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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEXUAL SATISFACTION AND MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG UNIVERSITY MARRIED STAFF

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction among University married staff. A total of 175 participants comprising 70 males and 105 females' staff were drawn from Caritas University in Enugu East of Enugu State. The participants are between the ages of 24-63 years. They were selected making use of convenience sampling technique in which only the participants who were available participated. The participants were administered two questionnaires of 25-items each with a Likert type response format designed to measure sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. The statistical test used for the analysis was Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient while survey design was adopted based on the large number of participants. However, the findings revealed that a positive significance relationship was observed between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction had a mean of 59.46 and a standard deviation of 18.33 and sexual satisfaction had a mean of 81.78 and a standard deviation of 17.83 with $r=.59$, $P<.01$ indicating a positive significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. The findings were discussed in relation to literature reviewed and recommendations were made.

Keywords: *intimacy, love making, happiness, marriage, satisfaction.*

Introduction

Marriage is described as a normative, personal life event in adulthood and involves the cohabitation of two people with different characteristics and needs (Sevinc & Garip 2010).

In general, people get married for specific purposes such as finding meaning in life and loving for a better quality of married life. It is worth noting that continuation of marriage may depend on factors like marital relationship; because matrimony is more successful when couples establish a sense of satisfaction with each other (Hassan 2010; Lucas, Parkhill, Wendorf, Imamoglu, Weisfeld & Weifeld, 2008).

Marital satisfaction is simply the degree of contentment regarding certain aspects of marital relationship as well as the whole relationship. According to some previous researchers, marital satisfaction refers to a subjective and global evaluation of the relationship (Daiuto, Baucom, Epstein & Dutton, 1998; Marcaurelle, Belanger & Marchand, 2003). It is a situation in which, the couples are satisfied and feel happy and living together (Shakerian, 2010). The concept of marital satisfaction is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept including psychological, socioeconomic and spiritual component. Measures of marital satisfaction in

fact, vary from one researcher to another and the operational definition of marital satisfaction. In particular, the criteria for a satisfying marital satisfaction may be highly varied and may depend on a unique set of culturally enforced norms, obligations and values (Lucas et al., 2008; Wang 1994).

Indeed, marital satisfaction is influenced by many factors, for example, safe and pleasurable sexual relationship is mentioned to be one of the most important factors noticed in many researchers (Rahmani, Alahgoti, & Merghati 2009). Studies have reported a significant positive association between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction (Blumatein & Sahwartz 1983; Cupach & Comstock, 1990; Edward & Booth, 1994; Henderson-King & Veroff, 1994; Lawrence & Byers, 1995; Oggins, Leber & Veroff, 1993; Young, Luquis, Denny & Young, 1998). A few longitudinal studies also reported that sexual satisfaction was negatively predictive of marital instability (Edwards et al., 1994; Oggins et al., 1993; Veroff, Douvan & Hatchett 1995; White & Keith, 1990). Karney and Bradbury's (1995) review of longitudinal studies of marriage also showed that marital satisfaction was merely strongly related to marital stability than most other predictor variables. However, the causal sequences sexual satisfaction, marital satisfaction and marital stability have not been carefully examined.

Sexual satisfaction plays an important role between couples in marital satisfaction. Sexual relationship influenced marital satisfaction which is accomplished through studying on couples (Tuinmann, Fleeer, Sliejfer, Hoekstra, & Hoekstra 2005). Human usually consider sex as a communication tool and as a means to express feelings intimacy, love anger, and also as a relaxing and enjoyable activity. Sexual experience is personal and private and all people have unique thoughts and feelings of sexual relations. Sexual satisfaction was defined as "an emotional response from the subjective assessment of the positive satisfaction is when couples enjoy together, these happened by mutual love, care for each other, acceptance, understanding and meeting their needs such as sexual need (Kalantari, Esfahani, & Bayat 2012). Communication and response of couples create intimate relationship with the emphasis of sexual satisfaction. Marital satisfaction depends on many factors. A good sexual life is an important part of marriage that creates the strong relationship between sexual relationship and marital satisfaction (Minakshi, 2012). Sexual satisfaction within marriage would be positively related to overall marital satisfaction. Not surprisingly, researchers would have looked beyond frequency and asked respondents about their feelings about sex have found evidence of a significant, positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and measures of overall marital satisfaction (Cupach et al., 1990; Hudson, Harrison & Crosscup, 1981; Snyder, 1979) have found correlations ranging from .59- .68 between the two, in a marriage of cohabiting couples. (Perlman & Abramson, 1982) found that overall relationship satisfaction correlated with sexual satisfaction and with the absence of sexual anxiety. We should expect, therefore to find a positive relationship and a negative relationship of both kinds of evaluation to experiencing problems or difficulties in marital sex.

