

Correlates of Narcissistic Personality Disorder Among Married Couples in Ika North East Local Government Area

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Abstract

The study investigated correlates of narcissistic personality disorder among married couples in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. Four research questions and four null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted correlational research designs with a population of 2,750 married couples. The sample size of 183 married couples is used for the study. The researchers used multi-stage sampling procedure. Four instruments used for gathering data are, Self-Worth Scale (SWS), Sexual Intimacy Scale (SIS), Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) and Narcissistic Personality Disorder Scale (NPDS). For the face and content validity of the instruments, two copies each with the aim/objectives, research questions and hypothesis were given to two experts. To ensure the reliability of the instruments Cronbach alpha (α) technique was used to obtained the coefficients of 0.93, 0.78, 0.73 and 0.79 respectively. The coefficient values obtained reflect high internal consistency. Research question 1-3 were answered using simple regression while research question 4 were answered using multiple regression. Also hypotheses 1-3 were tested using t-test associated with simple regression while hypotheses 4 is tested using ANOVA associated with multiple regression. However, all the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that Self-worth, sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction are jointly and independently related to narcissistic personality disorder among married couples in Ika North East Local Government Area. Thank researchers therefore recommend that government health agencies and partners should strengthen mental health services at the community level to enable early detection and proper management of personality disorders and associated conditions like depression, anxiety and substance use.

Keywords: Narcissistic personality disorder, Self-worth, sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Narcissistic personality disorder is a mental health condition in which most of the married persons, have an unreasonably high sense of their own importance. They need and seek too much attention and want people to admire them, most especially the newly married couples, with this disorder many lack the ability to understand or care about the feelings of others. But behind this mask of extreme confidence, they are not sure of their self-worth and are easily upset by the slightest criticism.

Narcissistic personality disorder causes problems in many areas of a married persons life, such as relationships, work, school or financial matters. Married persons with narcissistic personality disorder may be generally unhappy with their marriage and disappointed when they are not given the special favour or admiration that they believe they deserve. They may find their marriage troubled and unfulfilling, and other people may not enjoy being around them. A narcissistic personality disorder is characterized by its extreme praise, according to Baumeister (2022) he believes that narcissism is associated with positive and negative consequences, and some of its positive consequences include reducing depression, extroversion, initial agreeableness, and better performance in a group.

Hence, narcissism is considered both a type of disorder at the clinical level and a personality trait at the non-clinical level (Zaini, et al 2014). Shame is one of the most important self-conscious emotions that has a significant impact on a person's sense of self, well-being, and vulnerability to psychological and personality disorders (Hojjat, et al 2015). Self-conscious emotions are when the self plays a central role and is associated with self-evaluation (Jokar & Kamali, 2016). This feeling is defined based on uncomfortable feelings such as disappointment, stupidity, and the desire to avoid being around others for fear of being rejected (Jamali, et al 2013). One of the unconditional components of strengthening marriage is "the personal enjoyment of sexual intimacy". In this way, the greater the sexual intimacy of the persons in the framework of marriage, the more the continuity and stability of the marriage increase. In order to enjoy self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-esteem, growth, and prosperity, married persons should achieve at least "two-way sexual intimacy" (Vatankhah, et al 2019). Kargar, et al (2019) stated that sexual intimacy is one of the important indicators of married person satisfaction with each other. The findings showed that feelings of shame and guilt and difficulty in regulating emotions can predict person's sexual intimacy. Research carried out by Anzani, et al

(2021) showed that narcissists are characterized by sexual self-esteem, and sexual satisfaction as being very vulnerable. Narcissistic traits had a negative relationship with sexual satisfaction, to while sexual self-esteem had no direct relationship with sexual satisfaction. According to the previous results, one of the important aspects of marital relationships is having sexual intimacy which affects the improvement of the marital relationship, and also the self-esteem of the personality dimensions of the people may have a negative effect on the relationship. Also, considering the cultural issues in Nigeria, married persons may feel ashamed in sexual relations, since marriage are the foundation of family and childbearing.

