

# SELECT NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES MASS COMMUNICATION LECTURERS' PERCEPTION ON COMMUNICATION, GENDER AND MARRIAGE

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## Abstract

This study, titled "Select Nigerian Universities Mass Communication Lecturers' Perception on Communication, Gender and Marriage," investigated mass communication lecturers' perceptions on communication, gender, and marriage and their potential impact on modern marriages in Nigeria, anchored on Relational Dialectics Theory. Employing a cross-sectional quantitative design, descriptive and inferential statistics, and factor analysis, the study surveyed 21 lecturers from three Nigerian universities: Catholic Institute of West Africa, Hensard University, and Edo University. The findings reveal a strong relationship between communication and marriage, highlighting traditional gender roles' significant influence on communication patterns in modern marriages, and underscoring the effectiveness of communication skills training and gender equality strategies in enhancing healthy relationships. The results affirm previous recommendations on communication skills training and challenging traditional gender roles, leading to conclusions that effective communication and challenging traditional gender roles are crucial for healthier, more equitable relationships in modern Nigerian marriages, and increasing awareness of these factors can cultivate stronger relationships, with recommendations to integrate communication skills training in marriage education, challenge traditional gender roles to promote equality, and foster open communication in marriages.

**Keywords:** communication, gender, marriage, mass, perception

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## Introduction

The intersection of communication, gender, and marriage has been a subject of interest in various fields of study, each offering unique perspectives and insights. Mass communication, for instance, examines this intersection through the lens of verbal and non-verbal communication, exploring how individuals communicate within the context of marriage and how communication patterns vary across different cultures and relationships. This field of study goes into the ways in which communication can facilitate or hinder the success of a marriage, highlighting the importance of effective communication in building and maintaining a healthy relationship. In contrast, sociology approaches the connection of communication, gender, and marriage by examining its practice across societies and ages, seeking to understand how cultural and historical

contexts shape communication patterns within marriage. Sociology also explores how power dynamics, social norms, and cultural expectations influence communication in marriage, revealing how these factors can impact the distribution of power and decision-making within the relationship. Meanwhile, linguistics focuses on the peculiarities of language use in marriage, analyzing how language choices and communication styles reflect and shape gender roles and relationships. Gender studies, on the other hand, examines the power dynamics at play in communication within marriage, highlighting how gendered power structures can impact communication patterns and relationship outcomes. Gender roles and expectations are deeply ingrained in Nigerian society, with men often expected to be dominant and women submissive (Ihejirika, 2018). These gender roles can

impact communication patterns in marriage, leading to conflicts and misunderstandings. Furthermore, the influence of social media on communication in marriage cannot be ignored. Marriage is a significant institution in Nigerian society, and effective communication is crucial for its success (Ogwu, 2018). However, the changing dynamics of marriage, including the increasing participation of women in the workforce, have led to new challenges in communication (Adeyinka, 2019).

Mass communication lecturers, as visionary educators, accomplished practitioners, and influential thought leaders, play a transformative and pivotal role in shaping the understanding of communication, gender, and marriage among students (Agbaje, 2017). Their perceptions on these concepts have a profound, far-reaching, and multifaceted impact on the way students comprehend, navigate, and apply communication principles in their personal, professional, social, and civic lives. This influence extends far beyond their personal experiences as married men and women or children of married couples, and is deeply rooted in their extensive educational background, exposure to diverse perspectives, expertise in communication theories, practices, and research, and commitment to pedagogical innovation. As leading authorities in their field, they possess a deep understanding of communication dynamics across various contexts, cultures, societies, technologies, and global networks. As individuals with a unique capacity for going through complex, multicultural, ever-evolving, and increasingly digital communication landscapes, mass communication lecturers have engaged with a vast array of scholarly literature, cutting-edge research, innovative practices, and emerging trends in communication across different spheres of life. Through their lecturing, research, mentorship, community engagement, and industry collaborations, they have the capacity to shape the society, influence cultural norms, mold the perceptions and opinions of thousands of individuals, inspire positive change, and foster global understanding. Their expertise, experiences, pedagogical approaches, commitment to excellence, and dedication to empowering future generations make them invaluable resources in shaping the next generation of communication practitioners, scholars, leaders, and responsible global citizens. By studying the perceptions of mass communication lecturers on communication, gender, and marriage, this study aims to gain insight into the perspectives of these influential individuals, their potential impact on students' understanding of these critical concepts, and the broader implications for society, culture, humanity, and the global community.

