



## Effect of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy on Reducing Marital Instability among Secondary School Teachers in Gombe Metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** The study examines the effect of Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) on reducing marital instability among secondary school teachers in Gombe metropolis, Gombe State, Nigeria. The study adopted the pretest-posttest, control group and experimental design, a sample of 90 teachers was identified as having marital issues using marital spouse screening questionnaires (MSSQ). participants were randomized into two groups experimental group and control group; the experimental group were treated with cognitive behavioural therapy for six weeks. While the control group received psychological talk on environmental sanitation. the marital spouse screening questionnaire (MSSQ).and marital instability reduction questionnaire (MIRQ)were administered before and after the experimental programmed. The population of the study consisted of all the teachers in secondary school having marital instability issues, two research questions and two null hypothesis were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t test and independent test. The reliability was established using the cronbach alpha at  $r = .80$ ,  $P < 05$  level of significance. Result showed that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has significant efficacy on reducing marital instability among secondary school teachers as determined by their pretest and post test mean scores, thus CBT also had significant effects on the experimental groups based on the findings. Recommendations were made teachers with marital instability should be encouraged to visit counselors or psychotherapist to receive psycho therapeutic training skills on CBT workshop and seminar should be organized to help train married teachers and unmarried teachers on

issues concerning marital relationship affecting their homes

**Keywords:** Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Marital Instability, Reduction.

### 1. Introduction

Marriage is all about love, trust, commitment and a unique spiritual and mutual connection between two unrelated matured male and female who agreed to live together as husband and wife. Nwokolo (2012) states that marriage is a relationship and bond, most commonly between a man and a woman, that plays a key role in the definition of many families. Marriage has been in existence right from the creation of human being Adam and Eve as the oldest institution on earth. People cherished marriage and is highly approved all over the world The coming together of different people from different family background, tribe, races educational attainment and religious belief to form a marital union (Family) probably would create room for mis-understanding, argument and dis-agreement which makes marital instability inevitable Ogunsanmi (2005) view marriage as an agreement between a man and a woman who take certain vows to love and cherish one another, stay together through sickness and health, for better for worst A successful marriage can be achieved by mutual understanding, commitment, love and care for each other, acceptance, understanding and satisfying each other others needs. While unsuccessful marriage increases the risk of depression, anxiety, Physical illness, divorce or suicide it also has adverse effects on the children's health and behavioral problems as well. Okobia and Okorodudu (2017) describe marriage as a three-

legged stool involving the spiritual, sexual and financial needs. If one of these is not there or not adequately in order the marriage may collapse. Marriage brought about family and family is the most valuable respected and effective social Institution where the normality or abnormality of any society depends on the general conditions of the family unit.

The influence of most societal problems comes from the family units. Couples satisfaction is a good implication which not only affects the couples' level of satisfaction and happiness but also reduced marital instability among the family unit. According to Butt (2005), the main reasons prescribing marriage are love and affections, satisfying emotional and mental needs which also lead to the emergency of co-operations, compassion, interest, kindness, tolerance and responsibility. Conflict in marriages is inevitable because the couples are faced with a lot of difficulties of knowing each other bad sides and good sides of their personality which is often very difficult to change. Conflict can endanger a relationship, but if handled properly, it can create room for opportunities for growth, and ultimately strengthening the bond between the couples. It is better to deal with conflict crucially rather than avoiding it. This conflict comes in different forms in every aspect of marital situations such as division of labour, financial issues, sexual issues, child upbringing, spousal abuse, spouse battering, and struggle for power among few.

Marital instability is the mis understanding or disagreement between couples and the same incidence keep on occurring repeatedly as most couples are unable to resolved their differences such can threaten the family unit. Oyafunke, Falola and Salau (2014) defined marital instability as a process whereby marriage breakdown through separation, desertion or divorce. The high incidence of marital instability among marital couples has been a major concern of the society. It is a social problem affecting couples and is capable of causing everlasting sorrow on the children, couples, community and even the society at large. Marital instability can threaten the entire family relationship as a result of bitter quarrel, emotional withdrawal of one partner, lack of care and affections, psychological and mental problems, maltreatment, sexual assaults among few. Many couples find it difficult to resolve conflicting issues as it affects the functioning and satisfaction of the family unit. Therefore, how couples handled disagreement and mis-understanding determines the satisfaction of the relationship because marital conflicts can also increase violence in the marital union. According to Bastan, Golzar and Roshani, (2011) marriage is one of the most important needs affecting all aspects of

