

SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION, SOCIO-CULTURAL BELIEFS AND COMMUNICATION STYLES AS PREDICTORS OF
MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED PEOPLE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study investigated sexual dysfunction, socio-cultural beliefs and communication styles as predictors of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria. The research design used was the descriptive research of the survey type. The population consisted of all married people in the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria (Igbo, Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba).

The sample for the study comprised 1,200 married people whose ages ranged from 18 years and above selected through multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled "Marital Relations Questionnaire (MRQ)". The instrument's face and content validities were ensured while the construct validity yielded a co-efficient of 0.73. Test-retest method of reliability was adopted with a co-efficient of 0.80 at 0.05 significant level. One research hypothesis was postulated for the study and tested using multiple regression analysis at 0.05 significant level. The findings of the study showed that socio-cultural beliefs of married people in Nigeria were the single best predictor of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria with a beta weight of 0.057 (57%). Based on this findings, It was recommended that counsellors should design effective programmes that would enable married people in Nigeria to have a change in their negative perspective towards marriage. Parents should encourage their children to marry from any part of Nigeria when every condition is met. In addition, would be couple should involve their parents in the selection of their life partners.

Key words: *Sexual dysfunction, socio cultural beliefs, communication styles, marital satisfaction.*

Introduction

Sexual dysfunction, according to Akintoke (2015), is inability of an individual to engage effectively or actively in sexual relationship as he or she wants or wishes. It appears to be a sexual problem that is associated with erection, premature ejaculation, retarded ejaculation, frigidity, sexual arousal disorders, erectile disorder, sexual pains disorder, sexual response cycle, inability to achieve orgasm, impotence, low sexual drive and vaginismus. Yahaya, Esere, Ogunsanmi and Oniye (2008)

posit that, sexual dysfunction affects desire, preference, arousal or orgasm in either man or woman. The scholars reported that if the condition is not properly handled, it can lead to severe scaring and permanent loss or erectile function which could have a link with marital dissatisfaction and consequent break-up of marriage due to psychological trauma. The sufferer is made to pass through insanity, anxiety, fear and depression. Akingbade (2015) submits that the disorder can occur in young men and children such as individuals with sickle cell disease, diabetes, hepatitis and individuals who do not follow prescribed medication. The author further asserts that one cannot deny that having sex in marriage or making love is one of the most enjoyable activities in marriage as sexual intercourse does not only increase marital satisfaction and harmony, but improves overall health. The scholar also agrees that sexual interactions can help to burn enough calories, improve health, reduce stresses, lower blood pressure, serves as a cardio exercise which enables the heart to pump blood very fast, improves immunity, enables an individual who engage in it to sleep very well as a result of the oxytocin that might have been released during mating which promotes sleep. Owuamanam (2004) reports that sexual dysfunction is a sexual inadequacy and that, it is a psychological term used to illustrate any difficulty in sexual functioning that is present in both man and woman which could threaten marital satisfaction and consequently encourages divorce or break-up of marriages. Nwobi (2016) states that almost everyone who is sexually active, even couples who are very satisfied with their relationships experience occasional sexual problems. Gorman (2015) reports that sexual dysfunction could occur as a result of possible decrease in the production of normal oestrogen in women or testosterone in men.

Owuamanam (2004), also reports that, some men experienced sexual dysfunction due to anxiety which comes from masculinity and that it may come from highly religious homes where they view sex as dirty and sinful habits.

Aina (2010) enumerates some factors that could encourage sexual impairment such as age, fatigue, alcoholism, smoking, influence of childhood learning about sex, the use of chemotherapy drugs which are meant for the treatment of certain blood related diseases such as Acquired immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS), diabetes, hepatitis and hypertension. Akingbade (2015) submits that majority of deaths in Nigeria are due to disorder of the arteriosclerosis, heart attack, stroke and some other organic conditions which have been traced to erectile dysfunction. Folami (2017) opines that sexual dissatisfaction of both partners can be devastating to the self-esteem. According to Folami, erectile dysfunction is an inability of the male to ejaculate intra virginally as a result of physical causes such as: age, fatigues, alcoholism, drug abuse, smoking and influence of childhood learning about sex. Folamidescribed sexual dysfunction as being characterized by the inability to develop or maintain an erection of the penis by men while it is associated with not achieving orgasm by women. Folami agreed that the underlying causes of this problem which

appears to have brought marital dissatisfaction among married people in Nigeria could be traced to damage to the nervierigentes which threatens erection as well as diabetes and cardiovascular disease which simply decreases blood flow to the tissues in the penis. Oyedepo (2014) reports that 15-20% of men in Nigeria are suffering from one type of sexual dysfunction or the other and that, 40-57% of women experienced varying degrees of sexual dysfunction. Dion (1999) stresses that sexual dysfunction of a woman could occur as a result of any physiological change that affect the reproductive system such as premenstrual syndrome, pregnancy, postpartum, child labour and menopause.

