Interpersonal Dependency as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction Among Female Tutors

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Abstract
The study investigated interpersonal dependency as a predictor of marital satisfaction among female tutors. One hundred (100) participants, with 54 females and 34 males, with an age range of 30 years, with a mean of 35.68 and standard deviation of 5.79, were selected as participants. Multi-stage sampling techniques were adopted as sampling techniques to draw students from secondary schools in Uvwie LGA of Delta State. The Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (Hirschfield et al., 1977) and the Index of Marital Satisfaction (Hudson, 1982; Anene, 1994) were used for data collection. A correlational design was adopted, while a linear regression using SPSS version 27 was used for data analysis. Findings revealed that interpersonal dependency (emotional reliance sig.= 212, lack of confidence sig.= .157, assertion of autonomy sig.= .462) at p< .05 did not predict marital satisfaction among married female tutors. Future researchers should investigate other factors that can predict marital satisfaction.

Introduction

According to Kumari (2017), marriage is an institution where men and women are united in a special kind of social and legal dependence to establish and sustain a family. Marriage is indeed a crucial element of our family system. It is founded on the need to live and be together, the emotional security it offers, the need for sexual expression, and the desire to have offspring; an ideal union effectively fulfils these sexual needs (Kumari, 2017). Couples who understand themselves and manage their differences and similarities positively are said to experience good marital adjustment, while those who do not may face challenges. Every married individual and couple expect satisfaction with their spouse and the marriage, along with feelings of happiness as the marriage develops. These feelings of happiness, satisfaction with the spouse, and contentment are essential components of a well-adjusted married life. However, there is a scarcity of research identifying these factors among secondary school teachers in Nigeria, although some studies (Ihuoma, 2007; Ikenyirimba, 2015) have identified certain factors as correlates of marital satisfaction among various groups. Therefore, conducting a study to identify factors that may predict marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers is considered necessary. Identifying these factors can help promote them within this population, thereby increasing and strengthening their marital satisfaction. Additionally, it may contribute to greater job commitment and productivity, among other benefits. Consequently, this investigation will focus on how interpersonal dependency predicts marital satisfaction among married female teachers in community secondary schools in Uvwie Local Government Area (LGA) of Delta State.

Marital satisfaction is a mental state that is not achieved automatically, but requires the couple's ongoing efforts to realise it, especially in the early years of marriage, because in this stage,

marital satisfaction is unstable and the marital relationship is at risk (Gorbanzadeh et al., 2013; Sayehmiri et al., 2020). Marital satisfaction, according to Ofovwe et al. (2013), refers to an individual's positive assessment of his/her marital relations. Dabone (2014), on his own part, stated that marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefit and cost of marriage to a particular person. As such, Debone (2014) noted that the more cost a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. In line with these aforementioned definitions, one may assume, according to Ofovwe et al. (2013), that the significance of marriage in an individual's life has the prospect of affecting other facets of his or her life. Aliya (2013) equally noted that there are significant social implications in marital satisfaction. Namver (2021) research work on the relationship between marital satisfaction and interpersonal dependency with a sample of 220 participants and the Findings showed a significant negative correlation between interpersonal dependency and emotionality and marital satisfaction.

Interpersonal dependency is a complex, multifaceted personality trait that has adaptive and maladaptive variants (Bornstein et al., 2003; Bornstein, 2005; McClintock & McCarrick, 2020). Interpersonal dependency reflects a core motivation to obtain and maintain nurturant and supportive interpersonal relationships (Bornstein, 1992, Bornstein, 1993; Wangab et al., 2014). Everyone is more or less dependent on others for guidance, help and support. However, rigid and inflexible dependency negatively impacts an individual's social, career, and romantic relationships (Bornstein, 2005; Wangab, 2014). At its most severe, interpersonal dependency may be diagnosed as dependent personality disorder (DPD) in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5; American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Both adaptive and maladaptive forms of dependency involve relying on others for nurturance, support, and/or guidance (McClintock & McCarrick, 2016). However, healthy dependency is marked by behaviour flexibility, wherein the individual relies on others when the situation is appropriate and engages in self-reliance when autonomous functioning is required (McClintock & McCarrick, 2016). These individuals tend to see themselves as competent, and they develop strong, secure bonds with significant others. Dependency is particularly related to negative emotions when relationships are disrupted. Individuals with higher levels of dependency are more sensitive to interpersonal cues and experience greater negative emotions in reaction to relationship conflict and interpersonal stressors (Bornstein, 2005; Hammen, 2005). Actual or anticipated relationship disruption leads to increased anxiety and depression in dependent individuals, and can also lead to increased illness risk (Bornstein, 1993; Bornstein, 1995).

