

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND MALADAPTIVE COGNITION AS PREDICTORS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This research delved into social support and maladaptive cognition as predictors of marital satisfaction. The study involved a sample of three hundred and fifty married adult (175 males, and 175 females), comprised of academic and non-academic staff of the University of Nigeria Nsukka. Selected from Odenigwe, Odum, and Hilltop residential areas, and within an age bracket of 27 to 66 years, with a mean age of 22.17 years ($SD = 2.80$). The study hypothesized that maladaptive cognition would not significantly predict marital satisfaction, social support would not substantially predict marital satisfaction, and social support would not significantly have a positive association between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction. among married adults. The investigation employed three assessment tools: the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), the Maladaptive Interpersonal Belief Scale (MIBS), and the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS). Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was utilized to empirically examine the study. The findings of the hierarchical multiple analysis indicated that maladaptive cognition did not significantly predict marital satisfaction, social support distinctly and positively predicted marital satisfaction, and ultimately, social support did not moderate the interplay between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction. The implications and constraints of this research encompass the limited sample size and potential social desirability biases in questionnaire responses, suggesting that future investigations should encompass larger population sizes and encompass diverse geographic locations and ethnic demographics.

Keywords: Enugu, Hayes Process Macro, Maladaptive Cognition, Marriage, Marital Satisfaction, MSPSS, Nigeria, Social Support.

INTRODUCTION

The institution of marriage represents a significant facet of an individual's life, embodying the union between a man and a woman, regardless of the type of marriage (Arif & Fatima, 2015). Marriages encounter conflicts at various points, which can pose significant challenges and may eventually result in the unfortunate outcomes of divorce or separation (Sorokowski, 2017). Marital satisfaction reflects a true measure of a person's happiness within the family framework. This is presented as an emotional response arising from the internal evaluation that couples conduct regarding their marriage, covering all aspects of the relationship (Fahimdanesh et al., 2020). It represents a state of pleasure, satisfaction, and happiness experienced by both partners in marriage (Bilal & Rasool, 2020). Marital satisfaction is viewed as an emotional reaction arising from couples' internal evaluations of their marriage, including various aspects of the relationship like communication, financial issues, and forgiveness (Fahimdanesh et al., 2020). Overlooking any facet of the marital relationship can result in strain, discontent, emotional and physical separation, ultimately leading to negative consequences not just for the family but also for the society (Gadassi et al., 2016). A variety of factors, such as cognitive schemas and interpersonal dynamics, have been examined concerning marital satisfaction (Faustino et al., 2019).

Individuals who harbour distorted perceptions of themselves often pursue comfort as a means to reduce potential drawbacks, including the threat of negative judgement and failures in self-presentation, while also improving their constrained capacity to thrive in marital relationships (Fioravanti et al., 2020). Conversely, maladaptive cognitions include various distorted, rigid, or dysfunctional thought patterns that negatively affect an individual's cognitive processes and emotional regulation. Maladaptive cognitions can be described as irrational or flawed thought processes that trigger maladaptive responses by causing some level of anxiety in the individual (Faustino & Vasco 2019). Within the realm of marital relationships, these thoughts take shape as schemas, attributions, or beliefs that can hinder communication, conflict resolution, and emotional intimacy.

These cognitive misrepresentations can lead to increased conflict, reduced empathy, and lower satisfaction in the relationship (Faustino & Vasco, 2019). People with skewed self-perceptions frequently look for comfort to reduce potential threats, like the anxiety of being judged negatively and failing to present themselves well, while also enhancing their limited ability to succeed in the realm of marriage (Fioravanti et al., 2020). Moghadamfar and Shah Nazari (2017) found that schemas marked by vulnerability to harm or illness, entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control/self-discipline, and failure are positively correlated with marital satisfaction. On the other hand, schemas related to emotional inhibition, self-sacrifice, unrelenting standards or hypocriticalness, and social isolation tend to adversely affect marital satisfaction.

Couples who effectively manage love, patience, reciprocity, communication, understanding, personal identity, orientation, religion, intimacy, and other factors often report increased levels of marital satisfaction (Darren et al 2019). Social support, which includes emotional, informational, and practical assistance from friends, family, and peers, is essential in reducing the negative impacts of stressors. Rostami, Ghazinour, and Richter (2013) noted that for healthcare practitioners, spousal support lessens the negative effects of work-related stress on marital satisfaction. The research conducted by Falola and Oladipo (2020) revealed a positive and significant correlation between social support and marital satisfaction among couples in Southwestern Nigeria, indicating that greater perceived social support correlates with enhanced marital satisfaction.

