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COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AS PREDICTORS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION OF MARRIED PERSONS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

The researchers in this study examined communication patterns, sexual as predictors of marital satisfaction among married persons in Anambra State. Four research questions were raised and three null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population for this study comprised of 3,605 married academic staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State. A sample of 346 married academic staff from the two public universities in Anambra State was used for the study using multi sampling technique. The communication pattern questionnaire (CPQ) is developed by Christensen and Sullaway (1984). The analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0. Findings of the study revealed that majority of married persons in public universities in Anambra State do not make use of conversation orientation communication pattern and conformity orientation communication pattern. The communication patterns (conversation orientation communication pattern and conformity orientation communication pattern) of the married persons in public universities in Anambra state do not significantly predict their marital satisfaction. The ccommunication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State significantly predict their marital satisfaction. The study concluded that communication patterns are significant predictors of marital satisfaction of married persons in public universities in Anambra State because effective communication and pleasant intimate relationships play are pivotal determinants of marital success. The study recommended among others that guidance counsellors in practical field of couple or marital therapy, should emphasize therapies that a man and woman enter into marital relationship and they owe it to themselves to talk it through better by engaging in positive communication patterns.

Keywords: Communication Patterns; Prediction; Marital Satisfaction; Married Persons.

Introduction

Marital satisfaction in ones' marriage is an essential factor and antecedent to overall happiness. However, marital satisfaction over the years have been influenced by a number of variables within and outside the marriage environment. Even though, several studies revealed that marital satisfaction positively correlate different factors which includes job satisfaction and increases job performances (Fallahnejad, Shahlla, and Mollahoseiny, 2016; Tampieri, 2022). Likewise, marital satisfaction has been reported to significantly correlate with job commitment among

married persons (Akinnawo, Akpunne, Ahmed and Bello, 2019). Nonetheless, poor or moderate level of marital satisfaction have been reported and documented by researchers among different categories of married persons in terms of occupation (Fallah, Naz, Ozgoli, Mehrabi, Farnam, and Bakhtyari, 2018; Fallahnejad et al., 2016; Ghaibi et al., 2022; Ha and Ha, 2019; Taghani, Ashrafizaveh and Soodkhori, 2019). In Nigeria, research have it that marital satisfaction impacts the lifelong well-being of the involved parties. This includes couple overall happiness, jpsychological health, physical health and life satisfaction (Patricia, Thomas, Liu and Umberson, 2017). A couple's well-being may be positively or negatively affected by marriage, depending on their marital satisfaction. Martial satisfaction can be affected by certain factors and the present study will examine variables like communication patterns to determine its prediction on marital satisfaction. This is so as Kordbache and Arefi (2018) asserted that one of the most important determinants of marital dynamics is family communication pattern.

Communication patterns in relationships are defined as the styles of communication that people typically use to deal with problems in relationship (Akuezuilo and Nwanna, 2021). According to Awujo and Onwukwe (2019), communication in marital relationship involves the ability of persons to share and examine all their perceptions, feelings, ideas and thoughts to come to an accurate understanding of what is happening; with the aim of facilitating marital progress, harmony and marital satisfaction. Communication in any marriage is very important for a successful marriage. Oniye, Yahaya., Odebode and Alade (2016), opined that communication is an essential ingredient in marriage and when communication styles are not recognized and implemented early in the marital relationship, it can cause damage and lead to instability. The quality of communication in marital relationship has continued to gain evidence over time. In the context of this study, communication pattern in the family system is a process in which the husband and wife exchanged emotions and thoughts through verbal and non-verbal forms of listening, pausing, facial expression and gestures.

In the view of Nwokolo and Osemwegie (2021), family communication pattern provides a model of behaviour that shapes children's communication skills and behaviours. A growing body of research examining family communication patterns has provided support for the notion that the communication environment within the family influences the communicative behaviours of the individual family members as well as perceptions of the family unit. Family communication patterns as originally propounded by Mcleod and Chafee in the year 1972 include concept and socio orientations. Although these terms were used to describe the different communication patterns in earlier years, it was later renamed by Ritchie in 1991 as conversation orientation and conformity orientation family communication patterns (Nwokolo and Osemwegie, 2021). These family communication patterns interact with each other to form four family types which are: Pluralistic, Protective, Consensual and Lassiez-faire family types (Clark, 2015).

