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SEXUAL SATISFACTION AND COMMUNICATION IN MARRIAGE: KEY FACTORS IN MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED RESIDENTS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Marital satisfaction is widely recognized as a global concern, as the quality of marital relationships has profound implications for individuals' psychological well-being, family stability, and societal functioning across diverse cultural contexts. This study examined the predictive roles of sexual satisfaction, interpersonal communication, and personality traits in marital satisfaction among married residents of Ibadan, Nigeria. A cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected from 400 married adults selected using a purposive sampling technique. Standardized measures were used to assess marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, interpersonal communication, and personality traits. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analyses. The results indicated that sexual satisfaction and interpersonal communication were significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Individuals who reported higher levels of sexual satisfaction and more effective communication with their spouses also reported greater marital satisfaction. Although personality traits were examined, only agreeableness significantly predicted marital satisfaction, while other traits did not show meaningful effects when considered alongside relational factors. Further analysis revealed that sexual satisfaction and interpersonal communication jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of the variance in marital satisfaction. These findings highlight the central role of relational processes, particularly communication and sexual fulfillment, in shaping marital satisfaction. The study suggests that interventions aimed at improving communication skills and enhancing sexual satisfaction may be effective in promoting healthier and more satisfying marital relationships.

Keywords*: marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, interpersonal communication, personality traits, marriage, psychological well-being*

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a central adult relationship that plays a vital role in emotional well-being, psychological health, and social functioning (Bradbury et al., 2000; Fincham & Beach, 2010). As an intimate and enduring union, the quality of marital relationships has significant implications for individuals' overall life satisfaction and adjustment. When marital experiences do not meet personal expectations, the resulting strain often extends beyond the relationship, contributing to emotional distress and reduced mental health (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Communication and intimacy are consistently identified as core foundations of marital quality, as they promote mutual understanding, emotional closeness, and relational stability (Gottman & Notarius, 2000; Markman et al., 2010). Deficits in these processes have been linked to lower marital satisfaction and poorer relationship outcomes, underscoring their importance in sustaining healthy and satisfying marriages.

Marital satisfaction is widely regarded as a central indicator of marital quality and an essential component of individual psychological well-being, family functioning, and social stability. It refers to the subjective evaluation of happiness, fulfillment, and overall contentment individuals derive from their marital relationship, reflecting the extent to which emotional, physical, psychological, and relational needs are met within marriage (Amato, 2023; Tavakol et al., 2020). As a social institution and an intimate partnership, marriage plays a critical role in shaping adults' emotional adjustment, mental health outcomes, and social integration, particularly within collectivist societies where marital stability is closely tied to social cohesion.

Within the literature, marital satisfaction has been conceptualized alongside related constructs such as marital quality, marital harmony, and marital happiness (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987; Tutarel-Kışlak & Göztepe, 2012). However, marital satisfaction remains the most frequently employed construct due to its emphasis on spouses' subjective perceptions of relationship functioning and need fulfillment (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). Contemporary models of marriage conceptualize marital satisfaction as a dynamic process resulting from ongoing interactions

between individual characteristics and relational processes, rather than a static outcome (Bradbury et al., 2000; Fincham & Rogge, 2020). This perspective underscores the importance of examining both personal and interpersonal factors that sustain marital well-being over time.

Among the relational determinants of marital satisfaction, communication style has consistently been identified as a foundational mechanism through which couples negotiate meaning, manage conflict, and maintain emotional closeness. Communication within marriage encompasses verbal and non-verbal patterns of interaction, including emotional expression, listening behaviors, problem-solving strategies, and conflict resolution approaches. Recent empirical studies continue to demonstrate that constructive communication characterized by openness, empathy, responsiveness, and mutual respect is positively associated with marital satisfaction and relationship stability (Kim & Allen, 2021; Welsh, 2023). Conversely, maladaptive communication patterns such as criticism, defensiveness, withdrawal, and avoidance have been linked to emotional disengagement, unresolved conflict, and marital dissatisfaction (Fincham & Rogge, 2020; Johnston & Bailey, 2023). Importantly, contemporary research emphasizes that it is not the presence of conflict per se, but how couples communicate during conflict, that most strongly predicts marital outcomes.

