



INTERNET INFIDELITY AND COMMUNICATION AS PREDICTORS OF MARITAL DISSATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED PEOPLE

Cynthia N.C Udeze, Chioma Ogbuu, Chinenyenwa Ifedigbo & Anulika O. Nnadozie

Department of Psychology,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka
Correspondence email: cn.onyejiaka-udeze@unizik.edu.ng
Tel: +2347032335587

Abstract

This study examined Internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State. A total of one hundred and forty nine (149) participants, conveniently selected from Nnewi market in Okpunoegbu Nnewi North Local Government Area, participated in the study. They comprised of fifty one (51) males and ninety eight (98) females, whose age ranged between 20 and 60 with the mean age of 35.60 and standard deviation of 9.72. Three self-report scales were used for data collection: Marital Dissatisfaction Index Scale (MDIS) by Azize (2013), Internet Infidelity Scale (IIS) by Docan-Morgan (2007) and Primary Communication Inventory by Navran (1967). It adopted predictive design and Multiple Regression Analysis as the design and statistics respectively. The findings showed: i) a positive and not statistically significant prediction of internet infidelity in marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State ($\beta = .11, p < .05$), ii) a negative and statistically significant prediction of communication in marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State ($\beta = .19, p < .05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that there should be development and implementation of targeted interventions that address the specific challenges related to internet infidelity, communication and marital dissatisfaction among married people. That is, Counsellors should organize seminars and conferences where married people will be sensitized on the role of internet infidelity and communication on marital dissatisfaction. Religious bodies and government should make premarital counselling compulsory for intending couples to equip them with the communication skills for handling marital dissatisfaction. These interventions should be tailored to also consider awareness creation on the significance and pertinence of love based marriage to be made in Nigeria at large.

Key word: Internet infidelity, Communication, Marital dissatisfaction and Married women.

Introduction

The importance of marriage cannot be over emphasized. Marriage is regarded as a God-given institution for the continuation of society and the human race through the family unit. Marriage can be considered as the major rite of passage into adulthood; hence, marriage is not an option but an

obligation and indeed a sacred duty. Marriage is expected to be an affair of intimacy and compromise, where spouses complement each other. It is expected to be for better for worse but the current trend in the marriage departs from these assertions, as the marital union in recent time, is marred with marital dissatisfaction (Juliana & Nwanna, 2021).



This warranted a study on predict marital dissatisfaction.

Marital dissatisfaction can be defined as couples not being satisfied with the marriage process which can lead to many health challenges like depression (Woods et al., 2019). For both men and women, dissatisfaction with the amount of understanding and affection (including dissatisfaction with support and empathy from partner and mutual disclosure) is related to dissatisfaction in the following areas: problem solving, time together, communicating about finances and sex (Duba et al., 2012). Marital dissatisfaction stems from poor communication, lack of intimacy, money problems and growing apart as life takes different twists and turns (Duba, 2012). If you realize that your marriage is hitting a rough patch, but both you and your spouse are willing to make some necessary changes, you can resolve almost any source of tension. Marital dissatisfaction can be defined as the negative feelings, attitudes, and behaviors that are directed towards one's spouse and the marriage itself (Mahmoudi & Talaei, 2021). Marital Dissatisfaction refers to a state of unhappiness in a romantic or marital relationship. Marital dissatisfaction is the displeasure with or dissatisfaction with one's marriage or marital relationship (Mahmoudi & Talaei, 2021).

Marital dissatisfaction is defined as a lack of satisfaction with one's spouse, marriage, and/or marital relationship (Kim et al., 2016). Marital dissatisfaction can be viewed as the extent to which one's marriage falls short of expectations or aspirations (Vanwesenbeeck,

2021). This means that individuals can feel dissatisfied with their marriage if it does not meet their expectations or aspirations in areas such as intimacy, communication, trust, and overall happiness. This definition highlights that marital dissatisfaction is not just about negative feelings towards the partner, but also about feeling that the marriage is not meeting one's expectations. Kalayjian et al. (2020) refers to marital dissatisfaction as a state of unhappiness, lack of fulfillment, and overall dissatisfaction with one's romantic relationship. Marital dissatisfaction is often defined as the attitude an individual has toward his or her marital relationship (Fincham & Beach, 2014). Marital dissatisfaction is an important area for researchers and married people alike. For researchers, understanding the workings of relationships that contribute to lesser satisfaction remains a worthy goal. Identifying contributing predictors to dissatisfaction allows married people and marital counselors to employ strategies that may contribute to a more satisfying marriage, and likewise avoid other behaviors that may contribute to a decrease in marital satisfaction. Two possible predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people to be considered in this study are internet infidelity and communication.

Internet infidelity is defined as an interaction that occurred or started through online contact, involving third parties, which led in them keeping secret from their spouse. Internet infidelity is a form of infidelity in cyberspace where individuals have non-sexual relationships with others who are not spouses and there is an emotional closeness



between the parties involved (Fincham & Beach, 2014). Internet infidelity can either be a continuous relationship specific to one online user or a series of random erotic chat room encounters with multiple online users (Duba, 2012). Internet infidelity is defined as any secretive behavior online that includes flirtation, sexual behavior, or romantic attachment with someone other than the primary partner without the primary partner's consent (Schoenmaker & Trotter, 2017).