Research has shown that perceived social support enhances mental health, while relationships with family and significant others help to alleviate stress, depression, and anxiety (Acoba, 2024). In contrast, for mothers, instrumental support demonstrated notable direct and indirect impacts on marital satisfaction (Kumswa, 2024).

Statement of problem

This study examines the ambiguous influence of social support on the connection between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction among married adults at the University of Nigeria Nsukka residing at Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odum. Although maladaptive cognition—negative patterns of thinking—has been demonstrated to diminish marital satisfaction, the degree to which social support can alleviate or alter this impact is still not thoroughly examined within the Nigerian cultural framework. Grasping this role is essential as marital satisfaction affects overall well-being and family stability; however, numerous couples encounter cognitive and emotional hurdles that put pressure on their relationships. This study aims to elucidate the ways in which social support systems can alleviate the negative impacts of maladaptive cognition on marital satisfaction, with the goal of guiding targeted interventions to promote healthy marriages in Nigeria.

Although there is a significant amount of global literature on marital satisfaction, research in Nigeria remains limited. There is a noticeable lack of research investigating how perceived social support influences the relationship between maladaptive cognitions and marital satisfaction. The findings of this study are set to enhance the current body of knowledge on marital satisfaction and provide important insights for creating interventions designed to improve marital satisfaction among married couples in Nigeria,

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to;

1. Examine whether social support will significantly predict marital satisfaction among married adults in University of Nigeria Nsukka residing at Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odum
2. Examine whether maladaptive cognition will significantly predict marital satisfaction among married adults University of Nigeria Nsukka residing at Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odum
3. Examine whether social support will have a relationship between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction among married adult University of Nigeria Nsukka residing at Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odum

Theoretical Review

Dynamic goal theory was developed by Li and Fung, (2011). They opined that marital goals are the goals people want to attain in their marriage, and when these goals are met depending on the choices they made, then it can lead to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The buffering hypothesis is a theory that was proposed by Cohen and Willis (1985), it holds that the presence of a social support systems helps buffer or shield an individual from the negative impact of stressful events. This theory pins that social support plays a role in successful stress management, reduces psychological distress and promotes mental adjustment.

Cognitive schema theory was propounded by Li and Fung, (2011).

Schema which comprises of subjective constructs that contain broad patterns of memories, emotions, and cognitions that guide behaviors, maladaptive cognition in marriage can be understood as arising from such maladaptive schemas, which affect marital satisfaction by shaping unrealistic or negative views of self, spouse, and relationship dynamics. Social support plays a pivotal role in this process by potentially buffering or modifying the impact of these maladaptive schemas on marital satisfaction through emotional reassurance, validation, and practical help.

Empirical review

Maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction

Nguyen et al. (2021) studied couples diminished social and financial capitals exacerbate the association between maladaptive attributions and relationship satisfaction. The sample consisted of 231 couples in their first marriages identified with the above procedures, yielding marriages that averaged 4.7 months in duration. Wives ranged in age from 18 to 56 years ($M = 28.35$, $SD = 7.52$) and husbands ranged from 18 to 53 years ($M = 29.16$, $SD = 7.33$), all voluntarily participated in the study. Instruments used include Couple Satisfaction Index, relationship Attribution Measure, and Welfare, Children, and Families: Three-City Study questionnaires were used to collect the data. The design can be described as a cross-sectional dyadic study examining actor and partner effects with moderation analyses conducted through SEM. The result showed the association between maladaptive attributions and satisfaction is stronger to the extent that spouses' social networks are characterized by fewer financial resources and lower proportions of married couples. The study measured social capital mainly through perceived financial status and the proportion of married couples in social networks, rather than measuring direct social support quality or availability.

