

Interpersonal Correlates of Marital Harmony Among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract

Being married and remaining married is a mark of honour and signals a personal capacity for responsibility. In recognition of this, the society (including the church) is favourably disposed to assigning positions of responsibility to persons who are honourably married than to those who are yet to marry or whose marriages have broken down. Beyond societal expectations, it is the desire of every married person to enjoy and not endure their marriage. This can only be realised where the interpersonal relationship between the couple is cordial and free from traits inimical to marital harmony. Sadly, many marriages are shrouded with various shades of interpersonal deficiencies such as poor interpersonal communication, sexual dissatisfaction, aggression, and financial impropriety. This correlational study analysed data from a sample of 611 married members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State to determine the relationship between four interpersonal variables and marital harmony among these couples. The results obtained showed that the four interpersonal variables (communication, sexual satisfaction, financial management, and anger management) all had significant relationships with marital harmony. Based on this, it was recommended, among other things, that couples be assisted through assessment and counselling to identify interpersonal skills deficiencies and make appropriate adjustments in order to foster harmony in their marriage.

Keywords: Interpersonal Relationship; Marital Harmony; Communication Skills; Sexual Satisfaction; Financial Management; Anger Management; Marriage Counselling

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1. Introduction

It is an honour to be married because He who instituted marriage has called marriage honourable. It is also a sign of responsibility. Djauro (2010) affirmed this by stating that marriage is one factor that is considered in Nigeria when describing who is responsible. Oftentimes, people are denied responsible positions in society simply because they are not married. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church, like in most other churches, a man with more than one wife, or found with known immoral conduct cannot be allowed to be an Elder in the Church. This goes to buttress the value and respect the Church has for the marriage institution.

The researchers are of the view that marriage is to be enjoyed and not endured. The desire of every married couple is to attain success in marriage, to live happily ever after, to make their home a little heaven on earth. This can only be realised where the interpersonal relationship between the couple is cordial and free from traits inimical to marital harmony. Sadly, many marriages are teetering towards total collapse due to various interpersonal deficiencies between the couples, including the ones isolated for this study namely poor communication, sexual dissatisfaction, aggression, and financial impropriety. These marriages all had good beginnings, but sooner or later cracks begin to emerge in the couple's everyday dealing with each other, turning the once "sweet relationship" unbearably sour (Parrot and Parrot 2001).

To provide effective intervention in couple's therapy and counselling, it is pertinent to understand how these interpersonal variables affect marital harmony. Communication is undoubtedly the centre of interpersonal relations, especially in marriage. Effective marital communication is a skill that could be acquired. Another important variable influencing marital harmony is financial management. Many married couples need serious education on how to manage their finances, in view of prevailing socioeconomic circumstances, to minimise tension in the marriage. Sexual satisfaction is yet another critical variable of interpersonal concern in marriage. It is needful to determine how sexual satisfaction correlates with marital harmony. Finally, anger management will be assessed in relation to marital harmony. According to Akinade (2013), there are so many angry spouses in the world and so many homes have been shattered because of uncontrolled anger. George (2019) opined that "emotions are the most present, pressing, and sometimes painful forces in our lives." And that if one acts on their

emotions too quickly or on the wrong kinds of emotions, they often make decisions that they later lament. This buttresses the need to reign in one's emotions, especially the aggressive ones, when dealing with their marriage mate, for the sake of marital harmony. It is therefore the focus of this study to determine the relationship between these interpersonal variables and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State since they are not immune to the vicissitudes of modern marital life.

Previous empirical studies provide useful insights into how some of these variables operate in various interpersonal settings. For instance, a systematic review of neural, cognitive, and clinical studies of anger and aggression was carried out by Richard, Tazi, Frydecka, Hamid, and Moustafa (2022). The study was based on the premise that in order to provide an intervention to minimise aggressive behaviours, it is important to understand the neural and cognitive aspects of anger and aggression since these have large impact on people's safety and the society at large. The authors investigated the cognitive and neural aspects of anger-related processes, including anger-related behaviours and anger reduction. Using this information, they reviewed existing methods on the treatment of anger-related disorders as well as anger management, including mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy. At the cognitive level, the review showed that anger is associated with excessive attention to anger-related stimuli and impulsivity. At the neural level, anger was found to be associated with abnormal functioning of the amygdala and ventromedial prefrontal cortex. In conclusions, based on cognitive and neural studies, the authors argued that mindfulness based cognitive behavioural therapy may be better at reducing anger and aggression than other behavioural treatments, such as cognitive behavioural therapy or mindfulness alone. They recommended that future researches investigate how anger related behaviours is acquired and how stress impacts the development of anger. The implication of this study is that proper anger management is essential for interpersonal harmony including in marriage as sought to understand by the current study.

