

# PHYSICAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND SEXUAL SATISFACTION AS CORRELATES OF QUALITY MARITAL RELATIONSHIP AMONG MARRIED TEACHERS

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## **Abstract**

*This study examined physical attractiveness and sexual satisfaction as correlates of quality marital relationship among married teachers from selected senior secondary schools in Odogbolu local government. Descriptive research design of Correlational research type was adopted. Three hundred and sixty one (361) participants were used in the study. Also, three valid and reliable instruments were used for data collection: Physical Attractiveness Questionnaire (.598), Sexual Satisfaction Scale (.731) and Quality of Marriage Questionnaire (.567) using Cronbach alpha. Descriptive Statistics and Multiple Regression Analysis were adopted in analyzing the data collected from the field based on research questions set in the study. The findings reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between Physical Attractiveness and Quality Marital Relationship at ( $r = .160$ ,  $P < .05$ ) among others. Also, the findings of the study have shown that physical attractiveness and sexual satisfaction are important factors that predict quality marital relationship. Based on the outcome of the study, It recommends among others that married should pay attention to their physical look and at the same time gratify the sexual needs of each other, in doing so some marital challenges may be averted and quality marital relationship enhanced.*

**Key Words:** *Physical Attractiveness, Sexual Satisfaction, Quality Marital Relationship, Married.*

## **Introduction**

Quality marital relationship is an important construct in today's society where the formation and dissolution of marriages and relationships have become more complex and diverse. Quality marital relationship refers to how happy or satisfied a person is in his or her marriage and how well spouses get on together (Reynolds, Houlston & Coleman 2014). It is a state in which couples feel happy and satisfied

living together (Bookwala, (2005), Shakerian (2010). Reynolds, et, al. 2014) in reference to quality material relationship opine that quality marital relationship contributes to the health and well-being of spouses

.Quality marital relationship involves a process or an interaction that gives rise to each partner's assessment of their relationship which could be influenced by many characteristics such as: sexual satisfaction, physical attractiveness and feeling of emotion among others. In fact the condition for quality marital relationship varies and may depend on some values and on individuals (Conroy, McGrath, Rooyen, Hosegood, Johnson, Fritz, Marr, Ngubane & Darbes 2016)

Sexual satisfaction plays significant roles in marital relationship of couples. Conceivably, sexual activities mostly among couples may lead to positive outcome and quality marital experience (Nomejko, & Dolińska-Zygmunt 2014). Sexual relationship can be a wonderful tool that reinforces relationship or a terrible wedge for relationship. Sex is a celebration of love, a gift of God to every married couple (Jeffrey & Pattiejean 2001). Certainly, when couples are fulfilled in their sexual desires it contributes to making their relationship more pleasant and their love for one another more satisfying. Gallagher & Zahavi (2013) carefully listed some of the challenges many couples face that hinder their sexual satisfaction thus compromising their marital relationship. Some of these challenges are:

- i) when sex is used as a weapon to punish one another as a result of an unresolved grievance in the past
- ii) using sex as a "treat" to reward the partner for good behavior
- iii) If one person takes charge of when and how sex happens
- iv) where sex never or rarely occurs in marital relationship
- v) when spouses are too busy or too tired for sex
- vi) when a spouse dislikes sex with his or her partner

Any marriage where any of these sentiments are harbored: dissatisfaction, resentment and anger can emerge (Gallagher\_& Zahavi 2013), and sexual satisfaction may be hindered. According to Muise, Kim, McNulty, & Impett, (2016), sexual satisfaction is a key component of many romantic relationships and one of the vital elements for creating and maintaining a happy, satisfying and stable marital relationship and lower levels of sexual satisfaction is associated with higher rates of marital conflict and even divorce.