Alimoradi et al. (2022) examined the connection between cognitive schemas triggered in sexual contexts and early maladaptive schemas in married women of childbearing age. All participants ($N = 260$) consisted of married women within the reproductive age range. The participants' ages varied from 18 to 45, with a mean age of 32.48 years ($SD = 6.82$), and the average duration of their marriages was 10.34 years ($SD = 7.51$). The Cognitive Schema Activated in Sexual Context Questionnaire (CSASCQ) and the Young Schema Questionnaire-Short Form (YSQ-SF) were employed for data collection. the study used a cross-sectional survey design with self-report instruments in the study. The findings from the multivariable model indicated that significant predictors of the cognitive schema activated in a sexual context included three subscales of EMS: emotional deprivation ($\beta = 0.28$), social isolation ($\beta = 0.31$), and emotional inhibition ($\beta = 0.14$), along with two demographic variables: job ($\beta = 0.11$) and consanguineous marriage ($\beta = 0.20$). This study did not explicitly incorporate or measure social support, which is a critical external factor known to influence the development and impact of maladaptive cognition on marital satisfaction.

Ghasemi et al. (2022) examined the structural equation model that predicts marital commitment through the lens of early maladaptive schemas, specifically focussing on emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, and mistrust/abuse, with gender roles serving as mediators. A total of 300 married employees, comprising 132 females and 168 males, were selected using the convenience sampling method. Data were gathered utilising the Dimensions of Commitment Inventory (DCI), Young Schema Questionnaire-Short Form (SQ-SF), and Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The findings indicated that emotional deprivation schema is negatively correlated with marital

commitment. They used a cross-sectional design and quantitative study employing SEM for data analysis. The findings suggest that creating interventions focused on enhancing individuals' awareness of their maladaptive schemas. Ghasemi et al. advanced understanding by linking maladaptive schemas and gender roles to marital commitment, but he lacked social support consideration rather he focused on commitment rather than satisfaction.

Social support as a predictor of marital satisfaction

Khalil and colleagues (2023) carried out a study to explore the effects of inter-role conflict, social support, and marital satisfaction among female educators in Sialkot. The study included a targeted sample of 250 female participants, aged 24 to 60 years ($M=42.0$; $SD=5.7$), all of whom were married teachers employed in both government and private schools in Sialkot. The analysis revealed a noteworthy positive correlation between marital satisfaction and social support ($r=0.536$, $p<0.01$). The statistical methods used included descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and regression analysis using SPSS version 25. The study found a significant positive correlation between marital satisfaction and social support ($r = .536$, $p < 0.01$) and a significant negative correlation between marital satisfaction and inter-role conflict ($r = -.297$, $p < 0.01$). Regression results indicated that role conflict negatively predicted marital satisfaction ($\beta = -.132$) and social support positively predicted it ($\beta = .491$), both with $p < 0.001$. Additionally, the findings indicated that inter-role conflict served as a negative predictor, whereas social support acted as a positive predictor of marital satisfaction. While inter-role conflict and social support are relevant, maladaptive cognition is a crucial variable missing from the Khalil study's design that could mediate or moderate the relationship between social support and marital satisfaction.

Nihayah et al. (2023) explored the impact of forgiveness and spousal social support on marital satisfaction among working wives, framed within the context of Islamic ethics. A total of 225 participants were recruited from diverse professions in Indonesia, encompassing a range of marriage durations and income levels, aged between 22 and 55 years ($M=33.5$; $SD=6.2$). Data were collected using a questionnaire that included the Spouse Social Support Scale (SSSS) and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) for data collection. They employed a quantitative cross-sectional design for the study. The findings suggest that the spouse social support variable has a partial influence on marital satisfaction. Elements like forgiveness and social support from a spouse significantly influence marital satisfaction among working wives, especially within the context of Islamic ethics. The study importantly includes spousal social support, which is empirically well-documented as a critical predictor and buffer against relationship stress and maladaptive cognition.

Iwasa et al. (2024) investigated the relationship between spousal support and marital satisfaction and their impact on the subjective well-being of both fathers and mothers through a mediation analysis. Data were collected from 360 fathers (aged 25–50; mean age: 36.8 years; standard deviation: 5.5) and 338 mothers (aged 25–50; mean age: 35.9 years; standard deviation: 4.9). The Japanese version of the World Health Organization-Five Well-Being Index was utilised to measure subjective well-being as an outcome. The Japanese version of the Marital Relationship Satisfaction Scale was utilised to measure marital satisfaction as a mediating variable. Spousal social support, encompassing instrumental, emotional, and appraisal support, was assessed as an independent variable through the use of four-point scales. Among fathers, both instrumental and emotional support significantly influenced marital satisfaction and subjective well-being, while for mothers, instrumental support played a crucial role in marital satisfaction. They used a

mediation analysis within a quantitative cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between spousal support, marital satisfaction, and subjective well-being in fathers and mothers. Their findings revealed that social support from spouses both direct and indirect protective effects on subjective well-being among parents, Iwasa et al. contribute valuable data on the positive role of spousal support in marital satisfaction and well-being among parents, but the absence of maladaptive cognition limits a full explanatory model compared to integrative on marital satisfaction.

