

# Innovations

## Sexual Satisfaction as Correlate of Marriage Quality in Delta State

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### Abstract

*This study adopted correlational design to examine sexual satisfaction and marriage quality among married persons in Delta State, Nigeria. One (1) research question and one (1) null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The population for the study was all married couples in Delta State. The multistage cluster sampling technique was employed in this study. 607 couples were selected from the approximate population of married persons 303,833 using the Kerlinger rule of thumb. The instrument for data collection was Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ), and Marriage Quality Questionnaire (MQQ). These instruments have both face and content validity, the reliability coefficient is; 0.09 and 0.89 using cronbach's alpha. Research Question was answered using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation while the hypothesis was tested using regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that; there is a positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality of couples in Delta State. Married or intending couples should be given sex education about sex, who to initiate sex in the relationship, when to have sex, where and how to have sex, couples should be encouraged to imbibe the habit of reading and be ready to accept change as the only constant phenomena on earth.*

**Keywords:** 1.sexual, 2.satisfaction, 3.marriage, 4.quality,5. correlate

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### Introduction

Sex and sexuality emanate from a sound mind and have been a major factor bedeviling 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 your marital life, which 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). The author further stated that "about 70% of all marital problems have their causes firmly rooted in the bed room 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 union where the existence of a healthy marriage sexual relationship has become moribund, these issues are often blown out of proportion". In the same vein; Young *et al.* (2018), asserted that a person's satisfaction with his/ her marriage or primary relationship tends to be a pivotal factor in his / her overall happiness.

A happy sex life is an important part of a fulfilling marital life. What a happy sex life means is subjective, as individual's sexual expectations, desires and needs differ and changes as we age. A satisfying sex life may not necessarily mean a perfect sex life; there may be some factors that can affect an individual's sex life either positively or negatively. Some of these factors includes; biological, psychological, physical, rational and socio-environmental. Mirecki *et al.* (2013) views sexual satisfaction as an important indicator of sexual health and is strongly associated with relationship satisfaction. A lot of married couples are suffering in silence; hence

some indulge in extra marital affairs. Sexual satisfaction has to do with how well individual couple feels secured with all the sexual activities going on within their marriage sphere. These activities include; touching, kissing, caressing, mating etc. Several studies have shown significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and gratification with marital relationships. Some research experts like Harver *et al.* (2002), have stated that 50-60 percent of divorces are caused by sexual problems and disorders as also seen in our daily living, in newspapers and television news. Sexual disorders occur in all societies and it affects the quality of marriage. Sometimes, the way an individual exhibits his or her sexual characteristics depends on one's self esteem, low self-esteem may lead to a relationship void of trust and intimacy thereby reducing marital quality.

According to Ofoegbu (1998), ignorance and lack of matrimonial skills such as communication skills, problem solving and cognitive restructuring skills will continue to breakdown the marriage institution and create serious problems to families, communities and the nation at large. Many well celebrated marriages end up in divorce not too long after marriage due to childlessness or barrenness, lack of co-operation, love, care, objectivity and intimacy (Maciver, 2004). Maciver further stressed that, superstitions, staying apart, belief pattern/systems and traditions are the most cankerworms of marital relationships of some couple. According to Ofoegbu (2002), as cited by Okorodudu (2010), marriages are contracted to provide the basis for love and companionship, bearing of children and fulfillment of couple's expectations. Michael *et al.* (2000) indicated that sexual satisfaction has sometimes been conceptualized as the absence of dissatisfaction. Presser (2000), noted that the concept of sexual satisfaction seems at first to be rather straight forward. He mentioned that a person may be or may not be satisfied with his or her sexual relationship. In the view of Renee (2005), sexual satisfaction is an effective response arising from one's subjective evaluation of the positive and negative dimension, associated with one's sexual relationship. Marriage will be sweet if there is constant and continuous sexual gratification. Hence Okorodudu (2010), called on all counsellors to educate couple clients on the methods to adopt so that they can enjoy their marriage and procreate with ease as well as enjoy mutual sexual gratification within their marriages. In the same vein; King *et al.* (2018); Sallie *et al.* (2001) and Brotto (2018) opined 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 sexual satisfaction. In fact, sex is so important to marital satisfaction and quality that sexual inactivity may be a sign that there are other problems within the marriage to be well addressed.

