

Personality Traits as Predictors of Marital Instability Among Married Persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study investigates personality traits as predictors of marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State Nigeria. **Method:** Correlational research design was used for the study. Five research questions and five null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study comprised all the married persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, totaling 10,128. Fluid survey online calculator was used to determine sample size of 342 married persons for the study. Multi-stage sampling procedures were used for the study. Self-constructed instruments titled 'Personality Traits, Marital Instability Scale' (PTMIS) was used to collect data. The PT and MI Subscales were validated by research experts. The reliability of the instruments were determined through test re-test method that yielded indices of; conscientiousness 0.87, extroversion 0.82, openness to experience 0.85, neuroticism 0.81, agreeableness respectively. The researcher personally administered the instrument to the respondents with the help of research assistants in their various churches. Simple regression analysis was used to answer the five research questions and also tested the five corresponding null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS version 25. **Results:** The results revealed that; extroversion, openness to experience, neuroticism does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State, while conscientiousness, and agreeableness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. **Novelty:** Based on the findings, the researcher recommends that counseling services should be tailored to address the impact of openness to experience, and neuroticism on marital relationships. Couples with higher levels of these traits could benefit from conflict resolution training and emotional regulation techniques to mitigate marital instability.

Introduction

Marriage is a legal union of a man and a woman as husband and wife. which is an agreement between a man and a woman to live with each other spending the remaining part of their lives together as husband and wife. Marriage is also described as a legal covenant relationship between a man and a woman as husband and wife geared towards the foundation of a family, a gift, a call to servant hood, an intimate relationship and a refining process.

Effiong and Denga defined marriage as a legalized agreement involving two persons of opposite sex as husband and wife for the formation of a family [1]. It means an agreement of promise and a precursor to family living since it is the only legal medium that permits spouses to raise offspring and populate the societies of the world. Through marriage, many people try 'to actualize their various goals and influence in life.

Dorgbaa opined that premarital guidance concerning family issues are provided to prospective married persons by counselors which will give them better foundations in

family life [2]. In the Nigerian traditional society, Bayelsa State central senatorial district in particular preparing the young ones for adult life was an integral process of African traditional education of the child. Boys were educated in such a form that would enable them become responsible future husbands while girls were tailored in the activities and duties of womanhood in the communities, which would enable them, become successful and happy future wives. Deener and Seligman (2026) hinted on what constitutes the training as it entails a good upbringing at home for the girls, which included chastity before marriage, hospitality and kindness among others. This training was taken very seriously by their parents and significant others. Among the popular traditional methods is the fattening room practiced by the Bayelsa State Nigeria. It is a time where an intending bride is secluded and fed special dietaries to gain weight and get ready for marriage. The sole objective is to look robust and healthy for fertility and prosperity.

This fattening period is a marriage training school for girls before the last public marriage ceremony. Their spouses are always the old women who are experienced and well-grounded to impact them with the knowledge on how to live harmoniously with their relatives, with virtues of hard work and how to assist their people and please their husbands. This pre-marital guidance program helped for family stability but such preparations have been extinct nowadays due to modernity and civilization. Chima (2026) observed that the young people of the present day are in a confused state of mind with respect to family living and they do enter it without proper guidance, this could be the reason for failed marriages.

The term 'marital instability' is a very vast and broad concept. Therefore, focusing on a key factor responsible for marital instability can give us a good guide on what the term "marital instability is all about. The purpose for marriage is far more important than the mere legalized sexual relationship among spouses. Marital instability refers to the process whereby marriages break down through separation, desertion or divorce and where relevant to the subsequent re-partnering of the individual are concerned. Separation and legal divorce are psychological phenomenon caused by the married persons involved, and which could either result from personality traits. Many marriages remain shaky for a very long time; some of them recover equilibrium and become cohesive again, this shaky period may lead to separation.

As human, individuals develop their values, beliefs and attitudes throughout the course of their lives. Families, friends, community and the experiences they have had all contributed to their sense of whom they are, how they view the world and how they respond to situations. No two human beings are exactly alike. Hence, individuals differ in how they receive process and react to information. These differences in individual behaviour exist from person to person and are better described or explained through the concept of personality. People view personality differently. Most often, the nonprofessional sees it as the extent to which a person impresses or attracts other people. Conversely, it is also seen as the extent to which a person is negatively perceived, and even misjudged by others. More appropriately, personality refers to that consistency of

behaviour as exhibited by an individual. It includes, how an individual think, feels and acts on a consistent basis.

Aneke explained that marriage is the completion of both the man and the woman, and it is in marriage that the personalities of couples merge and become one [3]. Man's strength is complimented by the woman's beauty, man's aggressiveness is complimented by the woman's passivity, and woman is enriched by man's sense of objectivity, his strength, his courage, protection and security. Aneke further noted that marriage is ranked as the highest of all human interactions and therefore, must not be entered into carelessly [3].