METHOD

Participants

Participants in this study were 350 couples (175 males and 175 females) drawn from both academic and non-academic staffs of University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe (150), Odum (150) and Hilltop (100). The participants were selected using stratified random sampling. The participants' ages ranged from 27 to 66 years (Mean age=41.91%, SD=8.82). Based on ethnicity, the participants were predominantly Igbo (260, 74.3%) Hausa (48, 13.7%), Yoruba (35, 10.0), and others (7, 2.0%). Based on religion, the participants were predominantly Christians (302, 86.3%), Islam (7, 2.0%), traditionalists (33, 9.4%) and others (8, 2.3%). Most of the participants were WAEC holders (70, 20.0%), first degree holders (230, 65.71%), followed by higher degree holders (50, 14.8%).

Instrument

Three scales were employed in this present study: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS); Maladaptive Interpersonal Belief Scale (MIBS), and Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) were all employed for data collection.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): The scale was created by Zimet, Dahlem, and Zimet in 1988, utilising samples from adults. This tool has been utilised to assess perceived social support in various cultural contexts. The MSPSS has demonstrated a notable lack of social desirability bias. The 12-item MSPSS assesses three sources of support: Family support, Friends support, and significant others support. The scoring system utilises a 7-point Likert-type scale, with responses ranging from very strongly disagree (1) to very strongly agree (7). Items 3, 4, 8, and 11 assess family support; items 6, 7, 9, and 12 evaluate friend support, while items 1-, 2-, 5-, and 10-gauge significant other support. Examples of items on the scale are, "I receive the emotional help and support I need from my family," "I can rely on my friends when things go wrong," and "There is a special person who is present when I am in need." Zimet et al. (1988) reported a Cronbach's alpha of .82, with Bartlett's test of Sphericity yielding a value of 435.37 ($p<.001$), indicating that the sample was adequate for testing the factorial validity of the scale.

The current researcher carried out a pilot study to validate the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support for this study, involving a sample of 100 married couples from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .92, and the Bartlett's test of Sphericity was 2412.50 ($p<.001$), suggesting that the sample was adequate for testing the factorial validity of the scale. A single-component factor structure of the scale was identified, which explained 89.37% of the variance. The items demonstrated strong internal consistency, achieving a Cronbach alpha of .99.

Maladaptive Interpersonal Belief Scale (MIBS): The Maladaptive Interpersonal Belief Scale (MIBS) is a 9-item measure of maladaptive belief developed by Matthew et al. (2012). Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert format scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree (SD), 2=disagree (D), 3=neutral (N), 4=agree (A), 5=strongly agree (SA). Point values for all responses are summed. High scores indicate higher levels of maladaptive belief. Items 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9 were all reverse scored. Samples items on the scale include “I’m no good at making small talk”, “People like me”, “If people knew how nervous I get, they would think I was weird.

The current researcher carried out a pilot study to validate the Maladaptive Interpersonal Belief Scale for this study, utilising a sample of 100 married adults from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .65, and the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was 126.57 ($p<.001$), suggesting that the sample was adequate for testing the factorial validity of the scale. A single-component factor structure of the scale was identified, which accounted for 26.90% of the variance. The items demonstrated a high level of internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha of .86 achieved.

Kansa Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS): The Kansa Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) is a psychological instrument developed by Azize, (2008). It is a 3-item scale that measures marital satisfaction. Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert response scale ranging from (1 “extremely dissatisfied,” 2 “very dissatisfied,” 3 “somewhat dissatisfied,” 4 “mixed,” 5 “somewhat satisfied,” 6 “very satisfied,” and 7 “extremely satisfied”). Sample item on the scale is “In general, how satisfied are you with your marriage”, “Compared to most marriages, how would you describe your marriage” “How often do you think things are going well in your marriage”. Azize (2008) reported internal consistency values between .83. The researcher carried out a pilot study to validate the Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale for the current study, involving a sample of 100 married adults from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra state. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .50, and the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was 116.63 ($p<.001$), suggesting that the sample was adequate for testing the factorial validity of the scale. A single-component factor structure of the scale was identified, explaining 61.21% of the variance. The items demonstrated moderate internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha of .58 achieved.

