

**PERSPECTIVES**  
**IN**  
**GUIDANCE &**  
**COUNSELLING**

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN LIBRARY

Edited by

**Alfred A. Adegoke**  
**Oyaziwo Aluede**

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*Perspectives in Guidance and Counselling*

® Alfred A. Adegoke, Oyaziwo Aluede

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## CHAPTER 35

### EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MARITAL COMMUNICATION AS DETERMINANTS OF FAMILY WELL-BEING AMONG YOUNG COUPLES IN IBADAN

*Ogunlade, Oludele Olagoke (M.Ed); Ogundokun, Moses O (Ph.D)  
& Ayorinde, Solomon Oluranti (M.Ed)*

#### 35.1 INTRODUCTION

The family is an indispensable unit in any society. It started right inside the Garden of Eden between Adam and Eve and they were the progenitors of human race (Gen. 2:20). Right from that time, family has been seriously affected negatively and the challenges besetting them could not be detached from the sin of disobedience (Gen. 3:1-24)

Family well-being is synonymous with healthy living. The word "health" is a difficult concept to understand because different meanings as well as different interpretations are given by various scholars using their disciplines as the criteria. It may mean the condition of safety, soundness and wholeness of the body; it may also be visualised as freedom from disease, defect or

disability. Advanced Learners Dictionary defines health "as the feeling of well-being". World Health Organisation (WHO) defines health as a state of physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Health hangs on adequate functioning of the organs and the proper working together of the various systems of our body.

Communication is a key variable in understanding marital functioning. As many studies have shown, marital communication is a powerful predictor of marital quality (e.g. Gottman, 1994; Markman, 1984; Schaap 1984). Although negative communication is a distinguished characteristic of both distressed and non-distressed couples, ineffective communication has also been found to be a significant predictor of divorce and even before they call it



quit, family well-being had been declining geometrically. Although a great number of studies in the field of marital communication research is based on systematic observation, the self-reported perception of a couple's marital communication is as necessary as evaluation conducted by experts (Olson, 1981) as it yields subjective data and allows us to understand the couples' own definition of the quality of their communication. A crucial element in a marital relationship is communication which is effective in moulding desirable behaviour which leads to a quality relationship (Kolo&Dagari, 1993 as cited in Fatile, 2011).

Animashaun and Oladunni (2012) asserted that "the marriage institution is not accidental but meant to achieve a certain purpose," be that as it may, such purpose would be a mere dream when effective marital communication is lacking. Unity and health of the family is *sine qua non* to its effective communication. Hence, marital communication skills need to be learnt and internalised among family members and it would be metamorphosed into family well-being and also promote societal well-being at large. Communication is a complex

process whereby information is enclosed in a package and is channelled and imparted by a sender to a receiver via some media. The receiver then, decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback (Usuroh et.al 2010). All forms of communication require a sender, a message, and intended recipients (Montana &Chamov, 2008, Holmes, 2002 cited in Usuroh et.al 2010).

Good and effective communication is highly needed for the family members to discharge their various responsibilities dutifully in order to stay healthy. The father, as the head of the family, is expected to provide basic needs in the family which include food, shelter and clothing. The strength as well as weakness of the father needs to be communicated accordingly within the family. Communication is a critical element in marriage as it is an inevitable requirement before the commencement of the relationship and it is also necessary for the sustenance of the union (usuroh,Ekot, &Ihyang, 2010).Family well-being may be a mere dream where effective communication is missing among family members when verbal and non-verbal cues are not made known through communication.

Researchers have discovered a strong link between communication pattern and satisfaction with family relationship (Noller & Patrick, 1990). A study by Stanton (2006) shows that cohabitation greatly increases the likelihood of marital failure. Nowadays, marriages preceded by cohabitation can face a 65% increase in likelihood of divorce. Stanton (2006) also reports that marriage where only one spouse ever cohabited faces a 50% increase in likelihood of divorce compared with marriage preceded by no cohabitation. Over 50% of cohabiting unions in the US, whether or not they are eventually legalized by marriage end by separation within 5 years compared to roughly 20% for marriage with no history of cohabitation. By implication, it means cohabitation does not promote family well-being and be that as it may, cohabitation should be discouraged from our society.

