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EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION AS CORRELATES OF MARITAL STABILITY AMONG MARRIED ADULTS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Effective communication in marriage is very important. Over the years, poor sexual satisfaction and ineffective communication in marriages have affected the growth and stability of many homes. Thus, this study investigated effective communication and sexual satisfaction as correlates of marital stability among married adults in Ogun State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey of correlational type and the population comprised all registered married adults in Ogun State, Nigeria. A multi-stage sampling procedure was adopted to select 394 married adults across the three senatorial districts in Ogun State. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled “Marital Stability, Effective Communication and Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire”. The instrument was content validated by experts with reliability coefficient of 0.87. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that the marital stability indices of married adults in Ogun State was high with 2.97; the effective communication indices of married adults in Ogun State was high with 2.81; sexual satisfaction profile of married adults in Ogun State was good with 3.15; there was significant correlation among marital stability, effective communication and sexual satisfaction of married adults in Ogun State; The study recommended that married Adults should continue to communicate effectively in marriage and pay more attention to the feelings of their spouses; understand sexual preferences of their spouses that can enhance sexual satisfaction in marital relationship.

Keywords: Marital Stability, communication, sexual satisfaction, married adults

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Introduction

Marriage is an institution that is as old as the life of man, the oldest social institution that requires a social contract between two individuals to become husband and wife. All the behaviour,

norms, roles, expectations and values associated with a man and a woman's legal union are represented by the institution of marriage that requires compatibility, dedication and understanding between married adults. For marriage to be successful and satisfactory, it must be stable, couples must communicate effectively and be sexually satisfied.

According to Ojukwu, Woko, and Onuoha (2016), marriage is the state of being united as a husband and wife with a person of the opposite sex for companionship, procreation and the maintenance of marital life. Ojukwu et al. (2016) explained that marriage has several satisfactory benefits that make a difference in one's life, and in addition to companionship, it offers financial stability as one of the satisfactory benefits of marriage. All the satisfactory advantages of marriage, however, depend on the marriage's stability. For instance, when a marriage is not stable, there are instances of separation and divorce.

Iwunze-Ibiam (2019) reported that separation in marriage rates in 2018 saw a 14% rise across Nigeria's entire population, according to a Nigerian online newspaper, Cable Newspaper, April 4. The Nigeria Catholic Reporter (2015) reported in another article on June 20, 2015, that due to the high rate of divorce, the marriage institution is increasingly collapsing. Abuja, a Federal High Court source told this magazine that there are several cases pending before the court for a divorce. Moreover, on February 25, 2020, Brand Spur Newspaper (2020) reported that an Abuja-based lawyer stated on her Twitter page that 4,000 divorce applications were filed in Abuja in just 51 days in 2020. The Brand Spur Newspaper further stated that children are always at the receiving end of the negative effect of broken homes. According to Ojukwu (2014), marital stability is fundamental to the well-being of individuals and families.

Marital stability connotes the accommodation of spouses to each other. It denotes the process by which married couples attain mutual gratification and achieve common goals while maintaining an appropriate degree of individuality. Especially important to marital stability are the sharing of experiences, interests, and values; respect for the partner's individual needs, aims, and temperament; maintenance of open lines of communication and expression of feelings; clarification of roles and responsibilities; cooperation in decision making, problem-solving, and rearing of children; and attainment of mutual sexual gratification (Esuabana, 2019).

According to Esuabana (2019), marital stability calls for a maturity that accepts and understands the growth and development of the spouse. If this growth is not experienced and realized fully, a dearth in a marital relationship is inevitable. Marital stability is interpreted as whether a couple in a marriage remains together, instead of separating or getting divorced. Marital instability is possible, especially for the fact that the two individuals are from different backgrounds but live together. Two individuals, or in some cases one of them, can face sexual

problems. This is more common in urban settings than in rural settings. Well sexually satisfied marriages are expected to be stable and last for a long time while marriages with low sexual satisfaction end up with divorce and separation (Eneyo, Ushie, Akeh, Udonwa, Esuabana, Idika,

Itu & Antai, 2022; Ola, Oni & Akande, 2017;).

Sexual satisfaction has been described as the frequency, pleasantness and pleasure derived from sexual activity (Conradi, Noordhof, Dingemanse, Barelds & Kamphuis, 2017). The ability to keep relationships ever fresh and lively helps couples maintain and achieve sexual satisfaction over a long period of time (Fredrick, Lever, Gillespie, & Garcia, 2016). Sexual activity implies a physical proximity that may enhance emotional closeness and desire for a spouse. Scholarly discourse has established various contributors to sexual satisfaction. Fredrick, Lever, Gillespie and Garcia (2016) explained that couples who engage in more frequent vaginal intercourse have greater sexual satisfaction. In differentiating between sexual drive and intimacy on satisfaction, experts suggested that the satisfaction begins to decline due to the reduction in sexual drive. This is attributed to fading away of the initial euphoria of early marriage days, when love is fresh and communication processes (Conradi, Noordhof, Dingemanse, Barelds & Kamphuis, 2017).