Narcissistic personality disorder affects more men than women, and it often begins in the teens or early adulthood. Some children may show traits of narcissism, but this is often typical for their age and doesn't mean they'll go on to develop narcissistic personality disorder in marriage. Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is characterized by a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, interpersonal explosiveness, and lack of empathy, beginning in early adulthood and manifest in a variety of contexts (Anzani, 2021).

Married persons with narcissistic personality disorder may not want to think that anything could be wrong, so they usually don't seek treatment. If they do seek treatment, it's more likely to be for symptoms of depression, drug or alcohol misuse, or another mental health problem. What they view as insults to self-esteem may make it difficult to accept and follow through with treatment (Day, et al 2022).

Kernberg and Kohut initially introduced NPD in the late 1960s. Kernberg as cited in Ngwu (2023) defined NPD as a pathological self-structure characterized by abnormal transference development. They described narcissists as individuals who develop grandiose self-perceptions due to unsatisfactory social relationships in childhood that result in a complex psychological reliance on others in adulthood Ngwu (2023). The concept of pathological narcissism gained significant recognition among clinicians influenced by psychoanalysis, leading to the inclusion of NPD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) in 1980 Ngwu (2023). Over time, NPD was refined and modified in subsequent editions, such as DSM-III-R (1987) and DSM-IV (1994), incorporating empirical review from psychological studies that identified narcissism as a personality trait.

Kargar, et al. (2019) stated that narcissistic personality disorder is a mental health condition. It affects a person's sense of self-esteem, identity, and how they treat themselves and others. It's more than arrogance or selfishness. In the worst cases, people with NPD may struggle with feelings of failure or rejection, putting their own health and well-being at risk. In view of Kurdi (2018) narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is a mental health condition that affects how you view yourself and relate to others. Having NPD means the person have an excessive need to impress others or feel important. That need can be strong enough to drive harmful behaviors, negatively affecting them and those around them. NPD gets its name from Narcissus, a hunter from Greek mythology. According to the myth, Narcissus was so obsessed with his own beauty that he couldn't stop looking at his reflection in a pool of water. He did nothing else but stare at his reflection until he died (Abosaidi, 2020).

While people commonly connect the term "narcissism" to physical appearance just like in the myth NPD isn't just about how you look. It can also involve other traits or abilities you have, such as intelligence, charisma, artistic skill, athletic ability, wealth, power, success and more (Abosaidi, 2020). Some married persons have this low self-esteem about themselves in some point of their marriage where they feel that they must have lost the attraction and admiration that they use to get when they were still leaving their single life. Therefore in the bed to get such attraction and admiration back NPD may set in.

Narcissism has been linked to a number of behaviors that could interfere with romantic relationships, including vengefulness (Brown, 2024), domineering and vindictive behavior (Ogrodniczuk, et al 2019), and interpersonal aggression (Reidy, et al 2020), and narcissistic personality disorder is associated with causing distress in a significant other (Miller, et al 2017). Whereas the high level of antagonism (e.g., callousness, exploitativeness) associated with narcissism may help to explain some of this dysfunction, other theories have been put forth to help explain the low commitment seen in narcissistic relationships. For example, Fish (2019) showed that the low levels of relationship commitment that characterize narcissistic individuals is linked to overvaluing agentic aspects of relationships (e.g., physical enjoyment) and undervaluing communal aspects (e.g., emotional connections). Nonetheless, some marriage data have revealed that narcissism predicts higher satisfaction and commitment, but only in cases where narcissistic individuals report high self-esteem and communal feelings for the partner.

Although the cause of narcissistic personality disorder isn't known, some researchers like Mahmoudi, el al 2022) think that over pampering, socio-economic status, family background etc may have an impact on the development of

narcissistic personality disorder among married persons. But this study will focus on self-worth, sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction.