Physical attractiveness has consistently emerges as a highly desirable partner's trait (Gallup & Frederick 2010). Research on physical attractiveness gained prominence in the 1960's when researchers discovered the influence that physical attractiveness has on human relationships. It was at this time also that the slogan 'what is beautiful is good' was popularized (Webb, 2009: Trujillo, Jankowitsch, & Langlois, 2014). An individual is said to be physically attractive when he or she carries a number of elements that may be attractive to other members of the society and in all societal settings. Some of the indices of physical attractiveness include: beauty, body

attractiveness, personality and style, social skills in interaction, physical fitness, social energy and good humor, style of dress, and sexual competence (Berry 2016).). However, individuals chose their spouses and get married for diverse purposes such as: one's physical attractiveness, sexual performance and social acceptance, therefore the role physical attractiveness plays in a marriage cannot be underestimated.

Studies have shown that physical attractiveness is equally important to men and women and plays an important role in marital relationships (Thao, Overbeek & Engels. 2010; Eastwick, Eagly, Finkel, & Johnson 2011). According to Faroldi & Sánchez, (2014) men and women are known for focusing their interest for attraction on different traits. Whereas women usually pay attention to expressive character elements, flamboyance and ostentatious features, men tend to focus more on physical features such as the breasts, buttocks, hips, legs even open teeth as the cases may be (Faroldi & Sánchez 2014). The fact remains that these features are apparently perceived as such that would provide the needed pleasure and help couples to find meaning in their marital experiences and enjoy quality relationship. Conversely, the nature of these satisfactions may change due to passage of time, number of children, religious beliefs, and health conditions. Most often than not, concentration at this stage of life is shared among immediate needs and many spouses pay little or no attention to their spouses. The tendency to associate physical attractiveness with positive quality relationship occurs in all cultures. (Zebrowitz., Wang, Bronstad., Eisenberg, Undurraga, Reyes-García, & Godoy, 2012). Most previous researches studied sexual satisfaction, physical attractiveness and marital relationships as separate variables, as result not much is known about the interactions of these variables with each another. Therefore this research was aimed at studying Sexual Satisfaction and Physical Attractiveness as correlates of Quality Marital Relationship among couples.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Lack of physical attraction and Sexual dissatisfaction may be among the causes of marital unhappiness globally; as a result many couples are facing marital instability, devastation, occasional divorce and low marital satisfaction. Consequent upon this, a large number of these spouses are suffering from mental and psychological disorder, marital unsteadiness, unfulfilled marriage and marital infidelity. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the relationship that exists between Physical Attractiveness and Sexual Satisfaction and how these variables correlate with quality marital relationship among couples.

### **Research Questions**

- i. Is there any significant relationship between physical attractiveness and quality marital relationship
- ii. Is there any significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and quality marital relationship
- iii. What is the relative contribution of Physical Attractiveness and Sexual Satisfaction to Quality marital relationship

### **Method**

Descriptive research design of the correlational type was adopted and three hundred and sixty one (361) respondents participated in the study. Three valid and reliable instruments were also used name: Physical Attractiveness Questionnaire, a twelve item response instrument developed by the researcher to ascertain respondents' opinion about physical attractiveness with the Likert's format: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The reliability coefficient of (.598) using Cronbach's Alpha. Sexual Satisfaction Scale, the level of respondents' sexual satisfaction was measured, using (SSS) an instrument developed by the researchers. It is made up of a twelve item scale designed to capture the participant's opinion about sexual satisfaction. The instrument was based on Likert's scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. The reliability coefficient of (.731) using Cronbach's Alpha. Quality Marital Questionnaire, quality marital relationship was measured using a twelve item response instrument developed by the researcher which has Likert's scale format: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The reliability coefficient of (.567) using Cronbach's Alpha. Consents of the participants were sought before the administration of the instruments. All the instruments were administered with the help of three research assistants who were trained for the assignment. This made the collection of the instruments easy immediately after response. Data gathered were analysed using Descriptive Statistic and Multiple Regression Analysis.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Research Question 1:** Is there any significant relationship between physical attractiveness and quality marital relationship. This research question was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the result is presented in table below.

**Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing relationship between Physical Attractiveness and Quality Marital relationship**

Variable	Number	Mean	Std dev.	R	Sig	Remark
Physical Attractiveness	361	35.9	3.78		.002	Significant
Quality of Marriage	361	37.6	6.57		.160**	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Results of analysis show that the correlation coefficient (r) is significant at  $P < .05$  ( $r = .160$ ,  $P < .05$ ). This implies that the research question assertion of a positive significant relationship between Physical Attractiveness and Quality Marital Relationship is confirmed.