Internet infidelity is an act of betrayal that involves engaging in a relationship over the Internet that is romantic or sexual in nature and is kept secret from a committed partner (Braun-Courville, et al., 2017). They focused on understanding why individuals engage in online deception, specifically self-presentation and impression management. Self-presentation is motivated by the desire to enhance one's image, whereas impression management is motivated by the desire to avoid negative evaluations. (Braun-Courville et al., 2017). Internet infidelity involves engaging in romantic and/or sexual communication with an individual on the Internet who is not one's current romantic partner, without the current partner's knowledge or consent (Hudson, et al., 2020). Internet infidelity is a form of intimate relationship betrayal in which one partner develops a romantic or sexual relationship online with another person. It equally refers to engaging in secret online romantic or sexual interactions with someone other than one's primary partner without the partner's knowledge or consent (Hudson et al., 2020).

Internet infidelity refers to a form of extramarital involvement in which individuals engage in online romantic or sexual communication with people other than their primary romantic partner (Schneider & Weiss, 2015). Internet infidelity is also a romantic and/or sexual relationship with someone other than the spouse, which begins with an online contact and is maintained mainly through electronic conversations that occur through e-mail and chat rooms (Cravens, et al., 2014). The emphasis is on the process whereby individuals already involved in a committed relationship seek to be involved in computer synchronous, interactive contacts with members of the opposite sex (Burke, 2012). We must acknowledge the well-established prevalence of infidelity in our society and the role technology plays in sustaining these relationships. Internet infidelity is an affair through a digital platform or method, whether text, email, social media or anything else. This cyber affair could be solely emotional or they may exchange sensual messages which can simulate a physical affair. (Duba, 2012). Certain problems, however, appear to result directly from relationships online. For example, increased internet usage may diminish shared time between married people, which can be particularly problematic because a primary factor in infidelity is the amount of shared time between one spouse and another individual outside of marriage. As a result, in recent times, internet infidelity is becoming more common and it is among the factors for marital dissatisfaction (Bernadette & Juneman, 2018).



Communication on the other hand, is the ability to symbolically and efficiently transfer the meanings and messages one has in mind (Baghipour, 2010). When married people communication is of a better quality, they can share thoughts and feelings which create more intimacy (Baghipour, 2010). According to Keith (2012), communication is a process of passing information and understanding from one person to another. John (2010) stated that communication is essentially the ability of one person to make contact with another and make himself or herself understood. It is also the process by which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings or impressions in ways that each gains a common understanding of the meaning, intent and use of messages. The term communication stems from the Latin word “communis” meaning ‘Common’ (Winifield, 1957).

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages using verbal and nonverbal means to achieve understanding (Kottkamp & Benoit, 2019). This is a multifaceted concept that involves the exchange of information, ideas, and feelings between individuals (Kottkamp & Benoit, 2019). Communication is the intentional act of sharing information, ideas, emotions, and intentions with others through verbal and nonverbal channels (Dennis et al., 2021). This study aim to examine internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Attachment Theory: The theory of attachment offers some understanding for the mechanisms contributing to marital dissatisfaction. Attachment theory began with the pioneering work of Bowlby, followed by Ainsworth (Ainsworth, 1989). Bowlby argued that attachment was driven by human beings’ inherent need for relationships. Specifically, Bowlby recognized that humans sought out proximity to affectionate, trusted and supportive attachment figures as part of their survival and therefore viewed the loss of such proximity and contact as distressing and dysfunctional (Bowlby, 1988). Attachment’s continued influence in adult relationships and with romantic partners helps explain variances in marital dissatisfaction for married people. Research has shown that individuals who demonstrate attachment security as opposed to high levels of attachment-anxiety or avoidance will react and behave differently in long term romantic relationships (Dillow, et al. 2014). Secure attachment styles predict availability, reliability and a corresponding decrease in marital dissatisfaction, while attachment-related insecurity leads to lesser relationship satisfaction (Mikulincer et al., 2002). During a relationship, attachment injuries or instances that demonstrate a partner’s unavailability, lack of communication, infidelity, abuse, or rejection can create times of either deactivation or hyper-activation of attachment behaviors. These attachment injuries are incorporated into the individual’s working model of the relationship and continue the negative feedback between married people (Vorauer, et al. 2003). Overall, individuals with insecure attachment consistently demonstrate higher rates of relationship dissatisfaction (Chung, 2014).

Implicit Theories: Implicit theories are based on both perceptions individuals have of the



world and the expectations individuals have due to those perceptions. Implicit theories are therefore seen as a socially learned phenomenon that influences an individual's cognitions and future behaviors. Implicit theories guide individuals on how to respond and behave in situations based on expectations and automatic assumptions about the self and the social world. Specifically, Ross (1989) defined implicit theories as schematic knowledge structures that involve specific beliefs about the stability of an attribute and the conditions that are likely to promote change. Generally, there are two main implicit theories which are fixed or entity theory and malleable or incremental theory. Entity theory suggests that personal attributes are stable, immutable and set over time, while incremental theory suggests that personal attributes are capable of change, adaption, and growth. Research has demonstrated that an individual's implicit theories of personal attributes, such as intelligence or personality traits, influence his or her decisions, stress and social judgments in response to simple behaviors (Dweck, 1996).