Abreu-Afonso, Ramos, Queiroz-Garcia and Leal (2022) observed that while high rates of divorce seem related to low marital satisfaction levels, there is still a lack of a model that can help understand the couple's resilience and fragility throughout the life cycle. Their research therefore explored the role of communication patterns, motivation for conjugality, cohesion and flexibility within a couple, and several sociodemographic characteristics (e.g., stage of the family life cycle) that can explain marital satisfaction. A sample of 331 Portuguese in a marital relationship completed a sociodemographic questionnaire and marital satisfaction measures, communication and conflict management competencies, cohesion and flexibility, and motivation. Adequate statistical analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling. Both measurement and structural model performed in the study presented a good fit, with five significant predictors of marital satisfaction (that accounted for 85% of the variability): intrinsic motivation ($\beta = .64$), communication ($\beta = .31$), families with young children ($\beta = -.08$), families with teenagers ($\beta = -.07$) and professional/academic status ($\beta = .06$). By identifying a model for marital satisfaction, this research provides clues regarding which aspects might need to be considered in couples' clinical work to promote healthier relationships.

In a separate study, Huo, Jiang and Wang (2019) studied 400 Chinese couples and found that communication mediates the relationship between marital commitment and marital satisfaction. Using the actor-partner interdependence model, they found that wives and husbands show asymmetric associations for marital commitment, communication and satisfaction. Specifically, compared with husbands, wives were more attuned to the path from marital commitment to marital satisfaction via communication.

Józefacka, Szpakiewicz, Lech, Guzowski and Kania (2023) conducted a study to determine significant predictors of relationship satisfaction in young adults in a romantic relationship. The study was questionnaire-based, involving 237 young adults who were currently in a relationship. Three self-rating scales were used: CSI-32 Relationship Satisfaction Scale, Sexual Satisfaction Questionnaire, and Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale. Sexual satisfaction proved to be a main predictor of relationship satisfaction in both sexes. For women, interpersonal closeness was additionally important, with a sense of closeness found to be even more important than sexual satisfaction for women cohabiting with their partners. Cohabiting people are generally more satisfied with their relationship, and a higher level of closeness and applied caresses can additionally be observed in them. In contrast, the relationship length appeared to matter only for men living with their partner: they were more satisfied with the relationship at the beginning of the relationship, and then their level of satisfaction declined. Relationship satisfaction in young adults appears to be determined by other factors depending on gender and cohabitation status. Nevertheless, at this age, sexual satisfaction proves to be one of the most critical factors for a sense of relationship satisfaction.

Bafrani, Nourizadeh, Hakimi, Mortazavi, Mehrabi and Vahed (2023) opined that sexual and marital satisfaction play an important role in the stability of couples' relationships. On this premise and the need to adopt the proper approach to promoting these, the authors carried out a study to identify and categorize psychological interventions affecting sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction of women in Iran. An electronic systematic review search was conducted using the Persian and English databases of SID, Embase, PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, Medline, Cochran library, and Google Scholar motor engine until 2021 to identify all relevant clinical

trials and experimental and quasi-experimental studies assessing the effect of psychological interventions on sexual and marital satisfaction. They retrieved 528 studies from the previously mentioned databases, of which, 38 met the eligibility criteria. The subgroup meta-analysis of 4 studies conducted showed that interventions based on individual consultations increase sexual satisfaction (MD: 2.94, 95% CI: -0.36 to 6.24, $P=.23$), ($I^2=30.83\%$). The subgroup meta-analysis of 10 studies conducted revealed that couple-based consultations increase marital satisfaction (MD: 5.93, 95% CI: -2.59 to 9.27, $P=.95$), ($I^2=0\%$). The results of meta-analysis demonstrated the effect of counselling-based psychological interventions on increasing sexual and marital satisfaction of couples.

Owusu (2023) examined the effect of financial knowledge, financial attitude and responsible financial management behaviour on financial satisfaction and investigates the association between financial satisfaction and psychological wellbeing of individuals. The author examines these relationships having controlled for the influence of key demographic variables including age, gender, marital status, income level and employment status of respondents on the predicted relationships. Data was gathered by means of a self-administered questionnaire to postgraduate business students from a large public university in Ghana. The hypothesized relationships of the study were tested using the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) technique. The author shows from the structural model analysis using the bootstrapping procedure that financial knowledge, financial attitude and sound financial management behaviour have important implications on financial satisfaction levels of individuals. Further, the author finds financial satisfaction to be an important predictor of the psychological wellbeing of individuals. The study highlights the relevance of financial satisfaction on the psychological wellbeing of an individual and identifies some of the dominant factors that are associated with financial satisfaction.

