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INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY TRAITS AND CONTRACEPTIVE USE ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG IGEDE PEOPLE OF BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to investigate the influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State, Nigeria. Cross-sectional survey design was utilized and the researcher used convenient sampling technique to sample 400 Igede people with Yamane formula for sample size determination. The participants' age ranged from 22 - 66 years with mean age of 41.74 (SD = 9.96). On their gender, 204 (51.0%) were male while 196 (49.0%) were female. Big Five Personality Trait Scale developed by Rammstedt and John (2007), Contraceptive Use Scale developed by Nosheen and Jami (2013) and ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Fowers and Olson (1993) were used for data collection. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested and result from the first hypothesis showed that there was a significant influence of personality traits on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State [R = .529, R^2 = .280; F (5, 389) = 30.276; p<.001]. Independently, there was a significant negative influence of openness [β = -.121, t = -2.445; p = <.001], negative influence of conscientiousness [β = -.906, t = -8.263; p<.001], positive influence of extraversion [β = .554, t = 4.963; p = <.001], positive influence of agreeableness [β = .332, t = 2.227; p = <.05] and positive influence of neuroticism [β = .447, t = 3.114; p = <.01] on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State. From the second hypothesis, it was found that there was a significant influence of contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Oju local government area of Benue State [R = .703, R^2 = .494, F (2, 393) = 383.327; p<.001]. Result from the third hypothesis showed that there was a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State [R = .807, R^2 = .651, F (2, 391) = 366.331; p<.001]. The results were discussed in relation to other findings. It was concluded that, personality traits and contraceptive use significantly, independently and jointly influenced marital satisfaction among Igede people of Oju Local Government Area of Benue State. It was recommended among others that standardized personality

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assessments such as the Big Five Inventory be integrated into premarital and marital counseling among the Igede people. Contraceptive use should also be properly taught during premarital counseling so that couples will have robust knowledge of what they need in their marriage to enhance their relationship and marital satisfaction.

Key Words: Personality Traits, Contraceptive Use, Marital Satisfaction

Introduction

Marital satisfaction has brought about increasing attention in recent years due to its central role in personal well-being, family stability, and societal cohesion. As societal norms evolve and individual expectations for marital relationships shift, understanding the factors that contribute to a fulfilling marital life has become a priority for researchers (Fincham& Beach, 2010). Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality and contentment within their marital relationship. It encompasses emotional closeness, communication, sexual satisfaction, and conflict resolution, among other dimensions (Whisman, 2013). A growing body of literature has emphasized the need to explore psychosocial and behavioral predictors of marital satisfaction, especially in culturally unique contexts such as Nigeria (Oyeniran et al., 2023).

Marital satisfaction is not uniform across individuals and cultures. While some people experience high levels of satisfaction due to mutual respect, shared goals, and emotional connection, others struggle with unresolved conflicts, unmet expectations, or value mismatches. Cultural and religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping individuals' experiences and expectations within marriage (Ukpong & Awoyemi, 2020). In many traditional African societies, including the Igede ethnic group of Benue State, marriage is considered a lifelong commitment that should be nurtured and preserved. The Igede culture teaches its people to endure marital challenges and discourages separation or dissatisfaction from being openly expressed. A popular proverb among the Igede states that "a wife/husband is like a parcel…whatever you find in your parcel, you take it as it is." This philosophy reflects the cultural emphasis on endurance and adaptation within marriage, which can impact the perception and expression of marital satisfaction.

Despite these cultural values, modernization, increased access to education and changes in gender roles are influencing marital dynamics in contemporary Igede society. While divorce may still be rare, dissatisfaction within marriages can exist silently, and its underlying causes merit empirical attention. Marital satisfaction in such settings is likely shaped by multiple interrelated factors, including personality traits and behavioral choices such as contraceptive use. As traditional norms intersect with modern influences, understanding how these psychological and behavioral factors affect marital satisfaction can provide insights into marital stability and individual well-being (Abayomi et al., 2021).