Social Exchange Theory: The theory of social exchange offers some understanding for the mechanisms contributing to marital dissatisfaction. This theory posits that individuals evaluate their relationships based on the perceived costs and benefits of being in that relationship. If the costs outweigh the benefits, marital dissatisfaction is likely to occur (Jeon & Kim, 2021). Jeon and Kim (2021) stated that marital dissatisfaction was defined as the extent to which one partner is dissatisfied with his/her

relationship with the other partner. Jeon and Kim (2021) applied the Social Exchange Theory to the context of marital dissatisfaction and communication. Their study found that, individuals who perceived their relationship as offering more costs than benefits were more likely to report higher levels of marital dissatisfaction. The quality of marital communication was a significant mediator of the relationship between perceived costs and benefits and marital dissatisfaction. Spousal verbal aggression, or the use of verbal attacks or insults, was found to be a significant moderator of the relationship between perceived costs and benefits and marital dissatisfaction.

Investment Theory Model of Commitment:

Investment model of commitment theory is based on people's commitment to a relationship is based on the amount of resources they have invested in the relationship, such as time, energy, and emotions (Finn, et al., 2020). Marital dissatisfaction can occur when individuals perceive that they have invested more than their partner has. Investments refer to the resources that individuals contribute to a relationship, such as time, effort, money, or emotional energy (Fine et al. 2020). The Investment Model of Commitment suggests that individuals remain in relationships because they have invested a great deal of resources into those relationships, and because leaving would be costly and disruptive" (Asao & Lok, 2022). Individuals weigh the costs and benefits of staying in a relationship against the potential costs and benefits of leaving (Asao & Lok, 2022).



Theory of Planned Behaviour: Theory of planned behavior is a very powerful and predictive cognitive model for explaining online infidelity. It evolved from the theory of reasoned action by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), which posited intention to act as the best-predictor of behavior. In addition to attitudes and subjective-norms, theory of planned behavior adds the concept of perceived behavioral control, which originates from self-efficacy theory, proposed by Bandura in 1977. The premise of the theory of planned behavior is that individuals make rational decisions to engage in specific behaviors based on their own beliefs about the behaviors and their expectation of a positive outcome after having engaged in the behaviors. Theory of planned behavior hypothesizes that infidelity happens because of the opportunity, as well as the intention to cheat.

Technological Facilitation Theory: This theory posits that the availability and ease of access to online communication technologies have facilitated Internet Infidelity (Kaiser & Egger, 2019). Individuals are attracted to online partners who provide positive social information, such as compliments, attention, and support (Kaiser & Egger, 2019). Individuals may develop strong emotional attachments to their online partners, which can lead to Internet Infidelity. Kaiser & Egger (2019) uses this to explain how advancements in technology have led to an increase in Internet Infidelity.

Social Information Processing Theory: This theory proposes that the way individuals interact online can influence their behaviors

and attitudes toward their romantic relationships. For example, individuals may engage in more self-disclosure and express more positive emotions online, which may lead to greater intimacy and attachment with their online partners (Seidman & Harman, 2019). According to Joseph Walther (1992), Social Information Processing theory explains how individuals develop relationships online. In the theory, individuals engage in a series of stages when forming relationships online.

Communication Accommodation Theory: Communication accommodation theory explained that it is the process of changing one's speech or nonverbal behavior to match that of another person in a communication situation (Giles, 2015). Giles, (2015) theory suggests that spouses who are able to accommodate each other's communication styles are more likely to be satisfied in their relationship. For example, if one spouse prefers to discuss problems openly and directly, while the other prefers to avoid conflict and talk about problems indirectly, the couple may experience communication difficulties.

Communication Accommodation Theory suggests that when spouses accommodate each other's communication styles, it signals respect and acceptance, which can help strengthen the relationship (Giles, 2015). This theory has been used to explain communication patterns in intercultural marriages, where spouses may have different cultural norms and communication styles. Communication Accommodation Theory also suggests that accommodation can be strategic, meaning that spouses may intentionally accommodate or resist accommodation depending on the situation (Giles, 2015).



Marital Communication Theory: Under the marital communication theory developed by Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, there are three clusters that married people tend to fall under throughout the duration of their relationships and those are: the traditional, the independents and the separates. The traditional is the first stage of the marital communication theory. At this stage, married people are literally obsessed with each other and want to spend every waking moment with each other and share everything. The independents is the second stage when married people begin to feel more comfortable with each other. They do still share a great deal but also cherish their own personal space. The separates is the last stage in the marital communication theory when married people begin having mixed feelings about their spouse in the relationship. They are no longer interdependent and they do not self-disclose to each other at all.

Internet Infidelity and Marital Dissatisfaction

Diana, et al., (2021) aimed to validate the Romanian version of the Internet Infidelity Scale (IIS), and to determine its psychometric properties in Romanian couple relationships. Specifically, IIS assesses the severity of 44 specific acts on both the Self Infidelity and the Partner Infidelity versions. 675 participants completed the Romanian version of the Internet Infidelity Scale (RVIIS), the Infidelity Scale (DIS), the Extra-Dyadic Behaviors Inventory (EBI) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). They used the exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to examine the structure and models fit for Self and Partner Internet Infidelity. The scale's reliability, convergent and divergent validity were also tested. The EFA and CFA analysis used for testing the matrix structure for Self and