Sexual satisfaction represents another critical dimension of marital satisfaction and has received increasing scholarly attention in recent years. Sexual satisfaction extends beyond physical gratification to include emotional intimacy, mutual responsiveness, affection, and the quality of sexual communication between partners (Yucel & Gassanov, 2020). Recent studies indicate that sexual satisfaction is a robust predictor of overall marital satisfaction, emotional closeness, and relationship longevity (Barros et al., 2022; Józefacka et al., 2023). Couples who report higher levels of sexual satisfaction are more likely to experience stronger emotional bonds, greater relationship commitment, and enhanced psychological well-being. In contrast, persistent sexual dissatisfaction has been associated with emotional distance, increased marital conflict, and heightened risk of marital instability (Gogolin et al., 2024). These findings highlight the interdependence between sexual intimacy and broader relational functioning within marriage.

Beyond relational processes, individual personality traits significantly shape marital experiences by influencing emotional regulation, communication behaviors, and responses to relational stressors. Personality traits represent enduring patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving that individuals bring into marital interactions. The Five-Factor Model of personality comprising openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism has been extensively applied in marital research due to its empirical robustness and cross-cultural relevance (McCrae & Costa, 2019). Recent evidence suggests that traits such as agreeableness and conscientiousness are positively associated with marital satisfaction, as they promote empathy, cooperation, responsibility, and effective conflict management (O'Rourke et al., 2022; Roberts et al., 2021). In contrast, neuroticism has been consistently identified as a strong predictor of marital dissatisfaction due to its association with emotional instability, negative affectivity, and maladaptive communication patterns (Fincham & Rogge, 2020; Noorani, 2024).

In the Nigerian context, marital relationships are increasingly shaped by rapid socio-economic transformation, urbanization, and shifting gender roles. Urban centres such as Ibadan present a unique marital environment in which traditional marital expectations coexist with modern lifestyles, economic pressures, and changing interpersonal dynamics (Alabi & Olonade, 2022; Okunlola et al., 2022). These contextual changes have been linked to increased marital strain, communication breakdown, and challenges in maintaining emotional and sexual intimacy. Despite the centrality of marriage within Nigerian society, empirical research examining the psychological and relational determinants of marital satisfaction remains limited, particularly studies that integrate communication style, sexual satisfaction, and personality traits within a single analytical framework.

Existing Nigerian studies on marriage have largely focused on socio-demographic variables or examined relational factors in isolation, thereby limiting a comprehensive understanding of how individual dispositions and interpersonal processes jointly influence marital satisfaction. This gap constrains the development of culturally responsive marital counseling interventions and evidence-based therapeutic approaches tailored to the Nigerian socio-cultural context. Given the importance of marital satisfaction for individual mental health, family stability, and social well-being, there is a clear need for systematic empirical investigation into the combined influence of communication style, sexual satisfaction, and personality traits on marital satisfaction among residents of Ibadan.

Social Exchange Theory, originally proposed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959) and later developed by Blau (1964), explains social relationships as processes in which individuals evaluate interactions based on perceived benefits and disadvantages. The theory assumes that people are motivated to maintain relationships that offer greater rewards than costs. In the context of marriage, satisfaction is understood as the outcome of spouses' assessments of whether their expectations and needs are adequately met within the relationship. A key assumption of Social Exchange Theory is that individuals rely on internal standards, known as comparison levels, to judge the quality of their marital experiences. These standards are shaped by previous relationships, cultural values, and societal expectations. In addition, commitment to marriage is influenced by perceptions of alternative options, which affect how partners evaluate the desirability of remaining in the relationship. The theory also emphasizes fairness and reciprocity, suggesting that marital relationships are more satisfying when both partners perceive a balance in what they contribute and receive.

Sexual satisfaction represents an important marital benefit that contributes to emotional closeness and intimacy. When sexual experiences within marriage are fulfilling, partners are more likely to perceive the relationship as rewarding, thereby enhancing overall marital satisfaction. On the other hand, sexual dissatisfaction may increase emotional strain and reduce satisfaction. Communication style serves as a central mechanism through which marital exchanges occur. Open and constructive communication enables spouses to express needs, manage conflict, and negotiate expectations, thereby reducing relational strain and increasing positive outcomes. Ineffective communication, in contrast, may heighten misunderstandings and emotional costs within the marriage.

Personality traits further influence how marital interactions are perceived and managed. Traits such as agreeableness and emotional stability support cooperation, empathy, and effective conflict management, which enhance positive exchanges. In contrast, traits associated with emotional instability may intensify conflict and increase perceived costs. Within the cultural setting of Ibadan, shared norms and expectations regarding marital roles, communication, and sexuality shape how spouses evaluate these exchanges and their level of marital satisfaction.