**Research Question 2:** Is there any significant relationship between Sexual Satisfaction and Quality Marital Relationship. This research question was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the result is presented on table 2.

**Table.2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient showing relationship between Sexual Satisfaction and Quality Marital Relationship**

Variable	Number	Mean	Std dev.	r	Sig	Remark
Sexual Satisfaction	361	37.5	6.84		.470	Significant
Quality of Marriage	361	37.6	6.57		.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

Results of analysis show that the correlation coefficient( $r$ ) is significant at  $P < .05$  ( $r = .470$ ,  $P < .05$ ). This implies that there is a significant relationship between Sexual Satisfaction and Quality Marital Relationship

**Research Question 3:** What is the relative contribution of Physical Attractiveness and Sexual Satisfaction to Quality marital relationship? This research question was tested with Multiple Regression Analysis and the result is presented on Table 3

**Table.3: Multiple Regression Analysis showing relative contributions of Physical Attractiveness and Sexual Satisfaction to Quality marital relationship**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	15.724	3.146		4.998	.000
1 Physical Attractiveness	.140	.082	.081	1.713	.088
Sexual Satisfaction	.445	.045	.461	9.799	.000

From Table 3; the Beta ( $\beta$ ) weightings of the two predictor variables are given in the standardized coefficient column. The constant is 15.724. Relative to each other, Physical Attractiveness has a positive influence on Sexual Satisfaction. ( $\beta = .081$ ) and this is statistically significant at (0.088,  $P > 0.05$ ), Sexual Satisfaction has more positive influence on Quality of Marriage ( $\beta = .461$ ) and this is statistically significant at (0.000,  $P < 0.05$ ).

## Discussion of Findings

**Research Question 1:** Is there any significant relationship between physical attractiveness and quality marital relationship?. This research question was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the result as presented on table 1 above indicates a significant relationship between Physical Attractiveness and Quality Marital Relationship. Results of analysis showed that the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is significant at  $P < .05$  ( $r = .160$ ,  $P < .05$ ). This indicates a significant relationship between Physical Attractiveness and Quality Marital Relationship. This finding is in line with the findings of Sanchez, Good, Kwang & Saltzman (2008) proposed that there is an existence of positive relationship between physical attractiveness and relationship success. They concluded that physical attractiveness serves as a predictor of intimate relationship.

(Zebrowitz, Wang, Bronstad., Eisenberg, Undurraga, Reyes-García, & Godoy, (2012) noted also that the tendency to associate physical attractiveness with positive marital quality relationship occurs almost in all cultures. Similarly, Karraker, Sicinski & Moynihan (2015) in their study found that the importance of physical attractiveness in marital relationship cannot be over emphasized. It is obvious that individuals irrespective of race, culture, color, status or gender places attachment to Physical attraction, which means that when people are attracted to pleasing appearances, they are expected to be happier and have more rewarding marital relationship hence marital choices are in most cases made with individual who are attractive to each other. This present study also found out that Physical attractiveness of a spouse should make his or her partner happy and when happiness is achieved among couples then the marriage can be said to enjoy to some extent quality marital relationship.

**Research Question 2:** Is there significant relationship between Sexual Satisfaction and Quality Marital Relationship? This research question was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the result is presented in table 2 shows that the correlation coefficient( $r$ ) is significant at  $P < .05$  ( $r = .470$ ,  $P < .05$ ). This implies that there is a significant relationship between Sexual Satisfaction and Quality Marital Relationship. This finding is in line with the result of Rahmani, Khoei & Gholi (2009) that highlighted a significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and length of marital life, noting that sexual satisfaction plays an important role in marital relationship. In the same vein Muise, et.al. (2016) established that sexual satisfaction is one of the vital elements for creating and maintaining a happy, satisfying and stable marital relationship and lower levels of sexual satisfaction in marriage is associated with higher rates of marital conflict. This indicates that sexual satisfaction in marriage has a way of creating marital happiness and spouses who are not sexually satisfied may look for satisfaction outside of their marriages.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relative contribution of Physical Attractiveness and Sexual Satisfaction to Quality marital relationship?

