

Factors Influencing Marital Satisfaction Among Couples in Lartebiokoshie, Accra, Ghana

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Abstract

The study examined the interaction of three variables, intimacy, self-esteem, and locus of control, and their effect on marital satisfaction in Lartebiokoshie a suburb under the Ablekuma South Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. Across sectional survey method was adopted to study the variables of interest. Standardized questionnaires were used to assess all variables of interest. Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) and Locus of Control of Behavior scale (LCB) were utilized. Data entry, validation and analysis was done using the Statistical package for Social Science software (SPSS version 25). A total of 720 purposively selected participants took part in the research. The sample was predominantly female, 430 (60%) and Christian, 675 (94%). The modal age group for respondents and spouses was 31-45 years 387(54%) and 400 (56%) respectively. Study participants who were married by ordinance comprised 400 (56%). One hundred and fifty study participants (21%) had the same ethnicity with their spouses and the mean years of marriage was 13.15• 10.70. The result of the study revealed a significant positive correlation between intimacy and marital satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = .460, p < .000$], a no significant correlation between locus of control and marital satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = .041, p > .05$], a negative correlation between self-esteem and marital satisfaction variables [$r_{(718)} = -.027, p > .05$]. Partner intimacy for to-be-wed couples should be promoted within appropriate and approved settings due to the significant influence demonstrated in this research.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, intimacy, self-esteem, locus of control.

Introduction

The main objective of the study was to explore the effect of three variables, Intimacy, locus of control, and self-esteem on marital satisfaction among married couples in Lartebiokoshie, Accra, Ghana. The institution of marriage is an important aspect of the life of an individual, since everybody comes from a family, established through marriage or some other union between a man and a woman, irrespective of the type of marriage, and the likelihood that most people at one point in his or her life time may marry once [1]. For this reason, humanity seems to quickly rise up to find a solution against any situation that threatens the well-being of a union and the family at large which can be seen through the

amount of relevant research globally [2] [3] [4]. No marriage is free of problems, and many variables interact differently in different situations to threaten the life of the marriage which may ultimately lead to the undesirable point of divorce or separation [5].

Many factors account for marital dissatisfaction in marriages, and the problem that leads to marital dissatisfaction in one marriage may not necessarily lead to the same outcome in another [6] [7]. In a study by [6], results indicated that participants alleged infertility as the chief source of marital dissatisfaction. This was followed by other sources such as lack of love, inexperience, poverty, differences in religion, joblessness, and more. Marital dissatisfaction is no respecter of persons, age, religious affiliation, culture,

economic status or even spirituality [8]. Most of the research that has been carried out on marital satisfaction has originated from Europe, Asia and the Americas [9], [10], [11], [12], with few originating from Africa including Ghana [13], [14].

In the U.S., trends in marital dissatisfaction rates showed that in the 1990s, approximately 206,007 people aged 50 years and older got divorced, whereas in 2010 about 643,152 of the same group got divorced [15]. In 2010, around 529,842 persons aged 50–64 years got divorced against approximately 113,310 persons aged 65 years and older, if the rate of divorce remains the same based on this trend, the rate of divorce among people 50 years and above by 2030 should rise by one third to approximately 828,380 [16]. Between the middle aged, the rate of divorce inched up from 6.9 to 13.1 divorced persons for every 1,000 married individuals from 1990 to 2010. Likewise, the divorce rate ascended from 1.8 to 4.8 between older adults. The change in extent of the divorce rates between the two sets of age groups leads indicates that the total number of persons divorcing is much higher among people of middle ages than older adults [15].

Elsewhere in the world, marriages are breaking up due to a combination of many other factors, and divorce which generations ago was a holdout in some parts of the world has now received legal backing in those countries [8]. The literature further indicates that the rate of divorce is not only rising, but has actually slowed down in countries like Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The Sahel Region of Africa and the Indian sub-continent also have a very low rate of divorce rate partly due to low cultural acceptability [8]. Divorce is one of the main initiating factors of family unsteadiness in sub-Saharan Africa and is common in most countries although there is sparse evidence to show it is on the increase [17]. In Ghana, marital unions have had their own turbulences as far as dissolutions are concerned, and several factors have been identified as causes [18].