Overall, Social Exchange Theory offers a useful framework for understanding how sexual satisfaction, communication style, and personality traits function as perceived benefits and costs that collectively influence marital satisfaction among married residents in Ibadan.

METHOD

Design/Statistics
The study employed an expost-facto cross-sectional design. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics were used

to summarize participants' socio-demographic characteristics. Inferential statistics, including Pearson correlation coefficients and hierarchical regression analyses, were conducted to test the study hypotheses. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Setting
This study was carried out in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, Nigeria. Ibadan was chosen because of its sizeable and heterogeneous population, which offers a rich context for investigating sexual satisfaction and communication within marital relationships. The city is characterized by a blend of long-standing cultural traditions and evolving social norms influenced by urbanization, formal education, religious diversity, and increased exposure to contemporary lifestyles. This combination provides an appropriate environment for exploring how differing cultural orientations shape patterns of sexual interaction and communication among married couples.
Ibadan also comprises varied residential areas and socio-economic groups, making it possible to engage married adults across diverse age ranges, lengths of marriage, and social backgrounds. Access to participants was further enhanced by the city's extensive network of religious bodies, community groups, and workplaces, which is particularly important when researching sensitive marital issues. Additionally, the presence of established academic and health institutions supports ethical compliance and research feasibility, underscoring Ibadan's suitability as the study setting.

Participants and Procedure
Four hundred married individuals were selected through purposive sampling technique from Ibadan North Local Government, Nigeria. Ethnicity: Yoruba (n=210, 52.5%), Igbo at (n=107, 26.8%), Hausa (n=79, 19.8%), others (n= 4, 1.0%). Religion: Christianity (n=221, 55.3%), Muslims (n= 174, 43.5%) and others (n=5, 1.3%). Sex: Male (n= 206, 51.5%), Female (n= 194, 48.5%), Educational qualifications: O'Level or OND certificates (n = 148, 37.0%), HND holders (n = 142, 35.5%), Bachelor's degree holders constituted (n = 77, 19.3%), Postgraduate degrees (n = 33, 8.3%), Employment status: Casual workers (n = 112, 28.0%), Full-time employment (n = 96, 24.0%), Part-time workers (n = 80, 20.0%), Contract staff (n = 73, 18.3%), Unemployed individuals (n = 39, 9.8%). An ethical clearance was issued with ethical approval number UI/SSHREC2025/0239. Informed consent form was given to the participants, which informed them of their principals' permission for the study, and they signed it before participating in the study. Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to.

Instruments
Socio-Demographic Questionnaire

Participants' socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, religion, ethnicity, educational attainment, and employment status, were assessed using a self-developed questionnaire.

Marital Satisfaction Scale
Marital satisfaction was measured using the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS; Rusbult & Morrow, 1980). It is a three-item measure rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 7 (extremely satisfied). Previous studies have reported excellent internal consistency for the scale (α = .95). Item scores are summed to obtain a total score, yielding a possible range of 3 to 21. All items are positively worded; therefore, no reverse scoring is required. Higher total scores indicate greater overall marital satisfaction.

Sexual Satisfaction Scale
Sexual satisfaction was assessed using the New Sexual Satisfaction Scale (NSSS-S; Štulhofer and Brouillard, 2011). It consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all satisfied), 2 (a little satisfied), 3 (moderately satisfied), and 4 (very satisfied) to 5 (extremely satisfied). Higher scores indicating greater sexual satisfaction. The scale has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .91 to .94.

Personality Traits Scale

Personality traits were measured using the 10-item short version of Big Five Inventory (BFI-10; Rammstedt & John, 2007). The BFI-10 is a 10-item scale assessing extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. Items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The instrument has demonstrated acceptable reliability and test–retest stability across cultural contexts. In accordance with standard scoring procedures, one item per trait was reverse-coded, and trait scores were computed by averaging the two items, with higher scores indicating greater expression of the respective personality dimension.

Communication Style Scale

Communication style was measured using the Interpersonal Communication Scale (Campbell & Akdemir, 2016). The ICS comprises seven items assessing face-to-face communication across two subscales: External Perception and Internal Disseverance. Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale has demonstrated good internal consistency ($\alpha = .86$). Items are rated on a Likert-type response format, with higher scores indicating more effective and adaptive communication styles. Negatively worded items were reverse-coded where applicable, and responses were aggregated to produce a composite communication score

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Table 1.1 summarizes the key socio-demographic variables such as age, gender, educational level, marital status, and income level. These factors are essential for understanding the generalizability of the findings.