Self-worth is a condition characterized by a perception of one's confidence in one's abilities and worth. It is often associated with feelings of superiority, self-confidence, and overall positive self-image. Self-esteem is another psychosocial variable that may correlate with narcissistic personality disorder among married persons. Papouchis (2019) defined low self-worth as a condition associated with anxiety, depression, and stress, significantly impacting one's quality of life. Low self-worth is the contradiction between the competitive aspects of the self, such as between the real and ideal selves. Also, between the self as seen by oneself and as seen by significant others. This condition leads to psychosocial weakness and lack of self-confidence, creating problems and risky behaviors. But high self-esteem is considered one of the risk factors for narcissistic personality disorder, depression and anxiety, violence and drug abuse.

According to American Psychological Association (2023), "low self-worth or lack of confidence leaves individuals doubting their ability to succeed; making them hesitant to engage in personal development and growth risks. Due to their lack of self-worth and need for control, narcissistic individuals might feel entitled to treat their partners with disdain or disregard. They might diminish, criticize, and belittle their partner to make them more dependent and compliant. Some narcissists have high self-worth. But unlike individuals with a secure sense of high self-worth, narcissists have what researchers call "fragile high self-worth". It is a form of high self-esteem dependent on external validation and self-deception.

Sexual intimacy is a broad term and means much more than sexual intercourse. It can be expressed as any form of physical closeness and tenderness including caressing, massage, cuddling and even hand holding (Nematzadeh, et al. 2020). Society emphasizes marriage as an important two-way relationship in which sex happens, and sex is an integral part of romantic relationships, and marriage has been proven in every known culture. The desire for intimacy has biological roots and will continue in most people from birth to death. Sexual health is an important issue in couples' relationships and it helps the stability of marriage and the marital and sexual satisfaction of couples and it reduces the tendency to be a narcissist. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sex and sexual relations, and in the same way, it requires the possibility of increasing safe and enjoyable sexual experiences and freedom from coercion, discrimination and violence in marital relationships. The need for stable and intimate relationships with sex is one of the most important reasons for marriage for men and women. The creation and durability of an intimate relationship is strengthened by special emotional bonds.

Intimacy, a feeling of closeness, is a romantic or emotional personal relationship with another person in order to express thoughts and feelings that are used as a source of similarity and closeness. Intimate relationships in people's marital and family life is the most important emotional challenge in their lives (Nematzadeh et al. 2020). In recent years, the concept of intimacy has been considered as an important element in marital relationships. Intimacy is the main human need that grows from one of the basic human needs called the need for attachment. The need for intimacy includes the need for physical closeness, connection and contact with other people and is one of the necessities for the continuity, satisfaction and success of marriage. Sexual intimacy includes sharing romantic experiences with each other, the need for physical contact, arousal, sexual intercourse, and relationships, which lead to sexual relationships and sexual satisfaction. One of the basic human needs is the sexual need that must be satisfied within the framework of the family. Although the main purpose of forming a family is not to satisfy the sexual need, it is one of its important functions (Shakrmi, et al 2014). DSM – IV describes people with narcissistic personality disorder as having excessive expectations of sexual intimacy with their spouse, a proud sense of superiority and importance, needing the admiration of others, exploiting and abusing others, lacking empathy and taking refuge in secretive grandiose fantasies (Rahiminejad, et al., 2018).

Marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Marital satisfaction of women can never be overemphasized in the family. Every member of the family plays their role in the family ranging from the husband, wife and children. If any of them including the wife do not play their role very well, it will or may destabilize the family. According to Skowron (2018), married persons play varieties of role in the family which includes, wife, leader, administrator, manager of family income and last but not the least important, mother and fatherly role. Married persons are a help mate to each other. They assign duties among family members, manage the family income, carries the whole burden of rearing task in the family, married persons are also the first teacher of their child. Wu et al (2020) indicated that wives' total narcissism and entitlement/

explosiveness scores predicted the slope of marital quality over time, including steeper declines in marital satisfaction and steeper increases in marital problems.