Kinanee, in Barrick and Munt explained that personality is the enduring patterns of behavioural and mental processes that are expressed in different circumstances [4][5]. In other words, it refers to the totality of the behavioural and mental characteristics that are unique to an individual. These characteristics reveal the Individual's unique and relatively stable patterns of behaviour, thoughts and feelings. Importantly, we are not born with a stamped personality. In the course of human growth and development the raw or genetic materials a person inherited from his/her parents at conception, integrate in a dynamic manner with forces operating in his/her environment to form his personality. This means that personality can be explained by hereditary, environmental and situational factors. It can therefore be said to be only relatively permanent. Key aspects of personality as enumerated by Iwundu in Daminabo include temperament, character, adjustment, intelligence, interest and attitude [6][7].

Generally, people refer when they describe one's personality to these components. They are internal characteristics possessed by every individual. These could equally be referred to as identity components that are not permanent but can be modified by environment or personal experience. Personality refers to the characteristics and modes of behaviour that make one individual different from others and determine his unique adjustment to his environment" Personality is derived from the Latin word "persona" which means "mask" used by the actors to change their appearance. It refers to the combination of individual thoughts, characteristic way of thinking, feeling and behaving. Personality involves moods, attitudes, opinions, and habits. Olive et al. described personality as a complex pattern of behaviour, it is referred to as the habits, attitudes, as well as physical traits of a person which are not same but have vary from group to group and society to society, everyone has personality, which may be good or bad, impressive or unimpressive [8].

The big five personality traits are the most popular personality framework. It has its origins from Cattell's 16 factors framework and today has become the most acceptable model of personality theory. These five factors do not grant exhaustive explanations of personality, but they are acknowledged as the five-factor model due to the fact that they embody a large component of terms that are related to personality. In addition, the five factors are not necessarily traits in and of themselves, but factors in which many related traits and characteristics fit. The concept of five-factor model of personality is widely accepted as a replicable and unifying taxonomy of married persons' personality such as

extroversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, openness to experience, and Conscientiousness.

Extraversion

Extraversion is characterized by behaviour such as positive emotions, assertiveness, sociability, talkativeness, etc. People who can be described as extroverts or are high in extraversion are outgoing and tend to gain energy in social situations. Whereas, people who are introverts or low in extraversion tend to be more reserved and have less energy to expend in social settings. For such individuals, social events can feel draining. Hence, they often require a period of solitude and quiet in order to “recharge”. Extraversion is thought to boost married persons, eliciting more active and affirmative behaviours in disciplinary interactions. Married persons with a high level of openness, meanwhile, provide greater stimulation for their children. Extroverts are usually sociable, talkative, communicative and friendly [9]. Olive et al. opined that extroversions individuals are active, bold, assertive, exciting and simulative [10]. In addition, individuals high in extraversion tend to seek out opportunities for social interaction, where they are often the “life of the party”. They are comfortable with others, gregarious and prone to action.

Various scholars maintained that there is a positive relationship between extroversion and marital stability. Al-Monani asserted that there is a relationship between high levels of extraversion and marital stability [11]. The major reason adduced is that individuals in this category are always cheerful, optimistic, easy going and outspoken. Hence, they can get easily influenced by others close to them. Larson and Buss defined extroverts as individuals who are outgoing and energetic as opposed to solitary and being reserved [12]. It includes behaviour such as sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness and emotional expressiveness. High extraversion is often perceived as attention seeking and domineering. In this regard, Larson and Buss further posited that high extroversion could cause an individual to be perceived as aloof and non-reflective capable of affecting the peace and stability of a marital union [13].

Extrovert behaviour can contribute to marital instability in the following ways:

- ❖ **Communication Styles:** Dominating conversations, extroverts may overpower introverted partners, leading to feelings of unheardness.
- ❖ **Conflict Escalation:** Extroverts' tendency to confront issues head-on can intensify conflicts.
- ❖ **Insensitivity to Partner's Needs:** Extroverts' focus on social interactions may lead them to neglect partner's emotional needs.
- ❖ **Social Habits:** Excessive socializing and spending too much time with friends and acquaintances can leave partner feeling neglect.
- ❖ **Flirtatious Behaviour:** Extroverts' friendly nature may be misinterpreted, causing jealousy.
- ❖ **Different Social Priorities:** Extroverts' love for social events may clash with partner's preference for quiet evenings.
- ❖ **Emotional Expression:** Extroverts' impulsiveness can lead to explosive arguments.

- ❖ Lack of Introspection: Extroverts may not prioritize self-reflection, neglecting underlying issues.
- ❖ Overemphasis on External Validation: Extroverts' need for social validation can lead to emotional dependence on others.
- ❖ Boundaries and Intimacy: Invasion of partner's space, extroverts' love for social interaction may invade partner's alone time.
- ❖ Difficulty with Emotional Intimacy: Extroverts' focus on external relationships can hinder deep connection with partner.
- ❖ Different Intimacy Styles: Extroverts' preference for physical intimacy may clash with partner's emotional intimacy needs.
- ❖ Conflict Resolution: Avoiding conflicts, extroverts may prioritize social harmony over addressing marital issues.
- ❖ Impulsive Decisions: Extroverts' tendency to act on emotions can lead to rash decisions.
- ❖ External advice: Extroverts may seek external advice, potentially undermining partner's feelings [14].

