

CONSIDERATIONS OF DISPOSITION TOWARDS THE OPPOSITE SEX [SEX-TONE] PARAMETER IN MATE SELECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRE-MARITAL COUNSELLING

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to bring into focus and application the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex-tone) parameter in mate selection. Four research questions guided the study carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria while one null-hypothesis was tested at .05 significance level. The researcher developed instrument was administered on 1000 tertiary level student-respondents drawn in a-multi stage random and accidental sampling techniques. Percentage frequency, mean, standard deviation and ANOVA were the statistical tools used in the study. The major findings include that: The disposition towards the opposite sex parameter is accepted for considerations in mate selection with a weighting pattern slightly above the mid-point of the 9-point scale. There is no significant gender difference in their weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter. Among the recommendations are that: Sexual compatibility in marriage should be emphasized in all pre-marital counselling efforts; individuals in heterosexual relationships have to be guided to take the responsibility to find the true sexual self; marriage counsellors should gear up towards the guidance of prospective mate selectors on sexual issues and indirect sexuality assessment.

Key words: disposition towards the opposite sex parameter; mate selection; sexual compatibility; pre-marital counselling; sexuality assessment

INTRODUCTION

Marital sex is a fundamental activity between the marital spouses without which no child will be produced in the marriage. Individuals do differ in their sexual orientations and preferences (Barlow & Durand, 2012; Kelly, 2004; Roop, 2004). Heterosexuals use different sexual strategies to get suitable mates they would agree with sexually (Fisher, 2000). Besides, difficulties in marital sex between the spouses tend to manifest in other areas of the marriage. Those sex-rooted problems can only be addressed by first solving the subterranean sexual problems. Meera Paros (2010) opines that couples who agree on matters of sex would as well agree on other matters. Pre-marital sex is abhorred in most societies. It becomes difficult to appraise sexual

compatibilities before marriage. The challenge is on the prospective mate selector to first assess own sexuality and then assess that of the particular opposite heterosexual mate to find out the extent of their agreement on sexual matters. How this can be done appears to hinge on their respective dispositions towards the opposite sex or simply put their sex-tones.

Statement of the Problem

It is certain that sexual compatibility of marital couples cannot easily be assessed before marriage. The problem of how to possibly assess the sexuality of prospective mate selectors remains a nagging one. Certainly, everyone has a way of projecting oneself sexually within the bounds of propriety. In the same token, the individual should

be capable of estimating the projected sexual self of a potential mate. It is these estimations of individual sexualities in heterosexual relationships that are brought into play in the considerations of the disposition towards the opposite in mate selection. In this study, the pattern of estimations and considerations would be elicited from the study respondents.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to bring into focus and application the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex-tone) parameter in mate selection. Specifically the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the extent to which disposition towards the opposite sex parameter is taken into consideration in mate selection
2. Find out the mean weighting of the subjects on the disposition towards the opposite sex (sex-tone) parameter in mate selection
3. Determine the frequency % of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex tone) parameter in mate selection
4. Determine the gender pattern of weightings of considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex tone) parameter in mate selection

Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Anambra State of Nigeria. Mate selection was the subject matter studied with the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter as the main study variable. Gender was the moderating variable included in the study. The researcher developed instrument was administered to tertiary level student-respondents. Percentage

frequency, mean, standard deviation and ANOVA were the statistical tools used in the study.

Research Questions

1. To what extent is the disposition towards the opposite sex taken into consideration in mate selection?
2. What is the mean weighting of the subjects on the disposition towards the opposite sex (sex-tone) parameter in mate selection?
3. What is the frequency % of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex tone) parameter in mate selection?
4. What is the gender pattern of the weightings of considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex tone) parameter in mate selection?

Null- Hypothesis: There is no significant gender difference in the weighting of the disposition towards the opposite sex [sex-tone] parameter in mate selection (ANOVA-tested at .05 level of significance).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex [sex-tone] in mate selection

Okoye, (2001) emphasizes that "marriage provides legitimate channel for satisfying sexual urges" pointing out that pre-marital and extra-marital sexual affairs are socio-culturally disapproved and also against God's commandments on fornication and adultery. Therefore, marital partners must exhibit transparent marital fidelity and should avoid putting themselves in positions of suspicion.