Procedure

The present investigator obtained an ethical clearance from the Department of Psychology at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, which was utilized to establish the legitimacy of the research among the participants. Participants are married adults working as Academic and non-academic staff of the University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odum. Meetings with participants were arranged by the researcher and a research aide, taking place in various settings such as offices, shops, and residences, scheduled after classes and on weekends at different intervals. The study's purpose was explained to the participants, who were then requested to provide their consent. Participants who agreed to take part were issued a questionnaire for completion, with the assistance of a research aide, and were assured of the confidentiality, with the option to withdraw from the study at any juncture without repercussions. A total of 370 questionnaires were distributed, out of which 361 were returned. Among these, 7 were completed erroneously, and 4 were left incomplete, resulting in a valid questionnaire rate of 90%.

Design/Statistics

Cross-sectional Survey design was employed for the study. The reason for the choice of correlation and regression analysis is based on Urbina's (2014) assertion that correlation allows researchers to make predictions by implying a certain amount of common or share variance. Regressions play a major role in demonstrating linkages between (a) scores on different tests (b) test scores a non-test (demographic) variables, (c) scores on parts of test and scores on whole sets (Urbina, 2014).

RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics, Pearson's Correlations of Demographics, Maladaptive Cognition, Social Support and Marital Satisfaction.

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Gender			-					
2 Age	41.91	8.83	-.46**	-				
3 Maladaptive Cognition	27.61	3.52	.04	-.02	-			
4 Social Support	66.95	20.86	.10	-.09	-.03	-		
5 Marital Satisfaction	14.79	4.60	.08	-.12*	-.05	.51**	-	

Note: N = 350, ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$, Gender (Coded 0 = Male, 1 = Female).

Table 1 showed that gender was negatively related to age ($r = -.46, p < .01$). Age was negatively related to marital satisfaction ($r = -.12, p < .05$). Social support was positively related to marital satisfaction ($r = .51, p < .01$).

Table 2: The Hayes PROCESS Macro result Predicting Marital Satisfaction by Maladaptive Cognition and Social Support with Gender and Age as Control Variables.

Variables	B	B	T	P	95% CI	R ²	F
Gender	-.08	.49	-.17	.8678	[-1.04, .87]	.27	24.98(5, 342) ***
Age	-.04	.03	-1.57	.1179	[-.10, .01]		
Maladaptive cognition (MC)	-.04	.06	-.69	.4918	[-.16, .08]		
Social Support (SS)	.11	.01	10.79	.0000	[.09, .13]		

Note: CI = Confidence Interval; Gender (Coded 0 = Male, 1 = Female)

In Table 2, gender and age were added as control variables. Gender ($\beta = .49, p > .05$) and age ($\beta = .03, p > .05$) were not significantly associated with marital satisfaction. Maladaptive cognition was not significantly associated with marital satisfaction ($\beta = .06, p > .05$). Social support was significantly associated with marital satisfaction ($\beta = .01, p < .001$). The B showed that each unit rise in social support was associated with .11 unit increase in marital satisfaction. The interaction between maladaptive cognition and social support on marital satisfaction was not significant ($\beta = .00, p > .05$). The R^2 model indicated that 27% of the variance in marital satisfaction was explained on account of the entire variables $\{F(5, 342) = 24.98, p < .05\}$.

Summary of Major Findings

1. Maladaptive cognition was not significantly associated marital satisfaction among married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim.
2. Social support was significantly associated and positively associated marital satisfaction, indicating that increase in social support was associated with increase in marital satisfaction among married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim.
3. The interaction between maladaptive cognition and social support on marital satisfaction was not significant, indicating that social support did not have a positive relationship between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction among married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim.

