

Sexual Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment of Married Persons in Delta and Edo States

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Abstract

This study adopted correlational design to examine sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment of married persons in Delta and Edo states, Nigeria. A total of 1,200 married persons living in Delta and Edo states were involved in the study. Respondents were sampled through multi-stage clustered sampling technique. Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire and Marital Adjustment Questionnaire were administered to the respondents and data collected was analyzed. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Regression analysis was used for testing the null hypotheses at 0.5 level of significance. The results showed that there is a significant correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment. On the basis of the findings of this research, the conclusion was reached that sexual satisfaction comes from a happy, excited, peaceful and emotionally balanced individual, and these are some of the ingredients of marital adjustment. It was then recommended among others that married or intending couples should be given sex education by various local government Council Areas in both states, and in different churches in order to correct all negative beliefs about sex.

Keywords: sex, satisfaction, marital, adjustment, marriage, Edo, Delta

Introduction

Marriage is a long-term relationship that is meaningful to the couple and others in their social circle. The lives and fortunes of married partners are intertwined and they, their friends and their families have beliefs about what constitutes proper conduct in the relationship (Osarenren & Oke, 1998). Mirowsky and Ross (1985) viewed marriage as a close long-term relationship in which the psychological benefits of personal control may be limited by a need for reciprocity and mutual control. Since marriage in any culture is one of the hallmarks signalling entry to adulthood, it thus represents the completion of a major life decision. Odebunmi (2007) noted that “Marriage is a serious affair and not something to be toyed with but something to be nurtured, cherished and preserved by all.” So all married couples are strictly requested to contribute to the success of their marriage by nurturing and cherishing their partners. This implies that all married persons are to be committed to their respective marriage obligations and

demands of marital relationship in their socio cultural environment. This is where adjustment becomes inevitable. But it is worthy of note here that societies differ in their various patterns of marriage obligations.

Lancer and Lancer (2004) stated that anthropologists have discovered a wide range of patterns in other societies. They observed that in some societies, the man takes the woman's name after marriage. While in a typical Nigerian culture, it is the woman who changes her name to the man's name after marriage. According to Igborgbor (2005), efforts are needed to prepare people for marriage and to sustain already contracted marriages. Obtaining such premarital counselling, according to Bruhn and Hill (2004) and Wolff (2005), has increasingly become popular, even desirable, because it is seen as preventive strategy by those in their 20s and 30s who are engaged. Murray (2005) asserted that at least four topics such as communication skills, conflict resolution skills, finances and parenting should be included in premarital counselling; however, the issue of sex in the home could be adversely affected if either of the couple is sexually sick.

Sex and sexuality emanates from a sound mind and has been a major factor bedevilling matrimonial homes. Many are married but have little or no sexual satisfaction. Hence, Hamon (2012) opined that sexuality is an important part of life, and an integral aspect of any emotional relationship. He added that the more you invest in your romantic life, the more rewards you will reap. Marital sex is like oil which is meant to lubricate every other aspect of marital life; all or most aspects of marital life will tend to move swiftly when this oil is in a good condition but when the oil is in a bad condition, then the result could be very devastating (Enyi, 2012). Enyi further stated that "about 70% of all marital problems have their causes firmly rooted in the bedroom, and that a marriage where there is the existence of a healthy marital sexual relationship, these marital problems are simply overlooked when they crop up. But in a union where the existence of a healthy marital sexual relationship has become moribund, these issues are often blown out of proportion." In the same vein, Young, Luquis, Denny and Young (1998) asserted that a person's satisfaction with his/her marriage or primary relationship tends to be a pivotal factor in his/her overall happiness.

Given the high rate of divorce and the marital and sexual dissatisfaction experienced by many couples who do not divorce (Frank, Anderson & Rubenstein, 1979), a number of researchers, according to Young et al (1998), have sought to identify the factors that gave a positive or negative impact on sexual satisfaction among married persons. These include the relationship of sexual satisfaction to physical aspect of sexual experience like orgasm consistency, frequency or timing of orgasm (Darling, Davidson & Cox, 1991; Waterman & Chiauzzi, 1982) and to psychological factors within individuals and couples (Farley & Davis, 1980). Young observed that couples who have more frequent sex reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction than couples

who have less frequent sex. The experience of orgasm also is correlated with sexual satisfaction (Young, 2012). This issues call for serious education/counselling of married and intending couples to avoid marital breakdown.