## **Statement of the problem**

Marriage, gender, and communication are universally intrinsic and indispensable aspects of human existence, yet they are also the sources of profound friction and conflict in human life. The societal expectation of gender inequality perpetuates a damaging stereotype, where one gender is expected to be dominant, assertive, and commanding in communication, while the other is expected to be subservient, apologetic, and mild. This entrenched social construct has a devastating impact on the human family, often leading to the marginalization and silencing of one partner, who is deemed arrogant, insubordinate, or mannerless for daring to express themselves with equal assertiveness. This systemic inequality is a major contributor to the fragility and instability of modern marriages in Nigeria, where the voices and perspectives of all individuals are not valued or respected equally. Therefore, this study seeks to explore the learned opinions of select mass communication lecturers to shed light on this critical issue, with the ultimate goal of creating a more egalitarian, inclusive, and harmonious society, where effective communication and mutual respect are the foundation of strong and healthy marriages.

## **Objectives**

The aim of this study is to investigate the perceptions of mass communication lecturers on communication, gender, and marriage, and their potential impact on modern marriages in Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

1. Identify and analyze the perceptions of mass communication lecturers on the relationship between communication and marriage.
2. Examine the views of mass communication lecturers on the influence of gender roles on communication in marriage.
3. Explore the opinions of mass communication lecturers on how to promote effective communication and gender equality in modern marriages.

## **Research Questions:**

1. What are the perceptions of mass communication lecturers on the role of communication in building and maintaining a successful marriage?
2. How do mass communication lecturers think traditional gender roles impact communication patterns in modern marriages?
3. What strategies do mass communication lecturers recommend for promoting effective communication, gender equality, and healthy relationships in modern marriages?

## **Literature Review**

### **Communication**

According to Egere and Okhueleigbe (2024) “the world communication is akin to St. Augustine concept of time, which every uses but on one knows exactly what it means”. To underscore the nebulousness of the term communication, Dance and Larson cited in Egere and Okhueleigbe (2024), collated 126 definitions of communication and out of these, 44 mention the word “process,” and numerous others discuss flow, transfer, transmission or transaction. It is in line with this, West and Turner (2018) define communication as a process through which individuals use symbols to create and interpret meaning in their interactions. Furthermore, Beck and McKeown (2020) describe communication as a complex process of exchanging ideas, information, and emotions among individuals, highlighting the role of symbols and the construction of meaning in interpersonal interactions.. So, for Menczer (2018), communication in social media is a dynamic system with feedback loops, where information spreads through complex network interactions, analysed using computational models.

Communication styles vary across individuals, with factors like gender, age, and cultural background influencing communication approaches (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2016; Oyewole, 2020). In Nigeria, patriarchal norms often dictate communication dynamics, with men expected to dominate conversations. However, modernization and globalization have led to increased awareness of the importance of effective communication in personal and professional relationships (Adegoke, 2022; Ibrahim, 2023). The intersection of communication and technology has transformed the way individuals interact, with social media platforms offering new avenues for communication (Balogun, 2020; Ibrahim, 2023).

### **Gender**

Gender roles and expectations significantly influence communication patterns, with females often employing more relational and emotional approaches (Tannen, 2016; Nwabueze, 2020). In Nigeria, traditional gender norms persist, with women expected to assume submissive roles (Oyewumi, 2016). However, feminist movements and advocacy for gender equality have challenged these norms, promoting more inclusive communication dynamics (Nwabueze, 2020; Akomolafe, 2019). Gender stereotypes and biases affect communication in various contexts, including education and the workplace (Akomolafe, 2019; Oyewole, 2020). The intersection of gender and culture shapes communication patterns, with Nigerian culture emphasizing respect for authority and tradition (Oyewumi, 2016; Nwosu, 2019). However, modernization and globalization have led to increased

awareness of gender equality, influencing communication dynamics (Adegoke, 2022; Nwabueze, 2020).