Discussion

The present study examined social support and maladaptive cognition as predictors of marital satisfaction among couples from University of Nigeria Nsukka. who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim. The initial hypothesis, positing that maladaptive cognition would not notably forecast marital satisfaction among married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka., was upheld. The result indicates that maladaptive cognition was not significantly associated with marital satisfaction among married adults at University of Nigeria Nsukka. Nevertheless, the data indicated that there was no substantial correlation between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction. This discovery was supported with prior research (Alimoradi et al., 2022; Ghasemi et al., 2022; Mehrpouya et al., 2022), which identified a negative link between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction among Married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim.

The second hypothesis positing that social support would not significantly predict marital satisfaction was refuted among couples from University of Nigeria Nsukka. The results demonstrated a significant and positive association between social support and marital satisfaction, implying that an increase in social support corresponded to enhanced marital satisfaction. This outcome aligns with earlier research findings (Khalil et al., 2023; Iwasa et al., 2024) that highlighted a significant and positive relationship between social support and marital satisfaction. Moreover, the third hypothesis, which suggested that social support would not significantly moderate the link between maladaptive cognition and marital dissatisfaction among couples from University of Nigeria Nsukka was validated. The interplay between maladaptive cognition and social support concerning marital satisfaction did not yield a significant outcome, indicating that social support did not moderate the association between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction among couples from University of Nigeria Nsukka. This finding contradicts previous studies (Alsaman and Abd El-Naiem, 2021; Manna et al., 2022) that detected an interplay between social support and maladaptive cognition in relation to marital dissatisfaction. The diminutive sample size may account for this outcome.

Implications of the Findings

The results of this study showed that social support was a predictor of marital satisfaction and maladaptive cognition was not a positive predictor of marital satisfaction among married adults at the University of Nigeria Nsukka. among married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim. This result has a clear indication that it may be useful to families, mental health practitioners, and researchers. Understanding family and friends'

relationships is important because it provides more insight into the reduction effect of maladaptive cognition on marital satisfaction. This therefore calls for families, friends, and significant others to provide the basic emotional and physical support that would curb marital dissatisfaction among couples. While families, and mental health practitioners may be aware of the potential relationship between maladaptive cognition and marital dissatisfaction. There seems to be very little that has been done about it. This therefore calls for professionals to develop programs and interventions for couples targeted at improving marital satisfaction.

Limitations of the Study

The cross-sectional nature of the design for this present research prevents conclusion regarding causal patterns between variables. The sample size, although a little bit conventionally large, may not be very useful in generalizing for the whole University of Nigeria, Nsukka students and Nigeria as a whole. Therefore, the findings of this study are to be taken with caution as findings may not be generalized to other samples both within and outside Nigeria. The study examines only married men and women in Nsukka specifically within school area and cannot be used to make generalization for the whole University community.

Suggestions for Further Studies

As expected, social support predicted marital satisfaction but failed to have a positive relationship between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction among married adults from University of Nigeria Nsukka who resides in Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim,. is counter intuitive as one would believe that the introduction of social support would moderate the relationship between maladaptive cognition and marital dissatisfaction and not vice versa. Therefore, future research could explore and explain this relationship by introducing a mediator. Also, this study should be replicated using experimental or longitudinal methods to allow for establishment of causal relationships. Future studies should consider using more representative samples that cut across different occupations and experiences.

Conclusion

The present study examined social support and maladaptive cognition as predictors of marital satisfaction. Social support, comprising emotional, informational, and practical aid provided by friends, family, and peers, plays a crucial role in mitigating the adverse effects of stressors. Maladaptive cognitions encompass a range of distorted, inflexible, or dysfunctional thought patterns that detrimentally impact an individual's cognition and emotional management. Three theories were employed in the study, Dynamic goal theory was developed by Li and Fung, (2011). The buffering hypothesis is a theory of social support that was proposed by Cohen and Willis (1985). Cognitive schema theory was propounded by Li and Fung, (2011). Participants in this study were 350 couples 175 males and 175 females, drawn from both academic and non-academic staffs of University of Nigeria Nsukka who are residents of Odenigwe, Hilltop and Odim. Result of the study indicates that Maladaptive cognition was not significantly associated with marital satisfaction. Social support was significantly and positively associated with marital satisfaction, indicating that increase in social support was associated with increase in marital satisfaction. The interaction between maladaptive cognition and social support on marital satisfaction was not significant, indicating that social support did not have a positive relationship between maladaptive cognition and marital satisfaction. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no previous study had considered such a study especially among married men and women in Nsukka.

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