human life for about half a century now. The school environment is negatively affected by the distressed teachers who are directly involved in marital instability making the school environment hostile and not conducive for learning. Marital instability as a problem behavior has been correlated with dysfunctional emotional thoughts like anger, anxiety, depression, irrational beliefs and suicide which can be controlled by cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Cognitive behavioural therapy is a therapeutic technique developed by Aaron Beck in the (1960s) the theory is a combination of psycho-therapy and behavior therapy the psychotherapy emphasizes on the way people think about issues (things) that affects how the individual feels emotionally and how thinking patterns begins in his/her early childhood, while behaviour therapy pays close attention to the relationship between problems, behavior and perception (thought). Cognitive behavioural approach helps people change negative thought patterns, beliefs and behaviours that can managed symptoms and enjoy more productive and less stressful lives. It is a collaborative approach where the client works with the therapist in identity connections between his/her distorted thought and feeling. The therapist providing strategies for the client to effectively cope with the situations in order to reduce distress; identify the problems in the thinking pattern or style and providing alternative solutions to their dysfunctional thought or belief.

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has been widely applied to the treatment of different and specific issues of depression, anxiety, marital problems, skill training in anger management, substance abuse among few. It is useful specifically for assisting clients in modifying their cognition and also help them to unlearn their unwanted behaviours and learn a new way of reacting to issues when the need arises. Beck (2011) was of the view that the client's cognition had an enormous impact on his/her feelings and behaviours the goal of CBT is to teach the clients that although they may not have control over their emotional behaviours but can take control over their thoughts, interpret and deal with the challenges in their environment. Teachers who indulge in marital conflicts have problem with their cognition and behavior which they might have learnt from their parents, environment or at their early life experiences as the family life plays an important role in the life of the child. According to Onyekuru and Thampson (2012) reported that a healthy family is a family where there is optimal functioning of every member because of love, commitment, respect for

each other, cooperation, openness of members to each other, the desire to help each other to achieve individual goals and aspirations while a dysfunctional family is a family in which the relationship between parents and children are strained unnatural and members adopt distruptive behaviours in order to cope with pains, suffering, fear and loneliness. Cognitive behavioural therapy has been successfully applied to address wide range of issues in the field of counseling, psychology, education and also clinical issues. The application of CBT on the distressed teachers in this study is based on the conceptualization and the understanding of the individuals. The treatment approach adopted involves on emphasis in identifying and modifying automatic thoughts derived from the basic beliefs of the individuals in the treatment group.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Teachers' attitude to work is worrisome and the negative attitude may have effects on the teaching learning processes on students' academic performance. These behaviour among the teachers are problematic and had introduced some worries among the social members of the environment which many factors could be attributed to such factors could be unstable homes, frustration, anxiety, parenting styles among few may behind this. Therefore, the researcher presumed that these may be the reasons of their attitudes towards input to work. Despite having the ability of creating a behavioural change in the students with the knowledge of cognitive, psychomotor as well as effective domains in utilizing the available opportunity of having a life skill to enable him/her interact well in the society, marital instability remind intractable in the society.

Marital instability is a serious problem which interact with teachers output to work, it could disrupt progress at work and performance in class would not be impressive due to conflict and mis-understanding which are normal occurrence among married couples no matter how harmonious a successful marital relationship is there bound to be problems in that union (family). Therefore, for teachers to be dedicated to duties in schools, it is necessary to correct some of these irrational behaviours towards marital instability. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) will be utilized as a means of eliminating negative attitudes of marital instability.

### 1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main objectives of this study were to determine the relative effects of cognitive behavior therapy on

reducing marital instability among secondary school teachers in Gombe metropolis, Gombe state, Nigeria. Research questions: The following research questions guided the study.

To what extent does cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) reduced marital instability mean scores of male and female teachers in Gombe metropolis?

To what extent does marital instability reduction among teachers in the experimental group differ from those in the control group?

### 1.3 Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance

**HO<sub>1</sub>** There is no significance difference on the effects of cognitive behavioural therapy on reduction of marital instability mean scores of distressed male and female secondary school teachers in their posttest mean scores.

**HO<sub>2</sub>** There is no significance difference on the reduction level of marital instability among secondary school teachers in experimental and control group before and after treatment.