In Ghana, the effort put into studying these variables is inadequate. There is a gap especially between the studies conducted on the variables of interest in this study (Intimacy, locus of control, and self-esteem and their impact on marital satisfaction between Ghana and the rest of the world. In connection with this, the current

study seeks to investigate the interplay of three variables: intimacy, locus of control, and self-esteem on marital satisfaction.

The attention of this work however was given to the relationship between marital satisfaction and self-esteem, locus of control (internal and external), and Intimacy with recognition to the existing literature on these factors [13], [19], [20], [21], [22].

Intimacy and marital satisfaction

One of the factors affecting marital satisfaction is intimacy [20]. Therefore, partner responsiveness in the intimacy process for married persons is very significant for the upkeep of a healthy union [13]. The role of intimacy in marriage has been given attention in different marriages which also gives a lead as to its significance [4], [22]. Intimacy is the capability to communicate with others while you maintain your individuality; this implies that as a person one must reach a point of individual growth where one can establish communication with others [22]. Intimacy has been linked with variances in marital satisfaction owing to the fact that, it is the start point in initiating almost any process in the marital relationship [22]. Intimacy is conceptualized as one's closeness level to spouse, engaging in joint activities with them, sharing common values and ideas, engaging in sexual relations and other emotional activities such as fondling [22]. According to [3], marital intimacy is said to occur when couples in a relationship are able to freely express their views, ideas, emotions and demands together.

Intimacy has been investigated among other variables like conflict and forgiveness, and their role in marital satisfaction [23]. Similarly, daily levels of intimacy were responsible for variances in global marital satisfaction [25], [3]. posit that when spouses share each other's fears, secrets, sex, dreams, religion and daily experiences together, they inch closer to attaining satisfaction in their marital relation which ultimately, results in a successful marriage. [3] assert that intimacy encompasses interrelated dimensions of emotional, intellectual, sexual, spiritual, social, recreational and aesthetic.

To throw more light on this, [3] set out to investigate intimacy among infertile women in Iran, it was evident that intimacy is a real need among infertile women since they consider

infertility as stressful [3]. According to the work of [24], intimacy is different according to the kind of relationship, thus intimacy in a marriage is different from that of a non-marital romantic relationship. Appropriate physical and emotional intimate responses from male partners have been responsible for sexual satisfaction and eventually higher levels of marital satisfaction among women having provoked vestibulodynia (PVD) experience [26]. Intimacy is necessary in marriage as it solidifies the couple's commitment to live together and is positively correlated with satisfaction in marriage [27]. On the other hand, the lack of intimacy in marital relations contributes to marital conflicts and distress and said to be one of the causes of divorce [3].

Self-esteem and marital satisfaction

One of the important psychological factors that promote harmony in a marriage is the self-esteem of the partners involved which brings improvement in the social life [28]. In the domains of psychology, self-esteem is an individual's rating of his or her worth in life [29]. The marital union is governed by both social and psychological factors, and self-esteem is one of many psychological factors that have been investigated in association with marital satisfaction by several studies [30], [35], [19], [13], [36]. Self-esteem has gained attention because of its profound influence on marital satisfaction, with higher self-esteem having a positive correlation [19].

According to [29], self-esteem significantly influences marital satisfaction and married persons with known self-esteem difficulties are advised to seek psychological help so as to save their marriages. A study [13] is in agreement with the positive correlation between self-esteem and marital satisfaction, and recommended that psychologist, family therapist, marriage counselors, behavioral scientist and policy makers are to get insights from this in improving marital satisfaction among couples. Consistent with these results is the study by [19], that found a positive relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction within Japanese married persons. Again, a study by [37] with four hundred and seven (407) married individuals from Emirate confirmed a positive relation between self-esteem and marital satisfaction. This implied

that respondents who scored high in the self-esteem scales also had high scores in marital satisfaction. The discussion above suggests that the relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction is positive [30].

Locus of control and marital satisfaction

Contemporary studies of the locus of control literature showed an increasing number of studies on the relationship between the type of control (internal and external) marriage [31], [32]. According to [33], locus of control as assessed in middle adulthood predicted marital satisfaction assessed contemporaneously. However, before this, [34] asserted in his work that external locus of control was linked with higher marital change compared to the people with internal locus of control. The work of [31] revealed a similar pattern of results indicating that there is a substantial interrelationship between internal locus of control and marital satisfaction.