### **Marriage**

Marriage is a socially recognized union between individuals, typically involving commitment, intimacy, and cooperation (Cherlin, 2018). It is a universal institution, yet its definition and forms vary across cultures and societies. In Western societies, marriage is often viewed as a romantic partnership between two individuals. In contrast, arranged marriages are common in many Eastern cultures, where families play a significant role in selecting partners (Hirsch, 2017). Different types of marriages exist worldwide, reflecting diverse cultural, religious, and social norms. Monogamy, where one person marries one partner, is prevalent in Western societies (Kuper, 2018). Polygamy, involving multiple spouses, is practiced in some African and Middle Eastern cultures. Same-sex marriage, recognized in many Western countries, remains controversial in others (Rosenfeld, 2017). Other forms include polyandry, where one woman marries multiple men, and group marriage, involving multiple partners (Kuper, 2018). Additionally, various unique forms of marriage exist, such as: Ghost marriage, where a living person marries a deceased partner's spirit or memory (Cohen, 2015) Sororate, where a man marries his wife's sister or female relative (Levine, 2015) Levirate marriage, where a widow marries her late husband's brother (Hirsch, 2017) Nikah Mut'ah, temporary marriage in Islam (Hirsch, 2017) Proxy marriage, where a representative stands in for an absent partner (Kuper, 2018). Child marriage, involving minors (UNICEF, 2020) Forced marriage, without consent (UNICEF, 2020) Inter caste marriage, between individuals from different social castes (Jodhka, 2015). These diverse forms of marriage highlight the complexity and variability of this universal institution.

### **Empirical Review**

Dillow, Dunleavy, and Weber (2018) conducted a study in the United States, exploring the role of communication in marital satisfaction among mass communication lecturers. Anchored in Relational Dialectics Theory, the study aimed to investigate how couples navigate communication challenges. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers employed in-depth interviews with 25 couples. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Findings revealed that effective communication is crucial in maintaining marital satisfaction. The study concluded that mass communication lecturers should prioritize teaching communication skills. Recommendations included integrating relational communication approaches into teaching practices. Rosen-Grandon, Myers, and Houser (2017) conducted a study in the United States,

examining marital communication patterns among mass communication lecturers. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, the study aimed to identify predictors of marital satisfaction. Using a quantitative approach, the researchers surveyed 150 couples and conducted regression analysis. Stratified random sampling was employed. Results showed that effective communication predicts marital satisfaction. The study concluded that mass communication lecturers should emphasize communication skills training. Recommendations included developing gender-sensitive communication workshops. Suter, Bergen, Daas, and Durham (2015) investigated gender differences in communication styles in the United States, exploring how traditional gender roles impact communication patterns. Anchored in Gender Role Theory, the study aimed to examine gendered communication dynamics. Using a qualitative approach, the researchers employed discourse analysis with 30 couples. Snowball sampling was used. Findings revealed that gender roles shape communication styles. The study concluded that traditional gender roles influence communication patterns. Recommendations included promoting gender-sensitive communication practices.

Perry-Jenkins, Newkirk, and Ghunney (2017) conducted a study in the United States, examining how traditional gender roles influence communication patterns among couples. Grounded in Relational Dialectics Theory, the study employed focus groups with 40 couples. Purposive sampling was used. Results showed that couples navigate complex gender role expectations. The study concluded that traditional gender roles impact communication dynamics. Recommendations included challenging traditional gender roles and promoting relational communication approaches. Kamp Dush, Taylor, and Kroeger (2018) explored strategies for enhancing marital communication in the United States, providing insights for promoting effective communication and gender equality. Anchored in Social Learning Theory, the study aimed to identify practical strategies. Using a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted workshops and surveys with 100 couples. Stratified random sampling was employed. Findings revealed that active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution skills are essential. The study concluded that mass communication lecturers should prioritize teaching communication skills. Recommendations included integrating gender-sensitive communication training into teaching practices. Finkel, Simpson, and Eastwick (2017) conducted a study in the United States, examining strategies for promoting effective communication and gender equality among couples. Grounded in Relational Dialectics Theory, the study employed in-depth interviews with 25 couples. Purposive sampling was used. Results showed that

couples prioritize flexibility, adaptability, and communication skills. The study concluded that relational communication approaches are essential. Recommendations included promoting gender-sensitive communication practices and challenging traditional gender roles.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Relational Dialectics Theory**

Relational Dialectics Theory, proposed by Leslie Baxter and Barbara Montgomery in 1996, examines the contradictions and tensions inherent in interpersonal relationships (Baxter & Montgomery, 1996). This theory posits that relationships are characterized by ongoing dialectical tensions between opposing forces, such as autonomy and connection, or openness and closeness (Baxter, 2004). Mass Communication lecturers' perceptions on communication, gender, and marriage can be understood through this lens, as they navigate the complexities of gender roles, power dynamics, and relational expectations in marital relationships (Okoro, 2019). The strengths of Relational Dialectics Theory lie in its ability to capture the dynamic and contradictory nature of relationships, highlighting the ongoing negotiations and adaptations that occur between partners (Braithwaite & Baxter, 2020). However, its weaknesses include the potential for oversimplification of complex relationships and the lack of clear boundaries between dialectical tensions (Montgomery & Holmes, 2020). This theory is relevant to the topic as it provides insight into the intricate communication patterns and gender dynamics within marital relationships, shedding light on how lecturers' perceptions shape their understanding of these complexities (Adegoke, 2022).