According to Kordbache and Arefi (2018), reported that Christensen and Solavi introduced three communication patterns

such as mutual constructive communicative pattern, mutual avoidance communication pattern, and defective communication patterns between married persons, which include a mutual constructive communicative pattern. The mutual constructive communication pattern is one which married persons' attempts to discuss their communication problem, express their feelings about each other and they propose solutions to the problem, and both feel that they understand each other. In the mutual avoidance communication pattern, married persons both try to avoid discussing the problem and the pattern of expectation during which one of them attempts to criticize the other's behaviours.

In the opinion of Abbasi, Madani, Gholamali (2014), a common understanding of the patterns of communication between persons is, in fact, the enlightenment of positive marital interactions that helps persons in the path of growth and development of communication skills. The defective communication patterns reduce spouses' understanding of each other, make spouses unable to support each other, try to meet each other's need, and understand each other's perceptions of conflicting issues and ultimately cause marriage and dissatisfaction problems. On the contrary, healthy and constructive communication patterns are one of the most important factors in marital satisfaction.

In Nigeria, Awujo and Onwukwe (2019) reported a strong relationship between communication styles and marital happiness. Khajeddin, Riahi and Izadi cited in Akuezuilo and Nwanna (2021), examined the relationship between communication skills and marital satisfaction among married students of psychology and counselling. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between communication skills and its subscales with marital satisfaction. Studies conducted on the association of marital satisfaction and communication styles reported that individuals who indicated better communication styles have higher marital satisfaction, hence poor communication styles lead to a decrease in marital satisfaction. The importance of attention to communication patterns is not only more effective on marital satisfaction, but also the changing of communication patterns in comparison with other factors affecting marital incompatibility, such as personality traits and social and economic factors are practical. Interaction in a married persons' relationship is a reciprocal relationship, including regular and repetitive patterns of behaviour.

Marital satisfaction is the degree to which partners in marriages assess their approval of different aspect of their marital relationship. This depends on the individual's expectations, needs and desires in their marriages and fluctuates throughout the duration of marriage. Nevertheless, marital satisfaction has been associated with individual and family wellbeing, societal stability and good family outcomes while marital dissatisfaction has been associated with poor family outcomes. Marital satisfaction among married persons have been on the full glare of all, this is so as most marriages fail within a little time. This implies that some marriages inevitably experience conflict, despite the compatibility, some casual disagreements often escalate to a high level of conflict. The ability of each partner in a relationship to navigate through these conflicts is crucial and hence the communication pattern could be predicting

factors to marital satisfaction among married persons.

The current situation among married persons in public universities in Anambra state reveals that lack of communication among married persons seems to have impacted their marital satisfaction. This is because communication is an essential ingredient in marriage and when communication patterns are not recognized and implemented early in marriages, it can cause damage and lead to instability. This however informed the present study. More so, the quality of communication and sexual status in marital relationship has continued to gain evidence over time. But, it has not been empirically established among universities in Anambra state, the prediction of certain variables on marital satisfaction, hence the need for the present study which examines communication patterns as predictors of marital satisfaction among married persons in Anambra state.

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of this study is to examine communication patterns as predictors of marital satisfaction among married persons in Anambra state. Specifically, this study determined;

1. Conversation orientation family communication pattern scores of married persons in Anambra state.
2. Conformity orientation communication pattern scores of married persons in Anambra state.
3. How conversation orientation communication pattern predicts marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state.
4. How conformity orientation communication pattern predicts marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state.
5. How communication patterns predict marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

1. What are the conversation orientation family communication pattern scores of married persons in Anambra state?
2. What are the conformity orientation communication pattern scores of married persons in Anambra state?
3. How does conversation orientation family communication pattern predict marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state?
4. How does conformity orientation communication pattern predict marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state?
5. How does communication patterns predict marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses was tested at .05 level of significance.

1. Conversation orientation family communication pattern is not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state.
2. Conformity orientation family communication pattern is not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state.
3. Communication patterns do not significantly predict marital

satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state.

Research Method

The study was carried in Anambra State. Correlation survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Onah and Anamezie (2022), a correlational research design seeks to establish relationship between two or more variables as well as predict the relevance of a variable over the other. In the same vein, Nworgu in Christian-Ike and Okoli (2021) defined correlation survey design as a type of research design that seeks to establish the relationship that exists between independent and dependent variables. Correlational survey design is more suitable for this study because it seeks to observe the values and determine the predicting power of these variables (communication patterns and marital satisfaction). This was examined among married persons in Anambra state.