A study among elderly women solidified the claim of a positive association between locus of control and marital satisfaction [20]. Again, [38], found significant evidence to suggest that internal locus of control was responsible for notable variations in marital satisfaction among post-traumatic stress disorder patients.

Limitations of the Study

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design which precludes no conclusions regarding causality. The use of a non-probability-based sampling within the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic limits generalization of the study beyond the sample. However, the study used an adequate sample size for the analysis proposed and findings can inform conceptualization of future research.

Materials and Methods

Study Design: The study employed a cross-sectional survey design with a quantitative approach to test the research hypotheses. A survey method was adopted to study the variables of interest (intimacy, locus of control, self-esteem and pre-marital counseling) in relation to marital satisfaction. A survey is able to study both large and small populations by selecting the study samples chosen from the populations in order to discover the interrelations of sociological and psychological

variables [40]. This allows for inference as to what people may think or feel is responsible for a certain behavior.

Study area

The study was undertaken in Laterbiokoshie, a suburb under the Ablekuma South Constituency in the Greater Accra Region, Ghana. The population of this area was not particularly dominated by any group of people and can be described as cosmopolitan. The area was therefore suitable for the study. The choice of the area was influenced by proximity, and the mixed nature of the people in terms of different cultural and socio-economic background.

Study population

All married persons in the study area, married by any of the three main types of marriage recognized by the law in Ghana were invited to participate in the study. The three main types of marriage were Traditional/Customary, Marriage under Ordinance and Islamic/Mohammedan Marriage. Participants were required to still be in the union and not separated at the time of data collection and they should have been married for six months or more which should afford enough time for a fair assessment of marital satisfaction. A participant who has been married for less than six months may still be reminiscing honeymoon moments. Separated and divorced persons may have answers that are skewed from the hurt they have felt and other issues that brought about the separation and divorce.

Persons aged 18 years or older were selected as this is the acceptable age of marriage. The study population also included individuals across different levels of education. Eligible persons who provided written and/or consent were included in the study. Participants who were unable to communicate in English, Ga or Twi, a commonly spoken dialect in the suburb were excluded, due to the language barrier which may affect the correct interpretation of constructs.

Sample size/Technique

An estimated sample size of 633 married persons was calculated for this study. The sample size was estimated using the Cochran's formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 X p X (1 - p)}{e}, \quad \text{assuming } 95\%$$

confidence level and assuming the prevalence of marital satisfaction to be 50% yielded a minimum sample size of 384. A non-response rate of 10% and design effect of 1.5 was allowed for resulting in a final sample size of 633. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample, however selecting the sample required that the geographical area should be divided into clusters to afford the researcher the opportunity to select equally from each cluster to avoid a skew. Purposive sampling is an attempt to select people who meet a certain pre-determined criterion [40].

Study instruments

Standardized questionnaires were used to assess all variables of interest. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS), while the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE) was used to measure self-esteem. The Locus of control of behavior scale (LCB) was utilized on to measure locus of control, and intimacy was measured using the Intimacy Scale by [41].

Data collection

On the days of data collection, questionnaires were distributed to participants in their homes. Study participants were approached in their homes due to the ban on public gathering including churches, mosque and clubs by the Government of Ghana following the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible persons responded to the questionnaire in a neutral area of their house that offered privacy to encourage honest responses. Social distancing was strictly observed. Research assistants were trained in the basic ethical and hygiene measures to minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19. Personal protective equipment such as face masks, sanitizers, disposable gloves and household wipe for surfaces were provided for all the research assistants and provision were made for research participants who did not have access to face masks during the study period. The research participants were requested to wash their hands and use sanitizer before and after the data collection process.

When consent was obtained from willing participants, questionnaires were administered. All questionnaires were collated daily by the

researcher, scoring completed for each relevant section and coded for entry in an electronic database. The data were password protected with the password known only to the researcher.