In terms of control in marriage, sex might come to play as one of the things that spouses feel they can rely on to improve negative situations or to make time spent together especially pleasant, especially for men. Rubin (1976) describes how men may attempt to end argument by making love, whereas women are more likely to seek emotional intimacy before engaging

in sex. According to the importance of sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction in family functioning, it is important to understand factors in predicting and sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction. This study intends to find an answer to the problem stated as; will there be a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction among married staff of Caritas University Amorji-Nike, Enugu.

When two people marry, in some cases, they hope their marriage will last all their lives. Others believe that the relationship will last as long as they love the other person. Also, there are people who condition their marital status to the satisfaction of their sexual needs and their requirements in terms of affection and protection (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000; Sabatelli & Ripoll, 2004).

On the other hand, when people live together as couples, they may reassess their goals and wishes of remaining together and decide to end the relationship (McNulty & Karney, 2004). In other cases the idea of continuing the relationship may persist for many years, as there may be personal powerful factors that motivate doing so and because there is a great deal of satisfaction derived from the relationship. A marital trajectory may be defined as the description of the course of a marital relationship that may or may not end in divorce and separation. The course of the relationship is determined by the continuous evolution of the satisfaction derived by the couples' overtime. Thus, the stability of the marital satisfaction is demonstrated by the fact that it ends or remains intact (Karney et al., 1995; Karney et al., 1999).

One hand, an evolutionary approach proposes that in order to conserve the union, the individuals in the couple should be faithful, have children together, be well to do, friendly, generous, understanding and they should sexually neglect or reject their partners (Buss, 2007). That is, in order to maintain a relationship its members are expected to display desirable attitudes in their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, reflecting in that manner, the best possible version of themselves. On the other contemporary behavioral tendencies indicate that those actions necessarily guarantee a lasting marriage.

Equity theory consists of four interlocking propositions (Hatfield, Utne & Traupmann, 1979c). Theorists argue that individuals try to maximize their outcomes (proposition 1). Groups can maximize collective outcomes by devising an equitable system for sharing resources. Thus, groups try to induce members to behave equitably. They can do this in only one way by making it more profitable to be generous than to be greedy. They reward those who behave and punish those who do not (proposition 2). When socialized persons find themselves enmeshed in inequitable relationships, they experience distress (proposition 3) and are moved to reduce such distress, by restoring either actual equity or psychological equity to the relationships (proposition 4). There is great evidence that equity theory considerations are critically important in determining how people act in relatively superficial encounters. Equity considerations have been found to be important in such diverse areas as employer/employee relationships, exploiter/victim relationships, and philanthropist/ recipient relationships (Walster, Walster, & Berscheid, 1978). Recently, equity theory has been applied to intimate relationships to dating couples encounters (Hatfield, Walster, & Traupmann 1979b), to married

couples interactions (Traupmann, Peterson, Utne & Hatfield, 1981; Traupmann & Hatfield 1983), and even to extramarital liaisons (Hatfield, Traupman, & Walster 1979a).

Sexual satisfaction generates marital satisfaction; sociologists argue that sex is critically important to couples. Intensely passionate or companionate feelings contribute to marital happiness, routine, dismal, frustrating sex can threaten the best of relationships (Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948, 1953; Bell, 1966; Hunt, 1974; DeLamater & McCorquodale, 1979). Marital satisfaction on the hand generates sexual satisfaction; sex is a delicate interaction. If couples like or love one another, if they feel equitably treated, if they feel comfortable with one another, sex may go well. If couples dislike or hate one another, feel trapped in inequitable relationships, feel comfortable in one another's presence, their deep-seated resentment or guilt may corrode their sexual encounters (Kinsey et al, 1948, 1953; Berne, 1964; Masters & Johnson, 1966, 1970, 1976; Hunt, 1974; Safilios-Rothschild, 1977).