Conscientiousness personality trait explains individuals with high levels of thoughtfulness, good impulse control and goal-directed behaviours. Highly conscientious people tend to be organised and mindful of details. They plan, think things through and are mindful of deadlines. People who are low on conscientiousness, on the other hand, dislike structures and schedules and often fail to complete necessary or assigned tasks. Conscientious single parents adhere to childrearing norms that allow them to create a more structured and coherent environment.

Ezeh described conscientiousness as the personality type of being diligent or careful [15]. It means taking one's obligations seriously and striving to do one's best in every given task of single parenting by ensuring a good family cohesion and meaningful children upbringing. In addition, conscientious people strive towards efficiency and organization as opposed to easy-going and disorderly. They are self-disciplined, act dutifully and aim for achievement. In addition, they display planned rather than spontaneous behaviour and they are generally dependable.

In relation to marital instability, Ezeh in their study maintained that married persons with low conscientiousness all scored low in marital instability [15]. Consequently, the characteristics of conscientious people make it more difficult for them to get into the business of quality marital relationship, as they are less impulsive and careful with a high sense of responsibility.

Conscientious personality trait can contribute to marital instability in the following ways:

- ❖ Perfectionism: Unrealistic expectations, conscientious individuals may set overly high standards for themselves and their partner.
- ❖ Criticism: Perfectionism can lead to excessive criticism, hurting partner's self-esteem.

- ❖ Overemphasis on Details: Focusing too much on minor issues can create tension.
- ❖ Rigidity: conscientious individuals may struggle with compromise and adapting to change.
- ❖ Resistance to Spontaneity: Over planning can make partner feel suffocated.
- ❖ Strict Routines: Excessive structure can limit partner's freedom.
- ❖ Analysis Paralysis: Over thinking, excessive analysis can delay decision-making, frustrating partner.
- ❖ Indecisiveness: Fear of making mistakes can lead to lack of direction.
- ❖ Second-guessing: Constant reevaluation can undermine partner's confidence.
- ❖ Self-Criticism: Conscientious individuals may overly criticize themselves, affecting self-esteem.
- ❖ Projection: Self-criticism can be projected onto partner, creating defensiveness.
- ❖ Unrealistic Self-Standards: Setting unachievable goals can lead to burnout.
- ❖ Control Issues: Micromanaging: Conscientious individuals may try to control partner's actions.
- ❖ Lack of Trust: Excessive monitoring can imply distrust.
- ❖ Restrictive Behaviour: Over controlling can limit partner's autonomy.
- ❖ Communication Challenges: Conscientious individuals may avoid conflicts or difficult conversations.
- ❖ Passive-Aggressive Behavior: Unexpressed concerns can lead to indirect expressions.
- ❖ Lecturing: Conscientious individuals may come across as preachy or condescending.
- ❖ Intimacy Issues: Conscientious individuals may prioritize tasks over emotional connection.
- ❖ Difficulty with Emotional Expression: Struggling to express emotions can create distance.
- ❖ Prioritizing Work over Relationship: Overemphasis on work can neglect partner's needs [16].

Agreeableness

Agreeableness is a personality trait manifesting itself in individual behavioural characteristics that are perceived as kind, sympathetic, cooperative, warm and considerate. In other words, it concerns how well people get along with others. So, it is a construct that rests on how an individual generally interacts with others. Dakubo maintained that such people are selfless, generous, courteous, cooperative, good-natured, flexible, gentle, sympathetic, tolerant, understanding and maintain social affiliations that single parenting style easier for single parent to carry on with the pros and cons associated with married persons [17]. Dakubo also found agreeableness in their study to be associated with tendencies towards kindness, unselfishness, generosity and fairness. Married individuals high in agreeableness tend to be well-liked, respectful, affectionate to their partner, children and loved ones, as well as sympathetic to the plights of strangers. Agreeableness is characterized by friendly and empathic behaviors. Agreeable

married individuals are helpful, warm, altruistic, generous and loving. Agreeable married individuals make more positive attributions about their behavior in marriages and are better able to identify and respond to their marital needs [18].

However, married individuals low on agreeableness is less likely to be trusted and liked by their partners. George opined that they are often blunt, antagonistic, rude, sarcastic, callous and ill tempered [19]. Nonetheless, it must be noted that all people in this category are cruel or harsh, they are however, not likely to leave their partners with a warm fuzzy feeling, and they will never make a good marital relationship. Agreeableness has an inverse relationship with married persons. This is so because people high in agreeableness display such traits as gentility and respectfulness and as such, is less likely to engage in activities that will make them aggressive or abrasive.

