

UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOGENIC AND BIOGENIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MALE AND FEMALE AS A PLATFORM FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY STABILITY

By

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ABSTRACT

The rate of divorce in our society is becoming alarming and even the rate of marital separation is equally high. Those who have permanently suspended all emotional ties, but are still co-habiting and answering 'husbands' and 'wives' appear to be in the majority. Those who are regretting their marriages seem to be far more than those who are enjoying theirs. It may be safe to speculate that most couples are trapped and looking for the quickest ways and means of bringing their marital union to an abrupt stop. This situation subsists mainly because majority has failed to understand both the psycho-genic and bio-genic differences that exist in the anatomy of the male and female genders. This paper therefore investigates and brings to the fore this subtle and striking uniqueness as a complementary and not a dividing factor in marital union. It is recommended that understanding these differences will assist couples to complement instead of fighting each other. It is also recommended that these differences should be taught in the schools, churches, conferences, Seminars and workshops so that spouses will begin to see each other as complementary partners and therefore use this understanding to live in harmony and work towards the growth and development of their marriage union, their homes and their immediate communities.

Keywords: *psycho-genic and bio-genic differences, marriages, national development.*

INTRODUCTION

The goal of every intending spouse is not only to get married but to grow, establish and do well in the said marriage. In reality this appears to be a more wishful thinking. This is because no sooner have these spouses come together in marital union than they begin to experience marriage conflict. The source of such marriage conflict may be located in the area of income and monetary concerns, sexual inadequacy, interference from in-laws, loss of job, barrenness, health challenges etc. Even when the marriage suffers a dislocation, the couples may be at diggers-drawn simply because they did not understand the major differences between men and women as husbands and wives as a pre-condition towards understanding and complementing each other.

Individual and gender differences are very important aspects of counselling psychology. This is because these differences pose big challenges to the uninitiated and unsuspecting husbands and wives. It is however, a truism that from childhood to adolescence and even in adult life, there exists differences in interest, brain capacity, sexual expectations, physical structure, likes and dislike and other psychological and biological idiosyncrasies. According to Martins-Umeh (2009), differences among individuals can be subtle or extreme, internal or noticed.

Extreme differences are those differences that are pronounced or easily noticed. In fact, extreme differences are conspicuous. Such differences can be seen in weight, academic achievement etc internal differences are those differences that are noticed in an individual through the different developmental stages.

Psycho-genic and bio-genic differences between boys and girls at childhood.

The major difference between the boy-child and the girl-child are as follows:

1. For a normal male-child, there are X and Y chromosomes while in a normal femalechild there are X and X chromosomes.
2. For a female child to be formed, the sperm with X chromosome from the male will fertilize the ovum with an X and (XX), while on the other hand, for the child to be a male child, the sperm with Y chromosome will fertilize the ovum with an X chromosome (XY).
3. At birth, the male neonate is slightly heavier than the female in most cases and this can be attributed to the health and nutrition of the mother during the period of pregnancy (Unachukwu and Ebenebe, 2009).
4. At age five the male child is faster and larger and more effective in activities like jumping rope. They are also faster in large muscle co-ordination. The male is a little stronger and has a little more muscle even at this tender age (Garai and Scheinfeld, 1968).
5. However, in small-muscle coordination, the female is more proficient- is a little ahead of the male and this is due to skeletal differences between the sexes.
6. In terms of physical maturity, the females tend to be more physically mature than the males of the same age.

These psychological and biological differences are put in place by nature to equip the girl-child and the boy-child for their various tasks ahead. The differences connote that both human beings cannot do without each other. Hence these differences are meant to complement them and should not be used to fight each other.

The Period of childhood spans between the ages of zero to ten years. It is the period of development beginning from the period of birth through the second year of life is called the infancy stage. In the same vein, the early childhood stage spans the period between two to five years; also the period of late childhood spans the ages of five to ten years. The period is characterized by a steady increase in height and weight. From the beginning of this stage till the onset of puberty, growth proceeds at a very slow rate- more slowly than was observed during the early childhood stage. It is important to note that all children at childhood will not be able to attain the same weight and height due mainly to environmental and genetic differences. Children who are fed better, provided with adequate support in the basic areas of good and balanced diet, good shelter, parental love and care, good Medicare and reared in a threat-free environment grow bigger and faster, than those who are poorly fed and lack adequate supportive environment. Observation at this stage has shown that there is a slight difference in the average height and weight of boys and girls. This difference, according to Durojaiye (1980) has been found to be in favour of girls.

