is every tendency that it might not be accepted by the other, this will result to conflict.

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

In resolving marital conflict therefore, each party in marriage should be able to talk over issues for clarity and also be flexible when finding solutions to conflict because no two individual are the same. It is on these bases that this study is anchored on marital communication theory and social learning theory model.

Empirical evidences have shown that marital conflict manifest in the form of communication breakdown among couples which result to constant argument in forms of verbal argument, physical aggression, psychological, emotional and physical separation, all of which may lead to an end in divorce (Bassard, 1995). On the other hand, Kalantarkousheh & Hassan (2010) opine that marital satisfaction is an important factor that determines the continuation of marriage, because when spouses establish a sense of satisfaction with each other, their matrimony is more likely to be successful (Lucas et al. 2008). Marcaurette et al. (2003) and Daiuto et al. (1998) in their researches refers to marital satisfaction as a subjective and global evaluation of the relationship, which Shakerian (2010) explains it as a situation where couples are happy, living together and satisfied.

Studies have shown that causes of marital conflict in Nigeria are lack of adequate

communication and sexual satisfaction (Olayinka, 2000) third party influence. Others include unemployment, financial problems (Akinbodunse, 1996) and extramarital affairs (Ogundana, 1998).

Anderson and Emmers-Sommer, (2006) and Cahn (1983) opine that the perception that one is understood by his/her partner and the perception that the communication interaction is successful is satisfying in marital relationships. The patterns of communication can be classified into mutual constructive, demand- withdraw, mutual avoidance, and withholding. Researches on the effects of communication on marital relationships reveal a negative communication pattern of demand and withdraw, in which one member of a couple pursues the other, seeking, while the other member withdraws as a major source of marital conflict. Demand-withdraw pattern of marital communication is that in which one partner is the demander, seeking change, engagement, discussion, or resolution of an issue, while the other partner is the withdrawer, seeking to end, attempting to reduce interaction or avoid discussion of the issue.

In one of the earliest studies of marriage, Terman et al. (1938) observed a pattern in which wives often complained that their

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

husbands were emotionally or physically withdrawn, whereas husbands complained about feeling pressured and nagged by their wives. Christensen (1988) describes this communication pattern as demand-withdraw interaction pattern that involves a partner blames or pressures while the other partner avoids or withdraws. According to Noller and Feeney (2002), the demand-withdraw pattern has been identified by several writers and has been variously referred to as the nag-withdraw pattern (Watzlawick et al., 1967), pursuer-distancer pattern (Fogarty, 1976), rejection-intrusion pattern (Napier, 1978), and demand-withdraw pattern (Wile, 1981). Eldridge and Christensen (2002) note that these authors suggested that this pattern has a negative influence on marital relationships, and that wives were more frequently the demanders, in contrast to husbands who were more likely the withdrawers in the relationship. Betchen and Ross (2000) disclose that couples engaging in this method of interaction have been described as attempting to stabilize the distance and/or power between them by taking polarized roles.

Klinetob and Smith (1996) in their research on marital interaction reveal that if the discussion is on the wife issues, wives demanded and husbands withdrew, while

husbands demanded and wives withdrew during discussions of his issue.

Interestingly, Heaven et al. (2006) describes marital communication pattern as generally not attributable to personality, so they suggest that it is open to change and likely to vary across contexts. Therefore, Vogel et al. (2007) suggest that the patterns of communication and interaction among couples are important in deciding the therapy to employ for them. Shoham & Rohrbaugh (2002) also highlight the importance of understanding demand-withdraw patterns to identify and treat couples who are entrenched in this destructive pattern. Christensen et al (2006) demonstrate that the woman demand-man withdraw pattern is more common than man demand-woman withdraw. On the other hand, Klinetob and Smith (1996) report that both husbands and wives are more likely to be in the demander role when discussing an issue they desire to change or address.