According to Muise, Giang, and Impett (2014), the depth of foreplay and duration of sexual activities matter for sexual satisfaction. For instance, women prefer to have more romantic-sexual repertoire such as kissing, cuddling and necking (Jankowiak, Volsche, & Garcia, 2015). It helps in the sexual initiation process, increases her sexual drive and based on the sustained feeling of intimacy before, during and after sexual act, increases the likelihood of an orgasm and completes marital satisfaction (Jankowiak, Volsche, & Garcia, 2015).

Communication is another major variable in this study. It is a process of expressing ideas and feelings or of giving people information. It is an act of conveying meanings from one entity or group to another through the use of mutually understood signs, symbols and semiotic rules. Communication, according to Esere (2020), is a life wire of marriage relationship or any other meaningful relationship. Esere stated that it is the elixir for ailing marital relationship, noting that many problems escalate when there is ineffective communication and many problems are resolved when there is effective communication. Communication can be said to be the glue that holds the world continents, countries, states, societies, communities, people and marriage generally, (Adekunbi, 2014). Marital communication is the study of the communication perspective in a broadly defined marriage, with intimacy and trusting relationship. The main goal of marital communication is to understand the interactions of marriage and the pattern of behaviour of couples. Open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows couples to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another (Wickrama, 2012).

Marital communication is seen as face-to-face communication between couples. Marital communication is seen as a process in which couples share information, ideas and feelings which involves not only the spoken and written word but also body language, personal mannerisms and

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styles (Idowu & Esere, 2015). It is a pillar which maintains the structure of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. (Esere, 2015) noted that communication is very vital in all areas of human life especially the marriage relationship. It was further stated that communication is a key

to a stable relationship for it allows partners to experience, love, trust, tolerance, patience and management of conflict of marriage stability.

Effective communication and sexual satisfaction usually sustain marriage with true love, honesty and trust in marriage (Sasa, 2018). Effective communication in marriage is the key to making any marriage successful and everlasting. Effective communication in marriage leads to better understanding and increases intimacy between couples. Thus, this study investigated effective communication and sexual satisfaction as correlates of marital stability among married adults in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

No human society can be stronger than effectiveness of its individual family; this implies that a society or nation in which the family, which is the basis of any community, is disintegrated is not a healthy one. Many marriages have ended in divorce or passive relationship due to ineffective communication and lack of sexual satisfaction. Many marriages breakdown weeks or months after wedding, young families who feel happy and dance from dusk to dawn during their marriage ceremony turn out to call the sugar in their tea a torn in their life.

Many factors have been identified to be responsible for marital instability, ineffective communication style as the major source of marital conflict, the researchers observed that, communication is often the missing link in an unhappy marriage. When communication between couples or married adults becomes strained, the entire foundation of the relationship is affected leading to divorce or broken home if not looked into on time.

Johnson and Ayibatari (2019) worked on effective communication in marital homes and work performance among secondary school teachers in Delta State, Nigeria. The result showed that lack of communication in marriages influenced secondary school teachers' work performance in Delta State of Nigeria. Ariguzo and Nnorom (2019) worked on nexus between gender differences and sexual satisfaction in selected married couples in Ilishan Town, Ogun State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that sexual initiation has no influence on sexual satisfaction. It depicted that sexual drive provokes sexual satisfaction more in males than in females while intimacy tends to engender sexual satisfaction more in females than in their male counterparts where the joint effect of the three variables on sexual satisfaction was tested. The study confirms intimacy as a key driver in the sexual satisfaction of married couples.