Psycho-genic and bio-genic difference between the adolescent boys and the adolescent girls

Adolescence, according to Unachukwu and Ebenebe (2009) is that span of years between childhood and adulthood. The word adolescence is derived from the Latin word

“adolesca” which means “to grow into maturity,” In the western society it covers from the age of twelve or thirteen till the early twenties. In Nigeria, however, there are a number of variations. The period is characterized by dramatic changes in growth. These changes follow a predictable pattern and result from certain hormones secreted by some endocrine glands into the blood stream.

The process of the changes that take place begins when secretions released from the hypothalamus stimulate hormonal production by the pituitary gland which in turn initiates increased hormonal secretions by the sex gland or gonads, and the adrenal glands (Ngwoke and Eze, 2010) According to the same scholars, the first signs that indicate the beginning of puberty are not visible.. The first signs are marked by increased concentrations of male (testosterone) and female (Progesterone and estrogen) hormones in the growing person’s blood stream. These hormonal concentrations take place at least one year before the emergence of the signs that are first observable to everyone. They include:

- In females, there is the development of breast caused by the sex glands producing hormones such as progesterone and estrogen.
- Also the development and widening of the hips which prepare the young female for the task of pregnancy, child bearing and child-backing. The widening protruding of the hips makes the adolescent- girl more attractive to her male counter-part.
- In the female, the growth spurt is followed by the appearance of pubic hairs and the onset of menarche which is the very first menstruation. This does not necessarily mean reproductive readiness.
- For the girl-adolescent, reproductive maturity is reached one or two years after menarche which is the onset of menstrual cycle/period.
- The slight but progressive enlargement of the reproductive organ is commonly referred to as the vagina.
- On the other hand (for the boy adolescents) the sex glands or gonads secrete the hormone known as testosterone which stimulates sequentially the growth the reproductive organs of the human person.
- Hence, the growth and enlargement of the testes and the penis and also the appearance of the first pubic hairs.
- The same hormones earlier mentioned for boys cause the capacity for sexual excitation which climax in ejaculation. The pubescent boy will wake up to find a wet spot or a hardened, dried spot in his bed. It is evidence that while he was asleep, he had a nocturnal emission or ejaculation of semen. This experience is normal and not a sign of sin or spiritual attack.
- The adolescent boy is taller, heavier with broad at shoulder which emphasizes his masculinity.
- By the end of puberty, the larynx or voice box lengthens resulting in the male voice becoming deeper and baritone. (Rutlers, 1980).
- Other traits exhibited by the boy-adolescents are the appearance of hairs in the armpits, on the face, for some boys on the chest.

Commenting on what has been said thus far, it is imperative to say that there is need to create awareness and develop enlightening programme to educate potential couple(s) and spouses in our society on the importance of these psychological cum biological different and interwoven complements of the opposing sex and the psychological consequences of thinking and believing that the male can survive without the female and vice-versa.

The differences discussed thus far cannot be overcome by age, educational achievement and/or emotional maturity. This is because most of the distinguishing features are located within the inner perimeters of their brain and therefore can be said to be more of genetically inherited than an environmentally learned behaviour. An analytical look at the male and female brains as presented in the pictures below will depict that there exist striking biogenic and hereditary differences that distinguish the brain of the male from that of the female. For instance while sex is paramount in the brain of the male fashion and shopping occupy very important and strategic positions in the female brain.

The Psycho-Genic and Bio-Genic differences between Male and Female in Adulthood

There is no general agreement as to the exact age that signals the beginning of adulthood. Emphasis is however placed on age twenty as the approximate starting point. According to Freud (1930), adulthood implies “the period when an individual is in a position to assume the responsibility of daily work and committed love”. Many psychologists share in the psychological view on adulthood as a period of maturity and responsibility in the vital areas of work and love. This period is characterized by plenty of changes which may be physical, social, economical, psychological and/or emotional. This is the period when the human person reaches the peak of his/her strengths. With these productive strengths, employment is sought for that will keep the individual going for life or change after sometime while others go into marital unions with the purpose of bearing children that will take care of them at old age.