On the other hand, social cultural beliefs, according to Schafer (2002) are the totality of learned, socially transmitted customs, knowledge, material objects and behaviour which include the ideas, values, customs and artifacts of a group of people. Schafer further describes socio cultural as the way which people live their lives. The scholar further explains that culture is a broad based issues and it is a thing that is peculiar to individuals, groups, villages, towns, ethnic groups, country and continents. This researcher therefore believes that culture includes people's language, mode of dressing, the food that people eat, culture as a societal way of life, while some refer to it as the various ways by which institutions, religion, social class, interactions and the behavioral patterns of the people. Oyedepo (2014) explains that there is no place in the globe that does not have peculiar ways of life and of doing things alike which easily shows and dictates the person's personality . Owuamanam and Adesanya (2003) submit that an important factor that causes Igbo marriage to endure among other tribes in Nigeria is the involvement of parents and relatives in selecting life partners for their sons and daughters. They further affirm that traditionally, in Igbo land, parents could go to the extent of consulting oracles (dibia) to confirm whether the proposed relationship is acceptable to the gods and if it is not, the obstacle could be removed by offering sacrifices as prescribed by diviner to appease the gods.

Owuamanam (2010) reports that the greatest threat to marriages today is the highest rate of divorce. The researcher further states that, traditionally in Nigeria, the social stigma which used to be associated with divorce has become less embarrassing with the rate at which couples rush to institute divorce. The scholar further stresses that in Nigeria, husbands are accorded superior positions by their custom on issues relating to sexual relationship with their wives as it is common among men or husbands to demand for sexual activities not minding whether it is convenient for the woman or not, because any woman or wife that does such will be stigmatized with different names as a harlot or a prostitute or suspected to be having extra marital affairs or dating other men.

In addition, communication begins with language which is a distinctive ability that has made possible the evolution of human society. With language, any message, no matter how complex, can be conveyed between people over a limited distance, within a room or place of assembly, or across a short open space (Akintoke, Alowolodu&Owuamanam, 2018). Communication in marriage has to

do with how married people relate with each other. In general term, communication in marriage serves as an articulation of sending a message through different media whether verbal or non-verbal, so long as it transmits a thought provoking idea or action. According to the scholars communication is a process of sending information from a sender to a receiver through a medium which is understood to each other.

The Gospel Faith Mission International (GOFAMINT) Sunday School Bible study Manual (2018) affirmed that one of the greatest gifts of God to mankind is speech. It further states that, this gift, which has greatly enhanced the pooling of thoughts together, is largely responsible for the great strides human being have enjoyed from the era of living in caves to this time of flying through space, and that , the same gift is most potent weapon of conflict resolution in order to promote marital satisfaction.

GOFAMINT (2019) further asserts that blood keeps our bodies alive; communication keeps your marriage alive. If blood stops flowing through the body the body will die. If communication ceases in the home , then the relationship will die . It was also reported by the religious group that one of the most important factors in a Christian home is good and effective communication which is the transmission of information and feelings from one person to another. The writer concluded that to develop good listening skill, you must do the following: decide that listening to your partner is the most important thing you must do at the moment, focus your attention on what your partner is saying, listen to the words, the body language and the tone of the voice, listen with your eyes, ears, mind and heart. Do not interrupt while your partner is talking even if you feel what he or she is saying is not accurate and that wait, listen ask question until you understand what he or she is saying.

Aina (2010) agrees that communication is an integral feature of human activities and it is a pillar which maintains the structure of peaceful co-existence and mutual understanding. The author further reiterated that, though, conflict is inevitable in marriage and the only tool for its resolution and harmonious co-existence is through communication as couples need good and effective communication in time of conflicts.

Communication styles in marriage are conversational styles which is the way in which couple share information with themselves through language (Adejoro, 2011).