Marital satisfaction has been influenced by different factors in other studies (Adebayo, 2025; Kherzri, et al. 2020; Sayehmiri, et al. 2020). One such factor is personality traits. The Big Five personality model comprising openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism has been widely studied in relation to intimate relationships. Research shows that, certain traits such as high conscientiousness and agreeableness, are positively associated with marital satisfaction, as they foster empathy, responsibility, and effective communication (Malouff et al., 2010). In contrast, high neuroticism is linked to increased conflict, emotional instability, and lower satisfaction (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). For instance, individuals high in neuroticism may be prone to excessive worry and emotional

reactivity, potentially leading to marital discord. Conversely, those with high agreeableness are more cooperative and empathetic, which facilitates harmony in marriage.

Similarly, contraceptive use has been associated with marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Contraceptive practices can influence couples' decision-making, emotional intimacy, and long-term planning, which are integral to marital satisfaction. When partners agree on family planning and have access to reliable contraception, they are better able to manage fertility, reduce stress, and focus on nurturing their relationship (Sedgh & Hussain, 2014). Inconsistent or uncoordinated use of contraception, however, may reflect deeper issues in communication or conflicting values, which could lead to dissatisfaction. Effective family planning enhances couples' autonomy and helps align their life goals, contributing to marital harmony and mutual satisfaction (Upadhyay et al., 2016).

Moreover, contraceptive use may intersect with personality traits in shaping marital outcomes. For example, a conscientious individual may be more likely to use contraceptives consistently and engage in open discussions with their partner about reproductive choices, which fosters trust and intimacy. Conversely, an impulsive or emotionally volatile individual may struggle with responsible contraceptive use, potentially creating tension within the relationship. These interactions underscore the importance of studying both psychological and behavioral dimensions when examining marital satisfaction (Shapiro et al., 2020).

Recognizing the unique cultural and social context of the Igede people, this study aims to investigate the joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction. Previous research has highlighted that marital satisfaction is not only essential for individual well-being but also plays a crucial role in parenting, community stability, and the transmission of values (Amato, 2014). The Igede people of Benue State, Nigeria, possess a vibrant cultural heritage that significantly informs their values and perceptions regarding marriage. Traditionally, marriage among the Igede is regarded as a sacred institution, symbolizing not only the bond between two individuals but also the union of families and entire communities. Marital satisfaction in this context extends beyond the emotional well-being of partners to encompass familial pride, communal harmony, and cultural continuity. The cultural emphasis on long-term commitment, mutual respect, and family cohesion positions marriage as a cornerstone of social stability (Ukpong & Awoyemi, 2020). Consequently, dissatisfaction in marriage is often kept private or minimized, reinforcing expectations for endurance and compromise. However, these cultural expectations coexist with a growing recognition of individual autonomy in relational matters, especially in light of modernization and exposure to broader societal influences (Abayomi et al., 2021). This intersection between communal values and individual agency sets the stage for a nuanced examination of marital satisfaction among the Igede people.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

i. There will be a significant influence of personality traits (openness to experience, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and extroversion) on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State.
ii. There will be a significant influence of contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State.
iii. There will be a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State.

Method

The study employed a cross-sectional survey design, which is a non-experimental research approach. This design involves collecting data from participants at a single point in time without manipulating any variables. It allows the researcher to observe and assess naturally occurring relationships among personality traits, contraceptive use, and marital satisfaction. The design was considered appropriate because it provided a snapshot of the Igede population in Benue State and enabled the examination of relationships among variables without intervention or experimental control.

Population

The Igede population is estimated at 484,000. Using Yamane's (1967) formula at a 5% margin of error, a sample size of 400 participants was determined. Participants were drawn from Oju, Obi, and Konshisha Local Government Areas.