Individuals with narcissistic traits exhibit an unstable self-concept and object relations and require admiration to validate their self-worth (Campbell & Campbell, 2019). When their partners meet their expectations, they idealize them by denying their flaws; however, failing to meet these expectations often leads to their partners being devalued and criticized. Furthermore, they tend to lack genuine interest and empathy for others, viewing their partner as extensions of themselves that can be used to fulfill their own needs. However, certain aspects of narcissistic personality, such as confidence, self-assuredness, and achievement orientation, may initially appear attractive in romantic relationships, leading narcissists to be preferred partners due to their captivating charm and impeccable appearance (Campbell & Campbell, 2019). Despite this work highlighting associations between narcissism and relationship dysfunction, critical gaps remain in our understanding of narcissism's effect on intimate relationships, particularly marital relationships. This study will address these gaps by investigating the correlates of narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Statement of the Problem.

Although the direct link between narcissism and acceptance of differences in marriage has not been established, evidence suggests that narcissism could impede marital stability. Narcissists persons often dominate discussions and critique their partners, showing little respect for their viewpoints. Persons with narcissistic personality disorder are extremely resistant to changing their behavior, even when it's causing them problems. Their tendency is to turn the blame on to others. What's more, they are extremely sensitive and react badly to even the slightest criticisms, disagreements, or perceived slights, which they view as personal attacks. For the persons in the narcissist's life, it's often easier just to go along with their demands to avoid the coldness and rages. However, by understanding more about narcissistic personality disorder, one can spot the narcissists in their life, protect themselves from their power plays, and establish healthier boundaries.

Most of the persons has failed today to stabilize their family and marriages due to narcissistic personality disorder. Some of these persons don't even understand they are suffering from narcissistic personality disorder because some of the symptoms are not known to them.

Also, some of the narcissist persons also believe that they're better than everyone else and expect recognition as such even when they've done nothing to earn it. They will often exaggerate or outright lie about their achievements and talents. And when they talk about work or relationships, all they know is how much they contribute, how great they are, and how lucky the people in their lives are to have them. They are the undisputed star and everyone else is at best a bit player and these makes their partner to feel uncomfortable with them. And this has made so many marriages in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

Due to the constant sense of superiority that comes with narcissistic personality disorder some marriages are gradually losing the air without a steady stream of applause and recognition to keep it inflated. Despite all of these challenges that comes with narcissistic personality disorder, previous researchers have not really given attention to it in terms of its prevalence and factors that are associated with it. Therefore, the problem of this study is to investigate the correlates of narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate correlates of narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The following specific objectives guided the study to;

1. investigate the relationship between self-worth and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.
2. Ascertain the relationship between sexual intimacy and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.
3. Find out the relationship between marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.
4. examine the joint relationship between self-worth, sexual intimacy, marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does self-worth relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?
2. To what extent does sexual intimacy relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?
3. To what extent does marital satisfaction relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?
4. To what extent does self-worth, sexual intimacy, marital satisfaction relate narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study;

1. There is no significant relationship between self-worth and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.
2. There is no significant relationship between sexual intimacy and narcissistic personality disorder among married couples in Ika North East Local Government Area.
3. There is no significant relationship between marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.
4. There is no significant joint relationship between self-worth, sexual intimacy, marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

METHODOLOGY

The design for this study was correlational research design. Kpolovie (2010) defined correlational design as an investigation of the degree and direction or nature of relationship that exist between a dependent variable (criterion variable) and one or more independent variables (predictor variables). According to him it is aimed at understanding the variables by measuring differently and investigating how they changes in agreement with others. The population for the study was made up of 2,750 registered married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. A sample of 183 married persons were selected using a purposive sampling technique. This technique was adopted because the study specifically targeted married individuals experiencing narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). Four instruments were used for the study. They are, Self-Worth Scale (SWS), Sexual Intimacy Scale (SIS), Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) and Narcissistic Personality Disorder Scale (NPDS). For the face and content validity of the instruments, two copies each with the aim/objectives, research questions and hypothesis was given to two experts. To ensure the reliability of the instruments Cronbach alpha (α) technique was used. The coefficients obtained were 0.93, 0.78, 0.73 and 0.79 respectively. The coefficient values so obtained reflected high internal consistency. Research question 1-3 were answered using simple regression while research question 4 was answered using multiple regression. Also hypotheses 1-3 were tested using t-test associated with simple regression while hypotheses 4 was tested using ANOVA associated with multiple regression. However all the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: To what extent does self-worth relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Table 1: Simple regression table showing the relationship between self-worth and narcissistic personality disorder