Table 1.1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variables	Response category	Frequency	%	Mean	SD
Sex	Male	206	51.5%		
	Female	194	48.5%		
Age	Young Adults (23-29)	95	23.8%		
	Middle-Aged Adults (30-39)	167	41.8%	37.09	9.20
	Adults (40-49)	83	20.8%		
	Senior Adults (50+)	55	13.8%		
Religion	Christianity	221	55.3%		
	Muslim	174	43.5%		
	Others	5	1.3%		
Ethnicity	Yoruba	210	52.5%		
	Igbo	107	26.8%		
	Hausa	79	19.8%		
	Other	4	1.0%		
Educational qualification	O'Level/OND	148	37.0%		
	HND	142	35.5%		
	Bachelor's Degree	77	19.3%		
	Postgraduate Degree	33	8.3%		
	Others	0	0.0%		
Employment status	Full-time	96	24.0%		
	Part-time	80	20.0%		
	Casual	112	28.0%		
	Contract	73	18.3%		
	Unemployed	39	9.8%		

Note: n = 400 respondents.

From Table 1.1, the study involved 400 respondents selected from various backgrounds in Ibadan. The gender distribution was nearly equal, with 206 participants (51.5%) identifying as

male and 194 (48.5%) as female. Age was categorized into four groups. The majority were middle-aged adults between 30 and 39 years (n = 167, 41.8%), followed by young adults aged 23 to 29 years (n = 95, 23.8%). Adults aged 40 to 49 constituted 20.8% (n = 83), while senior adults aged 50 years and above made up the smallest group with 13.8% (n = 55). The overall mean age was 37.09 years (SD = 9.20), indicating a broad distribution across adulthood. Religious affiliation was predominantly Christian, with 221 respondents (55.3%) identifying with Christianity, while 174 (43.5%) identified as Muslim, and a small percentage (1.3%, n = 5) reported affiliation with other religions. Ethnic composition showed a majority of Yoruba respondents (n = 210, 52.5%), followed by Igbo (n = 107, 26.8%) and Hausa (n = 79, 19.8%). Only 1.0% (n = 4) reported belonging to other ethnic groups. Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of respondents held O'Level or OND certificates (n = 148, 37.0%), followed closely by HND holders (n = 142, 35.5%). Bachelor's degree holders constituted 19.3% (n = 77), and those with postgraduate degrees made up 8.3% (n = 33). None of the participants selected "Others" as their qualification. In terms of employment status, casual workers represented the largest category (n = 112, 28.0%), followed by those in full-time employment (n = 96, 24.0%), part-time workers (n = 80, 20.0%), and contract staff (n = 73, 18.3%). Unemployed individuals were the least represented (n = 39, 9.8%). Overall, the sample reflects a diverse demographic distribution across key socioeconomic indicators.

Table 1.2: Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Marital Satisfaction	10.08	4.26	--								
2. Sexual satisfaction	55.80	14.97	.549**	--							
3. Interpersonal Communication	24.03	9.54	.442**	.626**	--						
4. Extraversion	5.10	2.02	.285**	.529**	.582**	--					
5. Agreeableness	5.44	1.97	.287**	.456**	.555**	.675**	--				
6. Conscientiousness	5.23	1.83	.222**	.375**	.469**	.526**	.523**	--			
7. Neuroticism	5.69	1.91	.217**	.405**	.530**	.521**	.621**	.574**	--		
8. Openness to experience	5.57	2.15	.266**	.430**	.565**	.578**	.588**	.627**	.711**	--	
9. Age	37.04	9.21	.132**	-.028	-.071	-.114*	-.068	-.037	-.014	-.037	--