Agreeableness can contribute to marital instability in the following ways:

- ❖ Conflict Avoidance: Avoiding conflicts can lead to unresolved problems.
- ❖ Resentment Buildup: Suppressing concerns can create resentment.
- ❖ Lack of Assertiveness: Failing to express needs can lead to feelings of neglect.
- ❖ Over Accommodation: Excessive accommodation can enable partner's unhealthy habits.
- ❖ Loss of Identity: Constantly prioritizing partner's needs can erase personal boundaries.
- ❖ Resentment: Over giving without reciprocity can foster resentment.
- ❖ Difficulty Setting Boundaries: Agreeable individuals may overcommit to maintain harmony.
- ❖ Lack of Prioritization: Failing to prioritize own needs can lead to burnout.
- ❖ Vulnerability to Manipulation: Difficulty saying "no" can invite exploitation.
- ❖ Indecisiveness: Dependence on Partner: Agreeable individuals may rely too heavily on partner's decisions. Lack of Direction: Indecisiveness can create uncertainty.
- ❖ Frustration: Partner may feel frustrated with lack of initiative.
- ❖ Avoiding Disagreements: Unexpressed concerns can lead to indirect expressions.
- ❖ Bottling Emotions: Suppressing emotions can harm mental health.
- ❖ Missed Opportunities: Avoiding disagreements can prevent growth.
- ❖ Enabling Unhealthy Behaviours: Agreeableness can lead to tolerating unacceptable behavior. Enabling Addiction: Over accommodation can perpetuate addiction.
- ❖ Ignoring Abuse: Fear of conflict can lead to ignoring harmful behaviour [20].

Openness to Experience

Openness to experience as expounded by Howard and Howard is the tendency of the individual to be imaginative, original in thinking, attentive to inner feelings, appreciative of art, intellectually curious and sensitive [21]. Therefore, the trait of openness involves the degree to which married persons are generally open or receptive to all sorts of things. Howard and Howard further maintained that open married persons are less dogmatic and more intellectually humble. They are more open to change and

willing to consider new ideas. They are also open to trying new things and are more flexible in their behaviour. Simply put openness to experience married persons are more open to innovations and are less concerned about doing things in a certain way just because they have always done them other way. As a result, open-minded married persons live somewhat less traditional and conventional lives, they do not feel a strong need to conform to social expectations. Married persons with this trait of personality can easily run families without fear of eventual negativity; they will excellently manage their families than unmarried persons who do not possess such openness traits [21].

Contrarily, married parents who are low in openness to experience show less of each of these tendencies, they are often obstinate and unwilling to let go of their ideas. They are also less willing to try new things. They are very unadventurous and love conventional way of life which makes them more set in their ways. Importantly, because openness is normally distributed, most of the married persons show mixture of these characteristics: married persons like a certain amount of novelty but not too much, they will try new things now and then, they are dogmatic about some of their beliefs but open about others, and so on [22].

Married persons high in openness to experience are reported by some studies to have positive correlation with the use and abusive behaviours. Eyoung et al. used the concept of openness to experience to describe married persons who are more likely to use abusive words. Openness is defined in the study as high creativity, adventure seeking, internal sensation novelty seeking, and low authoritarianism. Several other correlational studies confirm that young married persons who score high on this cluster of traits are more likely to display negative attitude.

Openness to experience can contribute to marital instability in the following ways:

- ❖ Exploration vs. Stability: Constant desire for new experiences can create instability. Dissatisfaction: Seeking novelty can lead to dissatisfaction with current relationship.
- ❖ Unpredictability: Unconventional behaviour can be unsettling for partner.
- ❖ Intellectualization: Excessive introspection can create emotional distance.
- ❖ Criticism: Analytical nature can lead to criticism of partner.
- ❖ Detachment: Intellectual pursuits can distract from emotional connection.
- ❖ Emotional Intensity: Intense emotions can create turmoil.
- ❖ Sensitivity: Heightened sensitivity can lead to hurt feelings.
- ❖ Drama: Emotional intensity can create conflict
- ❖ Nonconformity: Untraditional beliefs can clash with partner's values.
- ❖ Rebellion: Resistance to structure can lead to conflict.
- ❖ Unreliability: Unpredictable behaviour can erode trust.
- ❖ Curiosity vs. Commitment: Openness to experience can lead to external attractions.
- ❖ Questioning commitment: Exploratory nature can create uncertainty.
- ❖ Comparison: Constantly seeking new experiences can lead to comparing partner unfavorably.

Neuroticism

The central feature of neuroticism is the degree to which married persons experience negative emotions. Gordon and Yocke asserted that married persons who are higher in neuroticism often experience negative emotions more frequently than married persons who are low in neuroticism. Also, their negative emotions are usually more intense, and they last longer. Unreality, some married persons simply experience unpleasant emotions such as anxiety, sadness, anger, guilt, and regret more than other non-married persons do. In fact, some researchers call this trait negative emotionality.