Sexual satisfaction is when the desire, intimacy and perceived sexual needs of a partner are actualized. It is a state of sexual contentment and pleasure with the absence of problem and complaint. Sexual satisfaction is the affective response that arises from a person's appraisal of his or her sexual relationship, which includes the

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

understanding that one's sexual needs are being satisfied, meeting one's and partner's anticipations, and a positive assessment of the total sexual relationship (Offman & Mattheson, 2005). Sexual satisfaction was also defined by Sprecher and Cate (2004) as the extent to which a person is contented with the sexual facet of his or her relationship. Carpenter et al. (2009); Barrientos & Paez (2006); Byers and Macneil (2006); and Lieu (2003) disclose that the major determinants of sexual satisfaction are frequent of sexual interactions and frequent of orgasms. Davidson (1985) placed emphasis on penile penetration, manual and oral stimulation by one's sex partner, versatile techniques, and sexual fantasies as positively correlated with sexual satisfaction. Also, Barrientos and Paez (2006) noted that regular sexual intercourse and consistent orgasm are positively correlated with sexual satisfaction. Also, Carpenter et al. (2009) reveal that higher frequency and longer duration of sexual intercourse were both predictors of sexual satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction has also been said to be directly correlated with general relationship satisfaction (Santtila et al., 2008), communication and marital satisfaction (Litzinger, et al., 2005). Barrientos and Paez (2006) found that for women, higher

education and socio-economic status, being married and younger age were predictors of increasing sexual satisfaction. Additionally, Barrientos and Paez (2006) advocate that satisfaction with people's sex lives increases as they involve in a variety of normally accepted sexual behaviors such as kissing, oral sex, engaging in sexual conversations, experimenting with sexual positions.

Contrariwise, sexual dissatisfaction has been connected to infidelity (Allen et al., 2008) and divorce (Amato & Previti, 2003) in marriages. Similarly, a longing for an increasing frequency of anal sex, masturbation and sexual fantasies has been said to negatively influence people's sexual satisfaction (Santilla et al., 2008). Santtila et al., (2008) also noted that infidelity and masturbating were exclusively correlated with reduced sexual satisfaction in females.

Fingerman and Hay (2002) circulate the result of a content analysis of studies published in family and relationship journals which reveal that less than 1% examined in-law ties and interference. Rittenour and Soliz (2009) and Sechrist, Sutor, Kim, and Pillemer (2011) explains that the spouse introduces the partner to the in-laws and MorrSerewicz and Hosmer (2011) reveal that the relationship between spouses and in-law are non-voluntary.

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

Fingerman and Hay, (2002) and Lee, Spitze, and Logan (2003) posit that mothers-in-law are more involved with married children and children-in-law and Willson, Shuey, and Elder, (2003) reveal that they are in more frequent contact with the couple. Understandably, Merrill (2007) and Willson et al. (2003) claim that stereotypes portray the mother-in-law as the most problematic third party that evoke the strongest emotional reactions. Relationship with the in-laws is significant because of its influence on the quality of romantic relationships (Bryant et al., 2001; Sprecher & Felmlee, 2000; Timmer & Veroff, 2000), as a source of stress or support Fischer (1983), MorrSerewicz, (2006) and grandparents' ties to grandchildren (Fingerman, 2004). Marx et al. (2011) find out that daughters have a clear preference for their own mother's advice as opposed to that of their mother-in-law, while sons are less likely to consult any relative for parenting advice, which confirms Fischer (1983). Turner et al. (2006) found that majority of daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law experience trust issues such that their real relationships do not outright tally with pre-marriage anticipations. It was also reported from the works of Marotz-Baden and Cowan (1987) that mothers-in-law report a lack of

communication and inconsistencies in values and opinions as foremost causes of conflict with daughters-in-law.

Divorce is mostly caused by a lack of trust and understanding between spouses which has mostly been found to be influenced by extended family members (in-laws, friends and significant others) (Dawson, 2005). Moreover, In-laws are very important to a marriage and most times determine the direction in which the pendulum of a marriage swings. In-laws consist of relatives by marriage, especially the parents of husband or wife. In-laws are commonly perceived as "adversaries" by couples, because they intentionally and most times, needlessly interfere in the scheme of things (Arebi, 2007). Mothers-in-law are reported to be the most interfering relative in marriage. Most often, they are referred to jokingly as 'monster-in-law'. A 2005 movie of same title portrayed the mother-in-law trying everything to sabotage her son's engagement because she did not want to lose her son's company to another woman.

Timmer and Veroff (2006) reports that low level of conflict with In-laws among newly-weds predict marital happiness for both husbands and wives. Most mother-in-laws cause problems because they do not like who their sons/daughters are married to.

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

Different factors influence this; it can be difference in national, religious, economic or social background. Time does not change the effect of In-laws on marriage, this is because the opinions and behaviours Klein and Milardo (2000) observes that parents and close friends were equally likely to be perceived as being a third party inference, but close friends were more likely than parents to be perceived as supporters. Proulx et al (2009) suggest that low levels of interference from husbands and support from close friends is positively associated with wives' reports of marital satisfaction. Klein and Milardo (2000) also reveal that partners generally see their primary supporters among their same-sex friends. Walen, and Lachman, (2000) find evidences that some third party can serve as a buffering supportive network for women in strained relationship. Klein and Milardo (2000) further show that when women are in the presence of their supporters, they think their stance is the legitimate one while absence of critics enriches men's view of own stance as legitimate.