A number of researchers have sought to identify factors that influence sexual satisfaction. They investigated sexual satisfaction and its relationship both to physical aspect of sexual performance (e.g., orgasm consistency or frequency or timing of orgasm). Catrall *et al.* (2001); Micheal (2016) and McCarthy (2012); psychological factors, Sprecher *et al.* (2004), religiosity (Nicholas, 2010; Ziv, et al. 2017); gender role perception or adaptation (Ziv, et al. 2017; Renaude *et al.*, 2018 & Waite, et al. 2021) and cultural variables (Gladdings, 2007 & Aliakbari, 2018). Okorodudu (2010) observed that there have been a lot of unverified information about sexual satisfaction on gender factor, which has constituted a myth about sexual experience and the degree of pleasure men and women derive from it. In many communities according to him, people believe that only men enjoy sexual pleasure and that women are merely serving as objects for the pleasure of men folk. In the light of the above, the success or failure of any marriage will be dependent on the type of foundation on which the marriage is laid. Marriage is more than sex and romance. It requires a better understanding of each other, pure love and good foundational footing. The process of building a satisfying intimate marriage is seldom a smooth journey. Even though the early stages of a romance are stimulating, affirming and enjoyable, once a couple moves from courtship to marriage, the very nature of the marriage relationship demands that a couple has the strengths and the skills necessary to make a marriage relationship work (Stoop *et al.*, 2002).

Successful marriage is synonymous to a well-adjusted marriage. Marriage shows us how good we are at negotiating issues and how adept we are at resolving conflicts. Every couple encounters new pressure as the day goes by in the marriage relationship. It is a union in which the dyadic are in agreement on the essential issues of marriage. These could be issues of offspring, in-law interventions, financial management, interest,

objectives, parenting, and sexual relationship, religious and cultural issues. The factors that impact on marital success can be filtered into eight major domains which include, communication, peer influence, sexual relationship, own leisure, division of household tasks, time together, external network and finances and ability to cope with or manage stress (Enamuotor, 2020). How couples negotiate these various issues impacts the level of marital satisfaction and marital success. According to Ojo (2014), any marriage that is built on the right foundation is a successful and well-adjusted marriage and it is characterized by the social exchange model of marital interaction of rewards and costs. The rate of reward one receives from one's spouse would consequently determine the rate of reward the spouse is likely going to return. When couples reward each other satisfactorily it is referred to as reciprocity. The more the reinforcement couples receive from each, the more adjusted they become and the more quality their marriage could be termed to have. The love of money the Bible says is the root of all evils. This is not uncommon with married persons. The presence or absence of money in the dyad researchers agreed could make or mere the marriage.

### **Research Question**

What is the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality in Delta State?

### **Hypothesis.**

There is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality in Delta State.

### **Methodology**

The correlational design was used in this study. This study seeks to find out the relationship that exists between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality. Consequently, the most appropriate research design for a study of this nature is the correlation research design. The population targeted for this study includes all married men and women in Delta State of approximately 303,833 of the entire said population of 4098291 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, official gazette). The whole ethnic groups that comprise the state are administratively grouped into three senatorial districts namely; Delta North, Delta South and Delta Central for ease of administrative purposes. The multistage cluster sampling technique will be employed in this study six hundred and seven (607) married person were considered appropriate for the study. Respondents will be selected through purposive sampling technique as they will be captured individually in churches, mosque, schools, hospitals, social gatherings and other public offices.