## 2. Methodology

The study adopted quasi-experimental design the pre-test, post-test control and experimental group. The target population of the study comprises of all the senior secondary school teachers in Gombe metropolis numbering 1,021 teachers consisting of 628 male teachers and 393 female teachers from public secondary schools under the education teachers board in Gombe metropolis. (Source the office of director planning, research and statistics. ministry of education Gombe state 2018) The multistage and simple random sampling technique were used in selecting the sample size. After administration of marital spouse screening questionnaire (MSSQ). On the teachers in senior secondary classes 45 teachers are found to be in unstable relationship with their spouses forms the experimental group consist of 22 male and 23 female as participants. 45 while the control group consists of the 45 teachers. Therefore, a total of 90 participants constituted the sample size.

### 2.1 Research Instrument

Two research instruments were used for data collection they are as follows:

- Marital spouse screening Questionnaire (MSSQ) which was designed by the

researcher, the MSSQ is an instrument used for weighing, comparing, verifying or to asses' specific behaviours in a marital relationship, which involved pleasant and unpleasant or romantic or non-romantic behaviours. It is a self reported measures which included 14 items with the response of Yes/No

- Marital instability Reduction Teachers Questionnaire (MIRTQ) it is a measure of reducing marital instability which was also design by the researcher the MIRTQ has two-part A and B

Section A personal information which contains demographic characteristics of the participant

Section B it is the marital instability reducing teacher's questionnaire (MIRTQ) which contain 10 items on 5-point Likert scale for the distressed teachers to rate their perception by indicating 5-strongly agreed 4-agree 3-undecided 2-strongly dis agree 1- disagree. the respondent was required to pick any of the statement of the options as it concurred them. The questionnaire was given to three specialists of the senior cadre in measurement and evaluation educational psychology and guidance and counselling respectively from the University of Jos to determine the content validity and the construct validity. Range of marital behaviours: it accesses marital instability in the context of cognitive behavioural therapy ranges found 1-5 the scale was a Cronbach alpha reliability co efficient X= 0.85

**2.2 Procedure**

The treatment programmed lasted for a period of eight weeks of eight sessions, with each session lasting for two hours, there were eight weeks of

interactive sessions between the researchers and the participants which was carried out in five stages of recruitment, pre-test, treatment, post-test and evaluation. Before the commencement of the sessions the participants consent where soughed out and the 90 participants of secondary school teachers voluntarily participated in the study The researcher negotiated with the participants for the suitable days of the week where and when therapeutic sessions would hold at the end of the session an overall review post experiment test and evaluation were conducted to ascertain the effect of the treatment package. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis

**3. Results**

The result of the study was presented in tables based on the two research Questions and the two null hypotheses formulated in the study.

**Research questions 1:** To what extent does cognitive behavioural therapy reduced marital instability among distressed male and female teachers as measured by their posttest mean scores? Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question.

**Null Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference on the efficacy of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) on the reduction level of marital instability among teachers by their post test mean scores In answering the research questions mean and standard deviation were used and also testing the co-responding null hypothesis, independent t- test was used. The result obtained is shown in table I

**Table I:** Effect of cognitive behavioural therapy on reducing marital instability among secondary school Teachers based on gender difference.

Post test	Gender	Nos	Mean	STD deviation	Mena diff	df	t	Sig.
	Male	22	18.5455	.59580	2715	43	1.28	.266
	Female	23	18.7826	.79524				

**Table I** showed that the mean scores of marital instability reduction of distressed male teachers is 18.5455 and that of the distressed female teachers is 18.9826 it was showed that the standard deviation is 59580 and .79524 for the distressed male and female teachers respectively

The mean difference is 23715 this indicated that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) did not bring about significant difference on the reduction level of marital instability among teachers based on gender difference. more over when the mean differences were subjected to independent t-test, it was observed that the t-value 1.28 was not significant at 0.05 level of significance (P>0.05) therefore the null hypothesis was accepted which indicated that cognitive

behavior therapy did not have a significance difference on the reduction level of marital instability among secondary teachers. Therefore, it can be observed that there is no significant gender difference on marital instability among secondary school teachers in Gombe metropolis is accepted.

**Research Question II:** to what extent does marital instability reduction level of secondary school teachers in experimental group differs from those teachers in control group as measured by their pretest and post test mean score?

**Null hypothesis II:** there is no significant difference on the reduction level of marital instability among teachers in experimental group and the control group.

To answer the research question, mean and standard deviation was used and to test the corresponding null hypothesis independent t-test was used the result obtained is shown on table 2 and 3.

**Table II:** Table showing the reduction level of marital instability using cognitive behavioural therapy between experimental group and control group.