This research question was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis and the result shows Physical Attractiveness as having a positive outcome in predicting quality marital relationship on. ( $\beta = .081$ ) and this is statistically not significant at ( $0.088$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ), Sexual Satisfaction has also positive result on predicting Quality Marital relationship ( $\beta = .461$ ) and this is statistically significant at ( $0.000$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). It can be concluded therefore, that both predictor variables had a statistically significant contribution on Quality Marital relationship. Therefore, Sexual Satisfaction predicts Quality Marital Relationship more than Physical Attractiveness. This result

goes a long way advocating the important of sexual satisfaction in marital relationship. In as much as physical attractiveness of spouses cannot be over emphasized in marital relationship, this study found out that a spouse physical attractiveness is more meaningful to his or her partner if he or she is sexual satisfied.

### **Summary of Findings**

- i. There is a significant relationship between the Physical Attractiveness and Quality Marital Relationship
- ii. There is a significant relationship between Sexual Satisfaction and Quality Marital Relationship
- iii. Sexual Satisfaction predicts Quality Marital Relationship more than Physical Attractiveness.

### **Conclusion**

This study has shown that physical attractiveness and sexual satisfaction are all important factors that predict quality marital relationship. When couples enjoy their physical attractiveness; it gives rise to physical intimacy which plays an indispensable role in causing spontaneous activities from time to time thus increasing the libido of such couples. Similarly, lack of attraction among marrieds may cause boredom with each other and activities that enhance marital relationship such as sexual relationship may also be neglected. According to the findings of this study it is detrimental for marrieds to pay lesser attention to their physical look and their sexual satisfaction. Hence this study expresses that Sexual satisfaction should be taken seriously in marriage, arguing that lack of sexual satisfaction in marriage could lead to promiscuity, marital unhappiness marital instability, devastation, occasional divorce and low marital satisfaction.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

This study makes the following recommendations:

1. There is need for marriage counselors and counsellors to develop appropriate practical strategies to improve couples' awareness of sexual relationship and the role sexual satisfaction plays in marital relationship, hence constant education in addressing couples' unique needs may yield a positive result, and may also decrease significantly marital challenges.
2. Couples should ensure that they sexually satisfied one another, in doing this some marital challenges will be averted and quality marital relationship achieved.



3. Couples should exhibited maturity, contentment, self-discipline and patience in their marital relationship and appreciate what they have, as beauty and attraction are of the mind.
4. Couples are to effectively communicate their needs and challenges with one another, researches have shown that intimate communication in marital relation is associated with both sexual satisfaction and quality relationship. Furthermore, effective communication may account for some of the concurrent changes in one's physic and sexual satisfaction.

#### **5.4 Implication of Findings to Counselling**

The findings of this study have several implications especially for marriage counsellors, marriage therapists and counsellors at large. There is an urgent need for seminars and open campaign in Churches, Mosques and schools where singles, intending couples and couples should be exposed to the intricacies of marriage. Young people looking for marriage partners should be properly guided. They should also be asked to face their priority right and make choices that can face the test of time. Furthermore, marriage counselors, marriage therapist and counsellors at large should as well develop programs where they will have face to face encounter with couples. Such platforms should provide stakeholders with the opportunity of counselling couples to take care of their physical looks, hence this study has suggested that as the shape of a spouse changes relationship between them is affected.

Marriage counsellors also should attempt to teach couples the role sexual satisfaction play in marital relationship, hence this study had identified that lack of sexual satisfaction in marriage is one of the causes of marital challenges which in some cases has resulted to separation or divorce. Couples who are experiencing marital challenges as a result of lack of sexual satisfaction should be provided with counselling services that will investigate the causes of their challenges and recommend therapies and interventions most suitable for them. Thus, it is important to identify each client's sexual challenge and the factors related to it in order to better understand how to help such individual build and maintain quality intimate relationships.

Counsellors can teach and promote positive, appropriate and kind language through communication intervention strategies with couples towards addressing communication styles proactively.

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