Study variables

Outcome variable

The outcome variable was marital satisfaction, which was measured using the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale. This scale consists of 15 items. Each item is scored using a five-point Likert-scale of 1-5, 1 being 'Strongly disagree' to 5 being 'Strongly agree.' Items scored in a negative direction were reverse-scored (i.e., if it is marked 5, it would be scored 1: if it is marked 4, it would be scored 2: a 3 remains unchanged). Items 1, 4, 6, 9, and 13 constitute the Idealistic Distortion scale. The remaining items are in the Marital Satisfaction scale.

Predictor variables

The variables investigated in this study were Locus of Control, Self-Esteem, and Intimacy. Locus of control was measured using the Locus of control behavior scale (LCB). The 17-item test is scored in the same direction that is, high scores indicate externality. This indicates that the higher the score, the more the individual inclined towards external locus of control and the reverse is true, the lower the score, the more inclined towards internal locus of control. Thus, the 10 items which relate to externality are tallied from the left-hand column of response boxes and the scores for the seven items relating to internality (items 1, 5, 7, 8, 13 and 16) are transposed so that 5 is scored as 0 (strongly disagree), 4 (generally agree) becomes 1 (generally disagree), etc., in the right-hand column of response boxes. After transposing the seven items the test is scored by summing the scores for all 17 items.

Self-esteem was measured with the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (RSE). This involves a method of combined ratings. Low self-esteem responses are 'Disagreeing' or 'Strongly disagree' on items 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, and 'Strongly agree' or 'Agree' on items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9. Two or three out of three correct responses to items 3, 7, and 9 are scored as one item. One or two out of two correct responses for items 4 and 5 are considered as a single item; items 1, 8, and 10 are scored as individual items; and combined

correct responses (one or two out of two) to items 2 and 6 are considered to be a single item.

The scale can also be scored by adding the individual 4-point items after reverse-scoring the negatively worded items.

Intimacy was measured with the Intimacy Scale (IS; Walker & Thompson, 1983) which is a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1= never to 7=always, with '1' being the least score and "7" being the highest score. A total of the scores gives one the level of intimacy that exists in the relationship.

Statistical analysis

Data entry, validation and analysis was done using the Statistical product and services solution software (SPSS version 25). Three main analyses were conducted. Descriptive statistics were generated for sociodemographic characteristics of the study participants and presented in frequency distribution tables with corresponding percentages. Preliminary analysis was done to ensure that study variables were accurate in terms of reliability estimates, normality and homogeneity, prior to inferential analysis and partial correlation matrices were generated. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses.

Results

The results presented in this chapter summarize the demographic characteristics of the study participants, provide a preliminary analysis of study variables to ensure accuracy for inferential analysis and present the output of multivariable regression analysis for hypothesis testing and discussion of findings.

Demographic characteristics of study participants

Table 1.1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of study participants. A total of 720 questionnaires were administered with a response rate of 100%. The sample was predominantly female, 430 (60%) and Christian, 675 (94%). The modal age group for respondents and spouses was 31-45 years 387(54%) and 400 (56%) respectively (Table 1.1). Study participants who were married by ordinance comprised 400 (56%). One hundred and fifty study participants (21%) had the same ethnicity with their spouses. The mean years of marriage was 13.15 ± 10.70 and the mean number

of children from the marriage was two children= 2.42 ± 1.44). One hundred and ninety-one (27%) study participants owned their personal house, while the rest were mostly renters (Table 1.1).

Among the study participants, 285 (40%) were employed, 66 (9%) were unemployed and 369(51%) were self-employed. Those who earned more than one thousand Ghana Cedis (GHC1000; USD 173 @GHC5.78 to USD1.00

on September 2, 2020 at 10.00am) were 330 (47%) were the majority, followed by those who earned between five hundred and one Ghana Cedis to one thousand Ghana Cedis (GHC501 – GHC1000; USD 87 – USD173), 210(30%) (Table 4.1). The mean monthly earnings were five hundred and sixty-four Ghana cedis, forty-seven pesewas (GHC 564.47 \pm 4.87; USD97.66 \pm 0.84).