Adenuga (2015) posits that a marriage does not grow without a commitment to invest time, emotional energy and practical expressions of love into its daily existence. The scholar further states that, there is need for couples to have the urgency to communicate their love to each other every day to find out where they hurt and their joy lies. In marital context, Owuamanam (2010) sees communication as a process of sending messages from one person to another, a way of sharing feelings and emotions among couples. Lack of adequate and effective communication between husband and wife may lead to marriage instability as people who do not communicate what they want from their partner do often disagree. The scholar further posits that a person who assumes that

the other partner should know what to do without actually telling him or her is not likely to live without constant quarrels.

Owuamanam and Akintoke (2013) reveal that communication is an important pillar in marriage, but poor communication weakens it and that, marriages have broken down as there is no exchange of ideas between husbands and their wives. Oyedepo (2014) reports that if there is effective communication between husband and wife, the relationship is more likely to be interesting and enjoyable. The author further states that communication in marriage should involve sharing of information, ideas and feelings which involves not the spoken and written words alone but also, body language, personal mannerisms and styles.

Adenuga (2015) affirms the following rules on which one can achieve marital satisfaction to include having a listening ear, do not attack; do not exaggerate, do not mind-read, focus on preferences and not principles, explain what made you feel the way you did, clarify your needs, limit yourself to one or two topics and allow time for questions at the end. Lyon (2016) claims that in good communication, what an individual says should be consistent with how it is said and that communication in marriage involves not just words but gestures, actions and sounds.

Similarly, Akintoke (2015) further opines that marital satisfaction is a total evaluation of the experiences or the rating in which an individual ascribes to his or her marriage to meet certain expectations such as economic, emotional and sexually related issues which promotes marital satisfaction. Toral and Kendal (2006) stress that marital satisfaction is seen as being happy within one's marriage and claim further that satisfied marriage does not have the propensity to divorce, as it is only being determined by the presence of thoughts or actions which affect marriage such as sexual inability of either of the partners in the relationship. Adenuga (2015) observes that for any marriage to be satisfied there must be ability to tolerate one another which is a secret that every couple must keep.

Pinsof (2007) enumerates some factors that can promote marital satisfaction such as sufficient love for each other, loyalty, improved sexually related issues and sincerity. Mamazandi (2010) reports that marital satisfaction is a status in which both spouses come to an agreement and are satisfied in their style of relationships, they are contented with quality and type of their leisure times, and how well they manage their time and economic issues. Arbabi (2008) emphasizes that several factors can affect marital satisfaction such as the mood of the spouse, believing in loyalty and love, employment and spouse's income and problem solving device. Aina (2010) states that the following categories of behaviour can lead a couple to marital satisfaction: expression of affection in a relationship through both words and actions. Adenuga (2015) lists the following as tips that can make marriage to be stable and satisfied: building a support network, letting guilt go, establishing of limits and boundaries, determining one's standard, creating time for self, getting organized, being flexible, enjoying quality family time, finding reliable child care and achieving

integrated life.

Marital satisfaction includes a friendly relationship accompanied by understanding each other, and a logical balance among the material and moral needs of the spouse (Hubert and Hubert, 2012). The researcher also considers marital satisfaction as a feeling associated with consent, satisfaction and joy experienced by man or woman. Owuamanam (2010) opines that marital satisfaction is mostly influenced by the personality characteristics of spouses. The scholar further asserts that personality in marital satisfaction indicates that part of the characteristics of the individual(s) that includes their fixed intellectual, emotional and behavioural patterns.

Chang (2018) reports that marital satisfaction in a family is the most important pillar of mental health of the family members as it indicates the strength and efficiency of the family system. The writer further reveals that a healthy family and society are formed based on the conscious ties, healthy and growing relationship of spouses.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, there are reported cases of divorce and break up of marriages in the social media. So also, visits of the researcher to customary courts and palaces of some kings in the South West of Nigeria confirmed such incessant cases of divorce and break up of marriages by partners especially marriages that are not up to a year of its existence, may be due to intolerance of shortcomings that are associated with sexual status of partners, unacceptable social-cultural beliefs and ineffective communication styles which discourages marital satisfaction. If the trend is allowed unabated, there would be tendency for young people to be enveloped with fear, hence they may not wish to get involved in marriage. Therefore, it becomes necessary to investigate the predictive influence of sexual dysfunction, socio-cultural beliefs and communication styles on marital satisfaction among married Nigerians.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the best predictor of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria based on sexual dysfunction, Socio-cultural beliefs and communication styles.