The Li and Fung (2011) dynamic goal theory was adopted as the theoretical framework because the theory argues that marital goals are the core foundation of the marriage and need to be achieved to reach marital satisfaction. Their marital satisfaction is the main factor that influences the dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction, which looks at the marital quality and the emotional aspect of the marriage (Li & Fung, 2011). Marriage is more voluntary and is symbolised by the couple's love for each other and desire to be together. The dynamic goal theory is because our expectations are part of our goals, and interpersonal dependency might also aid in either achieving the goal or mitigating against it. Thus, this hypothesis was tested:

- Interpersonal dependency will not independently predict marital satisfaction among female tutors.

METHOD
Participants
One hundred (100) female tutors with an age range of 30 years, with a mean of 35.68 and a standard deviation of 5.79, were drawn as participants. Multi-stage sampling techniques were adopted to draw the teachers from secondary schools in Uvwie LGA of Delta State. **Inclusion Criteria:** Participants must have at least N.C.E, B.Ed and M.Ed to qualify as a teacher.

Participants must have been in marriage at least five years or more in order to experience and express marital satisfaction. The participants must be employed as a teacher in any of the community secondary schools in Uvwie L.G.A of Delta state (Ekpan, Urhobo, Enere; Ugborikoko, Ogbomo;, Ugbolokboso and Ugboroke). **Exclusion Criteria:** Teachers who do not consent to partake in the study and who also have a history of mental disorder, Single teachers, Widows, separated and divorced teachers will be excluded as participants who are not currently in marriage and not predisposed to experience marital satisfaction.

Instrument

These sets of instruments were used for the study namely:

- Hirschfield, et al. (1977) and
- Index of Marital Satisfaction (Hudson, 1982; Anene, 1994)

The Interpersonal Dependency Inventory (Hirschfield, et al., 1977)

The Interpersonal Dependency Inventory was used to evaluate the participants' level of dependency. The 48-item inventory is designed to assess the "thoughts, behaviour and feelings revolving around the need to associate with others'' (Hirschfield et al. 1977). As a measure of aspects of personality characteristics, IDI consist of 3 subscales, which are: Emotional reliance – tendency to depend on others for one's emotional satisfaction. Lack of self-confidence – tendency to lack self-reliance and to be other directed. Assertion of autonomy – tendency to strive to be self-directed. Eighteen of the items are related to emotional reliance on another person. These items relate to attachment and dependency because the attachment bond is enduring and specific to a single individual and related to strong emotions (Hirschfield, 1977). Sixteen items address the lack of social self-confidence, and 14 items consider the assertion of autonomy.

Reliability: Hirschfield et al. (1977) reported split-half reliability coefficients ranging from .72.91 for the three subscales of IDI. The subscales are randomised within the inventory. Hirschfield et al (19770 provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Makinde (1999) provided the properties for Nigerian samples. Participants are instructed to rate each item with a number from one to four depending on how closely they feel each item reflects their attitudes, feelings, or behaviour.

Index of Marital Satisfaction (Hudson, 1982; Anene, 1994)

The index of marital satisfaction as developed by Hudson (1982) designed to measure problems associated with marital satisfaction. The 25 – item inventory is designed to measure the degree, severity, or magnitude of the problems one's spouse or partner perceives to be having in the marital relationship with his or her partner with a focus on current problems which have reduced marital satisfaction. Hudson (1982) provided the original psychometric properties for American samples while Anene (1994) provided the properties for Nigerian samples.

Procedure

Married female tutors were sampled as participants using two stage sampling techniques. First, a simple random sampling techniques (balloting) was applied to pick the schools and purposes sampling techniques was adopted to select the participants that participates in this research: (29) Army day secondary school, (31) federal government college, (20) Urhobo college and (10) Essi college all in Uvwie LGA of Delta state. NYSC members serving in the selected schools were employed and trained as research assistants to help distribute and retrieve the questionnaire. One hundred and thirty copies of the questionnaire were sent out, one hundred and fifteen were returned which seven copies bear multiple initials and eight were wrongly

responded to, leaving the rightly responded ones to one hundred, which was used for the analysis.

Design and Statistics

The study is survey research which employed a correlational design based on the fact that the level of relationship and interactions between the studied variables were been investigated; while Multiple regression analysis was adopted based on one predictor variable: interpersonal dependency (Emotional reliance, Lack of Self Confidence and Assertion of Autonomy) on marital satisfaction as a criterion variable to test the hypotheses.