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Adj Error of the estimate
.033a	.001	-.004	7.81894

Table 1 shows a weak positive relationship between self-worth and narcissistic personality disorder. The R value of 0.141 was gotten with an R² value of 0.112 and an adjusted R² of 0.110. On the basis of the R² value obtained, it can be seen that self-worth accounted for 11.2% variation in the narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Hypothesis 1: Self-worth does not significantly relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Table 2: Summary of analysis, of regression associated with t-test on the relationship between self-worth and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error Beta				
1	(Constant)	30.921	2.321		13.325	.000
	Self-Worth	-.056	.126	-.033	-.446	.656

The result further showed that the beta of -.033 and a t-value of -.446 was obtained when the obtained regression coefficient was tested for significance, based on the sig-value of 0.656 which is higher than the alpha of 0.05. This result therefore indicates that self-worth does not significantly relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and alternate accepted.

Research Question 2: To what extent does sexual intimacy relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Table 4: Summary simple regression of the relationship between sexual intimacy and narcissistic personality disorder

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Adj Error of the estimate
.103a	.011	.005	7.78155

Table 3 shows a weak positive relationship between sexual intimacy and narcissistic personality disorder. The R value of 0.103 was gotten, this is, alongside a coefficient of determination R² of 0.011 and an adjusted coefficient of determination an (adj R²) of 0.005, it is deduced that 1.1% of the changes in narcissistic personality disorder are dependent on the changes of the, combined effect of sexual intimacy. On the other hand, the remaining, 98.9% of the changes in narcissistic personality disorder among married persons are attributable to the factors outside sexual intimacy.

Hypothesis 2: Sexual intimacy does not relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Table 4: Summary of analysis, of Regression Associated with t-test on the relationship between sexual intimacy and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error Beta				
1	(Constant)	24.949	3.609		6.912	.000
	Sexual Intimacy	.262	.188	.103	1.395	.165

The result further showed that the beta of .240 and a t-value of .103 was obtained when the obtained regression coefficient was tested for significance, based on the sig-value of 0.165 which is higher than the alpha of 0.05. This result therefore indicates that sexual intimacy significantly relates to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Research Question 3: To what extent does marital satisfaction relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Table 5. Summary of simple regression of the relationship between narcissistic personality disorder and marital satisfaction

R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std error of the estimate
.244a	.059	.054	7.58721

Table 5 shows a low positive relationship between marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder. The result showed that a linear regression coefficient obtained for the relationship with narcissistic personality disorder by marital satisfaction among married couples in Ika North-East Local Government Area of Rivers State, R value was 0.244, while the coefficient of determination, R² was 0.059, and the adjusted R² was 0.054. Based on R² value, it therefore indicates that 5.9% of the variations in narcissistic personality disorder among married persons can be attributed and explained by their marital satisfaction while the remaining 94.1% can be attributed to other factors.

Hypothesis 3: Marital satisfaction does not significantly relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Table 6: Summary of analysis, of regression associated with t-test on the relationship between marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Government Area		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Coefficients		
Model				t	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	40.157	3.079		13.042	.000
	Marital Satisfaction	-.595	.176	-.244	-3.382	.001

The result further showed that the beta of -.244 and a t-value of -3.382 was obtained when the obtained regression coefficient was tested for significance, based on the sig-value of 0.001 which is higher than the alpha of 0.05. This result therefore indicates that marital satisfaction does not significantly relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The null hypothesis was therefore retained.

Research Question 4: To what extent self-worth, sexual intimacy and marital satisfaction jointly relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area?