Methodology

The design used for the study was the descriptive research of the survey type. Sample for the study consisted of 1,200 married people selected from two states in each of the three major ethnic groups of Nigeria: Igbo, Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba through multi-stage sampling technique. The ages of the respondents ranged from 18 to 60 years.

The data for the study were collected using a questionnaire titled "Marital Relation Questionnaire (MRQ)" constructed and validated by the researchers.

The instrument comprised of Parts A, B, C and D which contained items on respondents' experiences in sexual dysfunction, socio-cultural beliefs, communication styles and marital satisfaction.

Results

Hypothesis

For this study, only one research hypothesis was postulated; sexual dysfunction, socio-cultural beliefs and communication styles will not significantly predict marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria.

In testing the hypothesis, scores of respondents on sexual dysfunction, socio-cultural beliefs and communication styles of married people in Nigeria were compared and subsequently regressed on scores of respondents' on marital satisfaction at 0.05 significant level. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Multiple Regression Analysis showing the predictor of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria.

Model	B Error	Std	Beta	T	Sig. T	R	R2	F
Sexual Dysfunction	-623	.029	-641	-21.587	.000			
Socio Cultural Belief	-697	.035	-572	20.204	.000			
Communication Styles	-298	.33	-240	8.917	.000	.599	0.359	215.936
Constant	47.438	2.330		20.359	.000			

Table 1 shows that ($F=215.936, P<0.05$). The null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, the regression equation: $Y_{ms} = a + b_1SDT + b_2SC + b_3CS = 47.438 + 0.641SDY - 0.592SCB - 0.296CS$. Sexual dysfunction, Socio-cultural beliefs and Communication styles significantly predicted marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria.

It showed that there existed significant positive relationship between the predictor variable and marital satisfaction among married people ($R=0.599, P<0.05$). All the predictor variables jointly explained about 36% ($R^2=0.359$) of the total variation in marital satisfaction, while the remaining 64% unexplained variation was largely due to variables outside the regression model. The predictor variables had negative, but significant effect on marital satisfaction except socio-cultural beliefs. Sexual dysfunction had ($t=21.587, P<0.05$) with beta weight of 0.641 while Socio-cultural beliefs with beta weight of 0.572 followed. Sexual dysfunction was the single best predictor of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria with a beta weight of 0.641 (64.11%). Communication styles were the least predictor of marital satisfaction with a beta weight of -0.240 (24%).

Discussion

Consequently, the finding revealed that sexual dysfunction of married people in Nigeria was the best single predictor of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria. The finding was corroborated by Owuamanam (2010) who revealed that in some cultures, God's intention for

establishing marriage has been twisted by the activities of men such as alcohol taking, drug abuse and so on which tends to enhance sexual malfunctioning or dysfunction among men and women for their selfish interests (whether personal or societal). In addition, The findings of the study was corroborated by Aina (2010) when the scholar enumerates some factors that could encourage sexual impairments such as age, fatigue, alcoholism, smoking, influence of childhood learning about sex, the use of chemotherapy drugs which are meant for the treatment of certain blood related diseases such as : Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome(HIV/AIDS), diabetes ,hepatitis and hypertension. Similarly, Dion (1999) also supported the findings of the study when it was opined that sexual dysfunction of a woman could occur as a result of any physiological change that affect the reproductive system such as premenstrual syndrome , pregnancy, postpartum , child labour and menopause. More so, the findings of the study was in agreement with Owuamanam (2004) who reported that some men experienced sexual dysfunction due to anxiety which comes from masculinity and that it may come from highly religious homes where they view sex as dirty and sinful habits.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, It was concluded that sexual dysfunction was the best predictor of marital satisfaction among married people in Nigeria.

As a result of the findings, it is therefore recommended that, counsellors should design effective programmes that would enable married people in Nigeria to have a change in their negative perspective towards marriage. Marriage counselling centres should be established by government in all the local councils in Nigeria where married people can have access to information as regards marriage.

Married people should allow their children to marry from any part of Nigeria when every condition is met. Couples should not talk in parables to themselves. Would be couples should allow their parents to have hands in the selection of their life partners.

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