Furthermore, since it has been fully established that marital communication has to do with path/channel through which ideals, desires, feelings, purposes are being expressed among family members, it then becomes necessary for couple to

communicate effectively between each other. Communication breakdown is considered number one problem in the destruction of all marriages, occurring long before irreconcilable differences.

It is revealed in the Bible how to develop it and how to dramatically improve our marriage. (Proverbs 25:11). To enjoy marital communication, the following factors should be considered:

**Timing:** (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7, 17, 8:5-6). Couples should endeavour to identify the appropriate time for discussion. Nature of discussion should determine the appropriate time. Young couples of about 5-10 years in marriage must consider their differences since they are not from the same family background and as a result, couples should study the mood that will facilitate effective communication between each other. On the area of sex, spouses should not just go into it without foreplay and this equally ties to communication. A suspense novelist knows how to build the drama to the point where you are captivated and cannot put the book down.

A good preacher knows how to get people while their eyes are open, every communication looks at timing. And in a marriage, the time of communication is very much important. When mates have worked hard all day long, if he/she has been out in the heat of the day, and walks in ragged and drenched with sweat, it is not a good time to meet them and say "we have got a problem" you do not bring something up when they are engrossed in something that is demanding their full attention. A bad time equals fireworks.

**Planning:** To be effective in communication or to be persuasive, couples need to plan how they will introduce a subject to their spouses. Couples should try to listen to each other. None should dominate the object of discussion. Such would promote family well-being.

Smith (2004) posited that good relationships are likely to result in more frequent contact. Social support which is one of the ingredients of family wellbeing may not be given directly by the parent when family breakdown occurs due to their own distress which includes financial problem, economy and this make

children to seek support from those outside the immediate family such as grand parents and friends.

Other variables to be considered in this research is emotional intelligence. It involves the capacities to carry out reasoning with regards to emotions, and the capacity of emotions to enhance reasoning. More specifically, EI is said to involve the ability to perceive and accurately express emotion, to use emotion to facilitate thought, to understand emotions, and to manage emotions for emotional growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence according to Mayer & Salovey (1985) and Igiri (2005) as cited Agbe et.al (2012) refers to a type of social intelligence that involves ability to identify and monitor one's and others emotions to discriminate among and to use such information (emotions) to guide one's thinking, actions and relationships with self and others.

Akinboye (2002) posited that emotional intelligence is emotional thought creativity derived skilled based. Emotional intelligence describes the ability to organise emotion driven perception, intuition, creativity and thought processes plus

the ability to express such emotion laden behaviour intrapersonally as well as interpersonally to build trust honesty, integrity, fairness, human dignity and integrity in life and at work. The application of this type of emotional intelligence could be explained in four stages.

- a) **Self-awareness:** This is the ability to understand one's emotion and thought process emotion including the similarities and differences and juxtaposition products.
- b) **Intuitive:** Awareness ability to recognise emotion driven perception concepts designs and patterns.
- c) **Win/win and Synergy:** Ability to understand emotion driven creative thought processes collaboratively and in a way that is satisfying to all
- d) **Trust Worthiness:** Ability to develop trust in spite of individual differences in emotion driven thought processes.

The above is in line with (Greenberg, Kusche, Cook and Quamma 1995, and Igiri 2004) as cited by (Agbe et.al

2012) have identified many components or social competences of emotional intelligence that are crucial to success in work, social adjustment and business. Some of these include impulse control, empathy, trust, honesty, integrity, good character, communication (persuasion) and tolerance. Family wellbeing/healthy relationship among family members is promoted when the members' emotional intelligence is high. It is when family members understand each other's emotion and use the emotion contingently that individual's needs could be catered for and peaceful co-existence in the family could be promoted. From the foregoing, it has been stated that the major problem facing both young and old couples is lack of low emotional intelligence and ineffective communication among couples and these grossly affect family well-being. Based on the reviewed literature, it has been well established that decline in family well-being may lead children to seek for both sociological and psychological support from both grandparents and friends. The result is adjustment problems among family members and this affects the nation whole.