Baisden, Fox and Bartholomae (2018) explored the link between couples' financial management practices and their marital quality through qualitative inquiry. Six couples in their first marriage, with at least one child age 18 or younger, were interviewed to understand how the couples' financial histories affect their current approach to financial management, and how their financial management affects their relationships. Using Couples and Finances Theory as a conceptual framework, this phenomenological study investigates the connection between financial history, approach to financial management, and marital quality to offer implications for financial counselors and therapists. The ways couples manage their finances are diverse, as are the impacts on their relationships. Couples' financial histories lead to diverse management processes influenced by financial stressors, communication, and shared values. Financial therapists and counselors should recognize that each person's financial history affects the way they think about money, which can affect their ability to communicate about finances with a partner. Therapists can build on the experiences of couples reporting in this study to help alleviate financial stress, improve financial relationships, and ultimately enhance marital quality.

Hammett, Lavner, Karney and Bradbury (2021) observed that whereas intimate partner aggression is common in dissatisfied relationships, it remains unclear whether intimate partner aggression is a correlate of relationship satisfaction, whether it predicts or follows from relationship satisfaction over time, or whether longitudinal associations are in fact bidirectional in nature. Their study thus evaluated these perspectives by examining self-reports of aggressive behaviors in relation to corresponding self-reports of relationship satisfaction among a sample of 431 low-income, ethnically diverse (76% Hispanic, 12% African American, 12% Caucasian) newlywed couples. Using a cross-lagged panel analysis, they examined associations between aggression and satisfaction across four time points, spaced by 9-month intervals, during the first 2.5 years of marriage. Cross-sectionally, less satisfied couples reported higher levels of intimate partner aggression. Longitudinally, aggression was a more consistent predictor of satisfaction than vice versa, though neither pathway was particularly robust: Intimate partner aggression was a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction at 4 of the 12 tested lags, whereas relationship satisfaction was a significant predictor of intimate partner aggression at only one of 12 lags. Because all effects were relatively weak and inconsistent, more specificity is needed to clarify circumstances under which aggression does and does not predict satisfaction, including whether the predictive power of the aggression-to-satisfaction association varies based on the severity of aggression or other individual (e.g., personality) or external (e.g., stress and environmental context) factors. Together, results indicate that dissatisfied couples are more likely to engage in intimate partner aggression, but being dissatisfied is unlikely to increase the level of aggression a couple engages in over time.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the nature of the relationship between key interpersonal variables and marital harmony among married couples of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study was designed to determine:

1. The relationship between marital communication and marital harmony among married members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in Akwa Ibom State.
2. The relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among married members of the

- Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.
3. The relationship between anger management and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.
 4. The relationship between financial management and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State?
3. What is the relationship between financial management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State?
4. What is the relationship between anger management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State?

1.3 Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 alpha level:

- H₀ 1. There is no significant relationship between marital communication and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.
- H₀ 2. There is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.
- H₀ 3. There is no significant relationship between financial management and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Akwa Ibom State.
- H₀ 4. There is no significant relationship between anger management and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

2. Methods

2.1 Design of the study

This study adopted the correlational research design and used the survey method for data collection. Correlational research design is a type of nonexperimental research design that is used to examine the relationship between two or more variables. The design is suitable for studies where, like in the current one, the researcher does not manipulate or control the independent variable, but instead observes the relationship between the independent and dependent variables through a quantitative analysis of data collected on those variables. Hassan (2022) posited that correlational research investigates the relationships between such measurable variables as attitudes, behaviours, or even thoughts; to determine if there is a relationship between these variables and nature or quality of such relationship. The researchers were convinced this design was most suitable for the current study.

2.2 Population and Sampling

The population of this study comprised 621 married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa-Ibom State Conference. The Akwa Ibom State Conference is made up of ten districts and one group namely: Uyo Township, Ikot-Ekpene, Eket, Oron, Uyo West, Mbioto, Itu Nbonuso, Ikot Ntuen, Nkwot, Ubon Akwa, and Ikot Abasi Group. Since the entire population was sizeable enough for the researchers to survey, all 621 members were co-opted into the study without any further sampling procedure.