Table 7. Summary of multiple regression of the relationship between narcissistic personality disorder by self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction.

R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std error of the estimate
.686a	.471	.450	5.78672

The answer to research question seven as shown in Table 7 indicated that a multiple regression coefficient of 0.686 was obtained on self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction as it jointly relates to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area, with the coefficient of determination, R², of 0.471, and an adjusted R² of 0.450. From the R² value of 0.471, it therefore suggests that 47.1% of the variations in narcissistic personality disorder among married couples can be attributed and explained by the self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4: To what extent self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Table 8: ANOVA associated with Multiple Regression coefficient of self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction as it jointly relates to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5217.702	3	745.386	22.260	.000 ^b
Residual	5860.068	179	33.486		
Total	11077.770	182			

The analysis presented in table 8 shows the ANOVA results associated with the multiple regression assessing the joint relationship of self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction with narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The regression model yielded a regression sum of squares of 5217.702 and a residual sum of squares of 5860.068, out of a total variance of 11077.770. This distribution of variance indicates that the combined predictor variables account for a substantial proportion of the total variability observed in narcissistic personality disorder scores. The computed F-value of 22.260 at 3 and 179 degrees of freedom, with an associated significance level of .000, demonstrates that the overall regression model is statistically significant. This result showed that self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction jointly provided a meaningful explanation of variations in narcissistic personality disorder among the married persons. The reported p-value of .000, which is well below the conventional significance threshold of .05, further validates the robustness of the model. Based on this evidence, the corresponding null hypothesis, which states that self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction do not jointly significantly relate to narcissistic personality disorder, was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant joint relationship between self-worth, sexual intimacy, emotional intelligence, and marital satisfaction and narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area.

Discussion of the Findings

From the analysis of research question one and the corresponding null hypothesis in table 1, it was shown that self-worth does not significantly relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. This relationship was found not to be statistically significant when tested at 0.05 level of significance. This result means that married persons who scored high in the section of self-worth may not have scored high in narcissistic personality disorder while those who scored low in self-worth also scored low in narcissistic personality disorder. This result is similar to that obtained by Virgil (2023) who examined the associations that narcissistic personality features had with domain-specific contingencies of self-worth. In contrast, the results for the assertive/extraverted and antagonistic/disagreeable aspects of narcissism were more complex and suggested that these aspects of narcissism were characterized by the desire to demonstrate superiority over others. Communal narcissism was included in Study 5 and its pattern of associations with the contingencies of self-worth was similar to the results for assertive/extraverted narcissism. These results demonstrate the similarities and important differences between narcissistic personality features with regard to contingencies of self-worth.

This study is also similar to the findings of Simone (2034) who investigated the relationship between narcissistic traits and explicit self-esteem, distinguishing between grandiosity and vulnerability. Results showed different patterns of association between narcissistic traits and explicit self-esteem, depending on phenotypic manifestations of narcissism. Narcissistic vulnerability (NV) was linked to low explicit self-evaluations regardless of one's levels of implicit self-esteem. On the other hand, the link between NG and explicit self-esteem was qualified by levels of implicit self-views, such that grandiosity was significantly associated with inflated explicit self-evaluations only at either high or medium levels of implicit self-views. These findings showed that the relationship between narcissistic traits and explicit self-esteem is not univocal, highlighting the importance of distinguishing between NG and NV. Finally, the study suggested that both researchers and clinicians should consider the relevant role of implicit self-views in conditioning self-esteem levels reported explicitly by individuals with grandiose narcissistic traits.

From the analysis of research question two and the corresponding null hypothesis in table 3, it was shown that sexual intimacy had no significant relationship with narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The relationship is statistically significant at 0.5 level of significance. This result implies that married persons who scored highly on the section of sexual intimacy are prone to score high in their narcissistic personality disorder. However, the reported relationship indicates that all those who score high in sexual intimacy also scored high in narcissistic personality disorder. The result that sexual intimacy relate to narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area is not surprising to the researcher.