Partner Infidelity Scale revealed adequate models. An overall Cronbach's alpha of .80 for Self-Infidelity Scale and .88 for Partner Infidelity Scale, showed good internal consistency. Positive levels of convergent validity for each scale revealed that the instruments measure what they have intended to measure. The good fit of the scales ensures a pronounced robustness of the construct. Given the limited number of research on people involved in couple relationships in Eastern Europe thus far, it was recommended that it was essential to provide validated tools to develop research in these countries. Joseph and Alfred (2018) examined the causes of marital dissatisfaction as perceived by the people of Navrongo in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Data were gathered through the use of Marital Satisfaction Inventory and an in-depth interview. The sample size was 400 participants, where 384 couples comprising 192 males and 192 females responded to the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI). Out of the 400 sample size, 16 people were interviewed. The stratified and quota sampling procedures were used to select the respondents to respond to the Marital Satisfaction Inventory while the Snowball sampling procedure was used to select respondents for the interview. Their study showed that some couples in Navrongo were not satisfied with their marriages as indicated by those who responded to the Marital Satisfaction Inventory. Data gathered from the interviewees in Navrongo revealed that internet caused couples to break their marriages. Both husbands and wives were involved in extramarital affairs as a result of internet infidelity. Counseling was therefore recommended for couples especially those who have marital challenges. Nweke, et al., (2018) examined internet infidelity as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among employed married women. The participants of the study comprised of one hundred and



fifty (150) employed married women who are married. A purposive sampling technique was adopted. Their age ranged from 19 to 55 years. Multiple linear regression statistical analysis was used as a statistical tool to analyze the hypotheses postulated. Results showed that the first hypothesis which states that internet infidelity will have a significantly positive prediction on marital dissatisfaction among employed married woman was confirmed. By implication, this suggests that internet infidelity has a significant prediction on marital dissatisfaction. Sadie (2018) explored the association between internet infidelity and marital dissatisfaction among married people. Data was gathered from 82 participants. Participants included 11 males and 71 females, who endorsed currently being married. Results demonstrated a significant positive relationship between internet infidelity and marital dissatisfaction. In general, his study suggested that married people suspecting their partner of being involved in internet infidelity report higher levels of marital dissatisfaction.

Communication and Marital Dissatisfaction

Juliana and Nwanna (2021) investigated communication styles and sexual satisfaction as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among couples in Anambra State. Two hypotheses guided their study. Their study employed correlational research design. The population of their study consisted of all married persons in Anambra State. There was no reliable record of the actual number of couples in the state. The sample size of 630 couples was chosen for their study, through a multistage sampling procedure. Three instruments were used for their studies which were the

Communication Pattern Questionnaire, the Golombok-Rust Sexual Satisfaction Inventory and Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire. The data collected was analyzed using a simple regression analysis. From the findings of their study, couples' communication style significantly predicted their marital dissatisfaction and couples' sexual satisfaction significantly predicted their marital satisfaction. They recommended among others that counselors should organize workshops, seminars and conferences where couples will be sensitized on the role of communication styles and sexual satisfaction on marital satisfaction. Also, the churches and government should make premarital counseling compulsory for intending couples to equip them with the communication skills for handling marital issues.

Farah and Aneesh (2018) aimed to understand the relationship between marital satisfaction and communication skills among married couples. In addition, it aimed to find out the influence of demographics such as age, gender, years of marriage on marital satisfaction. The sample for their study consisted of one hundred couples, (50 wives and 50 husbands) from Kannur district, Kerala. Marital Satisfaction Scale and Interpersonal Communication Inventory were administered on the couples. Results revealed that the interpersonal communications among couples could predict satisfaction of their marital life. Their findings highlighted the influence of gender and other demographic factors on marital satisfaction. The results of their study have an important implication for couples, family counselors and educators. Addisu, et al.,



(2015) aimed to determine the level of marital dissatisfaction and its relationship with communication in the study area. To address the desired objectives, 240 married couples were surveyed and the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale to measure marital satisfaction was used as a major instrument. Key informant interview was used to collect qualitative data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data. Results indicated sizable numbers of couples are dissatisfied in their marital relationship in one way or another. In addition, it's understood that marital dissatisfaction is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the frequent lack of communication.

Statement of the Problem

Marital dissatisfaction has continued to be an extensively researched topic on various forms of investigation on family life and marriage. However, the ideal of marital satisfaction is so strong that many spouses deceive themselves about the extent to which their marriage meets their particular criterion for satisfaction. But this also complicates the task of researchers who are attempting to investigate marital dissatisfaction. The complex and diverse nature of marital dissatisfaction allows us to study only a fraction of the available variables related to this subject.

It is important to recognize that most research on marital dissatisfaction has been conducted with participants from industrialized western societies (Juliana & Nwanna, 2021). Very little data are available about the marital dissatisfaction in non-western societies. There is no exception for Nigeria and little has been done in Nigeria and one of the aim of this research is to fill the scanty of

literature. Again, some of the research gave priority and attention to the issue of divorce, its cause and effect and leave untouched that of the predictors of marital dissatisfaction. This study seeks to cover this gap.

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the study aimed to investigate internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To examine whether internet infidelity will predict marital dissatisfaction among married people in Nigeria.
2. To examine whether communication will predict marital dissatisfaction among married people in Nigeria.