Table 1.1: Distribution of Demographic Information on Participants

Variables	Statistics	
	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	290	40
Female	430	60
Religion		
Christianity	675	94
Islam	44	6
African Traditional Religion	1	0
Age (years)		
30 or less	90	13
31 – 45	387	54
46 – 60	184	25
61 +	59	8
Mean (s.d.)	39.43 \pm 3.89	
Age of Spouse (years)		
30 or less	63	8
31 – 45	400	56
46 – 60	193	27
61 +	64	9
Mean (s.d.)	39.79 \pm 3.18	
Type of Marriage		
Ordinance	400	56
Islamic	45	6
Customary	275	38

Preliminary Analysis

In order to assess for the accuracy of the data in terms of normal distribution, reliability estimates, normality and homogeneity were run for key study variables. Based on the results of the preliminary analysis, the data met the underlying assumptions for inferential statistical analysis to be conducted. Descriptive statistics including means, standard deviations were computed to support the data fittingness.

Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Major Study Variables

Mean scores for the study variables were as follows: Intimacy (99.40 \pm 21.73), Self-esteem

(23.03 \pm 2.66), Locus of Control (43.90 \pm 9.09), Marital Satisfaction (50.10 \pm 7.02). (Table 1.2).

Intimacy and Self-esteem were negatively skewed while Locus of Control and Marital Satisfaction were positively skewed. All the four scales recorded acceptable Kurtosis figures well within the ± 2 range [42]. As a result, the data for the study variables were analyzed without any transformation. Parametric tests used to test hypotheses were robust to minimize violations of any assumptions on data normality (Hayes, 2013).

Table 1.2. Mean, Standard Deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis of Major Study Variables

Variables	Data Normality Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
Intimacy (I)	99.40	21.73	-1.60	2.02
Self-esteem (ES)	23.03	2.66	-.281	1.37
Locus of Control (LoC)	43.90	9.09	1.27	2.15
Marital Satisfaction (MS)	50.10	7.02	1.03	1.78

Marital Satisfaction Category based on Standard Norms

Majority of the participants reported being satisfied with their marriage. Fifty-four per cent recorded a marital satisfaction score that fell within 50th to 99th percentiles. Those who were scored below the 50th percentile was deemed dissatisfied with their marriages (46%).

Correlation Matrix of the Key Study Variables

The major study variables were further subjected to partial correlation and the correlation matrix as depicted in Table 1.3.

Multicollinearity (interrelationships) existed between the key study variables. Intimacy correlated positively with Self-esteem, though this was not significant [$r_{(718)} = .004, p > .05$]. Intimacy positively and significantly predicted Marital Satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = .460, p < .01$] and negatively predicted Locus of Control [$r_{(718)} = .116, p < .01$]. Self-esteem negatively and significantly predicted Locus of Control [$r_{(718)} = -.176, p < .01$], but the correlation with Marital Satisfaction did not attain statistical significance [$r_{(718)} = -.027, p > .05$] and Locus of control did not demonstrate a significant correlation with Marital Satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = .041, p > .05$].

Table 1.3. Correlation Matrix of Key Study Variables

Variables	Key Study Variables			
	1	2	3	4
Intimacy (I)	-	.004 ^{ns}	-.116 ^{**}	.460 ^{**}
Self-esteem (SE)	-	-	-.176 ^{**}	-.027 ^{ns}
Locus of Control (LoC)	-	-	-	.041 ^{ns}
Marital Satisfaction (MS)	-	-	-	-

** = <.01, * = p<.05, ^{ns}= not significant, 1 = I, 2 = SE, 3 = LoC, 4 = MS

Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 – Intimacy and Marital Satisfaction

The null and alternate hypotheses are stated below:

Ho: There is no relationship between Intimacy and Marital Satisfaction.

H_A: There is a relationship between Intimacy and Marital Satisfaction.

The mean score for Intimacy was 99.40 ±21.73, while the corresponding score for Marital Satisfaction was 50.10±7.02. These

means were subjected to bivariate analysis using partial correlation to control for demographic variables such as sex, gender, years of marriage and number of children. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between the two variables [$r_{(718)} = .460, p < .000$] (Table 1.4). Regarding the first hypothesis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The alternate hypothesis states that there is a significant relationship between intimacy and marital satisfaction.