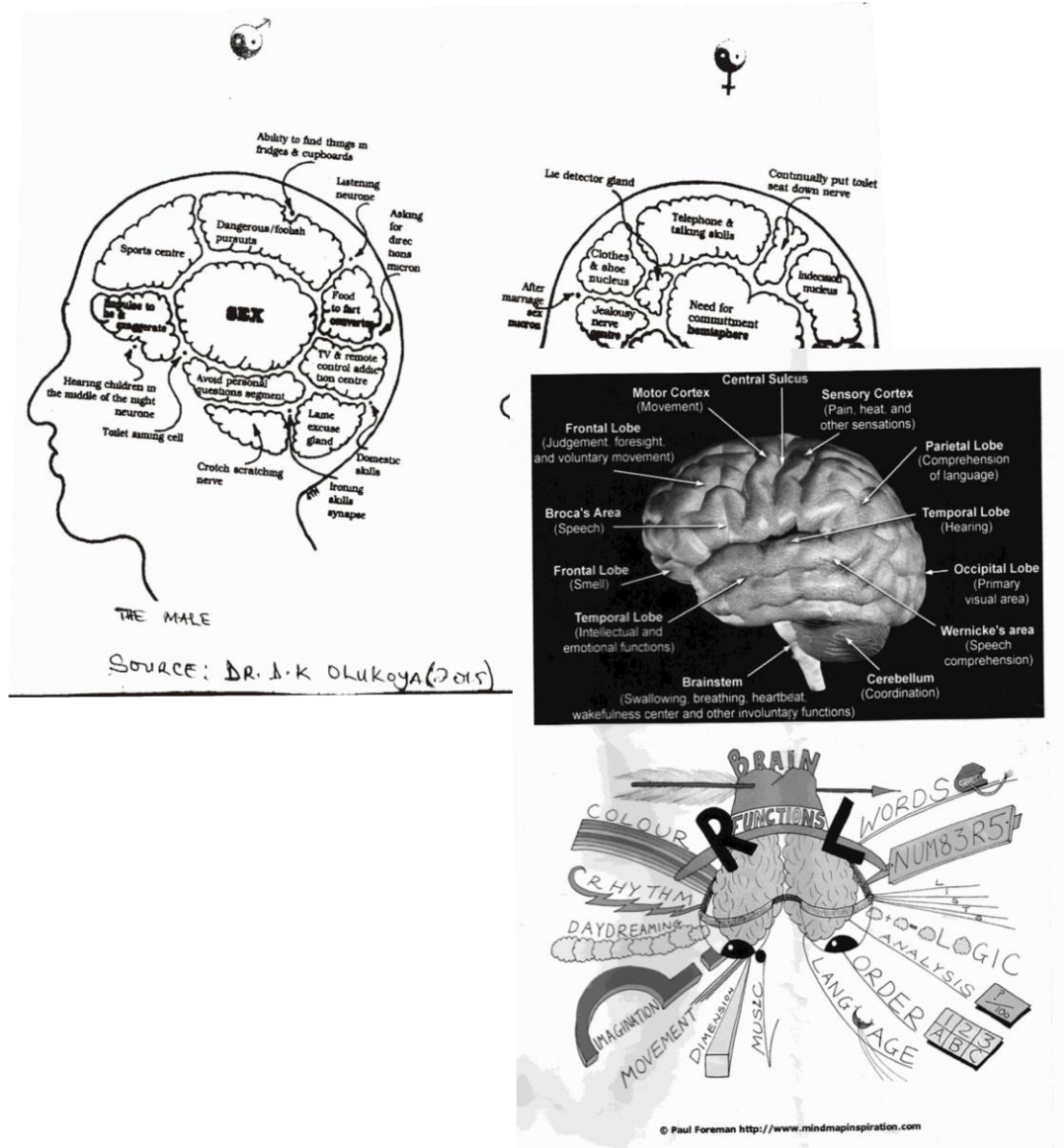
It is important to note however, that great differences exist between the man and woman making up this marital union. These differences are highlighted to form the basis for spouses to understand each other in this heterosexual relationship called marriage.

The first of such difference is that:

- The human brain is divided into two parts namely right hemisphere and left hemisphere, with the man (husband) making use more of the right hemisphere which controls colour, rhythm, day-dreaming, imagination, movement, dimension and music. The simple implication is that a man is moved by what he sees. While for women in control, the woman words, numbers, logic, analysis, order and language hence a woman is moved by what she hears. In support of this view Fieldman (2009) reports that “the left hemisphere concentrates more on tasks that require verbal competence, such as speaking, reading, thinking and reasoning. The right hemisphere has its own strengths, particularly in non verbal areas such as understanding of spatial relationships. In other words, men have greater visual-spatial and mathematical abilities while women tend to have greater verbal ability including listening skills.
- A man is a logical and reasoning being as can be seen in his day-dreaming and imaginative endowment while the woman is emotional by nature. For example, Buss (2003), observed that “men are more jealous in cases of sexual infidelity than in cases of emotional infidelity; women are more jealous in cases of emotional infidelity than in cases of sexual infidelity”.
- Emotionally (specifically when it comes to orgasm) the female can be described to be like electric kettle that takes time to reach the boiling point while men emotionally are like electric bulb that reaches out as soon as it is switched on.
- Psychological and otherwise, a man only do one task at a time while the woman is formed to perform many tasks at one time. For instance, a man watching a programme in the television may not be able to hear or see that the wife has carried his food to the dining

table. However, a woman can be boiling rice on a four sitting gas cooker, at the same time preparing stew and still be washing and spreading clothes etc.