Relevance of the Study

Theoretically, findings of this study will add to the existing body of knowledge particularly in the area of educational psychology. It will also generate data that will support and sustain the interest of researchers across disciplines on examining internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people and serve as a resource for further researches among students and other academic researchers on this topic. Practically, this study will be helpful to academicians, marriage counselors and married people in the understanding of how internet infidelity and communication can serve as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people and help them to understand the dimensions to which these variables are related with each other.

Hypotheses

1. Internet infidelity would significantly and positively predict marital



dissatisfaction among married people.

2. 2. Communication would significantly and positively predict marital dissatisfaction among married.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 149 (one hundred and forty nine) married people were conveniently selected from Okpunoegbu market in Nnewi North Local Government Area participated in the study. They included fifty one (51) males and ninety eight (98) females, whose age ranged between 20 and 60 with the mean age of 35.60 and standard deviation of 9.72. Their highest educational qualification was B.Sc. while they included traders of different religions such as Christianity, Islam etc. Inclusion criteria for the study was being a married person and living with your spouse.

Instruments

The following instruments were used for data collection. They included: Marital Dissatisfaction Index Scale (MDIS) by Azize (2013), Internet Infidelity Scale (IIS) by Docan-Morgan (2007) and Primary Communication Inventory by Navran (1967).

Reliability: Azize (2013) obtained a reliability and validity coefficient of the over MDIS and it ranged from .80 to .88. Docan-Morgan (2007) obtained a reliability coefficient of the IIS and it ranged from .82 to .86. Navran (1967) obtained a reliability coefficient of the PCI and it ranged from .092 to .095. The researcher adapted the scale, which the project supervisor saw to the face validity of the scale. The researcher conducted a pilot study with one hundred and

forty nine (149) married people from Okpunoegbu market in Nnewi North Local Government Area, to ascertain the internal consistency of the scale and obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.78.

Procedure

Copies of questionnaire were administered to married people in Okpunoegbu market, Nnewi. The married people were conveniently selected, in that, copies of the questionnaire were administered to the married people who were available, ready and willing to participate in the study. The administration of the questionnaire was done at the market place, with each copy of the questionnaire containing a page used to obtain informed consent from the participants. Out of 165 copies of questionnaire administered, 149 copies were properly filled and returned and were used for data analysis.

Statistical design

This is a survey research which adopted predictive design and multiple regression analysis as the statistics applied respectively.

RESULT

Table 1: Regression coefficients of internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction.

Variable	Beta	SE	B	P
Internet Infidelity	.06	.04	.11	.12
Communication	-.51	.06	-.61	.00

Note: $R^2 = .34$, $F = (2,146) = 37.55$, $p < .05$

Table 1 above shows internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction. The R^2 value of .34 revealed



that the predictor variables explained only .34 variance in the outcome variable with $F(2, 146) = 37.55, p < .05$. The finding however revealed a positive and not statistically significant prediction of internet infidelity in marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State ($\beta = .11, p < .05$). Thus, hypothesis one, which stated that “internet infidelity would significantly and positively predict marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State” was accepted. Likewise, the findings showed a negative and statistically significant prediction of communication in marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State ($\beta = .19, p < .05$). Consequently, hypothesis two, which stated that “communication would significantly and positively predict marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State ($\beta = .27, p < .05$),” was also accepted.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate internet infidelity and communication as predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State. Two hypotheses were tested. The findings revealed that hypothesis one which stated that internet infidelity would significantly and positively predict marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State was accepted. Previous studies by Nweke, et al., (2018) shows that internet infidelity has a significant prediction on marital dissatisfaction.

The finding agrees with the study by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), which posited intention to act as the best-predictor of behavior. In addition to attitudes and subjective-norms, theory of planned behavior adds the concept of perceived behavioral control, which

originates from self-efficacy theory, proposed by Bandura in 1977. The premise of the theory of planned behavior is that individuals make rational decisions to engage in specific behaviors based on their own beliefs about the behaviors and their expectation of a positive outcome after having engaged in the behaviors. Theory of planned behavior hypothesizes that infidelity happens because of the opportunity, as well as the intention to cheat. Thus, the internet infidelity takes on a special emphasis because partners are often subjective and self-serving and will take their needs into consideration rather than their partner's, thus justifying self-infidelity as more acceptable than partner-infidelity (Docan-Morgan & Docan, 2007). Theoretically, this study in line with the technological facilitation theory of Kaiser (2019), which by exploration opines that the availability and ease of access to online communication technologies have facilitated Internet Infidelity. This means that individuals are attracted to online partners who provide positive social information, such as compliments, attention, and support. In other words, individuals may develop strong emotional attachments to their online partners, which can lead to Internet Infidelity. So in terms of hypothesis one, this means that married couples with internet infidelity traits may be more likely to engage in marital dissatisfaction because of advancements in technology have led to an increase in Internet Infidelity. This may explain why internet infidelity is associated with increased rates of marital dissatisfaction.