Similarly, Timm (1999) sampled married individuals and found a relationship between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction. Sexual communication was also found to be related to both sexual and marital satisfaction. Renaud and Byers (1997) investigated the sexual relationship and factors related to sexual satisfaction of married Chinese men and women in another study. Results indicated that, the greater the relationship satisfaction, the greater the level of sexual satisfaction. Greater sexual satisfaction was also associated with a greater frequency of affectionate and sexual behavior and fewer sexual concerns and problems. It also appears that sexual difficulties of women play a greater role in the relationship satisfaction of both men and women than do the sexual difficulties of men.

Hypothesis

This study tested the hypothesis below;

There will be no significant relationship sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction among married University staff.

Method

Participants

A total of 175 participants comprising of 70 males and 105 female staff which were drawn from the non-academic staff population of Caritas University. The participants are between the ages of 24-63 years. The participants were selected making use of convenient sampling technique, in which only those participants who were available and willing were used.

Instruments

Two types of psychological instruments were used to gather information for the study and they are; Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS) (Hudson, 1982) and Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) (Hudson 1982)

Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS) (Hudson 1982)

The instrument was developed by Hudson (1982). The index of marital satisfaction (IMS) is a questionnaire with 25 items. The 25 item inventory is designed to measure the degree, severity or magnitude of the problems one spouse or partner perceives to be having in the marital relationship with his or her partner. The focus is on current problems which have reduced marital satisfaction. The scale does not, therefore, measure marital adjustment, a condition in which couples may have adjusted to lingering problems in their relationship even though the problems have not been solve. It is a likert type response format. The items were worded 1- Rarely or none of the time, 2- A little of the time, 3- Some of the time, 4- Good part of the time and 5- Most of all of the time. It uses direct scoring and direct scoring of the items. Direct score items include, 2,4,6,7,10,12,14,15,18,22,24, and 25 and the reverse score items 1,3,5,8,9,11,13,16,17,20,21, and 23. The reliability coefficients reported by Hudson (1982) are, Cronbach Alpha internal consistency = .96, 2-hour-test-retest = .96. A concurrent validity coefficient of .48 was a obtained by Anene (1994) by correlating IMS with Marital Stress Inventory (MSI) (Omoluabi, 1994).

Index of Sexual Satisfaction (ISS) (Hudson 1982)

The Index of Sexual Satisfaction was developed by Hudson in 1982. It was designed to measure problems in sexual satisfaction. It is a 25 – item measure, severity or magnitude of a problem in the sexual component of a couple’s relationship. The ISS measures the respondent’s feelings about a number o behaviours, attitudes, events and preferences that are associated with the sexual relationship between partners. Score range from 1-7 with 1 representing none of the time, 2-Very rarely, 3-A little of the time, 4-Some of the time and 5-A good part of the time. The ISS is scored by first reverse-scoring the items listed at the bottom scale, totaling these and the other item scores giving more evidence of the presence of sexual dissatisfaction. The reverse scores are as follows, 4,9,10,12,16,17,19,21,22 and 23 and the direct scores are as follows 1,2,3,5,6,7,8,11,13,14,15,18,20,24 and 25. The ISS has a mean alpha of .92, indicating high internal consistency (Hudson, 1982). The ISS has excellent concurrent validity, correlating, significantly with the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale and the Index of Marital Satisfaction and has also shown to be excellent construct validity (Touliatos, Perimutter and Strauss, 1990). For this current sample, high internal consistency was found with a Cronbach’s Alpha of .93 and .94 respectively for husband and wife sexual satisfaction.

Procedure

A total of 200 (two hundred) copies of the questionnaire on sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction were conveniently distributed within the period of one week to the target population. Each participant was instructed on how to fill the instrument and how they should

give their response. In all, 175 copies of the instruments were collected back. The remaining 25 copies of the questionnaires were either discarded due to incorrect or incomplete filling of the questionnaires by the participants. So the researcher made use of the questionnaires filled by those who were married. Finally, at the end of the administration and collection of the questionnaire, 175 copies were eventually used for the analysis.