Table 1.4. Partial Correlation between Intimacy and Marital Satisfaction

Predictor Variable	Marital Satisfaction Variable		
	df	r	Sig
Intimacy	718	.460 ^{**}	.000

** = <.01

Hypothesis 2–Locus of Control and Marital Satisfaction

The null and alternate hypotheses are stated below:

Ho: There is no relationship between Locus of Control (internal/external) and Marital Satisfaction.

H_A: There is a relationship between Locus of Control (internal/external) and Marital Satisfaction.

The mean score for Locus of Control score was 43.90 ± 9.09 and the corresponding score for marital satisfaction was 50.10 ± 7.02. The mean scores were subjected to bivariate analysis using partial correlation to control for demographic variables. There was no significant correlation between the two variables [$r_{(718)} = .041, p > .05$] (Table 4.5). Therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Table 1.5. Partial Correlation between locus of Locus of Control and Marital Satisfaction

Predictor Variable	Marital Satisfaction Variable		
	df	r	Sig
Locus of Control	718	.041 ^{ns}	.270

ns – not significant

Hypothesis 3 –Self-Esteem and Marital Satisfaction

The null and alternate hypotheses are stated below:

Ho: There is no relationship between Self-Esteem and Marital Satisfaction.

H_A: There is a relationship between Self-Esteem and Marital Satisfaction.

The mean self-esteem score was 23.03 ± 2.66 and the corresponding score for marital satisfaction was 50.10 ± 7.02 were subjected to bivariate analysis using partial correlation. This yielded a negative correlation between the two variables [$r_{(718)} = -.027, p > .05$] (Table 1.6). This implied that there was no significant relationship between Self-Esteem and Marital Satisfaction; therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Table 1.6. Partial Correlation between Self-esteem and Marital Satisfaction

Predictor Variable	Marital Satisfaction Variable		
	df	r	Sig
Self-esteem	718	-.027	.471

ns – not significant

Discussion

This study investigated the influence of intimacy, self-esteem, and locus of control on marital satisfaction of married couples. This section discusses the key findings in the research.

Intimacy and marital satisfaction

This study revealed a significant positive correlation between intimacy and marital satisfaction. This finding supports the findings of [22] who found that intimacy has been linked with variances in marital satisfaction owing to the fact that, it is the start point in initiating almost any process in the marital relationship. This finding is also consistent with the findings of [25] who found that daily levels of intimacy were responsible for variances in global marital

satisfaction. Several reasons could account for this finding. Intimacy is conceptualized as an individuals' closeness level to his or her partner, engaging in combine endeavors, interdependent on each other as a result of common goals, values and ideas, engaging in sexual relations and other emotional activities such as fondling [22]. [3] also posit that marital intimacy is said to occur when couples in a relationship are able to freely express their views, ideas, emotions and demands together.

The above views on intimacy indicates one can argue intimacy is more or less the expression of love and since marriage is about love it leaves no one in doubt that intimacy correlates with marital satisfaction. For instance, intimacy may include an emotional, bodily (sensual), social and/or emotional nearness. Intimate relations include physical, expressive,

social, logical, spiritual and entertaining extents [43]. Intimacy includes the awareness and recognition of one's private moods and actions, sharing it honestly with another and accepting the good within others, including unpleasant characteristics, both conscious and unconscious [44]. The views of Bochner and Kanwal & Akhtar, buttress the point that intimacy is a concept that fuels happiness and joy and the more couples get intimate the more satisfied they would be as the findings of this study showed.

In addition to the above reason, intimacy facilitates attachment and bonding between couples and this is a possible reason intimacy correlates positively with marital satisfaction. Well attached and bonded couples are likely to be satisfied couples. Attachment and bonding have significant influence over the development of trust, emotion regulation, social skills, positive identity and quality of relationships throughout the lifespan [45][46]. It is clear from the above explanation of attachment that couples without intimacy may find it difficult to attach and bond. Thus, attachment and bonding thrive on intimacy which consequently leads to satisfaction as stated by [47] that marriage can be of worth and satisfying when it is characterized by contentment, desire, love, closeness, sensitivity, solid communication, and obligation (which are all components of intimacy). When spouses share each other's fears, secrets, sex, dreams, religion and daily experiences together, they get closer to attaining satisfaction in their marital relation.