3 METHOD

3.1 Design

An ex-post facto design using a descriptive survey was used. Focused groups discussions - FGDs (2 sessions), Key

of the In-laws never change and the couple's vulnerability to the opinions and behaviours never end (Bryant & Thayer, 2007).

Shih and Pyke (2015) find that Taiwanese and Taiwanese Americans women generally expect their mothers and mothers-in-law to be emotionally close but only their mothers to be involved in their lives.

One study did find gender differences in quantitative ratings of in-law ties, with daughters-in-law rating greater conflict and ambivalence with their mothers-in-law (Willsonet al., 2003). Mentioning other parties, such as birth family members, as a potential source of problems was associated with increased negative feelings about in-laws. These findings substantiate the important role network members play in shaping marital ties (Sprecher and Felmlee, 2000) and in-law ties early on.

Informant Interviews - KIIs (2 sessions) and In-Depth Interviews -IDIs (6 sessions) were used for item generation based on three broad themes of communication,

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

sexual satisfaction and third-party interference.

3.2 Setting:

The study was carried out in Lagos metropolis. Venues used included offices, home and hotels, depending on proximity and convenience to the participants. Four of the IDI sessions were held in the personal offices of the participants, one was held in the home of the participant while one was held in a hotel lounge where the participant had been lodging at the time.

3.3 Participants

Focus Group Discussions – These were made up of 21 purposively selected participants who were all married, or had been married, and living in Lagos. Table 1 shows that out of 490 participants sampled for the study, 189 (38.6%) were males while 295 (60.2%) were females. The remaining 1.2% did not indicate their gender. Courtship duration ranged from 0 to 8 years with average of 2.5 years. Marriage duration indicated 8.04 years average with a range of 1 and 33 years. The result also revealed that age at marriage ranged between 17 and 35 with 25.40 years average.

In-depth interviews - Six sessions of In-depth interviews were conducted with three

males and three females making 50% each. Participants were either divorced (1 male, 1 female), in a second marriage (2 males) or not happy in their present marriage (2 females).

Key Informants Interview: Three sessions of Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted with two male clergy, and Muslim clergy.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling technique was used.

Inclusion criteria: (1) Married adult, (2) Understand and Can speak English, (3) Willingness to participate in the study, (4) Been in a marriage before or is separated.

Exclusion criteria: (1) Single or unmarried adults.

3.5 Instruments

Digital audio recording/playback device and FGD Guide Questions (see appendix 1) developed by this researcher were used for qualitative data generation. Quantitative data was gathered through a structured questionnaire which comprises of four sections, sections A, B, C and D.

Section A: Demographic Variable

This section of the questionnaire contains items measuring demographic information of the participants which include Sex, Religion, Marital Status, Ethnicity, Courtship Duration, Age at marriage and Marriage duration.

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

Section B: Communication Patterns

This measures the extent to which partners use different communication patterns during conflict interaction. This was measured using the 11 items condensed version of the Communication Pattern Questionnaire CPQ-SF (Christensen and Heavey, 1990, 1993). The Cronbach alpha for the originally conceptualized male demand/female withdraw (Items 4, 9, and 11), female demand/male withdraw (Items 3, 8, and 10), and total demand/withdraw (Items 3, 4, and 8–11) subscales were .71, .66, and .81, respectively.

Section C: Sexual Satisfaction

This measures the extent to which both partners are satisfied with sexual intimacy with either partner. It was assessed using the 25 items Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) by Hudson (1998). There are two cutting scores for this measure. The first is a score of 30 (± 5). Scores below this point indicate an absence of a clinically significant problem. Scores above 30 indicate the likelihood of a clinically significant problem. The second cutting score is 70. Scores above this point nearly always indicate that clients are experiencing severe stress with a clear possibility that some type of violence could

be considered or used to deal with problems.

Section D: Third-Party Interference

This measures the negative manipulations mothers-in-law and spousal friends bring to bear on the marriage. It was measured on two levels of appropriate and in appropriate using the adapted 12-item Relationship Qualities Scale by Newsom, Morgan, Nishishiba, and Rook (2000). Six items assess appropriate qualities of the relationship from 7 to 30 ($M = 23.75$, $SD = 4.46$, $\alpha = .87$) and another six items measure inappropriate relationship quality scale that range from 6–22 ($M = 7.84$, $SD = 2.90$, $\alpha = .86$). A high score infers high interference of third parties, while a low score infers low interference.