However, most of the past studies worked on the variables of marital stability, effective communication and sexual satisfaction separately in different locations in Nigeria, thus, this study investigated effective communication and sexual satisfaction as correlates of marital stability among married adults in Ogun State, Nigeria. This is the gap the study filled.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised for the study;

1. What are the marital stability indices of married adults in Ogun State?

2. What are the effective communication indices of married adults in Ogun State?
3. What is the sexual satisfaction profile of married adults in Ogun State?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant correlation among marital stability, effective communication and sexual satisfaction among married adults in Ogun State

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey of correlational type. The population for this study consisted of the entire 1,772,321 registered married adults in Ogun State (National Population Commission, 2019). The target population consists of selected married adults in Ogun State. With reference to the Research Advisor (2006), a sample size of 384 is recommended for a target population of 1,772,321. The researchers therefore increased the sample size by 5% to cater for attrition; this made a total of 400 respondents that were sampled for the study. For the purpose of this study, the researchers employed a two-stage sampling procedure to select sample for the study. In the first stage, the purposive sampling technique was used to select two Local Government Areas from each of the senatorial districts in Ogun State based on the population of married adults in the Local Government. These senatorial districts are Ogun Central, Ogun East and Ogun West. In Ogun Central; Abeokuta South and Abeokuta North were selected, in Ogun East; Ijebu Ode and Sagamu Local Governments were selected and in Ogun West; Ado-odo/Ota and Yewa South Local Governments were selected. In the second stage, random sampling technique was used to select respondents from the six selected Local Government Areas. Respondents were drawn from public organizations such as local government headquarters offices, schools and healthcare centres.

The instrument that was used for the collection of data is a researcher-designed questionnaire titled “Marital Stability, Effective Communication and Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire” A test re-test method of reliability was adopted; using Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation and an average coefficient score of 0.87 to ensure the reliability of the measuring instrument. Completed questionnaire forms were collected back from the respondents on the spot in order to avoid them being lost or misplaced. In analyzing the data collected for this study, both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed.

Results

This study collected data on investigated effective communication and sexual satisfaction as correlates of marital stability among married adults in Ogun State, Nigeria. A total of 400

questionnaire forms were administered and 394 were properly filled and valid for analysis. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the analyses are hereby presented thus:

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What are the marital stability indices of married adults in Ogun State?

Table 1: Mean and Rank Order of Respondents' Marital Stability Indices

N	As far as I am concerned, my spouse	Mean	S.D.	Rank order
1	takes care of me.	3.34	1.02	1st
5	makes me feel secure in the marriage.	3.31	.93	2nd
9	understands my emotions.	3.23	.88	3rd
7	appreciates me as expected.	3.23	1.00	3rd
13	family relates well with me.	3.20	1.03	5th
19	have good relationship with my family.	3.16	.99	6th
2	respects me in front of others.	3.12	.94	7th
6	loves me.	2.99	.98	8th
15	supports me in all areas of live.	2.94	.96	9th
11	sexually interacts with me.	2.92	.97	10th
10	console me when I am upset.	2.92	.99	10th
12	tolerates me.	2.89	.98	12th
18	gives regards to my family.	2.88	.98	13th
17	spends free time with me.	2.86	.99	14th
3	listens when I express my feelings.	2.83	.99	15th
8	shares every information with me about his/her feelings.	2.78	.95	16th
20	accompanies me in the training of our children.	2.74	.99	17th
4	helps me with house chores.	2.73	.96	18th
16	is patient with me.	2.71	.96	19th
14	and I manage our conflict without the help of third party.	2.68	1.05	20th
Aggregate Mean		2.97		

Table 1 shows the marital stability indices of the respondents, items 1, 5, 9 and 7 with mean scores of 3.34, 3.31 and 3.23 were ranked the top 3 items respectively. Since the aggregate mean

score was 2.97 which was above the mid-cut off point of 2.50, thus the marital stability indices of married adults in Ogun State was high.

Research Question 2: What are the effective communication indices of married adults in Ogun

State?

Table 2: *Mean and Rank Order of Respondents' Effective Communication Indices*

N	While communicating with my spouse, I usually:	Mean	S.D.	Rank Order
1	make good eye contact	3.45	.91	1st
6	speak directly	3.11	.95	2nd
3	pay attention to his/her feelings	3.09	.94	3rd
5	speak calmly and in clear tone	3.06	.96	4th
15	consider his/her point of view	3.02	.98	5th
12	agree when am wrong	2.99	.98	6th
18	I dance whenever he makes me happy	2.89	1.02	7th
2	listen attentively	2.86	.98	8th
10	feel shy to ask for help	2.83	.95	9th
14	show appreciation for his/her kindness	2.82	1.01	10th
13	monopolize discussion `	2.75	.91	11th
17	Smile	2.69	1.03	12th
20	express myself clearly	2.67	.94	13th
7	maintain silence	2.62	1.01	14th
11	do not interrupt discussion	2.60	.98	15th
19	state my expectations	2.59	.99	16th
16	show friendly disposition	2.58	.92	17th
8	avoid distraction	2.57	1.03	18th
9	sit comfortably	2.50	1.00	19th
4	state observations without being judgmental	2.48	1.01	20th
Aggregate Mean		2.81		

Table 2 shows the effective communication indices of the respondents, items 1, 6 and 3 with mean scores of 3.45, 3.11 and 3.09 were ranked the top 3 items respectively. Since the aggregate mean score was 2.81 which was above the mid-cut off point of 2.50, thus the effective communication indices of married adults in Ogun State was high

Research Question 3: What is the sexual satisfaction profile of married adults in Ogun State?