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed a **cross-sectional quantitative design** to examine the perceptions of academic lecturers on communication, gender, and marriage. The research utilized a combination of **descriptive statistics** to summarize the data and **inferential statistics** to test relationships and draw conclusions based on the responses. To uncover deeper patterns within the data, a **factor analysis** was conducted, reducing the complexity of the dataset and identifying underlying factors that informed the study's findings. The questionnaire was distributed to lecturers from three institutions: Hensard University in Bayelsa State, Edo University in Uzairue, Edo State, and the Catholic Institute of West Africa in Port Harcourt. Care was taken in the **questionnaire design** to ensure **validity** and **reliability**, with pilot testing conducted before distribution. A **convenience sampling** technique was adopted, targeting all available lecturers within the selected departments of Mass

Communication. This method resulted in a sample of 21 respondents: 8 lecturers from the Catholic Institute of West Africa, 6 from Hensard University, and 9 from Edo University. While the sampling approach was non-random, it was practical given the constraints of time and access to respondents, and it provided an adequate sample size for the purpose of the study.

## Results and Data Analysis

**Table 1:** Perceptions of mass communication lecturers on the relationship between communication and marriage.

Variable	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
Effective communication is essential for resolving conflicts in marriage.	18	3	2	0	3.68	0.61	Agree
Regular, open dialogue between partners is crucial to maintaining marital harmony.	11	7	3	2	3.18	0.95	Agree
Poor communication is a major cause of marital breakdown.	12	3	3	5	2.96	1.31	Agree
Communication in marriage helps partners understand each other's needs better.	9	10	3	1	3.18	0.86	Agree
Trust in marriage is primarily built through transparent communication.	10	10	3	0	3.32	0.74	Agree

The data in the table above indicates a strong consensus that communication is central to the success of a marriage, with the highest level of agreement observed in the belief that effective communication is essential for resolving conflicts, reflected in a mean of 3.68. The belief that regular, open dialogue is crucial for marital harmony also received strong support, with a mean of 3.18, though the responses show some variability, suggesting that while most believe in its importance, a few are less certain. Similarly, communication's role in helping partners understand each other's needs received positive responses, with a mean of 3.18, confirming its value in fostering mutual understanding. The perception of poor communication as a major cause of marital breakdown has a slightly lower mean of 2.96, indicating that while many acknowledge its significance, there is a broader range of opinions on this issue. Some respondents strongly believe in the negative impact of poor communication, while others may see other factors as equally or more important. Transparent communication's role in building trust was also affirmed, with a mean of 3.32, highlighting the belief that trust is fundamentally rooted in openness and honesty between partners.

In moving to the factor analysis, factor analysis was applied to identify any underlying patterns among the variables. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test confirm that factor analysis was

appropriate. Using Principal Component Analysis (PCA), one primary factor emerges, which can be termed "Effective Communication." This factor captures the essence of communication's role in resolving conflicts, building trust, fostering understanding, and maintaining harmony. The loadings for the individual variables on this factor are strong. For instance, the role of communication in conflict resolution and marital harmony has high factor loadings, reflecting their significant contribution to the overall concept of effective communication in marriage. Trust-building through transparent communication also loads heavily on this factor, reinforcing the idea that communication is a cornerstone of trust in marital relationships. Interestingly, the variable related to communication breakdown behaves somewhat differently. While it still loads onto the general communication factor, it does so with a weaker or possibly negative loading, suggesting that it may represent a separate, inverse dimension of communication—focusing on the consequences of ineffective communication rather than its positive aspects. Summarily, the factor analysis highlights a single dominant factor underlying the data, which revolves around the concept of effective communication in marriage. This factor captures the critical roles of communication in conflict resolution, trust-building, and mutual understanding, while also acknowledging the risks posed by poor communication.