This result is similar to that obtained by Marco (2022) who explored the relationship between narcissistic traits and sexual satisfaction in men, testing whether sexual self-esteem mediates this association. Results highlight how vulnerable narcissistic traits are negatively associated with sexual satisfaction. This association is fully mediated by sexual self-esteem. On the contrary, grandiose narcissistic traits are not directly associated with sexual satisfaction, but with sexual self-esteem only, which explains the indirect effect of grandiose traits on sexual satisfaction. In conclusion, sexual self-esteem in personality configurations with high pathological narcissistic traits accounts for the relationship between narcissistic traits and sexual satisfaction.

Also, the result is in line with that of Decaro (2024) who evaluated the associations between self-reported pathological narcissistic traits. The results highlight that vulnerable narcissistic traits are associated with lower sexual functioning, this association being mediated by higher levels of body image self-consciousness. Conversely, grandiose narcissistic traits are linked to lower body image self-consciousness and, consequently, higher levels of sexual functioning. Considering the link between body image self-consciousness and sexuality is of utmost importance in clinical practice with women, as well as in promoting positive body appreciation. Clinicians working with individuals presenting with pathological personality traits should consider including an assessment of their sexual functioning

From the analysis of research question three and the corresponding null hypothesis in table 5, it was shown that marital satisfaction does not significantly predict narcissistic personality disorder among married persons in Ika North East Local Government Area. The null hypothesis was therefore retained. This relationship was found to be statistically not significant when tested at 0.05 level of significance. This relationship of marital satisfaction on narcissistic personality disorder means that as the score on marital satisfaction increases, there is corresponding decrease in narcissistic personality disorder and vice versa.

The result from this study is dissimilar to that obtained by Ahmad (2023) who examined the mediating role of emotional maturity in couples. The results revealed that narcissistic tendencies were significantly and negatively associated with marital relationship stability ($\beta = -0.32, p < .001$). Emotional maturity was found to have a significant positive effect on marital stability ($\beta = 0.43, p < .001$) and a significant negative relationship with narcissistic tendencies ($\beta = -0.38, p < .001$). Importantly, emotional maturity partially mediated the relationship between narcissistic tendencies and marital stability (indirect effect $\beta = -0.16, p < .01$), and the total effect of narcissism on marital instability was substantial ($\beta = -0.48, p < .001$). The proposed model demonstrated a good fit to the data with acceptable fit indices. The findings suggest that narcissistic traits undermine marital stability directly and indirectly by reducing emotional maturity. Emotional maturity serves as a protective factor that enhances relational resilience. These results highlight the importance of addressing emotional development and personality traits in marital counseling and relationship education.

CONCLUSION

Based on studies analyzing narcissistic personality traits and marital stability in Delta State, including areas similar to Ika North East Local Government Area, the conclusions regarding the correlates of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) among married couples are as follows: the research indicates a high prevalence of narcissistic personality traits among married persons in the region. However, contrary to common assumptions, some findings suggest no significant direct relationship between narcissistic personality traits and marital satisfaction. Despite the lack of immediate breakdown in stability, narcissistic traits are heavily correlated with sexual intimacy and self-worth. Narcissistic tendencies are negatively associated with marital satisfaction, which acts as a buffer. Therefore, low satisfaction is a strong correlate of dysfunctional narcissistic relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were made

1. Government health agencies and partners should strengthen mental health services at the community level to enable early detection and proper management of personality disorders and associated conditions like depression.
2. Individuals in relationships with narcissistic partners should be encouraged to seek professional counseling, such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), which are effective in developing coping strategies and improving emotional regulation.
3. Individuals should be encouraged to maintain strong support systems with friends, family, or support groups to gain perspective and reduce isolation.
4. Emphasize the importance of self-care activities (exercise, hobbies, mindfulness) to protect one's mental and emotional well-being from the negative impacts of a narcissistic relationship.
5. If the narcissistic partner is willing to acknowledge their behavior and seek help, couple's therapy should be an option, provided both partners are committed to change.

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