3.6 Procedure:

Focus Group Discussion (FGD): The two FGDs included 6 participants (3 couples) each. The two sessions were audio recorded and each session lasted about 55 minutes. There were no audio-visual recordings due to the content and nature of the interviews.

In-dept interview – The participants completed and returned the consent forms prior to commencement of the interview sessions. The questions from the interview guides were asked and response was recorded accordingly. The sessions lasted for between 45 and 60 minutes.

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

Key Informant Interview - The participants completed and returned the consent forms prior to commencement of the interview sessions. Some of the themes from the qualitative study were communication patterns, sexual satisfaction, third party interference, upbringing and financial differences, unresolved minor disagreements, sexual dissatisfaction, nagging by the wife, poor communication style and interference by mother-in-law, parents, peers, spousal siblings and children. The responses to the questions in the interview guide were recorded for transcription.

Data collection: The researcher and her assistants approached households in the sample areas, requested the consent of married individuals in the households and administered the questionnaires those gave consent. They were assured of confidentiality with respect to the information being given, especially bearing the sensitivity of the variables of interest to the study. Administration for each participant had an average time of ten minutes. Data was gathered and coded for statistical analysis.

4 Statistical Analysis and Results

Preliminary Analysis

To ascertain the factorability of the scale, measure of sample adequacy showed

Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) = 0.907 and Barlett's test of sphericity (χ^2 (300) = 7443.170, $p < .01$). This showed that sample was enough for factor analysis. All the items were tested for multicollinearity and singularity. The determinant coefficient of R-Matrix of 1.00E-007 showed that all the items correlated fairly well with each other. Also, all the items reported communalities of .4 and above. In addition, anti-image matrix indicated that all items satisfied inclusion criteria of $> .05$ coefficient. Therefore, none of the items were excluded from the factor analysis.

Factor Analysis

Principal components analysis (PCA) was adopted with rotated varimax for factor loading with iterations. The factor solution was based on Eigen value of ≥ 1.0 and factor loading of ≥ 0.40 . The initial Eigen values indicated that the items loaded on 4 factors with Eigen values greater than 1. After extraction, all the item reported good Eigen value of $\geq .40$. The first factor accounted for 41.97% of the variance, the second factor explained about 9.47% of the variance, the third factor explained 6.39% while the fourth 4.87% of the variance. Altogether, the 4 factors explained a total of 62.70% of the variance (Table 2). The screeplot confirms the 4 factors loading.

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

Reliability Test - Internal Consistency

Table 2: Items, Means, Standard Deviations, Cronbach's alphas, and Factor Loadings of the Marital Conflict Scale (N = 490).

S/ N	ITEMS	Component				Communalities
		1	2	3	4	
Factor 1 ($\alpha = .92$; $\bar{X} = 33.21$; $SD = 6.7$)						
1	My spouse and I quarrel over little issues	.750				.602
2	The fact that my spouse has a password on his/her phone annoys me	.723				.610
3	My spouse only takes counsel from his/her friends and family members	.705				.731
4	My spouse spends more money on members of his/her own family than on mine	.693				.659
5	My spouse claims I misunderstand him/her	.681				.606
6	When we have arguments, my spouse always want to have the final say	.679				.701
7	My spouse and I see things from different perspectives	.639				.609
8	My spouse gives a negative interpretation to my utterances	.636				.695
9	My spouse and I argue about financial matters	.591				.680
10	Our different backgrounds make us disagree over little matters	.525				.726
Factor 2 ($\alpha = .86$; $\bar{X} = 26.01$; $SD = 5.1$)						
11	I have caught my spouse in a situation of infidelity		.774			.709
12	I transfer aggression from my work place to my spouse at home		.714			.616
13	I am annoyed when my in laws show up at our doorstep without prior notice		.708			.564
14	When I am angry, I over react		.706			.675
15	My mother in law's presence in my home always creates clashes		.615			.563
16	I can go to any length to prove to my spouse that I am angry		.611			.487
17	My spouse's choice of words during discussions annoys me		.542			.414
18	My spouse always uses words that lowers my self-esteem		.445			.654
Factor 3 ($\alpha = .73$; $\bar{X} = 12.04$; $SD = 3.1$)						
19	My spouse 's siblings are always visiting our home			.732		.631
20	My type of job opens me up to suspicious from my spouse			.725		.619
21	My spouse complains about my weight			.552		.654
22	My spouse blows up at the slightest provocation			.500		.688
Factor 4 ($\alpha = .67$; $\bar{X} = 9.44$; $SD = 2.1$)						
23	My spouse denies me sex when I am in the mood and he/she is not				.451	.661
24	My spouse does not satisfy me sexually				.795	.559
25	My spouse gives excuses so as not to have sex with me				.596	
Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		% of Variance	41.97	9.47	6.39	4.87
		Cumulative	41.97	51.44	57.83	62.7