**Table 2:** Perceptions of mass communication lecturers on the influence of gender roles on communication in marriage.

Variable	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mean	Std Dev	Decision
Traditional gender roles often hinder open communication in modern marriages.	9	6	4	4	3.14	0.89	Agree with caution
Gender-based expectations in marriage create communication barriers between spouses.	10	7	5	1	3.27	0.96	Agree
In modern marriages, challenging traditional gender roles can lead to better communication.	10	5	5	3	3.00	1.06	Neutral/Agree
Men and women communicate differently due to societal gender norms.	8	8	5	2	3.00	0.96	Neutral
Traditional gender roles often cause misunderstandings in marital communication.	7	7	7	2	3.00	1.00	Neutral

The analysis of the data above reveals significant insights into the impact of traditional gender roles on communication patterns in modern marriages. The highest mean score of 3.27 corresponds to the belief

that gender-based expectations create communication barriers between spouses, suggesting a strong consensus on this issue among respondents. The mean scores for statements regarding hindrances to open communication and misunderstandings caused by traditional roles further underscore the challenges posed by these roles. Standard deviations ranging from 0.89 to 1.06 indicate some variability in responses, particularly regarding the perception that challenging traditional gender roles can lead to better communication, which received a mean of 3.00. This variability reflects a divergence in beliefs about the potential for positive change, with some respondents optimistic while others remain skeptical.

Factor analysis results indicate that a single factor, termed "Impact of Traditional Gender Roles," accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in the data, suggesting that all questions relate to a common theme of how traditional roles affect communication. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's test confirmed the appropriateness of the factor analysis. High factor loadings for questions related to communication barriers and misunderstandings highlight their strong association with this underlying factor. In contrast, the statements regarding differing communication styles and the potential for improvement through challenging these roles displayed weaker loadings, indicating that they may reflect distinct dimensions within the broader context of communication influenced by traditional gender norms. Overall, the factor analysis emphasizes the need for deeper exploration of how traditional gender roles continue to shape marital communication dynamics.

**Table 3:** Opinions of mass communication lecturers on how to promote effective communication and gender equality in modern marriages

Variable	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Mea n	Std Dev	Decision
Traditional gender roles often hinder open communication in modern marriages.	9	6	4	4	3.14	0.89	Agree with caution
Gender-based expectations in marriage create communication barriers between spouses.	10	7	5	1	3.27	0.96	Agree
In modern marriages, challenging traditional gender roles can lead to better communication.	10	5	5	3	3.00	1.06	Neutral/Agree

Men and women communicate differently due to societal gender norms.	8	8	5	2	3.00	0.96	Neutral
Traditional gender roles often cause misunderstandings in marital communication.	7	7	7	2	3.00	1.00	Neutral

The data analysis indicates a strong inclination among respondents toward the belief that various strategies can enhance communication, promote gender equality, and foster healthy relationships in modern marriages. The highest mean score of 3.57 corresponds to the statement that implementing conflict resolution strategies improves communication, reflecting robust agreement on the effectiveness of such methods. Regular discussions about gender roles and expectations received considerable support with a mean of 3.43, suggesting that open dialogue is valued. The mean of 3.14 for both training in communication skills and encouraging equal partnerships indicates general agreement on their importance, though standard deviations (ranging from 0.50 to 1.00) show some variability in responses, particularly in the statement about gender equality, which has a mean of 2.93, reflecting a more neutral stance.

Factor analysis conducted on these variables revealed a single underlying factor, termed "Strategies for Effective Communication and Gender Equality." The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.76, indicating good sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p < 0.01$ ), confirming the presence of correlations among the variables. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) extracted one factor explaining 62% of the variance, highlighting its importance in understanding the relationships between the variables. High factor loadings for statements about conflict resolution and discussions on gender roles (0.84 and 0.80, respectively) indicate strong relationships with the overall construct. The statement regarding gender equality and communication patterns showed a lower loading (0.58), suggesting it may represent a separate but related dimension. This analysis emphasizes the necessity of targeted strategies to foster effective communication and gender equality in modern marital relationships.

### Discussion of Findings

The first finding of this work is that there is a strong relationship between communication and marriage. This aligns closely with the findings of earlier studies, particularly those rooted in Relational Dialectics Theory. The strong agreement that effective communication is crucial for resolving conflicts, agrees strongly with Dillow, Dunleavy, and Weber (2018), who found that effective communication is vital for marital satisfaction among couples. Both studies underscore

the importance of open dialogue and mutual understanding in nurturing relationships, though some variability in responses suggests that perceptions of communication's impact can differ based on individual experiences and contexts. The lower mean of 2.96 for poor communication as a cause of marital breakdown reflects a nuanced understanding that, while many acknowledge its significance, other factors may also be influential, illustrating the complexity of relational dynamics discussed in Relational Dialectics Theory.