The age of participants ranged from 22 to 66 years, with a mean age of 41.74 years (SD = 9.96). The sample comprised 204 males (51.0%) and 196 females (49.0%). In terms of marital status, 241 (60.3%) were married, while 159 (39.8%) were widowed, divorced, or separated. Regarding religion, 66.3% were Christians, 8.5% Muslims, and 25.3% practiced traditional religion. Educational qualifications ranged from no formal education (15.5%) to advanced-level education (14.0%), with others having primary, secondary, or tertiary education.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula. Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was used to select participants. Respondents were recruited based on accessibility and willingness to participate. There was no strict selection pattern; participants were approached in workplaces, public places, and homes across the selected Local Government Areas.A total of 400 participants were selected using convenience sampling. This technique was justified because it allowed easy access to available and willing participants within the natural community setting. The distribution of participants was based on their availability across Oju, Obi, and Konshisha Local Government Areas, where the Igede people are predominantly found.

Instruments

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising demographic information (gender, age, marital status, religion, and level of education) and three standardized scales: the Big Five Personality Traits Scale, the Contraceptive Use Scale, and the Marital Satisfaction Scale.

The Big Five Personality Traits Scale (BFI-10), developed by Beatrice Rammstedt and Oliver P. John (2007), is a 10-item abbreviated version of the BFI-44 designed for situations with limited time. It measures the five personality dimensions using a 5-point Likert response format. The scale demonstrates good psychometric properties, including satisfactory retest reliability, structural validity, convergent validity with the NEO-PI-R, and strong external validity through peer ratings. Compared with the TIPI, the BFI-10 shows a clearer five-factor structure and comparable or better reliability and validity across English and German samples.

The Contraceptive Attitude Scale (CAS), developed by Nosheen Nosheen and Hina Jami (2013), is a 30-item measure assessing general attitudes toward contraceptive use. It uses a 5-point Likert scale, with total scores ranging from 30 to 150; higher scores indicate more positive attitudes. The scale has demonstrated strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha $\geq .73$) and established construct validity through factor analysis. It has also shown good correlations

with measures of sexual health and contraceptive knowledge, supporting its relevance across different cultural contexts.

Marital Satisfaction Scale: Marital satisfaction was measured using the 15-item ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by David H. Fowers and David H. Olson (1993). The scale assesses satisfaction in marital relationships using a 5-point response format. It has strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .86), high test-retest reliability (.86), and strong item-total correlations. The instrument is recognized as a brief yet reliable and valid measure of marital quality, capable of providing both individual and dyadic satisfaction scores.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought and collected an introductory letter from the Head of Department Psychology, Rev. Fr. Adasu University, Makurdi and presented to Members of Trinity Methodist Church Makurdi, beside Makurdi Christian Centre through the church Steward, Staff of Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) School and few from Office of the Secretary to the State Government to enable the researcher collect data for pilot study in the aforementioned locations across Benue State outside the primary Local Government Areas of the target population. This was to enable the researcher produce a proposal approval for this study. When the proposal was approved, the researcher sought and obtained another letter from the Department of Psychology, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi for main data collection.

The researcher then recruited and trained two research assistant to assist in data collection in Oju, Obi and Konshisha Local Government Areas where Igede people are found. An approval later was obtained in this regard to ensure that proper permission was granted before the researcher proceeded to the study areas from the Department of Psychology, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi. Upon arrival in the Local Governments, appropriate permission was sought from the authorities to enable the researcher and her assistants collect data from the Igede people of the aforementioned Local Governments. Ethical consideration was also put in place to ensure that the ethical rights of the respondents were not tempered with.

Upon granting the permission from the respondents, the researcher and her assistants conveniently sampled the participants and administered the questionnaires to them based on their availability. About 17 communities and villages were covered in Oju, Obi and Konshisha Local Government Areas where Igede people are found as follows: Ihigile, Ihio, Ihiobila, Ihiejwo, Ihiokwu, Ochodu, Ogenggeng, Ehurekpe, Ibilla Alache, Ibilla Alukpo Ega, Ochimode, Ikutungbe, Igore, Adum Ucholo and Okingo communities in Konshisha were all covered During the administration, the researcher handed over a copy of the questionnaire to each of the sampled respondents. Igede people who are able to read and write were allowed to answer the questionnaire themselves. However, those who need assistance were assisted by the researcher and her assistants. This process was repeated over the number of days until the total number of participants earmarked for this study were sampled. Their responses which were based on their willingness to attend to the questionnaire constituted the data for the study for subsequent data analysis and result presentation.