Neuroticism is characterized by frequent worries, as well as greater emotional instability, including more frequent and more intense negative effects. Highly neurotic married persons react more intensely to life events. This tendency toward negative emotionality increases the proportion of negative affective interactions with their children, and hampers their ability and desire to respond adequately to their children's signals.

Importantly, neuroticism is not to be confused with neurosis. Medical News Today in John reported that neuroticism is not a medical condition. It is a long-term tendency to be in a negative or anxious emotional state. It is therefore a personality trait while neurosis is a mental disorder. Married persons with neuroticism often feel depressed and suffer more frequently from feelings of anxiety, anger, guilt and envy than other individuals. They can be particularly prone to environmental stress and may view everyday situations as frightening. In addition, frustrations or common stress experienced by others and regarded as trivial may become problematic and lead to despair. Thus, married persons with neuroticism are usually self-conscious and shy. They may tend to internalize phobias and other neurotic traits, such as anxiety, panic, aggression, negativity and depression. Marital relationship will be very difficult to practice by neurotic married persons; hence children and family members will find it stressful to live an aggressive and problematic parent.

George postulated that neuroticism is associated with distress and dissatisfaction. In this sense, neurotic married persons tend to feel dissatisfied with themselves and their live situations as married persons. In addition, they are more likely to amplify minor health problems and to feel general discomfort in varied situations. Gorge in a study asserted that the relationship between this personality aspect and the state of being of the individual makes married persons in this category vulnerable to family cohesion so as to reduce the psychological pain; suffering, high levels of anxiety, depression and overall negative emotions they face. In general, the study concludes that higher scores in neuroticism correlate with high risk negative behaviours.

Lin carried out a study to determine the influence of self-control and marital instability among married persons in Accra. Result showed that self-control positively influenced married persons' marital instability; hence, married persons who were able to control their emotions were able to do away with anger, and quarrel with people. In a marital union, most importantly, women are restricted to express their opinions, which may lead to marital instability, while in stable marital relationship, both men and women

are respected and encouraged to express their opinions and participate in family conversations which grantee marital stability and enhance his or her daily life activities.

Statement of the Problem

Marital relationships have faced numerous societal challenges throughout history, including those that threaten harmony and satisfaction among married persons in Bayelse central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. It was rare sometimes back to marry and settle down happily without scores to settle, erupting from somewhere shortly after the consummation of marriage. The researcher believed that marriage breakdown has been on the increase originated from personality traits. In Bayelsa State central senatorial district, the researchers have noticed a worrying trend of marital dissatisfaction, divorce, parental interference, family violence, and single-parent households, highlighting the need for marital stability. All these leave one unhopeful that marital relationship will remain unsuccessful in the near future.

The researchers believed that marital instability may likely have originated from the married persons' basic ignorance about marital relationship, misinformation on their application of personality traits variables to cause marital instability. It is against this backdrop that the researchers seek to find out the extent personality traits; openness to experience, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism predicts marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. To what extent does conscientiousness predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
2. To what extent does extroversion predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
3. To what extent does openness to experience predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
4. To what extent does neuroticism predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
5. To what extent does agreeableness predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study at 0.05 level of significance

1. Conscientiousness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
2. Extroversion does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
3. Openness to experience does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
4. Neuroticism does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

5. Agreeableness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Methodology

Correlational research design was used for the study. Chikwe defined a correlational research design as the foundation of relationship that exists between two or more variables designed at a better mastery of each of the two or more variables by determining them separately and scrutinizing how each of the variables changes in accordance with or in association with changes in the other. Correlational research design was suitable because the study seeks to find out the predictive powers of personality traits on marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa Central senatorial district of Bayelsa State.

Population of the study comprised all the married persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District of Bayelsa State, totalled 10,128 Source: (Churches in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, 2026). Married persons were suitable for this study because they possessed distinct qualities and unique deepest pains; painfully unhappy and volatile feature that described emotional social feelings of personality traits that would predict marital instability.

Based on the population of 10,128 married persons, the sample size of 370 was determined through fluid survey sampling size online calculator with confidence level of 95% and margin of error at 5%. This was done by substituting the population value, confidence interval and the marginal error into the online sample size calculator, then clicked on sample size, this gave a sample of 370. Multi-stage sampling procedures were used for the selection of the sample size of the study. Kpolovie explained that multi-stage sampling involves dividing the population into groups or clusters. Then one or more clusters are chosen at random and everyone within the chosen cluster is sampled. Three Local Government Areas were randomly picked from Bayelsa Central senatorial district among (Kolokoma/Opokuma Local Government Area, Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, and Yenagoa Local Government Area). In each of the LGAs chosen; Kolokoma/Opokuma (St. Peters Anglican Church) Southern Ijaw (St. Luke's Denary) Yenagoa (Salvation Ministry, St. Luke Anglican Church). From each of the three selected Local Government Areas 1, 1, and 2 churches will be picked making a total of four (4) churches; after which the stratified random sampling technique was adopted to pick out one hundred and eighty two (182) male married person and one hundred and eighty eight (188) female married persons, making a total of three hundred and seventy (370) married persons for the study.