Locus of control (internal/external) and Marital satisfaction

This study revealed that there was no significant correlation between locus of control and marital satisfaction. This finding supported the findings of [48] in the study which examined the relationship between locus of control with marital satisfaction and marital stability. The study reported a negative no significant relationship between external locus of control and marital satisfaction and no significant relationship between internal locus of control and marital satisfaction as well as no significant relationship between both locus of control and marital stability.

This observation could be accounted for by a number of reasons. In the first place, the theory

of locus of control proposes that some people are more inclined to attribute control to either internal or external factors regardless of the context [49]. Further, by adulthood locus of control is thought to be relatively fixed [50]. Since locus of control is learned as a result of life experiences over time, it is influenced by various factors, an example being attachment styles and emotional intelligence, which are among the most important factors affecting interpersonal interactions such as marriage [51]. The theoretical explanation of locus of control implies that socialization and culture play a significant role in an individuals' locus of control. We are in a culture (Ghanaian Culture) where most people believe happenings in life are controlled by higher sacred beings such as God and lesser gods and familial spirits [52]. This makes most belief systems of majority of Ghanaians external in terms of locus of control. This could have resulted in the non-significant relationship observed between locus of control and marital satisfaction.

Also, the lack of a significant correlation between locus of control and marital satisfaction could be explained based on the reward and reinforcement principle. When a reward does act as a reinforcer for learning and behavior frequency it is perceived to be contingent on the person's preceding behavior. In such cases, a person is deemed to have an internal locus of control. This was not the case with the majority of Ghanaian participants most of whom recorded on external locus of control. Due to this the success and satisfaction with one's marriage was seen not as a result of an individual effort let alone draw any link between that and locus of control.

Further an individual with external locus of control as most of the current participants were due to cultural believes, is not in a position to accept and realize the fact that the success and happiness in their marriage is under their control. As a result, the externality of participants in the correlation between locus of control and marital satisfaction was weakened. However, the current finding contradicts the findings of Self-esteem and Marital satisfaction: This study revealed that there was no relationship between Self-Esteem and Marital Satisfaction. The findings of the current study contradict the findings of earlier researchers many of whom found a significant correlation

between the two variables. Researchers argue how self-esteem is positively correlated to relationship satisfaction; it is not surprising that literature points to the fact that the progress of self-esteem is also affected by experiences in relationships [35][53]. So, as an individual becomes satisfied in a relationship with all the positive affirmations, the self-esteem increases as asserted by [54].

The argument by [35] that positive affirmative words from satisfied individuals increase the self-esteem implies couples who are satisfied are likely to have their self-esteem increased. The lack of relationship found by the current study could possibly imply marital satisfaction level of the participants in this study may not have the positive affirmative words due to culture and as a result the self-esteem has not increased to result in such a positive relationship. Future studies are required to examine in detail the relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction.

Conclusion

The satisfaction of marriage is an individual assessment of the marriage and intensely connected to the psychological and physical well-being and happiness of the people involved. Several research findings showed inconsistent relationship between various variables playing a role in marital satisfaction. From many studies, marital satisfaction has been affected by factors such as gender, social support, personality, infidelity, children, partner violence, religion and spirituality and sexual satisfaction.

The current study investigated the influence of intimacy, self-esteem, and locus of control on marital satisfaction of married couples. The research findings confirmed that there is a significant positive correlation between intimacy and marital satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = .460$, $p < .000$] suggesting that spouses working toward attainment of marital satisfaction should share each other's fears, secrets, sex, dreams, religion and daily experiences together.

On the other hand, the research findings also revealed that there is no significant correlation between the Locus of control and marital satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = .041$, $p > .05$] as well as self-esteem and marital satisfaction [$r_{(718)} = -.027$, $p > .05$].

Recommendations

Partner intimacy for to-be-wed couples should be promoted within appropriate and approved settings due to the significant influence demonstrated in this research. The impact of self-esteem on marital satisfaction can be investigated further as the present study did not confirm a significant association. Most of the earlier studies reviewed found a significant relationship which the current study contradicts. Independently, Locus of control had a negative correlation with Marital satisfaction contrary to earlier studies. This finding also calls for further research. The present study recruited participants from one specific community in Ghana (Lartebiokoshie). Future research may consider different settings in terms of culture and geo-spatial distribution.

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