The Second hypothesis, which stated that communication would significantly and



positively predict marital dissatisfaction among married people at Nnewi, Anambra State was accepted. The link between communication and marital dissatisfaction has been supported by several studies. For example, Gallois & Giles, (2015) found that couples who adjust their language, speech patterns, and nonverbal behaviors to accommodate to the characteristics of another person or a social context are more likely to engage in marital dissatisfaction. Additionally, a study by found that communication problems among couples was associated with an increased risk of Internet infidelity. That the way people communicate changes in response to perceived similarities or differences between themselves and others" (Gallos & Giles, 2015). These studies suggest that there may be a strong connection between communication and marital dissatisfaction. Theoretically, this study in line with attachment theory which suggests that secure attachment styles predict availability, reliability and a corresponding decrease in marital dissatisfaction, while attachment-related insecurity leads to lesser relationship satisfaction (Dillow, et al., 2014) and it shares common link with research by (Mikulincer et al., 2002) that found that securing a relationship, attachment injuries or instances that demonstrate a partner's unavailability, lack of communication, infidelity, abuse, or rejection can create times of either deactivation or hyper-activation of attachment behaviors. This may be because couples with attachment problems that are incorporated into the individual's working model of the relationship will contribute to marital dissatisfaction among them.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study on the predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people, with a focus on internet infidelity and communication, the following recommendations can guide interventions, police and practice. Counsellors should organize seminars and conferences where married people will be sensitized on the role of internet infidelity and communication on marital dissatisfaction. Religious bodies and government should make premarital counseling compulsory for intending couples to equip them with the communication skills for handling marital dissatisfaction.

Considering the rise in marital dissatisfaction, the call for marriage and family therapist is a timely issue and professional in the area has to be produced to grapple the challenges of marital dissatisfaction. An ongoing awareness creation on the significance and pertinence of love based marriage has to be made in Nigeria at large. Religious heterogamy is one of the scenario which is experienced in our world today. A detailed qualitative inquiry need to be done concerning the patterns and marital satisfaction of such marriage typology.

CONCLUSION

The study on the predictors of marital dissatisfaction among married people, with a specific focus on internet infidelity and communication concludes that internet infidelity predicted marital dissatisfaction among married people. It provides valuable insights into the complex interplay of individual and environmental factor shaping couples behaviours. The findings underscore



the need for a comprehensive understanding of the psychological dynamics that contribute to marital dissatisfaction, laying the groundwork for targeted interventions, educational programs, and policy initiatives.

References

- Abudu, A. O. (2008). Getting married? Staying married? *Accra: Creative Opportunities*, 1(1), 3–14.
- Addisu, A., & Turner, B. (2015). The effect of partner attractiveness and Facebook disclosure on relationship outcomes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 48, 153–160.
- Ainsworth, M. S. (1989). Attachments beyond infancy. *American Psychologist*, 44(4), 7–19.
- Ajzen, I. (2002). Attitudes, personality and behavior. *Open University Press*.
- Akpan, C. P. (2020). Marital communication. *The Family Journal*, 1(1), 23–31.
- Asao, K., & M. (2022). Exploring commitment in romantic relationships: A meta-analytic review and exploration of moderators. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 122(4), 800–835.
- Awoniyi, T. A. (1982). The teaching of African languages. *Hodder and Stoughton*, London.
- Azize, Y. (2013). The impact of social media on romantic relationships: An exploratory study. *Human Technology*, 7(1), 99–122.
- Baghipour, Z. (2010). The influence of education of communication skills on marital adjustment among married couples. *Master's Thesis*, ShahidBahonar University of Kerman.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Social Learning Theory. *Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall*.
- Benokraitis, N. V. (2008). Marriages and families: Changes, choices, and constraints. *Pearson Prentice, Incorporation*, New Jersey.
- Bernadette, N. O. & Juneman, A. (2018). Tolerance for emotional internet infidelity and its correlate with relationship flourishing. *International Journal of Electrical and Computer Engineering (IJECE)*, 8(5), 3158–3168.
- Berry, Alio-Osagie, A. & Lloyd-Edmond, I. (2020). Perceived relationship quality in long-term relationships: The effects of early commitment and marital status on marital dissatisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(4), 254–267.
- Bowlby, J. (1988). Developmental psychiatry comes of age. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 145(1), 1–15.
- Braun-Courville, J. H., Choi, J. E., & Madden, L. (2017). Why people lie on the Internet: Self-presentation versus impression management in online deception. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 68(3), 831–842.
- Brock, R. L. & Lawrence, E. (2008). A longitudinal investigation of stress spillover in marriage: Does spousal support adequacy buffer the effects? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22(1), 11–21.