### 35.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine joint and relative contribution of emotional intelligence and marital communication on the dependent variable (family well-being) among young couples in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo state, Nigeria.

### 35.3 METHODOLOGY

#### Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design in which questionnaire were employed in collecting data from the respondents on the variables studied.

#### Participants

The participants for this study were two hundred young couples purposively selected within Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria. There are five local governments within Ibadan metropolis and for the purpose of convenience; forty couples were selected from each local government, and they have certain things in common such as length of marriage, age before marriage.

#### Instrumentation

The three sets of instruments used to collect data for the study were:

Emotional intelligence scale (EIS) by EIS) by Schutle, Golder, Haggerty, Cooper, Malouf, Hall and Dornheim (1998), Marital Communication Scale (MCS) and Family Well-being Scale (FWBS) by Ryff (1994).

EIS (Schutle et al, 1998) was used to assess the emotional intelligence of the participants. It is a 33 item instrument with response format ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5. High scores on the scale indicate high emotional intelligence. The items on the instrument include: 'I know when to speak my personal problems to others; When I am faced with the obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcome them; I expect that I will do well on most things I try; Other people find it easily to confide in me; I find it hard to understand non verbal message of my spouse' etc. A Cronbach's alpha of .81 was found for the internal consistency of the scale. The test retest showed a reliability of .87 after three weeks.

**MCS:** This is a self-constructed questionnaire to assess the level of communication among couples. It is a 10 item instrument with response format ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5. The items on

the instrument include: I found it easy to express my mind to my spouse; Effective communication do exist between I and my spouse; My spouse is free to demand what he needs from me without hesitation; Quarrelling is very rare in my family; etc. Cronbach's alpha of .77 was found for the internal consistency of the scale. The test retest showed a reliability of .79 after three weeks.

include: When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased about how things have turned out; I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them reality; In many ways, my life is close to my ideals; The conditions of my life are excellent; I am satisfied with my life (spouse); etc. A Cronbach's alpha of .79 was found for the internal consistency of the scale. The test retest showed a reliability of .82 after three weeks.

**FWBS** (Ryff, 1994) was used to assess the family well-being of the participants. It is a 33 item instrument with response format ranging from Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5. The items on the instrument

**35.4 DATA ANALYSIS**

Multiple regression analysis and Pearson's Products moments correlation was used to analyse data collected.

**Results**

*Table 1.0*

Results are hereby presented in tables Regression Analysis on the contribution of Independent Variables to Family Well-being

Multiple R = .629  
 Multiple R<sup>2</sup> = .395  
 Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .389  
 Std. Error of the Estimate = 5.76522

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE**

| Model      | Sum of Square | Df  | Mean square | F      | Sig.  |
|------------|---------------|-----|-------------|--------|-------|
| Regression | 4278.123      | 2   | 2139.061    | 64.356 | .000a |
| Residual   | 6547.832      | 197 | 33.238      |        |       |
| Total      | 10825.955     | 199 |             |        |       |

The Table shows that there was joint contribution of the independent variables (Emotional intelligence and marital communication) on family well-being yielded a coefficient regression  $R = .629$ , Multiple  $R^2$  of .395 accounting for about 39.5% of the variation in the independent variables. Hence, the table further shows that the linear combination of emotional intelligence and marital communication on the family well-being was significant ( $F_{(2,197)} P < .05$ ). It implies that both independent variables namely emotional intelligence and marital communication contributed to the prediction of family well-being.