Researchers in the field of marital counselling, such as Obot (2000) and Okorodudu (2010), observed that many colourful marriages do not live to celebrate their first anniversary. Divorce results from malfunctioning in sexual relationships; when it occurs, it becomes a situation of 'where two elephants fight of course the grass suffers.' The grasses at this point are the children in the home, the people in the neighbourhood, the community and the nation at large. While some religious organizations involve the prospective couples in a series of medical and traditional test in terms of sexual satisfaction, others see it as neglected aspect of life. While some people marry and celebrate their silver and golden jubilee, some could not even celebrate their first year anniversary as a result of sexual dissatisfaction either from the man or the woman. The big question here is: could relationship exist between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment of married persons? Based on these issues, this research revolves around the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital (dyadic) adjustment of married persons in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research question was formulated to serve as a guide to the study:

1. What is the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment of married persons in Delta and Edo States?

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment.

Methodology

The correlational design was used in this study. This study sought to find out the relationship that exists between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment of married persons. Consequently, the most appropriate research design for a study of this type is the correlation research design. The population targeted for this study includes all married men and women in Delta and Edo States. Delta and Edo are oil producing states in Nigeria situated in the region known as the Niger Delta, South-south Geopolitical zone with a population of 4,098,291, for Delta and 3,497,502 for Edo state (Federal Republic of Nigeria, Official gazette, No. 24, Vol. 94, of 2007). The total population of both states therefore stands at 7,595,793. Samples of one thousand two hundred (1200) married persons were considered appropriate for use in this research. Respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique as they were captured individually in churches, schools, hospitals, social gatherings and offices.

The instruments used for data collection for this research were Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire and Marital (dyadic) Adjustment Questionnaire, which were adapted from Young et al (1998) and Santrock (2006) respectively. Questions were drawn from the four components or dimensions of sexual satisfaction which include: sexual pleasure, attraction, intensity, and fulfilment within the context of marriage. The instrument was made up of 32 items. These items were subjected to Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method, which reduced the number of total items to 28. Using the extraction method of the Principal Component Analysis (PCA), seven components were extracted. Component one has 7 items which measures sexual fulfilment, component two has 5 items and measures sexual attraction, component three with 4 items measures sexual fulfilment, component four with 3 items measures sexual intensity, component five with 3 items measures sexual pleasure, component six with 3 items covers issues on sexual attraction, while component seven with 1 item covers issues on sexual fulfilment. The extraction sums of squared loading shows that components have 30.5% variance, 15.4 variance, 6.73% variance, 6.08 variance, 4.21% variance, 4.14% variance and 3.7.2 variance respectively. The overall cumulative percentage for the main components of Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire is 0.71.

Delta State is a multicultural state, and this study deals with one of the most intricate aspects of human life which is very sacred, highly reserved and confidentially treated by all married couples. No married couple would want his or her marital issues to be discussed outside her home. Therefore a culture free instrument becomes inevitable so as to get the required response from participants. Consequently the Dyadic Adjustment Questionnaire (DAQ) of Spanier (1976) which is highly culture free was adapted for data collection in this study. The instrument is segmented into four sections using a five point Likert type of 0-5 points as thus:

Section 1: Dyadic consensus: This segment provides questions on family, financial issues and religious matters.

Section 2: Affection expression. It covers sexual matters, and demonstration of affection in the marriage relationship.

Section 3: Dyadic satisfaction. It covers satisfaction with themselves and the marriage.

Section 4: Dyadic cohesion. It covers couples socialization.