Cronbach Alpha ($\alpha = .94$)

Guttman Split-Half Coefficient = .92

Mean = 80.71; SD = 14.36; N = 490

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. Note: Factor loading > .04 were included.

Table 2 showed items loaded on each of the 4 factors and their reliability coefficients (Cronbach alpha and split-half) as well as

means and standard deviations. Each of the factors yielded very good reliability coefficients ranging from .67 to .92. The

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

global or overall norm for the entire scale coefficient = .92, Mean = 80.71 and SD =
showed Cronbach α = .94, Split-half 14.36.

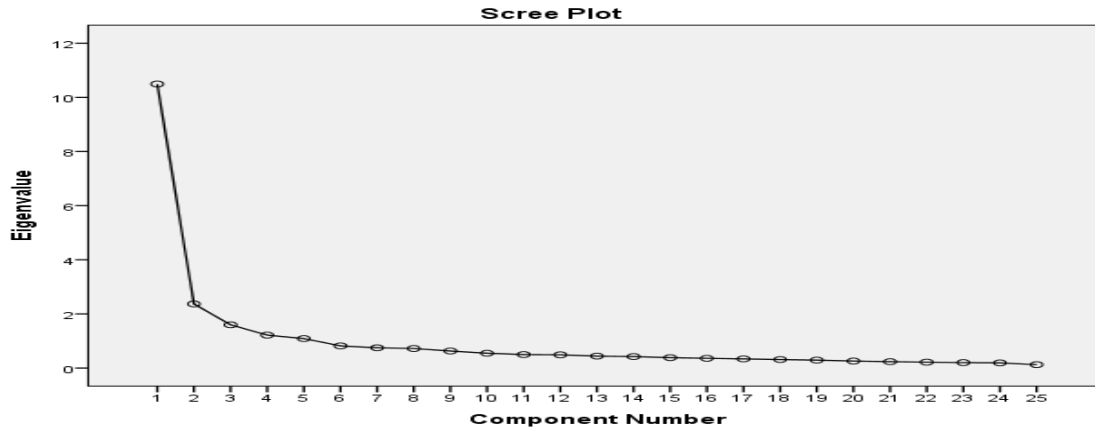


Figure 1: Scree plot showing the principal-components analysis with Varimax rotation of the 25 items.

Construct Validity: Convergent and Concurrent Validity

Table 2: Correlation Matrix Showing Relationship between the Factors of New Marital Conflict and Other Constructs (Old Marital Conflict, Third Party Interferences, Sexual Satisfaction and Communication)

SN	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	MC_F1	-							
2	MC_F2	.624**	-						
3	MC_F3	.566**	.648**	-					
4	MC_F4	.577**	.544**	.496**	-				
5	Marital Conflict (old)	.085	.016	-.080	-.088	-			
6	Third Party	.787**	.536**	.518**	.588**	-.063	-		
7	Sexual Satisfaction	-.151**	-.175**	-.367**	-.052	-.214**	-.077	-	
8	Communication	-.005	-.020	-.067	-.038	-.135	.020	.073	-
	\bar{X}	33.21	26.01;	12.04;	9.44;	35.42	36.81	69.82	36.92
	S.D	6.7	5.1	3.1	2.1	7.95	8.31	8.84	5.07
	N	490	490	490	490	490	490	490	100

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

Table 2 showed that the four factors of marital conflict scale correlated significantly with each other. The correlation coefficients between factors were not high and they range between .496

to .648 suggesting that multicollinearity between factors was not recorded. The four factors of marital conflict scale correlated with marital conflict (old), third party interference scale, sexual satisfaction scale

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)

and communication scale. However, not all correlations were significant.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix showing Relationship between New Marital Conflict Scale, Old Marital Conflict, Third Party Interference, Sexual Satisfaction and Communication Scales.