Self-designed instrument titled: Personality Traits and Marital Instability Scale'' (PTMIS) was used for data collection. The instrument has subscales of ''Personality Traits scale (PTS) and Marital Instability Scale (MIS) structured in a modified Likert four point scale. Experts validated the instruments; PTS and MIS. The reliability of the instruments were determined using test-retest reliability technique and were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation which yielded indices of Agreeableness 0.80, Extroversion

0.82, Openness to experience 0.85, Conscientiousness 0.87, Neuroticism 0.81, and Marital Instability 0.85 respectively.

The researchers personally administered 370 instruments to the respondents with the help of research assistants. The researchers and the assistants visited the Churches/Senatorial District selected for the study that represents the Bayelsa Central senatorial district of Bayelsa State. The researchers and the assistants visited the Churches where they met with the married persons in their various churches and solicit for their assistance to fill the questionnaires. The objectives of the research were explained to them, and after completion, only 342 filled questionnaires were retrieved for analysis. Simple regression analysis was used to answer the five research questions and also tested the five corresponding null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance using SPSS version 25.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Research Question One: To what extent does conscientiousness predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis One: Conscientiousness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Table 1. Simple Linear Regression for Conscientiousness and Marital Instability

Analysis of Variance						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
1	Regression	436.075	1	436.075	66.131	.000
	Residual	2248.607	341	6.594		
	Total	2684.682	342			
Coefficients						
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
	Constant	36.274	1.839		19.720	.000
	Conscientiousness	.899	.111	.403	8.132	.000
		R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R ²		
		.403	.162	.160		

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Instability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Conscientiousness

In Table 1, the regression coefficient of .44 for conscientiousness and marital instability revealed a negative relationship. The R² of .160 revealed that, the independent variable (conscientiousness) will not predict marital instability by almost 19 percent while the Adjusted R² of .190 shows the goodness-of-fit of the model. In the analysis of variance table, F-value is 81.371; p-value is .000 and the chosen alpha level is 0.05. The p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level ($p < 0.05$). This revealed that the null hypothesis is not rejected; implying that, conscientiousness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does extroversion predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis Two: Extroversion does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression for Extroversion and Marital Instability

Analysis of Variance						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	p-value
1	Regression	517.213	1	517.213	81.371	.000
	Residual	2167.469	341	6.356		
	Total	2684.682	342			
Coefficients						
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
	Constant	37.399	1.535		24.366	.000
	Extroversion	.853	.095	.439	9.021	.000
		R	R Square (R²)	Adjusted R²		
		.439	.193	.190		

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Instability

b. Predictors: (Constant), Extroversion

In Table 2, the regression coefficient of .40 for extroversion and marital instability revealed a positive relationship. The R² of .162 revealed that, the independent variable (extroversion) will predict marital instability by almost 16 percent while the Adjusted R² of .160 shows the goodness-of-fit of the model. In the analysis of variance table, F-value is 66.131; p-value is .000 and the chosen alpha level is 0.05. The p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level (p < 0.05). This revealed that the null hypothesis is rejected; implying that, extroversion does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Research Question Three: To what extent does openness to experience predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis Three: Openness to experience does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression for Openness to Experience and Marital Instability

Analysis of Variance						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
1	Regression	549.018	1	549.018	87.661	.000
	Residual	2135.664	341	6.263		
	Total	2684.682	342			
Coefficients						
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value

Constant	35.829	1.646		21.765	.000
Openness to Experience	.921	.098	.452	9.363	.000
R	R Square (R²)		Adjusted R²		
.452	.205		.202		

- a. Dependent Variable: Marital Instability
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Openness to Experience

In Table 3, the regression coefficient of .45 for openness to experience and marital instability revealed a positive relationship. The R² of .205 revealed that, the independent variable (openness to experience) will predict marital instability by almost 21 percent while the Adjusted R² of .202 shows the goodness-of-fit of the model. In the analysis of variance table, F-value is 87.661; p-value is .000 and the chosen alpha level is 0.05. The p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level (p < 0.05). This revealed that the null hypothesis is rejected; implying that, openness to experience does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Research Question Four: To what extent does neuroticism predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis Four: Neuroticism does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression for Neuroticism and Marital Instability

Analysis of Variance						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
1	Regression	916.375	1	916.375	176.714	.000
	Residual	1768.307	341	5.186		
	Total	2684.682	342			
Coefficients						
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
	Constant	33.574	1.331		25.227	.000
	Neuroticism	1.052	.079	.584	13.293	.000
R	R Square (R²)		Adjusted R²			
.584	.341		.339			

- a. Dependent Variable: Marital Instability
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Neuroticism

In Table 4, the regression coefficient of .58 for neuroticism and marital instability revealed a positive relationship. The R² of .341 revealed that, the independent variable (neuroticism) will predict marital instability by almost 34 percent while the Adjusted R² of .34 shows the goodness-of-fit of the model. In the analysis of variance table, F-value is 176.714; p-value is .000 and the chosen alpha level is 0.05. The p-value of .000 is less than the alpha level (p < 0.05). This revealed that the null hypothesis is rejected; implying that,

neuroticism does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Research Question Five: To what extent does agreeableness predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State?