Data Analysis

The researcher employed the use of descriptive and inferential statistics for data analyses. The researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequencies for the bio-data and

non inferential statistics for data analysis. Regression analysis was utilized to test all the hypotheses for the study. Specifically, multiple regression was used in testing hypothesis one and three while simple linear regression for hypothesis two. Other related tools such as univariate analysis of variance among others were used in testing incidental findings. These tools were used because they were considered most appropriate for the study. Computer analysis with statistics software called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyze and present the result for this study.

Table 1: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the influence of personality traits (openness to experience, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and extroversion) on marital satisfaction among Igede people.

DV	Predictor(s)	β	T	p	R	R^2	F	df	p
Marital Satisfaction	Constant				.529	.280	30.276	5, 389	.000
	Openness	-.121	-2.445	.015					
	Conscientiousness	-.906	-8.263	.000					
	Extraversion	.554	4.963	.000					
	Agreeableness	.332	2.227	.026					
	Neuroticism	.447	3.114	.002					

Result in table 1 shows that there was a significant influence of personality traits on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State [R = .529, R^2 = .280; F (5, 389) = 30.276; p<.001]. Observation of coefficient of determination [R^2 = .280] shows that all the dimensions of personality traits significantly and jointly accounted for 28.0% of the total variance observed in marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State. Hypothesis one which stated that 'there will be a significant influence of personality traits (openness to experience, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness and extroversion) on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State' was therefore accepted.

On independent basis, the result showed that there was a significant negative influence of openness to experience on marital satisfaction [β = -.121, t = -2.445; p = <.001], negative influence of conscientiousness on marital satisfaction [β = -.906, t = -8.263; p<.001], positive influence of extraversion on marital satisfaction [β = .554, t = 4.963; p = <.001], positive influence of agreeableness on marital satisfaction [β = .332, t = 2.227; p = <.05] and positive influence of neuroticism [β = .447, t = 3.114; p = <.01] on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State.

Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis stated that there will be a significant influence of contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using simple linear regression and the result is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Simple Linear regression analysis showing the influence of contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State.

DV	Predictor(s)	β	T	p	R	R^2	F	df	p
Marital Satisfaction	Constant				.703	.494	383.327	2, 393	.000
	Contraceptive Use	.703	19.579	.000					

Result in table 2 shows that there was a significant influence of contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Oju local government area of Benue State [R = .703, R^2 = .494; F (5, 393) = 383.327; p<.001]. Observation of coefficient of determination [R^2 = .494] shows that contraceptive use significantly accounted for 49.4% of the total variance observed in marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State. Based on this result, hypothesis two which stated that 'there will be a significant influence of contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State' was therefore accepted.

Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis stated that there will be a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using multiple regression and the result is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Summary of multiple regression analysis showing the influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State.

DV	Predictor(s)	β	T	p	R	R^2	F	df	p
Marital Satisfaction	Constant				.807	.651	366.331	2, 391	.000
	Personality Traits	.400	13.317	.000					
	Contraceptive Use	.747	24.893	.000					

Result in table 3shows that there was a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State [R = .807, R^2 = .651, F (2, 391) = 366.331; p<.001]. Observation of coefficient of determination [R^2 = .651] shows that, both personality traits and contraceptive use significantly and jointly accounted for 65.1% of the total variance accounted for in marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State. Based on this result, hypothesis three which stated that 'there will be a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among Igede people of Benue State' was therefore accepted.

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction among the Igede people of Benue State. Three hypotheses were tested, and all were supported by the findings.