In mate selection interactions, the individual male or female should dress,

comport and conduct the self in the best possible manner to project the sexual self without being suggestive. Yet, the ability of one to control ones sexual desires should be manifestly obvious. As people plan to marry, they tend to enter into sexual relationships they “plan to honour with fidelity” (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1989). One area where trust, intimacy and mutuality blend is in the sexual union of two people in marriage (Zimbardo, 1979; Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 1989). Marriage is the most permanent sexual relationship regulating sexual behaviour with remarkable precision. Frequent sex with a partner is overwhelmingly important and desirable (Michael, Gagnon, Laumann & Kolata, 1994), and the partners must be easily accessible. Furthermore, Kieren, Henton & Martoz (1975) emphasize that mates must “change some of their values and ways of thinking about sex to bring them closer to those of the partner.” Boys and girls differ in the nature of their sex drives and in their sexual behaviour (Kelly, 2004) as boys are more sexually active than girls. Papalia and Olds (1978) have reasoned that the differences in the sexual responses between the sexes are based both on biology and culture. Thus girls are sex-socialized differently from boys all over the world, because in the views of Papalia & Olds (1978) the woman is in a more vulnerable position and the man needs reassurance that he is the father of his wife's children. Therefore, the man needs to be sexually stronger than the woman. The pre-marital sexual behaviours of the duo are common pointers to their sexual appetites while their dressing mode is the overt indicator of same. The heterosexual relationship that gravitates easily to coitus would definitely have a regular prompter who

has a stronger sex urge. Individuals in heterosexual relationship should be able to quantify the amount of sexual appetite of the self as well as that of the heterosexual partner.

VanPelt (2002) affirms that sexual appetites established before marriage affect and direct sexual appetites after marriage. It may also follow that people who have had extensive pre-marital sexual experiences are most likely to have extra-marital affairs, especially if their marriage were at all unhappy (Athanasiou & Sarkin, 1974). However, problems in sexual relationship may be a symptom of their marital difficulties, or they may simply result from the couple's sexual naiveté (Papalia & Olds, 1978). Sex within marriage has become much more vital in becoming an equal-opportunities affair these days with husbands being more concerned about their wife's enjoyment of sex, and wives being more willing to initiate and take responsibility.

Kelly, (2004) posits that human beings use sexual strategies in selecting a mate that are advantageous from an evolutionary perspective to ensure reproductive success. According to Fisher (2000) evolution has yielded three primary emotional systems that lead to mating, reproduction and parenting. They are a craving for sexual gratification, attraction focusing on a particular mate and attachment to that mate. Sexual satisfaction and compatibility are considered to be important to the general satisfaction levels that couples share (Dunn, Crost & Hackett, 2000) in marriage.

Zimbardo (1979) sees “the blending of trust, intimacy and mutuality.” in marital sexual union. Married couples should be mutually

yielding (Scanthling, 2007) and maintain sexual exclusivity (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994). Sexual adjustment, Papalia & Olds (1978) observe “often requires, a complete reversal of previous attitudes and behaviour”. Zimbardo (1979) cautioned that the “power of sexual impulses to bring young people into closer union” can be overwhelming and misleading. Rather, the power of sexual impulses should be properly harnessed to guide eligible prospective people into harmonious and fruitful marriages. Sexual desire discrepancy between marital spouses could be drastically reduced if prospective mate selectors put in sufficient effort to ascertain their sex tone and that of their possible mate choice.

Theoretical Framework The Unconscious Archetype

According to Eckland (1980) instinct is what guides a man to choose a woman as there must be for each particular man a particular woman who corresponds most perfectly with him. Folk opinion has it that each person has a partner who has been specially made for him or her and that “our job is to make a careful search and sort out our own husband or wife” (Okoye, 2001) by careful surveillance and observation.

The Principle of Complementary Needs

Based on Winch's (1958) theory of complementary needs Eckland, (1980) says that “opposites attract”. Each individual seeks that person who will provide him with maximum needs gratification. Determining the complementarity or “fit” of the two individuals on sex matters is of enormous

importance (Strean, 1980). Women who hold traditional view of husband's and wife's roles may prefer men with traditional masculine traits to complement their own feminine characteristics. Similarly, women would prefer men with stronger sexual drive or larger sex-hunger than they, but not those with excessive sexual drive that may be difficult to contain within the marriage. On the other hand, men would prefer women who have lower sexual drive or sex-hunger than them within marital containment.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed **Descriptive Survey Design**. A representative sample of tertiary students in Anambra State was studied and the findings generalized to the entire tertiary student population in Anambra State or other contiguous states.

Area of the Study

The tertiary institutions in Anambra State constitute the area of the study. There are nine tertiary institutions in the State out of which two were randomly selected for the study while the third was used for determining the reliability of the instrument.