The population for this study comprised of 3,124 married academic staff in Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka (Male = 1529, Female = 1114, Total = 2643) and 481 married academic staffs in Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, A65nambra State (Male = 263 Female = 218). (Source: Personnel Unit, 2023).

The sample for this study comprises 346 married academic staff from the 2 public universities in Anambra State. This desired sample size for the study was 1st determined using the Taro Yamane formula. The result for the calculation yielded a sample size of 345.597 approximating to 346 married persons. 176 from Nnamdi Azikiwe University, NAU, Awka and 170 from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, COOU, Anambra State. The sample for this study will be selected using the multi-stage sampling technique. The 2nd stage applied the use of proportionate stratified sampling technique to stratify married academic staff in NAU and COOU based on their respective faculties. The 3rd stage employed the use of simple random sampling technique (balloting with replacement) to select three (3) faculties, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Law and Faculty of Social Sciences from the existing faculties in each university. The reason for selecting these three faculties was to ensure proper representation of the subjects in the population. Furthermore, the 4th stage also employed the use of simple random sampling technique to select 57 married academic staff from each of the faculties. All the three instruments have been originally subjected to internal consistency reliability estimate. The communication pattern questionnaire (CPQ) is developed by Christensen and Sullaway (1984). The reliability of this scale has been established and confirmed by many researchers. The average value of Cronbach alpha was 0.79 for conformity and 0,89 for conversation. In the same vein, Jokwar and Rahimi cited in Geetika (2019) had reported reliability of this scale for the dialogue orientation 0.93 and 0.88 for conformity orientation by using Cronbach alpha. Furthermore, data relating to the null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance using multiple regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis determined the R, R – squared and R^2 adjusted coefficients were used to establish the percentage prediction among communication pattern and marital satisfaction among married persons in Anambra state.

In testing the hypothesis, where the significant p-value is less than the alpha value, the null hypotheses is rejected (there is a significant prediction). Otherwise, where the significant p-value is greater than the alpha value 0.05, the null hypotheses is not rejected (there is no significant prediction)

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What are the conversation orientation communication pattern scores of married persons in Public Universities in Anambra State?

Table 1: Range of the conversation orientation communication pattern scores of married persons in Public Universities in Anambra State (Norm 120)

Range of Scores	N	%	Remark
24 – 119	233	68.5	Do not use Conversation Orientation
120 – 216	107	31.5	Use Conversation Orientation

In table 1, it was observed that with scores ranging from 120 to 216, 107(31.5%) married persons in public universities in Anambra State make use of conversation orientation communication pattern, while 233(68.5%) others whose scores ranged from 24 to 119 do not make use of conversation orientation communication pattern.

Research Question 2: What are the conformity orientation communication pattern scores of married persons in Public Universities in Anambra State?

Table 2: Range of the conformity orientation communication pattern scores of married persons in Public Universities in Anambra State (Norm 55)

Range of Scores	N	%	Remark
11 – 54	221	65.0	Do not use Conformity Orientation
55 – 99	119	35.0	Use Conformity Orientation

Table 2 shows that with scores ranging from 55 to 99, 119(35.0%) married persons in public universities in Anambra State make use of conformity orientation communication pattern, while 221(65.0%) others whose scores ranged from 11 to 54 do not make use of conformity orientation communication pattern.

Research Question 3: How does conversation communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State predict their marital satisfaction?

Null Hypothesis 1: Conversation Orientation family Communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State are not significant predictors of their marital satisfaction.

Table 3: Regression analysis on how conversation communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State predict their marital satisfaction

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	%	Beta	df	Cal. t	P<0.05	Remark
0.008	0.000	0.006						
Conversation Com. Pattern				-0.009	338	-0.132	0.895	NS
Conformity Com. Pattern				0.003	338	0.046	0.963	NS

In table 3, it was observed that conversation orientation communication pattern of married persons in public universities in Anambra state had Beta of -0.009. This indicates that conversation orientation communication pattern of married persons in public universities in Anambra state contributed -0.9 percent to their marital satisfaction. Also conformity orientation communication pattern of married persons in public universities in Anambra state had Beta of 0.003. This indicates that conformity orientation communication pattern of married persons in public universities in Anambra state contributed 0.3 percent to their marital satisfaction.