Design/Statistics

Based on the large number of my participants and the nature of the research and also how it was carried out Survey Design was adopted while Pearson Product - Moment Correlation Coefficient was applied as a statistics to analyze the data in order to test the hypothesis.

Results

Table 1; Summary Table of Mean, Standard Deviation and Inter-Correlation of Variables Sexual Satisfaction and Marital Satisfaction.

S/N	Source	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Marital Satisfaction	59.46	18.33	1				
2	Sexual Satisfaction	81.78	17.83	.59**	1			
3	Gender	1.59	.49	-.08	.06	1		
4	Age	2.29	1.68	.08	.08	-.10	1	
5	Marital Status	1.06	.23	.14	.10	-.10	.02	1

**P<.01, N=175

The correlation table revealed that among the control variables, gender, age and marital status, there is no significant relationship. This indicates that all the control variables, gender, age and marital status did not relate with marital satisfaction. Also, the control variables did not relate among themselves. However, there is a significant positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction ($r=.59$, $P<.01$). The table also showed the mean and standard deviation using one hundred and seventy five participants.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that the hypothesis tested was not confirmed. In view of this, the hypothesis which stated "There will be no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction" was not confirmed. This means that there is a positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction amongst married University staff.

However, the positive relationship is not a surprise because a couple cannot have a satisfied marriage without being sexually satisfied. A couple can be marital satisfied but not sexually satisfied likewise vis-à-vis, which affects the marriage. Sexual satisfaction plays an important role between couples in marital satisfaction. Sexual relationship influenced marital satisfaction which is accomplished through studying on couples (Tuinmann, Fleer, Sliejfer, Hoekstra, & Hoekstra, 2005). Humans usually consider sex as a communication tool and as a means to express feelings intimacy, love anger, and also as a relaxing and enjoyable activity. Sexual experience is personal and private and all people have unique thoughts and feelings of sexual relations.

Many studies investigating the relationship between sexual and marital satisfaction indicated that these two variables significantly predict each other (Brezsnyak, 2001; Fielder, 2001). Klemer (1970) states that “A good sexual adjustment usually, but not always, requires a fairly good total marriage relationship” (p.215). It is also stated that, in the process of treating sexual problems, important marital problems may affect negatively the outcomes (Kayır, Yüksel, & Tükel, 1987) and treating couple’s marital problems sometimes should be the first choice (Uçman, 1982). It is also reported that, in sex therapy process, some spouses seem reluctant to solve sexual problems that couple encountered. They want to continue the positive marital outcomes (such as manipulating the partner who seems responsible for the sexual problems) which were given by the sexual problems (Uçman, 1982). Additionally, sexual dysfunctions are more commonly seen in unconsummated marriages (Uçman, 1982) and treating sexual problems might result in an increase in marital satisfaction (Kabakçı & Batur, 2002). These findings might be the indicators of the relationship between sexual and marital issues.

Implications of the Study

The outcome of this study has obvious implications. First and foremost, this study will serve as an empirical study for future researchers. The findings of this study have also made it obvious that a couple cannot say they are satisfied or happy in their in marriage without being sexually satisfied. The two variables are the main factors or keys to a happy and satisfied relationship. This study will help therapist in the management of relationships between couples. With the knowledge acquired in this study, therapists will henceforth understand the sexual and marital problems of their clients knowing that each factor plays a significant role in the happiness and satisfaction in a couple’s relationship.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the outcome of this study, I hereby suggest that future researcher should increase the number of their participants. In addition, similar studies such as the factors that could influence marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction should be carried out by future researchers.

Limitations of the Study

One major problem encountered during the data collection was the refusal of some of the staffs in collecting the questionnaires. Some refused to respond to the items of the questionnaires saying that it was too deep (invading their private lives). Some refused filling the questionnaire until I tell them what I was measuring. But after generating much rapport and explaining to them to high level of confidentiality attached to the research, some complied towards the objective completion of the questionnaire. In view of the above findings, the researcher hereby recommends that similar study or investigation be carried out in other schools and also in the working sector where more strenuous works are done e.g. banking sector, manufacturing sector, industries, big organizations etc. Further study should be carried out on other control variables like educational level, socio-economic status etc.

Conclusion

There is a significant positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction and also the satisfaction of a relationship both sexually and maritally does not depend on the age, gender, marital status or any demographic factor.

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