**Table 1.1**

Multiple Regressions showing Relative Contribution of each of the Independent Variables to the prediction of family well-being of young couples

| Model                  | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients |        |      |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|                        | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      | t      | Sig. |
| (Constant)             | 29.732                      | 5.921      | 5.021                     | .000   |      |
| Emotional intelligence | .094                        | .106       | .052                      | .883   | .378 |
| Marital communication  | 1.427                       | .139       | .608                      | 10.251 | .000 |

The Table shows the relative contribution made by the independent variables to family well-being. It was observed that marital communication ( $\hat{\beta} = .608$ ;  $t = 10.251$ ;  $p < .05$ ) was significant, while emotional intelligence ( $\hat{\beta} = .052$ ;  $t = .883$ ;  $p > .05$ ) was not significant. This shows that the contribution of marital communication to the family well-being is higher when compared to emotional intelligence.

**Table 1.2:**

Pearson Correlation of Family well-being, Emotional intelligence and Marital Communication

| Variable               | Mean    | Standard Deviation | Family well-being | Emotional intelligence | Marital communication |
|------------------------|---------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Family wellbeing       | 91.4850 | 7.37576            | 1.000             |                        |                       |
| Emotional intelligence | 44.5100 | 4.12857            | .269              | 1.000                  |                       |
| Marital communication  | 40.3650 | 3.14343            | .627              | .357                   | 1.000                 |

The result from Table 1.2 shows that there was significant contributions of emotional intelligence ( $r = .269$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and marital communication ( $r = .627$ ;  $p < .05$ ) to family well-being of young couples.

### 35.5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The results of the present study clearly shows that the contribution of marital communication to the prediction of the family well-being was higher when compared to emotional intelligence. This finding supported the earlier research findings of Gottman, 1994 Markman, 1984 Schaap 1984 who cited that communication is a powerful predictor of marital quality. Communication is a key variable in understanding marital functioning. This means that negative communication is a distinguishing characteristics of both distressed and non-distressed couples. Ineffective communication has also been found to be a significant predictor of divorce and even before they call it quit; (Kolo&Dagari, 1993) as cited in Fatile, 2011, posited that "A crucial element in a marital relationship is communication which is effective in moulding desirable behaviour which leads to a quality marital relationship.

Marriage, which is an institution ordained by God, is not by accident. It is meant to perform certain purposes. Animasahun and Oladunni 2012; be that as it may, such purposes would be a mere dream when effective communication is lacking among family members. In line with (Usoroh, C; Ekot, & Inyany, 2010) communication is a critical element in marriage as it is an inevitable requirement before the commencement of the relationship and it is also necessary for the sustenance of the union. Hence, every married couple in the interest of peace and harmony in the family and society as a whole should endeavour to have unhindered as well as effective communication so as to enable them to have peaceful co-existence in the matrimonial home and the nation at large.

Emotional intelligence and marital communication jointly contributed to the prediction of family well-being. This result is easily explainable bearing in mind that with high emotional intelligence couples are able to recognise and use their emotions to eliminate obstacles and advance their horizons than those with low emotional intelligence. They are also



likely to be able to cope with the family demands, frustrations and stress involved in managing homes. Hence, they are able to develop high commitment to family well-being. For the fact that emotional intelligence was insignificant, it does not mean that it is not a factor to be reckoned with as far as family well-being is concerned. Hence, this calls for the duplication of the studies in another area. It was not surprised that marital communication contributed to the prediction of family well-being because communication is a vehicle through which we make our feelings, needs, desires known. Hence, its effectiveness will definitely lead to family well-being in all ramifications.

### **35.6 IMPLICATION OF THE FINDINGS**

This study has implications for the work of counsellor as well as researchers and family therapist. There is the need to develop a greater awareness and understanding of the various interactions involving variables that predict family well-being for the fact that marital communication is a strong predictor of family well-being. It is necessary that couples should understand their emotions and express themselves in

order to relate well with each other so as to successfully cope with family daily life challenges. It is hereby suggested that other researchers can carry out investigations on other variables besides these two variables of the present study.

### **REVISION QUESTIONS**

1. What is the joint contribution of emotional intelligence and marital communication to the family well-being of young couples?
2. What are the relative contributions of emotional intelligence and marital communication to family well-being of young couples?
3. What is communication?
4. State the factors that gives room for enjoyment of marital communication and happy home.

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