Table 3: *Mean and Rank Order of Respondents' Sexual Satisfaction Profile*

N	I am satisfied;	Mean	S.D.	Rank Order
17	with the frequency of which i engage in sexual intercourse with my spouse.	3.45	.95	1st
20	with the gentle talk and smile with my partner before sexual intercourse.	3.32	.96	2nd
6	when my spouse is a better lover of different sex positions.	3.31	.93	3rd
18	with the impulsiveness of my lovemaking.	3.31	.93	3rd
1	when my partner instigated sex intercourse more often	3.30	1.01	5th
19	with the foreplay involved during lovemaking.	3.27	1.01	6th
3	when my partner is more patient during sexual intercourse.	3.20	.98	7th
2	when I make love with my spouse.	3.18	.96	8th
4	when there is open communication of what my partner wants during sexual intercourse to me.	3.18	.96	8th
5	when my spouse is more thoughtful of my physical needs during sexual intercourse	3.15	.93	10th
16	with the quality of time my partner and I spend together after sexual intercourse.	3.14	.98	11th
10	when my spouse shows more love and care during intercourse.	3.12	1.02	12th
7	when my spouse could make me feel better sexually.	3.12	1.02	12th
8	when my spouse is more affectionate through foreplay.	3.11	1.01	14th
9	when my spouse is more romantic during sexual intercourse.	3.07	.93	15th
12	the time of the day i make love with my partner	3.06	.95	16th
13	and content with my capability to make my physical desires known during sexual intercourse.	3.03	1.01	17th
11	at the rate in which i reach orgasm.	3.03	1.01	17th
14	with the amount of time my partner and i spent together after sexual intercourse.	2.97	.95	19th
15	with the capacity to enjoy sex with my spouse.	2.74	1.02	20th
Aggregate Mean		3.15		

Table 3 shows the sexual satisfaction profile of the respondents; items 17, 20, 6 and 18 with

mean scores of 3.45, 3.32 and 3.31 were ranked the top 3 items respectively. Since the aggregate mean score was 3.15 which was above the mid-cut off point of 2.50, thus the sexual satisfaction

profile of married adults in Ogun State was good.

Hypothesis Testing

There is no significant correlation among effective communication, sexual satisfaction and marital stability of married adults in Ogun State

Table 4a: *Regression Analysis Showing the Correlation among effective communication, sexual satisfaction and marital stability of married adults in Ogun State*

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	790.362	2	365.181	4.291	.014 ^b
	Residual	36008.409	391	92.093		
	Total	36798.772	393			

a. *Dependent Variable: Marital Stability*

b. *Predictors: (Constant), Effective Communication, Sexual Satisfaction*

The model in Table 4a indicates the linear combination of predictor variables (i.e., effective communication, sexual satisfaction). The F-value 4.291 was obtained with a p-value 0.014 when computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.014 is less than 0.05 alpha level, the hypothesis is rejected and thus, the combination of the independent variables significantly correlates the dependent variable. Hence, there is significant correlation among effective communication, sexual satisfaction and marital stability of married adults in Ogun State.

To ascertain the contribution of the correlators together, r-square was calculated and output is presented in Table 4b.

Table 4b: *Regression Model Summary of effective communication, sexual satisfaction and marital stability of married adults in Ogun State*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.147 ^a	0.021	0.016	9.597

Predictors: (constant), effective communication, sexual satisfaction

As shown on Table 4b, two correlators jointly contributed R-Square of 0.147 to the dependent variable (marital stability). Thus, the total variance marital stability was accounted for by the combination of effective communication and sexual satisfaction. Therefore, effective

communication and sexual satisfaction jointly explained 14.7% of the total variance on marital stability. To determine the contribution of each of the correlators, Beta Weight was calculated and

the outputs are shown in Table 4c

Table 4c: *Relative Contributions of each of the Correlators to Sexual Satisfaction*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1 (Constant)	59.177	5.537		10.688	.000
Sexual Satis.	.225	.082	.147	2.746	.006
Effec. Comm.	.169	.087	.104	1.947	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Stability

Table 4c shows the relative contribution of each of the correlators. As depicted from Table 4c, sexual satisfaction and effective communication have Beta weights of .147 and .104 respectively. Therefore, married adults' sexual satisfaction and effective communication are positively associated with their marital stability.