Hypothesis Five: Agreeableness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Table 5. Simple Linear Regression for Agreeableness and Marital Instability

Analysis of Variance						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
1	Regression	607.201	1	607.201	99.667	.321
	Residual	2077.482	341	6.092		
	Total	2684.682	342			
Coefficients						
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p-value
	Constant	37.705	1.357		27.781	.000
	Agreeableness	.813	.081	.476	9.983	.000
R	R Square (R²)		Adjusted R²			
-.476	.226		.224			

- a. Dependent Variable: Marital Instability
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Agreeableness

In Table 5, the regression coefficient of -.48 for agreeableness and marital instability revealed a negative relationship. The R² of .23 revealed that, the independent variable (agreeableness) will predict marital instability by almost 23 percent while the Adjusted R² of .22 shows the goodness-of-fit of the model. In the analysis of variance table, F-value is 99.667; p-value is .321 and the chosen alpha level is 0.05. The p-value of .321 is greater than the alpha level (p < 0.05). This revealed that the null hypothesis is not rejected; implying that, agreeableness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Summary of Findings

1. The results revealed a negative relationship between conscientiousness and marital instability. The null hypothesis is not rejected, indicated that; conscientiousness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
2. The results revealed a positive relationship between extroversion and marital instability. The null hypothesis is not rejected, indicated that; extroversion does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
3. The results revealed a positive relationship between openness to experience and marital instability. The null hypothesis is rejected, indicated that; openness to

experience does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

4. The results revealed a positive relationship between neuroticism and marital instability. The null hypothesis is rejected, indicated that; neuroticism does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.
5. The results revealed a negative relationship between agreeableness and marital instability. The null hypothesis is not rejected, indicated that; agreeableness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State.

Discussion

Research question one/hypothesis one revealed a negative relationship between conscientiousness and marital instability. The result also revealed that conscientiousness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. This could be so because conscientious individuals take responsibility for their actions and commitments, as well as their marriage. This sense of responsibility could help them work through difficulties and operate stable relationship. This did not correspond with the result of Stearns, Jeffrey et al and Ghanum. Stearns conducted a study on relationship between conscientiousness and marital instability of married persons in Kenya. Result indicated a significant correlation between conscientiousness trait and their marital instability. Jeffrey et al. conducted a meta-analysis of relationship between conscientiousness and married persons' marital instability in Hong Kong. Result of the study indicated that, the effect of prior conscientiousness on subsequent married persons' marital instability after controlling for the effects of prior married persons' marital instability was highly significant, and positive in ninety percent of the married individuals in their meta-analysis. Ghanum instigated the relationship between conscientiousness and marital instability of married persons in Brotiqua. Result showed that there was no significant relationship between conscientiousness trait and married persons' marital instability. The result also indicated that when married persons exhibited low expectations for their marital capabilities as a group, individual spouse's expectations reduced, and their goal direction decreased as a result of the low expectations and absence of self-discipline.

Research question two/hypothesis two revealed a positive relationship between extroversion and marital instability. The result also revealed that extroversion does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. This could be so because extraverted individuals may be more likely to engage in social interactions outside of the relationship, potentially leading to conflicts with their partner. This finding is in-line with the findings of Kauts and Saroji, Bansibihari and Surade, Reza and Asweb. Kauts and Saroji conducted a study based on the assumption that application of extroversion can increase the tendency of marital instability and reduce affection on children and among married persons at the

young age in Cape Coast in Ghana. The result revealed that married individuals with low extroversion experienced more difficulties and marital instability. Those with high extroversion trait were found to be helpful, sociable, assertive and friendly with their children. Bansibihari and Surade in their study compared married person extroversions of emotionally mature group with that of emotionally immature group. Result of the study showed that marital instability were more effective in child caring than their counterparts in relation to extroversion. Reza carried out a study on the relationship between Personality trait of extroversion and marital instability in Tehran. The result revealed that there was a meaningful relationship between Extroversion personality trait and marital instability, and positive emotion and assertiveness highly influenced the peace and stability of married persons. Asweb investigated extroversion trait as a predictor of marital instability among married persons based on gender in Brendiv city of Chad. The result revealed that there was a significant influence of extroversion personality trait on marital instability of married persons based on gender, and positive emotion and assertiveness highly influenced the peace and instability of married persons.