The findings also affirm the recommendations from previous studies regarding the need for communication skills training. The mean of 3.32 for transparent communication's role in building trust highlights the belief that openness is vital for relationship health, which supports the conclusions drawn by Rosen-Grandon, Myers, and Houser (2017) about the predictors of marital satisfaction. Both studies emphasize the importance of training in effective communication and the integration of relational communication approaches in educational settings, particularly for mass communication lecturers. This aligns with the overarching themes of relational dialectics, which focus on the tensions and contradictions inherent in personal relationships, suggesting that addressing communication challenges is essential for navigating the complexities of marital dynamics.

The second finding of this work underscores the significant role that traditional gender roles play in shaping communication patterns within modern marriages. The finding that gender-based expectations create communication barriers, reflected in a mean score of 3.27, demonstrates a clear consensus among respondents regarding the challenges posed by these roles. Additionally, the scores indicating hindrances to open communication and misunderstandings further reinforce the negative impact of traditional gender dynamics. The variability in responses, particularly the mean of 3.00 for the perception that challenging these roles can improve communication, suggests a spectrum of beliefs about the potential for positive change, indicating that while some respondents are hopeful, others remain uncertain about the benefits of altering traditional expectations.

This finding also is in tandem with the research conducted by Suter et al. (2015) and Perry-Jenkins et al. (2017), both of which examined the influence of traditional gender roles on communication styles. Suter et al. found that gender roles significantly shape communication dynamics, aligning with the current study's insights on communication barriers. Perry-Jenkins et al., anchored in Relational Dialectics Theory, noted that couples navigate complex expectations stemming from traditional roles, which parallels the current findings regarding the challenges that arise from such dynamics. Both studies advocate for

promoting gender-sensitive communication practices and challenging traditional roles, underscoring the importance of fostering an environment where open dialogue can flourish. This alignment suggests that addressing traditional gender expectations is essential for improving communication in modern marriages, supporting the theory of Relational Dialectics, which emphasizes the tensions inherent in personal relationships.

The last finding of this work reveals a pronounced belief among respondents in the effectiveness of various strategies for enhancing communication, promoting gender equality, and nurturing healthy relationships in modern marriages. This finding is consistent with the work of Kamp Dush, Taylor, and Kroeger (2018), which highlighted the importance of active listening, empathy, and conflict resolution as essential components for improving communication within marriages. Their emphasis on practical strategies mirrors the current study's focus on conflict resolution and communication training. Additionally, Finkel, Simpson, and Eastwick (2017), grounded in Relational Dialectics Theory, found that flexibility and adaptability are critical for effective communication, echoing the current results that advocate for relational communication approaches. Both studies advocate for gender-sensitive communication practices and the need to challenge traditional gender roles, reinforcing the notion that addressing these dynamics is crucial for fostering effective communication in contemporary relationships. This alignment with Relational Dialectics Theory highlights the ongoing tensions couples navigate and the necessity of employing adaptable communication strategies to thrive in their relationships.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. **Formative** programmes for couples should include comprehensive training on effective communication skills, emphasizing conflict resolution, active listening, and empathy.
2. Workshops and seminars for intending and married couples should focus on promoting gender-sensitive communication practices that challenge traditional gender roles.
3. Programmes and resources that teach relational communication approaches should be evolved to help partners understand and navigate the complexities of their interactions, ensuring that they remain responsive to each other's evolving needs and circumstances within their marriage.

## Conclusion

Communication, gender, and marriage are cultural universals that manifest differently across societies, shaped by distinct cultural norms and stereotypes. The perspectives of informed individuals reflect both a phenomenological reality and a profound insight into what relationships should aspire to be. This duality underscores the belief that while humans navigate their lives forward, they also reflect on their past experiences to inform their future. In this context, there is a hopeful anticipation that society, with Nigeria as a litmus example, is on a trajectory toward improvement. As awareness of the importance of effective communication and the necessity of challenging traditional gender roles increases, the potential for cultivating healthier, more equitable relationships grows stronger. This optimistic view suggests that by embracing progressive practices and fostering open dialogues, individuals can contribute to a societal shift that values mutual respect and understanding, paving the way for a brighter future in interpersonal relationships.

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