Discussion of Findings

The study highlighted several key indicators of marital stability among married adults, revealing that factors such as being cared for by one's spouse, feeling secure within the marriage, emotional understanding, and receiving appreciation play a vital role in sustaining a healthy and satisfying union. These dimensions underscore the emotional and relational investments that foster enduring marriages. Supporting these findings, Ojukwu, Woko, and Onuoha (2016) emphasized that marriage brings with it a variety of satisfactory benefits that significantly enhance one's quality of life. Beyond emotional companionship, their research pointed to financial stability as another major advantage of marital life. In contrast, these positive insights into marital satisfaction stand in opposition to the findings of Lazarides, Belanger, and Sabourin (2010), who observed that dissatisfaction in marriage often manifests through negative interaction patterns. According to their study, unhappy couples tend to exhibit behaviours such as criticism, dominance, emotional withdrawal, and a lack of supportive or problem-solving communication. Thus, while some research celebrates the protective and fulfilling aspects of marriage, others caution against the potential for destructive communication patterns that can erode its foundation.

The findings reveal that married adults exhibit effective communication behaviours such as making good eye contact, speaking directly, and being attentive to their spouse's feelings. These indicators of healthy interaction are crucial in maintaining strong marital bonds. This aligns with

the research of Esere et al. (2015), who explored the impact of poor communication and faulty

cognition on marital stability among couples in the Owerri metropolis. Their study concluded that ineffective communication patterns and distorted perceptions between partners were significant contributors to marital instability. Therefore, the presence of effective communication skills, as highlighted in this study, not only fosters understanding and emotional connection but also serves as a protective factor against the breakdown of marital relationships.

The findings suggest that sexual satisfaction among married adults encompasses several key aspects: satisfaction with the frequency of sexual intercourse, the presence of affectionate gestures such as gentle talk and smiling before intimacy, appreciation of a spouse's creativity and responsiveness during lovemaking, and the spontaneous nature of their sexual experiences. These elements collectively reflect a healthy and fulfilling sexual relationship between spouses. This supports the findings of Esuabana (2019), who emphasized that marital stability demands a level of maturity that embraces the personal growth and evolving nature of one's partner. Esuabana also highlighted that sexual satisfaction plays a critical role in sustaining long-term marital stability, whereas dissatisfaction in this area often leads to separation or divorce. Furthermore, Meaok (2017) reinforces this understanding by defining marital satisfaction as the extent to which couples experience happiness and fulfillment in their relationship. According to Meaok, marital satisfaction is shaped by a range of social and cultural influences, as well as how couples interact within their home environment. Thus, the quality of a couple's life is deeply intertwined with their level of marital satisfaction, particularly in the domain of sexual intimacy. These findings underscore the importance of mutual understanding, emotional connection, and physical fulfillment in fostering a stable and enduring marriage.

The results of the study revealed a significant correlation between sexual satisfaction, effective communication, and marital stability of married adults in Ogun State. This finding reinforces the understanding that strong communication and fulfilling sexual relationships are foundational to a stable and lasting marriage. It aligns with the work of Sasa (2018), who emphasized that marriages rooted in effective communication and sexual satisfaction are more likely to thrive, especially when coupled with core values like true love, honesty, and trust. Effective communication stands out as a critical pillar of marital success. It not only fosters mutual understanding but also strengthens emotional intimacy between partners. When couples communicate openly and respectfully, they are better equipped to navigate challenges, resolve conflicts, and deepen their connection. In turn, this communication lays the groundwork for a more satisfying sexual relationship, further reinforcing the emotional and physical bonds that sustain marital stability. These findings highlight the interconnected nature of communication, sexual satisfaction, and lasting partnership showing that when these elements are in harmony, marriages are far more likely to endure.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study reveals that married adults in Ogun State generally experience a high

level of marital stability, effective communication, and a good degree of sexual satisfaction. The data show strong indices in each area, with marital stability scoring 2.97, effective communication at 2.81, and sexual satisfaction slightly higher at 3.15. Importantly, the study found a significant correlation among marital stability, effective communication, and sexual satisfaction, indicating that these elements are interconnected in contributing to overall marital well being.

Recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

1. Married adults should continue to take care of their spouses, understand their emotion and build trust to continue to enhance stability in marriage.
2. Married Adults should continue to communicate effectively in marriage and pay more attention to the feelings of their spouses.
3. Married adults should continue to understand sexual preferences of their spouses that can enhance sexual satisfaction in marital relationship.
4. Married Adults should continue to ensure proper sexual satisfaction in marital relationship for stable marriage.

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