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation analysis reveal several important patterns in the relationships between marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, interpersonal communication, and personality traits. A significant positive correlation was found between marital satisfaction and sexual satisfaction (r = 0.549, p < 0.01), indicating that individuals who reported higher sexual satisfaction also reported higher marital satisfaction. Additionally, interpersonal communication was moderately correlated with marital satisfaction (r = 0.442, p < 0.01), suggesting that effective communication within marriage is an important factor for overall satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction was significantly correlated with all other variables. It showed a particularly strong positive relationship with interpersonal communication (r = 0.626, p < 0.01) and extraversion (r = 0.529, p < 0.01). This suggests that individuals who engage in more open communication and possess extraverted traits tend to report higher sexual satisfaction. Communication satisfaction had significant positive correlations with sexual satisfaction (r = 0.626, p < 0.01), extraversion (r = 0.582, p < 0.01), agreeableness (r = 0.555, p < 0.01), and openness to experience (r = 0.565, p < 0.01). This shows that individuals with more agreeable and open personalities tend to report better communication satisfaction within their marriages. Extraversion was positively correlated with sexual satisfaction (r = 0.529, p < 0.01), interpersonal communication (r = 0.582, p < 0.01), agreeableness (r = 0.675, p < 0.01), and conscientiousness (r = 0.526, p < 0.01). Extraverted individuals, as expected, tend to have more positive relationships across various aspects of marital satisfaction, particularly in communication and sexual satisfaction. Agreeableness showed significant positive correlations with sexual satisfaction (r = 0.456, p < 0.01), interpersonal communication (r = 0.555, p < 0.01), extraversion (r = 0.675, p < 0.01), and conscientiousness (r = 0.523, p < 0.01). These findings suggest that individuals who are more agreeable may have

better interpersonal relationships and sexual satisfaction in their marriages. A significant negative correlation was found between neuroticism and marital satisfaction (r = 0.217, p < 0.01) as well as sexual satisfaction (r = 0.405, p < 0.01). This implies that higher levels of neuroticism are associated with lower satisfaction in both marital and sexual relationships. Neuroticism was positively correlated with interpersonal communication (r = 0.530, p < 0.01) and agreeableness (r = 0.621, p < 0.01), which might reflect some complexities in how emotional instability affects relationships.: Openness to experience showed positive correlations with sexual satisfaction (r = 0.430, p < 0.01), interpersonal communication (r = 0.565, p < 0.01), agreeableness (r = 0.627, p < 0.01), and conscientiousness (r = 0.711, p < 0.01), highlighting that individuals who are more open to new experiences tend to have better interpersonal and sexual relationships. Age was found to be positively correlated with marital satisfaction ($r = .132$, $p < .01$), suggesting that older participants reported slightly higher levels of marital satisfaction. However, age showed a significant negative correlation only with extraversion ($r = -.114$, $p < .05$), indicating that older participants tended to score slightly lower on extraversion.

Hypothesis: Age, personality traits, interpersonal communication, and sexual satisfaction significantly predict marital satisfaction among residents in Ibadan. This hypothesis was tested using hierarchical regression and the results presented in

Table 1.3: Hierarchical Regression for combined influence of age, personality traits, interpersonal communication and sexual satisfaction on marital satisfaction among married residents in Ibadan

Model	Variables	B	T	Sig.	R	R2	ΔR2	df	F	ΔF	Sig.
1			8.900	.000	.132a	.017	.017	1, 398	7.060	7.060	.008b
	Age	.132	2.657	.008							
2			2.652	.008	.364b	.133	.115	5, 393	10.011	10.434	.000c
	Age	.164	3.453	.001							
	Extraversion	.148	2.182	.030							
	Agreeableness	.144	2.023	.044							
	Conscientiousness	.029	.454	.650							
	Neuroticism	-.048	-.659	.510							
	Openness to experience	.117	1.567	.118							
3					.480c	.230	.098	1, 392	16.749	49.730	.000d
	Age	.172	3.839	.000							
	Extraversion	.034	.509	.611							
	Agreeableness	.082	1.213	.226							
	Conscientiousness	.007	.124	.901							
	Neuroticism	-.100	-1.451	.147							
	Openness to experience	.034	.472	.637							
	Interpersonal Communication	.419	7.052	.000							
4					.591d	.349	.119	1,391	26.181	71.208	.000
	Age	.156	3.789	.000							
	Extraversion	-.070	-1.118	.264							
	Agreeableness	.067	1.079	.281							
	Conscientiousness	.001	.016	.987							
	Neuroticism	-.106	-1.674	.095							
	Openness to experience	.034	.513	.608							
	Interpersonal Communication	.206	3.410	.001							
	Sexual satisfaction	.458	8.438	.000							

Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

A four-step hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to examine the combined influence of age, personality traits, interpersonal communication, and sexual satisfaction on marital satisfaction among married residents in Ibadan. In the first step, age was entered and accounted for a small but significant amount of variance in marital satisfaction, R² = .017, F (1, 398) = 7.06, p = .008. In the second model, personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness,

neuroticism, openness) were added, which significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .115$, $\Delta F = 10.434$, $p < .001$. Within this model, age ($\beta = .164$, $p = .001$), extraversion ($\beta = .148$, $p = .030$), and agreeableness ($\beta = .144$, $p = .044$) were significant predictors. Model 3 included interpersonal communication, which further improved the model significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .098$, $\Delta F = 49.73$, $p < .001$. Interpersonal communication emerged as a strong predictor ($\beta = .419$, $p < .001$), while the effects of personality traits became non-significant, suggesting mediation or overshadowing effects. Finally, the addition of sexual satisfaction in Model 4 yielded a substantial increase in explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .119$, $\Delta F = 71.208$, $p < .001$, with the full model explaining 34.9% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R^2 = .349$). Sexual satisfaction ($\beta = .458$, $p < .001$) and interpersonal communication ($\beta = .206$, $p = .001$) were the strongest predictors, followed by age ($\beta = .156$, $p < .001$). None of the personality traits were significant in the final model. The hypothesis is accepted. The results show that age, interpersonal communication, and sexual satisfaction significantly predict marital satisfaction among married residents in Ibadan while the influence of personality traits diminishes in the presence of interpersonal and sexual factors.

DISCUSSION
This study explored how age, personality traits, interpersonal communication, and sexual satisfaction together influence marital satisfaction among married adults living in Ibadan. The results strongly support the study hypothesis. Age, interpersonal communication, and sexual satisfaction were found to be important predictors of marital satisfaction, while the effect of personality traits became weak once communication and sexual factors were considered. This suggests that day-to-day interaction and shared experiences play a more important role in marital satisfaction than stable personality characteristics within this context. Age explained a small but meaningful part of marital satisfaction, showing that marital relationships change over time. As couples grow older, shared experiences, role adjustments, and better coping strategies may improve how partners relate to each other. Previous studies have shown that emotional maturity and relationship stability often increase in midlife and later adulthood (Levenson et al., 1994). In many African societies, age is also linked with patience, commitment, and expectations of marital stability, which may further strengthen marital satisfaction.

When personality traits were added to the model, extraversion and agreeableness initially showed significant effects. This supports earlier findings that people who are friendly, cooperative, and emotionally expressive often experience better marital relationships (Donnellan et al., 2004). However, this personality effects disappeared after interpersonal communication was included. This suggests that personality may influence marital satisfaction mainly through communication patterns rather than having a direct effect. Interpersonal communication emerged as a strong predictor of marital satisfaction. Couples who communicate openly, clearly, and respectfully tend to report better marital relationships. This finding is consistent with previous research showing that good communication is central to healthy and lasting marriages (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). In Nigerian and other collectivist cultures, effective communication may be especially important for resolving conflict, managing expectations, and maintaining emotional closeness.

Sexual satisfaction had the strongest influence on marital satisfaction and accounted for the largest increase in explained variance. This finding agrees with studies showing that satisfying sexual relationships contribute significantly to overall marital quality (Byers, 2005; Rosen & Bachmann, 2008). Sexual satisfaction is closely connected to emotional intimacy, partner responsiveness, and relationship stability, even in cultures where open discussion of sexuality is limited. In the final model, none of the personality traits remained significant. This highlights the greater importance of changeable relational factors, such as communication and sexual satisfaction, over stable personality traits in long-term marriages. These findings support interactional and biopsychosocial views of marriage, which emphasize relationship processes rather than personality alone in explaining marital outcomes (Karney & Bradbury, 1995).

Overall, the results suggest that efforts to improve marital satisfaction among married adults in Ibadan should focus more on strengthening communication skills and improving sexual satisfaction. Personality traits may be less useful targets for intervention. Future studies should use longitudinal and culturally sensitive approaches to better understand how age, culture, gender roles, communication, and sexual satisfaction shape marital satisfaction across African settings.

Conclusions

The study examined factors influencing marital satisfaction among residents in Ibadan, with a focus on sexual satisfaction, interpersonal communication, and personality traits. The findings showed that sexual satisfaction has a strong positive effect on marital satisfaction, indicating that individuals who are more satisfied with their sexual relationships tend to be happier in their marriages. Interpersonal communication was also found to be a significant predictor of marital satisfaction, as participants who reported better communication with their spouses experienced higher levels of satisfaction. Although several personality traits were examined, only agreeableness significantly predicted marital satisfaction, suggesting that being cooperative and understanding contributes positively to marital relationships. Other personality traits did not show significant effects, indicating that their influence may depend on context. Overall, sexual satisfaction and interpersonal communication together explained a meaningful portion of marital satisfaction. These results highlight the importance of promoting effective communication and sexual satisfaction in marriage. The study suggests that interventions focusing on these areas may help improve marital satisfaction among couples.

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