Population of the Study

The population studied was a total of 10,500 tertiary students made up of 4513 students of Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe (Statistics Unit, Registrar's Office) and 5987 of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (formerly Anambra State University), Igbariam Campus (Registrar's Office).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The research sample was made up of 1000 students. In a simple random sampling technique, Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam were drawn out of the nine tertiary institutions in Anambra State to constitute two areas/clusters for the study. From each area/cluster a sample of 500 student respondents were drawn giving a total of 1000 for the two clusters. For the Nsugbe cluster, multi-stage random sampling method was used to first draw one school from the 6 schools. From that drawn school, one of the constituent departments was also drawn and from which the 500 respondents were drawn. A similar multi-stage random sampling method was used to draw a faculty for the three faculties at Igbariam down to the class list.

Instrument for Data Collection

The researcher developed instrument used in this study entitled Considerations of Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex (Sex-tone) Parameter in Mate Selection Questionnaire (CDOMSQUE) has three sections. Section A elicited information on the personal characteristics of the respondents. Section B elicited information on the inclusion of disposition towards the opposite sex [sex-tone] parameter in the considerations in the choice of a marriage partner. Section C elicited the weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter based on a 9-point expanded Likert-type scale.

Instrument Validation: The face and content validity of the instrument were determined by the team of experts who inspected the items to ascertain their adequacy for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

The research instrument was reliability-tested on 80 students of Federal College of Education Technical, Umunze. Cronbach alpha α reliability technique was used. The calculated Cronbach Alpha $\alpha = 0.86$ reliability coefficient was found to be “very high”.

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

The instrument was administered on the sample of 1000 students (500 students in Nsugbe, and 500 in Igbariam). The respective class representatives assisted in the administration and recovery of the questionnaires. The completed CDOMSQUE were processed by simple Tally Method to determine the relative responses to each item in each section. Simple mean, frequency % and standard deviation were used in answering the research questions, while one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in testing the null hypotheses.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The results of the study are presented in line with the research questions and summarized in Tables.

Table 1: Acceptance of Inclusion of Considerations of Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex Parameter in Mate Selection

Parameter	Min	Max	Mean	Std-Dev	Remark
Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex [Sex-Tone]	1	5	3.37	1.35	Accepted

Table 1 shows that disposition towards the opposite sex parameter is accepted for considerations in mate selection. With mean level of the acceptance of 3.37 and Std-Dev. of 1.35,

the respondents do not vary much in their acceptance to include considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (Sex-Tone) in their choice of a marriage partner.

Table 2: Frequency and Mean Weighting of the Subjects on the Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex (Sex-Tone) Parameter in Mate Selection

Parameter	Weights for Quantification									(\bar{x})
	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex (Sex Tone)	214	85	99	95	124	62	46	86	189	5.24

Table 2 shows the weighting pattern swinging from 9, (214) through the scaling mid-point 5, (124) to I, (189) with the mean weighting of 5.24. Therefore, the weighting attached to the

considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection is slightly above the mid-point of the 9-point weighting scale.

Table 3: Frequency % Considerations of Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex (Sex Tone) Parameter in Mate Selection

Weightings	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative %
Valid 9.00	214	21.4	21.4
8.00	85	8.5	29.9
7.00	99	9.9	39.8
6.00	95	9.5	49.3
5.00	124	12.4	61.7
4.00	62	6.2	67.9
3.00	46	4.6	72.5
2.00	86	8.6	81.1
1.00	189	18.9	100.0
Total	1000	100.0	

From Table 3, the frequency % of the weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter reflects the amount of

importance attached to it in mate selection. From the mean weighting of 5.24 (Table 2), this appears to tally with the scaling mid-point of 5.

Table 4: Gender Mean and Std Dev of Weightings of Considerations of Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex (Sex Tone) Parameter in Mate Selection

	GENDER		TOTAL
	Male	Female	
Mean	5.5565	5.1403	5.2360
N	230	770	1000
Std-Dev	2.8567	2.9668	2.9457

Table 4 indicates that the males and females differ in their mean weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection. The males have a mean of 5.56 while the females have a mean weighting of 5.14 when

compared with the total mean weighting of 5.24. There is some variability in the weightings. When the observed mean gender difference was ANOVA tested at 0.05-level of significance (Table 5.), it was found not to be statistically significant.