The instruments was validated by an expert in the field of Test and Measurement who made critical screening, criticism and modifications which increased it from its original 32 items to 37 items. It was later subjected to Varimax with Kaiser Normalization rotation method, thereby reducing the number of total items to 29. Using the Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extraction method, eight (8) components were extracted. Component one which has 8 items and component six with 2 items both deal with the family financial and religious issues; component two

has 4 items and covers couples' social lives, component three accounted for 4 items and component five with 3 items cover the issues of marital affection, component four accounted for three 3 items, component seven with 3 items and component eight with 2 items cover the issue of marital satisfaction. The extraction sums of square loading shows that component one has 26.94%, component two has 14.5%, component three has 6.94%, component four has 6.12%, component five has 4.9%, component six has 4.2%, component seven has 3.8%, and component eight has 3.67% variance. The overall cumulative percentage for the main components of dyadic adjustment questionnaire is 71%.

The face and content validity of these instruments were established after a thorough scrutiny by three experts in Guidance and Counselling. The instrument for Sexual satisfaction, and Dyadic adjustment were administered to 100 married persons for its reliability test. To establish the reliability for this instrument the Cronbach Alpha Index method of determining reliability coefficient was used. These measures of internal consistency for Sexual satisfaction yielded a coefficient of 0.90 at $P < .05$ and Dyadic adjustment yielded a coefficient 0.89 at $P < .05$, which were significant at the 0.05 confidence level. Consequently, the items in the instrument were considered to be of good reliability to this research work. To collect data from the 1200 sample, the researcher employed the services of research assistants who did not only help to distribute the copies of the questionnaire but also helped to educate the respondents on how to complete them conscientiously. Hospitals, Health Centres, Local Government Secretariats, Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Tertiary institutions were used from the sampled areas. In areas where there are no such centres as mentioned above, Mosques and churches were used to get respondents but with proper appeal. At the end, 1200 copies of questionnaire were administered with 100% returned rate. The retrieved questionnaires were scored and separated into the various categories as stated in this section; the research question was answered using the mean scores, standard deviation and multiple correlation coefficient (r). The Regression analysis was used for testing the hypothesis. The computer assisted data analysis was done and the null hypotheses was tested at .05 level of significance.

Presentation of Findings

Research Question: What is the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment of married persons in Delta and Edo States?

The analysis of data collected to answer this question is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r	Decision
Sexual satisfaction	1200	103.05	19.87	.34	Positive
Marital Adjustment	1200	96.25	24.53		Relationship

As shown in table 1, the computed multiple correlation statistics produced an $r=.34$. Therefore, the answer to research question 1 is that Sexual Satisfaction is positively related to Marital Adjustment.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment.

The correlation and regression analysis was computed for the data in testing this hypothesis and the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Sexual Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment

Model 2.	R.	R ² .	R ² (adjusted)	Standard Error of the Estimate	
	.34	.11	.11	23.13	
ANOVA(b)					
Model (2)	SS	Df	MS	F	SIG
Regression	80961.10	2	40480.54	75.64	.00
Residual	640585.90	1197	535.16		
Total	721546.99	1199			
Variable in the Equation					
Model (2)	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient		
	B	Standard Error	Beta	T	SIG
Constant	38.42	4.99		7.10	.000
Sexual satisfaction	.32	.04	.26	9.30	.000

Predictors: (constant) Sexual satisfaction, Dependent variable: Marital adjustment. * $P < .05$

The result in table 1 showed a correlation output of .34, which shows that there is a positive linear relationship between, sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment. The computed $F(2,1197)$ is 75.64, and $P < .05$; therefore hypothesis 1 was rejected. This therefore showed that there is a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment. The conclusion was reached that sexual satisfaction correlate with marital adjustment. The R^2 adjusted value of .11 indicated that 11% of the variance in marital adjustment was due to the collective impact of sexual satisfaction. Out of this amount, sexual satisfaction accounted for 6% amount of variance, in marital

adjustment respectively. This is the effect size of the antecedent variable on the criterion, that is, marital adjustment. To determine the practical relevance, the effective size estimate was tested for significance using the computed F change statistic $R^2=.064$, $F=86.426$, $df=(1,1197)$, Sig. F change =.000, $P<.05$. To remove the influence of other variables and avoid spurious relationship, the beta weight was computed for sexual satisfaction. The computed beta weight of .26, $t = 9.30$, $P<.05$ was observed. The conclusion was drawn that sexual satisfaction alone can explain the marital adjustment of married persons without the influence of any other variables.