This instrument used for data collection are Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ) and Marital Quality Questionnaire (MQQ). The Modified Derogates Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire of Young *et al.* (1998) and that of Santrock (2004) which was recently used by Uloho (2019) was adapted for use. Questions were drawn from the four components or dimensions of sexual satisfaction which include: sexual pleasure, attraction, intensity, and fulfillment 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. 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. Consequently, the marital quality questionnaire (MQQ) 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 0-6 points as thus:

**Section 1:** Consensus Quality: This segment provides questions on family, financial issues and religious matters.

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

**Section 3:** Satisfaction Quality. It covers satisfaction with themselves and the marriage

**Section 4:** Cohesion Quality. It covers couple’s socialization.

The instruments having being studied by an expert in the field of test and measurement made critical screening, criticism and modifications which increased it from its original 32 items to 37 items. The scale interpretation schedule for all the research instruments is presented in Appendix.

The face and content validity of these instruments was established after a thorough scrutiny by experts in Guidance and Counselling, and my supervisor. They saw that the instrument measures the various factors that will actually impact on couple’s marital quality, Spiritual wellbeing, Sexual satisfaction and marital stress. And that the given percentages of the number of items that are covered by a construct or variables are in order.

The instrument for Sexual Satisfaction and marital quality was 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 and these measures of internal consistency for Marital Stress Scale, yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.90 and Marital quality yielded a coefficient 0.89, which were significant at the 0.05 confidence level. Consequently, the items in the instrument were considered to be of good reliable. To collect data from the 607 sample, the researcher employed the services of research assistants who did not only help in distributing the questionnaires but also helped to educate the respondents on how to complete the questions conscientiously. Hospitals, churches, mosques, health centers, local government secretariats, schools, market places as well as other public offices within the sampled area were visited and sample drawn. The retrieved questionnaires were scored and separated into the various categories. 607 questionnaires were administered but 600 were retrieved. The research question and hypothesis were answered and tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the correlation coefficient (r) and 0.05 level of significance.

**Presentation of Findings**

**Research Question:** Is there any relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality of couples in Delta State?

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality of couples in Delta State.

**Table 2a: Correlation Analysis of Sexual Satisfaction and Marriage Quality of Couples in Delta State.**

**Correlations**

		Marital_Quality	Sexual_Satisfaction
Marital_Quality	Pearson Correlation	1	.054
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	600	600
Sexual_Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.054	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	600	600

**A Pearson product-moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality.**

The result in Table 2a, indicated the r value of 0.054 is the extent of relationship between marital satisfaction and marriage quality. The result showed a positive linear relationship. Therefore, the answer to question three; is that there is a positive relationship sexual satisfaction wellbeing and marriage quality of couples in Delta State. Also, we can see that the Pearson correlation coefficient,  $r = 0.054$ , is statistically significant ( $p = 0.000$ ) as  $p < 0.05$ . Hypothesis 2 was therefore rejected and the alternative is retained. Thus, indicating that there is a significant correlation between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality.

### Discussion of Findings

Findings from Table 2 showed correlation output of .054, which shows that there is a positive linear relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital quality. The corresponding hypothesis tested also showed that there is a significant correlation between sexual satisfaction and marriage quality. This study 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 your 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 and indeed enhances marriage quality. Hulbner et al. (2007) stated that most 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.

This study is also in agreement with the work 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 observation of Brotto (2018) is also in agreement with this study. 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 study also agreed with King et al. (2018) he observed that sexually inactive marriages are less happy and 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. Harper et al. (2010), Renee (2005) and Morokott et al. (2003) 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. Never the less, this study is in disagreement with the study of Harvey et al. (2002) who stated that the wives' sexual interest was related to the husband's 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, as stated 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 and marriage quality.

### Conclusion

On the basis of the finding of this research, the conclusion was reached thus; Sexual satisfaction is significantly related to marriage quality. This indicates that sexual satisfaction is an index for high marriage quality and must be taken seriously.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings arising from these investigations, the study therefore recommends that:

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 and correcting all negative belief about sex, who to initiate sex in the relationship, when to have sex, where to have sex in the house and how to have sex. Also, individual couples should be encouraged to imbibe the habit of reading and be ready to accept change as change is the only constant phenomena on earth.

Counsellors should organize counselling programs for married and intending couples at intervals. A lot of divorces in the marriage relationships are due to ignorance and foolishness. Talks and seminars should also be held to enlighten the people on the importance of a healthy sex life in marriage.

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