Table 5: ANOVA of Gender Considerations of Disposition Towards the Opposite Sex (Sex Tone) Parameter in Mate Selection

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	Cal. F	Crit F	P>0.05
Between Groups	30.687	1	30.687	3.55	3.84	NS
Within Groups	8637.617	998	8.655			
Total	8668.304	999				

Table 5 shows that at .05 level of significance, 1df (numerator) and 998df (denominator) the Calculated F 3.55 is less than the Critical F 3.84. Therefore, the null hypothesis is upheld. Then the researchers conclude that there is no significant difference in the gender weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection.

Summary of major findings

1. The disposition towards the opposite sex parameter is accepted for considerations in mate selection with mean level of the acceptance of 3.37 and Std-Dev. of 1.35.
2. The weighting or importance attached to the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection is slightly above the mid-point of the 9-point weighting scale.

3. Males and females differ in their mean weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection. The males have a mean of 5.56 slightly above the mean weighting of 5.24 while the females have a mean weighting of 5.14 slightly below.
4. There is no significant difference in the gender weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection.

DISCUSSION

There is a general acceptance by prospective mate selectors to include the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection. This shows that even though according to Barlow & Durand (2012), Kelly (2004), Roop (2004) individuals do differ in their sexual orientations and preferences, they still attach importance to sexual issues in mate selection. This agrees with the views of Streaun (1980) that determining the complementarity or “fit” of the two individuals on sex matters is of enormous importance.

The prospective mate selectors have to find out the extent of their agreement on sexual matters. This agrees with the position of Fisher (2000) that heterosexuals use different sexual strategies to get suitable mates they would agree with sexually. The individual has to first ascertain own self weighting of sexual matters and then be able to do so of heterosexual friends. Establishing sexual appetite is essential as affirmed by VanPelt (2002) that sexual appetites established before marriage affect and direct sexual appetites after marriage.

Males and females differ in their

mean weightings of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection as evident from this study. This agrees with Kelly (2004) that boys and girls differ in the nature of their sex drives and in their sexual behaviours as the boys are more sexually active than girls. This observable gender differences have been reasoned by Papalia and Olds (1978) to be based both on biology and culture. The observed gender differences have been empirically proven not to be significant. This may be explained by Kelly, (2004) that human beings use sexual strategies in selecting a mate. This is further corroborated by Fisher (2000) that individuals crave for sexual gratification that lead to attraction focusing on a particular mate and attachment to that mate. Properly harnessed sexual impulses should guide eligible prospective people into sexually compatible marriages.

Counselling Implications

Sexual compatibility in marriage should be emphasized in all pre-marital counselling efforts. Individuals in heterosexual relationships have to be guided to find the true sexual self. Individuals, therefore, should be adequately guided to be able to ascertain their sex tones and that of their possible mate choice in order to drastically reduce sexual desire discrepancies in marriage. Sexual appetites of individuals are difficult to assess directly. Therefore, counsellors have the challenge to develop indirect assessment techniques. Attention may focus on dressing mode, body language or verbalizations as overt behaviours while the spectrum of actual sexual behaviours need to be carefully explored.

Thankfully, the findings of this study should strengthen the counselling efforts in the sense that: (1). individuals agree to include the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection and this provides a good starting point. (2).The weighting pattern is so flexible that every individual would conveniently fit into the spectrum. (3). Males and females accord similar weighting and importance to issues of sex in mate selection in spite of any observable individual differences.

Conclusion

Evidence-based effort has been made in this study to ascertain the willingness of prospective mate selectors to include the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex (sex tone) in mate selection. It, therefore, behooves on individuals to diligently consider matters of sexuality in mate selection. The importance individuals attach to the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex in mate selection reflects the weighting pattern found in the study. Although individuals vary widely on sexual issues, they post a mean of 5.24 on a 9-point weighting scale.

A slight gender difference exists in gender weighting of the considerations of disposition towards the opposite sex parameter in mate selection. This difference is not statistically significant. This implies that both males and females are equally concerned in the desire to find a mate to agree with sexually.

Recommendations

1. Sexual compatibility in marriage should be emphasized in all pre-marital counselling efforts.
2. Individuals have to take the

responsibility of adequately assessing self and heterosexual friend on sexual matters prior to marriage.

3. The individual mate selector should be fully aware of the import of sexuality assessment to marital sexual compatibility.
4. As it is pretty difficult to assess sexual compatibility before marriage, counsellors should gear up towards proffering the necessary guidance to prospective mate selectors on sexual issues.
5. Counsellors have the challenge to develop indirect sexuality assessment techniques that may integrate focus on dressing mode, body language or verbalizations.

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