Research question three/hypothesis three revealed a positive relationship between openness to experience and marital instability. The result also revealed that openness to experience does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. This could be so because individuals high in openness to experience may crave novelty and variety (infidelity), potentially leading to dissatisfaction with the routine and stability of a long-time relationship. This could be because this corresponded with the findings of Muhammed et al. and Pauline. Muhammed et al. conducted a study on the relationship between openness to experience trait and marital instability of married persons in Benue State. Result showed that openness to experience trait was an important positive factor for a single parenting home. Result also indicated that gender differences on married persons positively showed that emotion response existed, and female married persons were more prone to openness to experience trait than male spouse was. The result also showed that there was a significant relationship between married persons from high and low income background, with regard to openness to experience. Pauline investigated influence of openness to experience on married persons' marital instability. The result showed that married mothers with excellent outgoing behaviour, sense of humidity positively affected the management of their children. Result also showed that the same married persons with openness trait at times were rude in nature, and young people who scored high were likely to showcase abnormal behaviour.

Research question four/hypothesis four revealed a positive relationship between neuroticism and marital instability. The result also revealed that neuroticism does significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. This could be so because neurotic individuals may experience mood swings and emotional instability, making it difficult for their partner to cope and maintain a stable relationship. This corresponded with the findings of Heather and Libarente. Fan examined the relationship between neuroticism trait and marital

instability of single parents. The study revealed that individuals with high neuroticism showcased negative relationship emotions; they exhibited anxiety and guilt which was likely to increase the proportion of negative affective interactions with their children and decreased their ability and desire to respond to their children. Heather carried out a study on the effect of neuroticism personality trait between marital instability among married persons and children in the overall behavior in Starden High School Uganda. The study found that, in an atmosphere of lack of trust, shared vision and openness creates negative school climate conditions due to anxiety, sadness, guilt and worry. Under aged married persons' relationships with their children affected parent and child's peace, unity, and commitment levels, Aged married persons traits of low sadness, and anxiety recorded moderate negative behaviour. Libarente (2024) carried out a study to determine the effect of married persons' neuroticism traits as correlates of marital instability based on socioeconomic status in Canada. The result revealed that neuroticism trait of married persons denoted marital instability which had immeasurable effects on their children's' behaviour and their overall negative life style based on socioeconomic status.

Research question five/hypothesis five revealed a negative relationship between agreeableness and marital instability. The result also revealed that agreeableness does not significantly predict marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa central senatorial district, Bayelsa State. This could be so because agreeable individuals tend to be more cooperative and compromising, which can assist resolve conflicts and maintain marital stability. This corresponded with the result of Singh, Sad and Compole. Singh examined the characteristics associated with married persons as correlates of marital instability. The overall assessment revealed that though the marital instability were normal in general, and with the tendency of all the characteristics, agreeableness tends to be well liked affectionate by the children and loved one. Sad examined the effect of agreeableness personality on marital instability of married persons in Haryana city in India. Result of the study showed that those individuals less in the variables above had more problems with children, while those individual with high agreeableness trait associated with tendencies towards kindness, generosity, and fairness were helpful and made more positive attribution to their children. Compole (2024) investigated influence of agreeableness trait on married persons marital instability. The finding showed that these with selflessness, and understanding were under a low level of marital instability than those with low agreeableness trait, while the married female were significantly under low marital instability than their male counterparts.

Conclusion

Fundamental Finding : Based on the findings of the research on "Personality Traits as Predictors of Marital Instability among Married Persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State", the study concludes that specific personality traits such as neuroticism, agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness, openness to experience significantly predicted marital instability among married persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District. **Implication :** Counseling services should be tailored to address the

impact of personality traits like openness to experience, and neuroticism on marital relationships. Couples with higher levels of these traits could benefit from conflict resolution training and emotional regulation techniques to mitigate marital instability. Existing marital education programs should focus on enhancing emotional intelligence, stress management, and adaptability to reduce conflicts related to personality differences. Organize workshops to educate individuals and couples about how personality traits can affect marital stability. Understanding personality compatibility could lead to improved communication, tolerance, and shared problem-solving approaches in marriages. Since neuroticism significantly predicts marital instability, targeted interventions such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness practices could be effective in managing anxiety, mood swings, and impulsive behaviors, which may contribute to marital conflicts. Since conscientiousness and agreeableness are negatively associated with marital instability, programs should encourage the development of empathy, cooperation, and compromise among couples. Workshops and activities that promote these qualities can strengthen relationship bonds. **Limitation :** This study is limited to married persons in Bayelsa Central Senatorial District, Bayelsa State, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions or cultural contexts. The use of a correlational research design does not allow for causal inferences between personality traits and marital instability. In addition, reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, including social desirability and subjective interpretation of marital experiences. **Future Research :** Future studies should expand the scope by including participants from diverse geographical locations and cultural backgrounds to enhance generalizability. Researchers may also employ longitudinal or experimental designs to better establish causal relationships between personality traits and marital instability. Furthermore, future research could incorporate qualitative approaches or mixed methods to gain deeper insights into how personality traits influence marital dynamics over time.

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