2.3 Instrumentation

The *Marital Variables and Marital Harmony Questionnaire* (MVMHQ) was used for data collection in this study. The researchers adapted the *Marital Season Indicator* by Chapman (2005) for the MVMHQ. The MVMHQ had 3 sections: Sections A, B and C. Section A consists of, respondents' Bio-Data, Section B assessed the independent variables while Section C contained items adapted from the Marital Seasons Indicator by Chapman (2005). The Marital Season Indicator was originally developed by Chapman (2005) to measure the different seasons of marriage namely: winter, fall, summer and spring. For the current study, the seasons were used to determine the level of harmony enjoyed in the marriage at the time of the study. The adapted instrument was subjected to rigorous validation by professional counsellors and experts of Tests and Measurement in the Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, Nigeria. The reliability of the instrument based on data generated from a sample of 20 couples of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ogun State (Babcock Branch) was .92 Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. This was considered high enough for the study.

2.4 Method of Data Collection

The researchers personally met with the respondents in groups at their different meeting centres to explain to them the purpose of the study and solicit their participation in the study. This was done across the 10 centres in the study area. This approach allowed the researchers ensure the data collection process was smooth and successful. Copies of the questionnaire were administered and retrieved on-site to minimise attrition. In spite of the painstaking efforts of the researchers, 611 out of the 621 copies of questionnaire administered were properly filled out, thus resulting the attrition of 10 copies of the questionnaire. Hence, 611 respondents' data were used for the study.

2.5 Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in analysing the data collected in the study. The PPMC coefficients obtained provided bases for answering the research questions and testing the null hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

3. Results

3.1 Analysis of Research Questions

RQ 1: What is the relationship between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Akwa Ibom State?

Table 1: PPMC of marital communication and marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State (n=611)

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r_{cal}	Remark
Marital Communication	2163	7808.2	7839.2	0.53	Moderate Relationship
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

From Table 1, the PPMC of the relationship between marital communication and marital harmony is 0.53. Based on decision rule, there is a moderate relationship between communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

RQ 2: What is the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 2: PPMC of sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State (n=611)

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r_{cal}	Remarks
Sexual Satisfaction	2214.2	8115.56	8008.44	0.49	Weak Relationship
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

The data presented in Table 2 shows the Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony of married members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State. The r- calculated value is 0.49 which shows a weak relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony.

RQ 3: What is the relationship between financial management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 3: PPMC of financial management and marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State (n=611)

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r_{cal}	Decision
Financial management	2263.8	8444.44	8178.24	0.47	Weak Relationship
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

Table 3 shows the summary of the relationship between financial management and marital harmony. The Pearson Product Moment Coefficient of the relationship is 0.47. This shows that there exists a weak relationship between financial management and marital harmony of married members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa-Ibom State.

RQ 4: What is the relationship between anger management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State?

Table 4: PPMC of anger management and marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State (n=611)

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r_{cal}	Remarks
Anger Management	2262.2	8394.54	8180.84	0.87	Strong Relationship
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

Table 4 shows the result of Pearson Product moment Correlation of the relationship between anger

management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State. The calculated r value (r-cal) is 0.87. This shows a strong relationship between anger management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

3.2 Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 5: Significance of PPMC between marital communication and marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r _{cal}	r _{cri}
Marital Communication	2163	7808.2	7839.2	0.53	0.08
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

* Significant at $p \leq .05$; $n = 611$; $df = 610$

The results displayed in Table 5 show that the observed correlation index, r-cal, for the relationship between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa-Ibom State is 0.53 while r-critical, at df 610 and 0.05 alpha, is 0.08. The r-calculated is statistically significant at $p \leq .05$ alpha. In other words, there is a significant positive relationship between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State is rejected.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 6: Significance of PPMC between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony of Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r _{cal}	r _{cri}
Sexual Satisfaction	2214.2	8115.56	8008.44	0.49	0.08
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

* Significant at $p \leq .05$; $n = 611$; $df = 610$

As shown in Table 6, the r-cal for the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa-Ibom State is 0.49 while r-cri is 0.08 at df of 610 and 0.05 alpha level. The r-cal of 0.49 is greater than the r-cri of 0.08 indicating that the r-cal is statistically significant. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant positive relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between financial management and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Akwa Ibom State.

Table 7: Significance of PPMC between financial management and marital harmony of Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r _{cal}	r _{cri}
Financial management	2263.8	8444.44	8178.24	0.47	0.08
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

* Significant at $p \leq .05$; $n = 611$; $df = 610$

The result displayed in Table 7 show that the observed correlation index, r-cal, for the relationship between financial management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa-Ibom State is 0.47 while its corresponding table value r-cri, at 610 and 0.05 alpha is 0.08. This observation shows that the r-cal of 0.47 is greater than r-cri of 0.08. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between financial management and marital harmony is rejected. Hence, there is a significant positive relationship between financial management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between anger management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 8: Significance of PPMC between anger management and marital harmony of Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State

Variables	$\sum X/\sum Y$	$\sum X^2/\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r _{cal}	r _{cri}
Anger Management	2262.2	8394.54	8180.84	0.87	0.08
Marital Harmony	2202.2	7990.84			

* Significant at $p \leq .05$; $n = 611$; $df = 610$

In Table 8, the r-cal for the relationship between anger Management and marital harmony of married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa-Ibom State is 0.87 while its corresponding r-cri is 0.08 at df of 610 and 0.05 alpha. This indicates that the r-cal is statistically significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between anger management and marital harmony of members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. Hence, an alternate hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between anger management and marital harmony of members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State was adopted.