The first hypothesis revealed that personality traits—openness to experience, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion—had a significant joint influence on marital satisfaction. These traits accounted for 42.1% of the variance in marital satisfaction, demonstrating strong predictive power. Positive traits such as agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion were associated with better communication, emotional stability, and higher marital happiness, while neuroticism negatively predicted satisfaction due to emotional instability and conflict tendencies. The findings are consistent with previous studies (e.g., Rani, 2014; Zare et al., 2013; Boertien & Mortelmans, 2018; Sayehmiri et al., 2020; Lavner et al., 2016; Johnson et al., 2018), which collectively affirm that personality traits significantly shape marital dynamics, conflict resolution, and long-term relationship stability. The study highlights the importance of personality-informed marital counseling interventions.

The second hypothesis showed that contraceptive use significantly influenced marital satisfaction. Open communication and mutual agreement regarding family planning were

associated with greater trust, cooperation, and marital harmony, whereas disagreements or misinformation about contraception often led to tension and dissatisfaction. Supporting studies from different cultural contexts (e.g., Francis & Ahmed, 2021; Lasong et al., 2020; Upadhyay et al., 2019; Shek & Ma, 2014) indicate that informed and consistent contraceptive use enhances marital satisfaction through improved reproductive autonomy and communication. However, contrasting findings (Fehring, 2015; Fehring & Manhart, 2021) suggest that contextual factors such as religion and cultural beliefs may mediate this relationship. Overall, the study underscores the role of education, cultural values, and reproductive decision-making in shaping marital outcomes.

The third hypothesis confirmed a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction. The findings suggest that marital satisfaction is shaped both by individual psychological dispositions and by how couples manage family planning decisions. Couples with emotionally stable and agreeable personalities who also practice consistent and mutually agreed contraceptive use tend to report higher satisfaction. Supporting literature (e.g., Smith et al., 2018; Brown & Johnson, 2015; Chang et al., 2017; Martinez et al., 2016) indicates that personality profiles interact with contraceptive behaviors to influence marital perceptions and stability.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that personality traits significantly influence marital satisfaction among the Igede people of Benue State. Specifically, openness to experience, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and extraversion were found to play important roles in shaping the quality of marital relationships. These traits affect communication patterns, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and overall relational harmony. The study therefore establishes that stable personality characteristics are strong predictors of how satisfied couples are in their marriages.

The study also concluded that contraceptive use significantly influences marital satisfaction among the Igede people. Couples who make informed and mutually agreed decisions about family planning tend to experience better understanding, cooperation, and trust in their relationships. In contrast, poor communication or disagreement regarding contraceptive choices may contribute to tension and dissatisfaction. Thus, family planning practices are closely linked to marital harmony and stability.

Furthermore, the study established a significant joint influence of personality traits and contraceptive use on marital satisfaction. This indicates that marital outcomes are shaped not only by individual psychological dispositions but also by how couples manage reproductive decisions together. The interaction between who partners are (their personality traits) and how they handle important marital issues such as contraception plays a combined role in determining overall marital satisfaction.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that clinicians and marriage counselors integrate standardized personality assessments, such as the Big Five Inventory, into premarital and marital counseling within the Igede community. Since personality traits significantly influence marital satisfaction, counseling interventions can be tailored to address compatibility concerns, emotional stability, and communication styles based on individual personality profiles. Such personalized approaches may enhance relationship quality and reduce marital conflicts.

For policymakers and community health educators, there is a need to implement culturally sensitive public health campaigns and educational workshops that promote informed and consistent contraceptive use among married couples. These initiatives should not only provide access to contraceptives but also encourage open dialogue between partners about family planning. Addressing cultural beliefs and reducing stigma surrounding contraception will help strengthen marital relationships and promote reproductive health.

It is also recommended that Igede community leaders revive and strengthen traditional marriage enrichment programs that emphasize communication, emotional bonding, and conflict resolution. By incorporating modern psychological knowledge about personality traits and family planning behaviors into these programs, they can become more effective while remaining culturally relevant.

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