Results

Table I: Descriptive and correlational statistics

S/N	Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1	Marital satisfaction	72.51	12.16	1				
2	Emotional reliance	37.88	4.34	.019	1			
3	Lack of confidence	25.64	4.34	.049	.93**	1		
4	Assertion of autonomy	26.45	4.20	.006	.92**	.94**	1	
5	Age	35.68	5.79	.041	.08	.101	.06	1

At $p < .01$

Table I above shows that none of the predicting and demographic variables has a relationship with the dependent variable of marital satisfaction.

Table II: regression of marital satisfaction

S/N	Variables	UnStE β	StE β	t	sig
1	Emotional reliance	-.410	-.164	-1.244	.212
2	Lack of confidence	.516	.195	1.427	.157
3	Assertion of autonomy	.324	.112	.740	.462
2	Extraversion	-.695	-.278	-.774	.441
3	agreeable	1.642	.565	1.252	.214
4	conscientiousness	.893	.269	.946	.347
5	neuroticism	-.328	-.074	-.470	.640
6	openness	-1.256	-.421	-1.249	.215

$r = .367$ $r^2 = .134$ adjusted $r^2 = -.046$ f-change= 1.515   sig f-change= .166

Dependent variable= marital satisfaction, at $p < .05$

Table II above shows that interpersonal dependency (emotional reliance sig.= 212, lack of confidence sig.= .157, assertion of autonomy sig.= .462) at $p < .05$ predicted marital satisfaction. Result from table II also indicated that the predictor variables are closely related to the dependent variable of marital satisfaction at $r = .4$, which means that the presence of the independent variables can sometimes cause the presence of the dependent variable. The result also shows that the predicting variables possess 13% variance of the dependent variable at $r^2 = .134$.

Discussion

The hypothesis under examination proposed that interpersonal dependence would not have a significant predictive relationship with marital satisfaction. Upon conducting the analysis, the

results supported this hypothesis, leading to its acceptance. Specifically, the findings indicated that there is no substantial correlation between levels of interpersonal dependency and the overall marital satisfaction experienced by married female tutors. This suggests that factors other than interpersonal dependence may play a more critical role in influencing the marital happiness of this group.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study align with the dynamic goal theory proposed by Li and Fung (2011). This theory posits that marital goals serve as the essential foundation of a marriage and must be attained in order to achieve marital satisfaction. It emphasizes that marriage is fundamentally voluntary and is characterized by the couple's mutual love and desire to be together. Furthermore, the theory suggests that individual personality traits and patterns of dependency can significantly shape which marital goals are perceived as realistic or unrealistic. Consequently, these traits may influence the importance placed on these goals, especially when evaluated within the context of significant life events and circumstances.

The findings of this research reveal that interpersonal dependency does not significantly contribute to marital satisfaction among secondary school tutors. This suggests that reliance on interpersonal connections or dependency within relationships does not enhance the overall happiness or fulfilment experienced within marriage among this demographic. Given these insights, it is crucial for future researchers to investigate a broader range of factors that might influence marital satisfaction, as exploring alternative variables could lead to different and potentially more meaningful outcomes.

Furthermore, it is essential for therapists and clinicians to reconsider their approach regarding the role of interpersonal dependency in marital counselling. Instead of viewing it as a critical factor that can enhance marital satisfaction, practitioners should focus on other aspects of relationships that may have a more profound impact on the well-being and contentment of couples. By doing so, they can provide better support and strategies for enhancing marital quality.

Limitations of the Study

Several factors hindered the progress of this research. A significant issue was the constant inflation affecting the country's economy, which had a detrimental impact on various aspects of the study. The rising inflation resulted in a sharp increase in the prices of goods and services, as well as transportation costs, making it more challenging to conduct research effectively. Under normal circumstances, the budget available would have allowed for the inclusion of additional locations and a broader scope of study. However, the economic constraints imposed by inflation limited the ability to expand and enhance the research.

Another factor is sampling only gender and drawing participants from one location.

Suggestions for Further Study

Future researchers should try and sample participants from other geopolitical zones on time to avoid delays if one part of the country is experiencing insecurity.

Funds backup should be made available if in case there is inflation so as it will not affect the research work.

Summary and Conclusion

The findings of this research indicate that interpersonal dependency does not contribute to the presence of marital satisfaction among secondary school tutors. This conclusion reveals that the degree to which individuals rely on their partners for emotional support or validation does

not significantly enhance their overall happiness and fulfilment within their marriages. In fact, the data suggests that other factors may play a more crucial role in determining marital satisfaction for this particular demographic. As such, the results challenge the assumption that a strong reliance on interpersonal connections leads to greater marital contentment, highlighting the need for further investigation into what truly influences satisfaction in these relationships.

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