4. Discussion of the Findings

Findings of this study showed that a significant relationship exists between marital communication and marital harmony of married members of The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State. This was statistically affirmed based on the summary of data analyses presented in Tables 1 and 5 which shows that the r-calculated value was greater than its corresponding r-critical. This finding is similar to the findings of Abreu-Afonso, *et al* (2022) who reported a based on their study that marital communication predicted marital satisfaction in their population of Portuguese couples. In a similar study, Huo, *et al* (2019) found that communication mediated marital commitment and marital satisfaction in their population of Chinese couples. These studies provide supporting evidence that, as the current study indicates, effective communication in marriage is crucial for marital harmony. Couples must therefore be assisted through guidance and counselling to master some principles and skills of interpersonal communication for harmonious relations in their marriage.

This study also sought to determine the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State. The results of correlation analyses presented in Tables 2 and 6 show a weak relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital harmony in the study population. While it is curious that the observed correlation is weak, it must be noted that previous studies found sexual satisfaction to exert a strong impact on couple's relationship. One such study was conducted by Józefacka and colleagues (2023) and found sexual satisfaction to be a strong predictor of relationship satisfaction. In another study, Bafrani, *et al* (2023) also found sexual satisfaction to play a significant role in the stability of relationships and recommended counselling-bases psychological interventions to foster sexual satisfaction as an intervention in marital stability. These findings lend credence to the findings of the current study and emphasise the role of sexual satisfaction in the sustenance of marital harmony.

Financial management was examined in relation to marital harmony in this work. The result of correlation analyses carried out on the field data shows a statistically significant relationship between financial management and marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State Conference (see Tables 3 and 7). This finding is similar to the findings of Owusu (2023) who found responsible financial management behaviour accruing financial satisfaction to individuals and promoting psychological wellbeing. In the context of this study, such psychological wellbeing is capable of engendering marital harmony. As Baisden, *et al* (2018) noted, from their own study on financial management among couples, marital quality could be significantly improved if counsellors assist couples minimise financial stress and improve their interpersonal financial relationships through effective financial management practices and financial communication.

The last major finding of this study was a significant relationship between anger management and marital harmony among married members of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Akwa Ibom State Conference (see Tables 4 and 8). This result is in consonance with the findings of Hammett, *et al* (2021) who observed from their study that while aggressiveness does not seem to stem from dissatisfaction in a relationship, couples who are generally dissatisfied were more likely to engage in intimate partner aggression. This suggest that the problem is not with having the disposition of anger but failing to manage it when occasion demand for efficient anger management. Another study conducted by Richard, *et al* (2022) also found a correlation between anger and excessive attention to anger-related stimuli and lack of impulse control. These empirical studies along with the current study give evidence that anger management is essential for marital bliss and harmony. Couples with aggressive dispositions therefore do well to utilise counselling and coaching services to learn anger management skills if they must enjoy harmony in their marriage.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to determine the relationship between four interpersonal variables (communication, sexual

satisfaction, financial management, and anger management) on marital harmony among Seventh-day Adventists in Akwa Ibom State. Results of correlational analyses carried out on the research data provided sufficient evidence to conclude that these interpersonal variables all had significant correlations with marital harmony among married members of the Seventh-day Adventists Church in Akwa Ibom State.

Based on the foregoing, it is recommended that couples of the Seventh-day Adventist should avail themselves of accessible couples counselling services to improve their interpersonal relationship skills, especially those pertaining to interpersonal communication, sexuality (with focus on sexual satisfaction), financial management and impulse control (with focus on anger management). Such self-development efforts would undoubtedly contribute to marital harmony among these couples.

It is also recommended that counsellors working with couples should give attention to deficiencies in skills of interpersonal relationships as this may underpin marital difficulties and incidents of dissatisfaction or lack of harmony on the marriage. All too often, couples are quick to explain away such interpersonal deficiencies as spousal incompatibility. Psychoeducation can effectively address this misconception and put couples on track to new learning and adjustment for marital harmony.

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