Group	Experimental	Control
Pre test	43.38	44.49
Post test	18.67	44.20
Mean difference	24.71	0.29

Table 2 shows the mean score of the pretest and the posttest of distressed teachers in experimental group are 43.38 and 18.67 respectively. the pre test and post test of teachers in the control group are 44.49 and 44.20 respectively and the mean difference is 0.29. this shows that the reduction level of marital instability among teachers in experimental group is significant while that of the control group is not significant.

**Table 3:** confirms the result obtained in table 2

Group	N	Mean	STD deviation	Mean diff.	df	t	Sig
Experiment	45	18.67	.70711	25.53	88	17.292	.000
Control	45	44.20	9.88019				

Table 3 shows that the mean scores of teachers reducing level of marital instability among experimental group and the control group are 18.67 and 44.20 respectively. It is shown that the standard deviation is .70711 and 9.88019 for experimental and control groups respectively. The mean difference is 25.53. this indicated that marital instability behaviour of teachers in this experimental group was highly reduced than that of the control group

Furthermore, this mean difference was subjected to independent t-test and it was observed that the t-value 17.292 was significant at 0.05 level. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

The rejection of null hypothesis indicates that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) had significant efficiency on reducing marital instability on the experimental group

#### 4. Discussion of Findings

The major findings of this study:

The finding of this study on reduction level of marital instability among secondary school teachers indicated

that the participants in the experimental group CBT performed better than those in control group that is participants in the intervention group compared with participants in the control group showed overwhelming improvement in their marital instability level. Thus, showing the effectiveness of treatment strategy as well as the utilization of the treatment gain by participants. because the participants in the treatment group were expose to intervention program while the participants in the control group were not given any form of treatment, but were engaged in the activities that had no relevance on marital instability reduction.

The result obtained in respect of null hypothesis one as presented in table 1 shows that the post test means scores on reduction level of marital instability among teachers based on gender are 18.5455 and 18.7826 for distressed male and distressed female respectively. The mean difference was subjected to independent t-test statistically and found to be statistically not significant on the reduction level of marital instability of teachers based on gender. The result shows that there was no significant difference between male and female teachers in reduction level

of marital instability. This finding indicated that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) did not have significant difference on the reduction of marital instability among male and female teachers.

The finding of this present study is in agreement with the finds of Shayan, Taravati, Garouslan, Babakhani Faradimal and Masoumi (2018) who find out that there is no significant effects on cognitive behavior therapy on marital quality among women in Iran. This result is accepted irrespective of how or where an individual acquires his/her marital instability behaviours from, cognitive behavioural therapy aim at helping them become aware of these negative behaviour patterns and developed alternative ways of thinking and finding solutions which will reduced their level of marital instability in their homes.

The result obtained in table 2 and 3 in respect of null hypothesis two presented shows that the mean score of the reduction level of marital instability among teachers in the experimental group and the control group are 18.67 and 44.20 respectively the mean difference 25.53 indicates that marital instability behavior of teachers in the experimental group was highly reduced than that of the control group which received no treatment. This mean difference was subjected to independent t-test statistics and found to be statistically significant. This finding indicates that cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has significant effect on reducing marital instability. Because CBT aims at redirecting individual with negative thought pattern and irrational behaviours to better logical thinking patterns of finding solution in resolving issues of concerned to them.

The finding of this present study is supported by Shayon, Taravati, Garouslan, and Babakhani (2018) who found out that cognitive behavioural therapy to improve the relationships between couples and reduced divorce rates among women in Iran the findings is also consistent with that of Ghaseni, Afshari, and Amiri (2020) who find out that cognitive behavioural therapy programs enjoyed a high level of improvement in their marital burnout which has significantly reduced marital conflicts among emotional oriented couples in Iran.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study the researcher concluded as follows:

- Teachers needed to be assisted in equipping them with required social skills to achieve

inter-personal relationship toward building a successful marital relationship with spouse. Cognitive behaviours therapy (CBT) is an effective technique to be used in the treatment of marital instability among teachers.

- Leaving teachers with marital instability behaviours without given them psycho therapeutic training such as cognitive behaviours therapy, may have negative effects on the teaching learning processes on student academic performance
- Therefore teachers, being the role models in molding, shaping the student and the society required high level of marital stability.

## 6. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- The ministry of education and school management board should provide schools with professional counselors to pilot the affairs of both teachers and students
- School guidance counselors and teachers should be encouraged to always go for seminars, workshops and conferences so that they can interact, share ideas and experience in marital relationships.
- Marriage counselors, psycho therapists and social workers should encourage teachers, couples and parents to live harmoniously with spouses and by adjusting their irrational behaviours in other to impact positively for a brighter future for their family.

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