Again, at 338df and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t-0.132 with P.value 0.895 and t0.046 with P.value 0.963 which are greater than the 0.05 for conversation orientation and conformity orientation communication patterns respectively, the first null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the communication patterns of the married persons in public universities in Anambra state do not significantly predict their marital satisfaction.

Research Question 4: How does conformity orientation communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State predict their marital satisfaction?

Null Hypothesis 2: Conformity orientation Communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State are not significant predictors of their marital satisfaction.

Table 4: Regression analysis on how conformity communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State predict their marital satisfaction

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	%	df	Cal. F	P<0.05	Remark
0.168	0.028	0.020	2.0	336	3.262	0.022	S

In table 4 it was observed that communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State had R^2 adjusted of 0.020. This indicates that communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State contributed 2.0 percent of their marital satisfaction.

Also at 3df numerator, 336df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated F3.26 with P.value 0.022 which is less than the 0.05, the third null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, ccommunication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State significantly predict their marital satisfaction.

Discussion of Findings

The outcome of the study disclosed that majority of married persons in public universities in Anambra State do not make use of conversation orientation communication pattern and conformity orientation communication pattern. The findings of this study agrees with Akuezuilo and Nwanna (2021) which reported that couples in Anambra State do not make use of conversation orientation communication pattern and conformity orientation communication patterns. This means that married persons in public universities in Anambra State were low in both conversation and conformity orientation communication patterns. The researcher believed that majority of married persons in public universities in Anambra State do not make use of conversation orientation communication pattern because they are not open-minded to exchange their views on personal and societal issues. Also, majority of married persons in public universities in Anambra State do not make use of conformity orientation communication patterns because they shared acceptable attitudes, beliefs and values, therefore are likely express openness with one another.

The study disclosed that conversation orientation communication pattern of married persons in public universities in Anambra state contributed -0.9 percent to their marital satisfaction while conformity orientation communication pattern of married persons in public universities in Anambra state contributed 0.3 percent to their marital satisfaction. Thus, the communication patterns of the married persons in public universities in Anambra state do not significantly predict their marital satisfaction. This supports, Amazue, Amazue and Onu (2015) which reported that communication patterns predict marital satisfaction. The researcher believed that success in communication led to an increase in marital satisfaction and poor communication led to a decrease in marital satisfaction.

The study disclosed that that communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State contributed 2.0 percent of their marital satisfaction. Thus, communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State significantly predict their marital satisfaction. This means that married persons with low conformity orientation communication pattern are likely to have open discussion over health and sexual issues within the family than married persons with low conversation orientation communication pattern. The finding that communication patterns of married persons in public universities in Anambra State significantly predict their marital satisfaction is in tandem with Akuezuilo and Nwanna (2021) on the premise that persons' communication style significantly predicted their marital satisfaction and persons' sexual satisfaction significantly predicted their marital satisfaction. The researcher believed that married persons with a higher sexual satisfaction can improve marital life quality and decrease marital and communication problems in the family.

Conclusion

Effective communication fosters healthy marital relationships because they help to sustain the intimacy, understanding, and mutual satisfaction between married couples. Breakdowns in effective communication can lead to misunderstandings, disagreements and

conflicts in the marriage. The study concluded that communication patterns are significant predictors of marital satisfaction of married persons in public universities in Anambra State because effective communication and pleasant intimate relationships play are pivotal determinants of marital success

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Guidance counsellors in practical field of couple or marital therapy, should emphasize therapies that a man and woman enter into marital relationship and they owe it to themselves to talk it through better by engaging in positive communication patterns. They should be enlightened that age is just an ordinary number; it may not necessarily determine satisfaction in marriage. Hence, it should be an important factor in premarital counselling for intending married persons.
2. Institutions and ministries should increase conflict resolution and communication skills, considered influential in divorce, may strengthen marriage and family structures. Moreover, reorganizing activities and programs on family empowerment, enacted in cooperation between the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and universities, in a systematic and continuous manner is believed to be important.
3. Since the study revealed that communication patterns do not significantly predict marital satisfaction of married persons in Anambra state. It is important to provide communication training to the married persons before they get married which can promote married persons marital satisfaction and life quality, and it is one of the main prevention programs in the initial levels. Hence, for enhancing married persons to make a strong bond for the better family functioning and social well-being.

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