- Burke, M. (2012). Real Relationships, Virtual Worlds. *Stanford Law Review*, 64(6), 2041-2074.
- Burnette, J. L. & Franiuk, R. (2010). Individual differences in implicit theories of relationships and partner fit: Predicting forgiveness in developing relationships. *Journal of Personality and Individual Differences*, 48(1), 144-148.
- Cavaglion, G. & Rashty, E. (2010). Narratives of suffering among Italian female partners of cybersex and cyber-porn dependents. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 17(4), 270-287.
- Chopik, W. J., Moors, A. C. & Edelstein, R. S. (2014). Maternal nurturance predicts decreases in attachment avoidance in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 53(1), 47-53.
- Chung, M. S. (2014). Pathways between attachment and marital satisfaction: The mediating roles of rumination, empathy, and forgiveness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 70(1), 246-251.
- Cooper, A. (2002). Sex and the internet: A guidebook for clinicians. *Brunner-Routledge*, New York.
- Cravens, J. D., Leckie, K. R. & Whiting, J. B. (2012). Facebook infidelity: When poking becomes problematic. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 35(1), 74-90.
- Daneback, K., Cooper, A. & Månsson, S. (2005). An internet study of cybersex participants. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 34(3), 321-328.
- Daniel, I. O. A. (2013). Communication as socio-cultural meaning exchange: The example of Richard Wright's Black Boy. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 2(5), 173-177.
- Deck, J. S. (1996). Closeness of internet chat room relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 13(4), 543-554.
- Dennis, A. R., Witt, L. A., & Martin, R. R. (2021). Theorizing in communication research. In A. R. Dennis, L. A. Witt, & R. R. Martin (Eds.), *Handbook of Communication Theory* (pp. 131-154). Routledge.
- Diana, F., Gheorghe, H., Maria-Nicoleta, T. (2021). Self-internet infidelity and partner internet infidelity: The only Romanian psychological instruments assessing the online extra-dyadic behavior. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(1), 120-140.
- Dillow M. R., Goodboy, A. K. & Bolkan, S. (2014). Attachment and the expression of affection in romantic relationships: The mediating role of romantic love. *Communication Reports*, 27(2), 102-115.
- Docan-Morgan, T. & Docan, C. A. (2007). Internet infidelity: Double standards and the differing views of women and men. *Communication Quarterly*, 55(1), 317-342.
- Duba, A., Chaudhry, N. F., Hasham, S. S., & Thomas, C. A. (2012). Partners' individual and dyadic experiences of conflict in interracial and same-race relationships. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, 1(3), 142-160.



- Farah, H. & Aneesh, K. P. (2018). Marital satisfaction and communication skills among married couples. *Indian Journal of Social Research*, 59(1), 35–44.
- Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. H. (2014). "The Sexual Overperception Bias and Individual Differences in Sociosexuality." *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 40(6), 760-771.
- Finn, P., Balzarini, S., & Orbach, T. L. (2020). The investment model: Theoretical framework and a new conceptualization of commitment to romantic relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 37(11), 2224-2247.
- Fishbein, M. & Ajzen, I. (1975). Belief, attitude, intention and behavior: An introduction to theory and research. *Addison-Wesley*.
- Gallois, C., & Giles, H. (2015). Communication Accommodation Theory and Intergroup Communication: A Review. In *The Handbook of Intergroup Communication* (pp. 231-253). John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Giles, H. (2015). New frontiers in communication accommodation theory. In C. Gallois & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *The Handbook of Intergroup Communication* (pp. 232-255). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Guerrero, D. L., & Lee, J. H. (2020). Investment and relationship outcomes: The role of satisfaction and commitment in marital relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 37(3), 502-521.
- Hadden, S. (2014). Digital infidelity: An exploratory study of perceived relationship intrusions associated with social networking sites. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 17(2), 87-93.
- Hertlein, K. M. & Piercy, F. P. (2006). Internet infidelity: A critical review of the literature. *The Family Journal*, 14(4), 366–371.
- Hertlein, K. M. & Stevenson, A. (2010). The seven “as” contributing to internet-related intimacy problems: A Literature Review. *Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace*, 4(1), 3–9.
- Hudson, W. W., Song, L., & Campbell, W. K. (2020). Internet infidelity and relationship outcomes: Testing an extended attachment framework. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 114, 122-132.
- Jeon, J. H., & Kim, J. (2021). The impact of perceived rewards and costs of relationships on marital satisfaction: Mediating role of marital communication and moderating role of spousal verbal aggression. *Marriage & Family Review* 57(4), 11-21.
- Joseph, A. & Alfred, A. A. (2018). Causes of marital dissatisfaction as perceived by the people of Navrongo in the upper east region of Ghana. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(17), 50–159.
- Juliana, A. A. & Nwanna, U. C. (2021). Communication styles and sexual satisfaction as predictors of marital satisfaction among couples in Anambra State. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and*



- Development Studies (SGOJAHDS)*, 4(2), 48–54;
- Kaiser, A., & Egger, P. A. (2019). Technological Facilitation Theory: How Technological Changes Over the Past Decades Have Facilitated Infidelity. *Current Opinion in Psychology* 31, 164-170.
- Kalayjian, S. A., Nartey, E. Y., & Gond, A. (2020). The influence of marital dissatisfaction on incident hypertension: The role of race and ethnicity. *Ethnicity & Disease*, 30(3), 449-456.
- Katherine, M. H. & Fred, P. P. (2006). Internet infidelity: A critical review of the literature. *The Family Journal: Counselling and Therapy for Couples and Families*, 14(4), 366–371.
- Keith, L. K. (2012). "Media Use, Social Interaction, and Depression Among Middle and High School Students." *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 15(11), 659-665.
- Kim, S. Y., Han, S., & Blum, R. W. (2016). A randomized controlled trial of marital satisfaction interventions in dual-earner Korean couples. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 38(3), 69-79.
- Knee, C. R. (1998). Implicit theories of relationships: Assessment and prediction of romantic relationship initiation, coping, and longevity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(2), 360–370.
- Knee, C. R. & Canevello, A. (2006). Implicit theories of relationships and coping in romantic relationships. *Guilford Press*, New York.
- Knee, C. R., Nanayakkara, A., Vietor, N. A., Neighbors, C. & Patrick, H. (2001). Implicit theories of relationships: Who cares if romantic partners are less than ideal? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 27(7), 808–819.
- Kottkamp, J. J., & Benoit, E. M. (2019). From theorist to practitioner: Communicating to enhance human performance and well-being. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 47(1), 1-17.
- Lundblad, A. M. & Hansson, K. (2006). Couples therapy: Effectiveness of treatment and long term follow-up. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 28(1), 136–152.
- Lunenberg, F. C. (2010). Communication: The process, barriers and improving effectiveness. *Schooling*, 1(1), 1–11.
- Maheu, M. M. & Subotnik, R. B. (2001). Infidelity on the internet. *Sourcebooks*, Naperville.
- Mahmoudi, R. K., & Talaei, M. (2021). Marital satisfaction and its relationship with physical and mental health: A review of the literature. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 30(13-14), 47-56.
- Mikulincer, M., Florian, V., Cowan, P. A. & Cowan, C. P. (2002). Attachment security in couple relationships: A systemic model and its implications for family dynamics. *Family Process*, 41(3), 405–434.
- Mileham, B. L. A. (2007). Online infidelity in internet chat rooms: An ethnographic exploration. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 23(1), 11–31.