Discussion of findings

The findings of this study revealed that there was a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment. This finding revealed that sexual satisfactions are correlates of marital adjustment. This finding showed that sexual satisfaction is a major predictor of marital adjustment. This finding is in agreement with the work of Hamon (2012) who opined that sexuality is an important part of life and an integral aspect of any emotional relationship. He added that the more you invest in your romantic life, the more rewards you will reap. This study also agrees with Enyi (2012), who said that marital sex is like oil which is meant to lubricate every other aspect of your marital life; all or most aspect of marital life will tend to move swiftly when this oil is in a good condition, but when the oil is in a bad condition then the result could be very devastating. In fact sexual satisfaction is an important aspect of marital satisfaction (Farley & Davis, 1980; Gebhard, 1966; Hurlbert, Apt & Rabehl, 1993). Enyi (2012) stated that about 70% of all marital problems have their causes firmly rooted in the bedroom and that in a marriage where there is the existence of a healthy marital sexual relationship, these marital problems are simply overlooked when they crop up. But in a union where the existence of a healthy marital sexual relationship has become moribund, these issues are often blown out of proportion.

This finding supported the views of Aliakbari (2010) who observed in a study with 60 married persons in Tarbiat-Modarres University that there was a significant positive correlation between women's sexual function and its component and their marital adjustment and also their husband's marital adjustment. Also women's sexual function component explained for 25% of their marital adjustment variance and 34% of their husband's marital adjustment variance. Sexual satisfaction, according to Aliakbari (2010), therefore has a role in predicting marital adjustment. He further stressed that paying attention to women's sexual function and providing proper information and necessary training in this field and enhancing the rate of women sexual function can help in their marital continuity and marital adjustment.

The finding also agreed with the observation of Dawn (1995). In Dawn's work on marital satisfaction in graduate student's marriage, he observed that the 161 couples

he worked with show a significant correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. And that greater marital satisfaction was found in marriages where both partners were students than in marriages with only one partner in school. This finding also agreed with Donnelly (1993) who observed that sexually inactive marriages are less happy and less satisfied than those with sexual activity. But she added that sexual inactivity was found to be associated with old age, the presence of small children, poor health and in males, duration of marriage. Huston and Vangelisti (1991), Donnelly (1993) and Morokoff and Gilliland (1993) agreed that personal sexual satisfaction, frequency of sex and sexual activities and the sexual interest and satisfaction of one's spouse has a great deal to do with marital satisfaction. Nevertheless, this study is in disagreement with Huston and Vangelisti (1991) who stated that the wives' sexual interest was related to the husbands' satisfaction, but that sexual affection as a whole was unrelated to their spouse's marital satisfaction. They tried to explain this in a number of ways. They suggested that the importance of sex for marital satisfaction may not surface until after couples have been married for a number of years. This again is unrealistic with this study, and the work of Derogatis and Melisaratos (1979) as in Michael et al (2000) who stated that a person is or is not satisfied with his or her sexual relationship regardless of duration of marriage. In fact sex is a major key player in the issues of marital adjustment.

Conclusion

On the basis of the findings in this research, the conclusions was reached that sex and sexual satisfaction comes from a happy, excited, peaceful and emotionally balanced individual, and these are some of the ingredients of marital adjustment. This is why the marital adjustment of married persons is very vital.

Recommendations

Sex and sexual activities is an important factor in the determination of a healthy and adjusted marriage. Therefore married or intending couples should be given sex education by various local government Council Areas in both states, and in different churches in order to correct all negative beliefs about sex, who to initiate it in the relationship, when to have sex, where to have sex in the house and how to have sex.

Married persons and those intending to come together in marriage should be made to attend trainings to be organized by the marriage registry of the various local government councils in both states, and in different churches who are involved in the joining of couples in holy wedlock. This is to get the intending couples properly equipped with enough information on sex and other marital issues that could be of help to them before coming together as husband and wife.

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