- Men are usually taller than women, men are more aggressive, competitive and prone to engaging in risky tasks than women. Men are also physically stronger, have broad shoulders and heavier bones than women.



- Men have very high metabolism than women and this explain why men eat more than women, who prefer biscuits, soft drinks and/or fruits to heavy food. This is because women have slow rate of metabolism.
- Men are very brief in communication, thus an average man speaks about 10,000 words per day while an average woman speaks about 25,000 words per day. In support of the above assertion Matlin (2000), said an individual man can be less talkative than most women. Similarly, an individual woman may be more talkative than most men.
- Men are egoistic, hence they find fulfillment in their jobs while women find fulfillment in relationships. In other words, women are more romantic than men.

- Following from the above, sex to a man is a need, while sex to a woman is a gift and the expression of love.
- The body of a woman is soft, smooth and flexible thus very beautiful while the body of a man is coarse, rough. Perhaps, this can be attributed to the creation story in the Bible that says that the man was created out of raw sand while the woman was formed from the man.
- Men take things for granted especially their health, hence their life span is shorter than that of the women. In comparison the women always seek for solution to any observed health challenge in their life.

Understanding the Psycho-genic and bio-genic Differences in Male and Female as factors in marriage and family stability

Marriage is the joining of two persons usually a man and a woman into a social, emotional and heterosexual union with all their family and social networks. Marriage is the most commonly practiced living arrangement for female and male adults. The period comes with high expectations for child-birth and child-rearing. Upon the arrival of children the females derive pleasure and excitement and develop greater warmth in playing the crucial role of a wife to her husband and a mother to her children. At this stage, the family wellbeing, growth and stable development is so important to the female that she is prepared to sacrifice her personal independence, wealth and opportunity for the actualization of family and marital stability. According to Click (1977) at this stage, the family is the greatest concern of the females, regardless of whether they are employed outside the home or not. The males on the other hand struggle to acquire wealth which will help in the upkeep of their families. Marital and family conflicts may set in at this stage from legion off angles such as sexual inadequacy, income, poor house-keep style, wife-abuse, womanizing, flirtatiousness on the part of the wife, drunkenness on the part of the husband, wastefulness, over demanding sexually, inability to cook, barrenness, impotence, disrespect, laziness etc. No matter the source of the marital brouhaha, the implication issuing from the discussion so far is that couples need always to remember that their psychological and biological differences are meant for them to complement each other. For due to the special make-up in the life of the man, he has broad shoulders, is stronger, taller and faster. These are indications that at all time the man has been positioned to protect, defend and secure the interest and well-being of the woman. In the same vein, it is a truism that the wife should not allow any other man to see her nudity except her husband. It is also indicative that wives should not bring in grownup girls to be their house-helps or allow her own female friends to be very close to their husbands. Moreover, since women are psycho-biologically meant to work with what their ears and are verbal, the husbands should not relent in telling them “I LOVE YOU”, listen also to their verbalization and pay attention when their wives are talking to them. This is because communication is to love and marriage what blood is to life and good health. Effort should also be made by husbands to protect their wives from their own male-friends, especially those that claim that their fathers are the owners of National Theatre in Lagos and they, themselves the owner of MTN in South Africa. This is because women believe whatever they hear including “white – lies”.

Since men are said to take things for granted especially their health challenges, their wives should do well to observe any illness whether manifest or still at the incubation stage and encourage them to see a qualified medical doctor for early diagnosis and possible treatment of the diseases and nip it in the bud. In the same vein, since it is now known that men are not only egoistic but find fulfillment in their jobs and careers more than anything else, women

should compliment them by assisting them both psychologically and financially including creating a threat-free atmosphere at home to enable their husbands actualize their career dream and job satisfaction.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to investigate and highlight howbeit briefly some psychological and biological differences between male and female human beings. The trend of the analysis was channeled towards the truism that where the male is endowed with one characteristics, the female is equally endowed with another which is not found in the male, so that the female will play a complementary role in building stability both in their marriages and families and vice versa.

Recommendations

- Those who read the special area called marriage counselling should be employed massively at all tiers of government to help teach these simple facts to civil servants so as to save marriages and families which are experiencing difficulties.
- Churches that give counselling before and after marriage weddings should always update their knowledge especially in the areas of psychological and marital psychology. This will enable them give out appropriate information to their ignorant members.
- Those couples who are experiencing difficulties in their marriages should seek help from marriage therapists and not from fake seers and prophets who will always claim “I see, I saw”.
- Governments at all levels should organize seminars and conferences for those in their employment to reduce the alarming rate of marital separation and divorce that is becoming the trend especially with women who think because of their financial muscle, they can do without their spouses.

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