S/N	Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Marital Conflict New	490	80.71	14.36	-				
2	Marital Conflict Old	490	35.42	7.95	.015	-			
3	Third Party	490	36.81	8.31	.756**	-.063	-		
4	Sexual Satisfaction	490	69.82	8.84	-.219**	-.214**	-.077	-	
5	Communication	100	36.92	5.07	-.028	-.135	.020	.073	-

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

Table 3 showed that the overall score of the new marital conflict scale correlated with other established scales - marital conflict scale ($r = 0.015$), Relationship Qualities Scale (third party interference) ($r = 0.756$), Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) (sexual satisfaction) ($r = -0.219$) and Communication Pattern Questionnaire CPQ-SF (communication) (-0.028). The sign, size and pattern of these correlation coefficients give a good support for the convergent validity of the Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI).

5. Discussions

The study which seeks to develop and validate a measurement scale that would measure marital conflict taking into consideration sexual satisfaction, communication and third-party interference yielded a very promising result and opens new research grounds in marriage and

family research as well as instrument development research. The result shows that the new scale - Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI) reported a very high reliability coefficient of .94 indicating an excellent internal consistency with a sample population of 490 participants. Item extractions revealed four broad factors with all reporting high reliability coefficient ranging from .67 to .92. These factors will make up the subscales of marital conflict inventory. Factor 1 contains 10 items, Factor 2 has 8 items, Factor 3 has 4 items while Factor 4 is made up of 3 items.

Although the apriori expectation for the scale is to extract 3 factors that would handle communication pattern, sexual satisfaction and third-party interference, the outcome shows four factors. Also, the extraction shows cross-factorial presentation of items. For instance, factor 1 which majority of the items tend to speak

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

about communication pattern, there are items like *"My spouse only takes counsel from his/her friends and family members"* & *"My spouse spends more money on members of his/her own family than on mine"* which speak more about third-party influence. Factor 2 which major items tend to address third-party influence also has two items that speak of communication issues - *"My spouse's choice of words during discussions annoys me"* and *"My spouse always uses words that lowers my self-esteem"*. While all the items in factor 4 (3 items) speaks of sexual issues, items in factor 3 are mixed with no clear definition. However, two items speaks of third-party influence - *"My spouse's siblings are always visiting our home"* and *"My type of job opens me up to suspicious from my spouse"* while the last two are not well situated.

The overall evaluation of the scale shows that all the items reported a high eigenvalue ranging from the .445 to .750. This is a pointer to the fact that the scale has a lot of potentials that could be maximised through further refining of the scale.

Further, we tested for construct validity through convergent and concurrent validities using correlation analysis and the result shows that all the factors reported

positive correlations with each other. Concurrent validity was reported with positive correlation with an existing marital conflict scale (though not significant), while convergent validity was tested with positive correlation with a scale that measures third-party influence (significant) and a significantly negative correlation with existing sexual satisfaction scale and communication pattern scales. Theoretically, the sign of these correlation coefficients is very instructive. The positive correlation of the scale with third-party influence scale indicates that marital conflict escalate in the face of high third-party interference and when there is marital conflict, communication between the parties drops as well as decrease in sexual satisfaction.

Therefore, the instrument can be used as an inventory to measure marital conflict as a whole since issues of communication, sexual satisfaction and third-party interference which have been established in the literature as causes of marital conflict are well captured in the inventory.

However, some limitations are not ruled out. Firstly, for effective categorisation and labelling of the subscales, there is need to subject the inventory to further analysis with larger sample

**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
Development and validation of Marital Conflict Inventory (MCI)**

to give room for refining of the items to really capture the very essence of the construct. Secondly, the study did not look at divergent, discriminant and diagnostic utility of MCI. Further studies need to look at these issues and also conduct test-retest reliability for the inventory.

Finally, the MCI had an excellent internal consistency with concurrent and convergent validities as shown by the

significant correlation with other scales within this construct. A four-factor structure with further refining for proper categorisation and labelling of the subscales, suggests adequate factorial validity of the MCI. The MCI is a promising psychometric instrument that can be used as a whole or with the subscales after proper categorisation and labelling for screening for, and research on, marital conflict and other family issues.

DECLARATIONS:

1. **Declaration of Originality:** We declare that this manuscript is my original work and has not been submitted or published elsewhere. We have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.
2. **Conflict of Interest:** We declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.
3. **Informed Consent:** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
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**Udoka, P. A., Umoren, A. M., Adejumo, A. O., & Osinowo, H. O. (2024).
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