- Morey, J. N., Gentzler, A. L., Creasy, B., Oberhauser, A. M. & Westerman, D. (2013). Young adults' use of communication technology within their romantic relationships and associations with attachment style. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 29(1), 1771–1778.
- Nelson, T., Piercy, F. & Sprenkle, D. (2005). Internet infidelity: A multi-wave Delphi study. *Journal of Couple and Relationship Therapy*, 4(3), 173–194.
- Nwanna, A. (2021). The mediated emotional love affair in the digital era. *Communication Quarterly*, 69(4), 375–391.
- Ogunbola, O. O. & Akomolafe, A. A. (2019). Marital satisfaction: An assessment of its fundamental factors in Nigeria. *Researcher*, 11(3), 26–30.
- Okenimkpe, M. N. (2010). Communication for business. *National Open University of Nigeria*, Lagos.
- Overall, N. C., Girmé, Y. U., Lemay, E. P. & Hammond, M. D. (2014). Attachment anxiety and reactions to relationship threat: The benefits and costs of inducing guilt in romantic partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 106(2), 2–35.
- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. (2004). *Oxford University Press*, Oxford.
- Pampusch, L., Roberts, S., & White, D. K. (2019). Attachment, commitment, and relationship satisfaction: A closer look at investment model factors. *Personal Relationships* 26(2), 355–372.
- Rholes, W. S., Kohn, J. L. & Simpson, J. A. (2014). A longitudinal study of conflict in new parents: The role of attachment. *Personal Relationships*, 21(1), 1–21.
- Ross, M. (1989). Relation of implicit theories to the construction of personal histories. *Psychological Review*, 96(2), 3–41.
- Ross, M. W., Mansson, S. A., Daneback, K. & Tikkanen, R. (2005). Characteristics of men who have sex with men on the internet but identify as heterosexual, compared with heterosexually identified men who have sex with women. *Cyberpsychology and Behavior*, 8(2), 131–139.
- Shahar, L., Yftach, G. & Uri, G. (2021). Dissatisfaction with married life in men is related to increased stroke and all-cause mortality. *Journal of Clinical Medicine*, 10(1), 1–10.
- Schneider, J. P., & Weiss, R. S. (2015). Internet infidelity: A review of online sexual activities and treatments for cybersex and sexual addiction. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 22(4), 38–64.
- Schneider, J. P., Weiss, R. & Samenow, C. (2012). Is it really cheating? Understanding the emotional reactions and clinical treatment of spouses and partners affected by cybersex infidelity. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 19(2), 123–139.
- Schoenmaker, B. M., & Trotter, L. (2017). Internet infidelity among adults who are currently dating or married: A systematic literature review. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 20(11), 644–653.



- Seidman, G., & Harman, N. (2019). The 'invisible affair': Rethinking infidelity in the digital age. *Computers in Human Behavior* 94, 123-131.
- Smith, K. A., & Webster, J. D. (2014). An application of the exchange theory of romantic relationships to Facebook. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 37, 187-196.
- Underwood, H. & Findlay, B. (2004). Internet relationships and their impact on primary relationships. *Behavior Change*, 21(4), 127–140.
- Vanwesenbeeck, I. (2021). The importance of sexual desire and intimacy for marital satisfaction and stability: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 47(4), 177-198.
- Vorauer, J. D., Cameron, J. J., Holmes, J. G. & Pearce, D. G. (2003). Invisible overtures: Fears of rejection and the signal amplification bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 70–93.
- Vorauer, J. D., Epley, N., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2003). Misunderestimation: Expected versus actual reactions to potential relationship threats. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(5), 922-935.
- Walther, J. B. (1992). Computer-mediated communication: Impersonal, interpersonal, and hyperpersonal interaction. *Communication Research* 19 (1), 3-43.
- Winfield, R. (1957). A field study of internet infidelity. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 19(4), 439-447.
- Wireko, V. (2012). Rampant family tragedies. *Daily Graphic*, 1(1), 7–8.
- Woods, R. G., Doucet, G., & Kaestner, L. A. (2019). Romantic relationships and distress in adolescence: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 36(10), 3115-3137.
- Vossler, A. (2016). Internet infidelity 10 years on: A critical review of the literature. *The Family Journal*, 24(4), 359–366.
- Young, K. S., Griffin-Shelley, E., Cooper, A., O'mara, J. & Buchanan, J. (2000). Online infidelity: A new dimension in couple relationships with implications for evaluation and treatment. *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity*, 7(2), 59–74.