



## Exploring the Dimensions of Marital Satisfaction among Married Teachers in Kwara State: Implications for Counsellors and Educators

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### ABSTRACT

Marital contentment holds paramount importance for individuals' overall welfare, especially among professionals such as teachers facing distinctive daily pressures. This paper conducts a thorough analysis of the diverse factors influencing marital satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria, drawing insights from existing literature. It delves into various facets including personal fulfillment, emotional health, individual development, communication, intimacy, and interpersonal dynamics like mutual comprehension and conflict resolution. By integrating cultural, religious, and psychological viewpoints. Moreover, it outlines implications for counseling and education, stressing the necessity of a holistic approach in supporting teachers' marital welfare. The paper concludes with the following suggestions. There should be collaborative efforts between various stakeholders such as marriage counselors, educational institutions, governmental bodies, religious institutions, and NGOs are to organize educational seminars and workshops in order to educate both prospective couples and married individuals about nurturing a happy and peaceful home environment. Counsellors should advocate for teachers to develop effective problem-solving skills in order to navigate challenges and improve marital satisfaction. Collaborative Conflict Resolution should be encouraged among counsellors and teachers to resolve conflicts among married secondary school teachers, as it has shown efficacy in fostering satisfactory marriages.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State encompasses a complex array of factors that contribute to their happiness and fulfillment within marriage. This extensive review explores the multifaceted dimensions that influence marital contentment within this specific demographic. In the pursuit of a rewarding and harmonious life, individuals who are married seek happiness and mutual satisfaction, valuing these aspects beyond the mere act of getting married itself. Marital satisfaction signifies a state of contentment and joy shared by partners after entering into matrimony. Marriage, being one of the most intricate social bonds, holds considerable sway over individuals' happiness, societal well-being, personal growth, and even the preservation of civilization (Merwin & Rosen, 2020). According to Yahaya and Jaymess (2019), African culture places significant emphasis on marriage, viewing it as a protective institution and a means to fulfill one's sexual desires. This cultural perspective regards marriage as a cornerstone for upholding moral values, discouraging behaviors like fornication and adultery, while fostering responsible living, peace, and unity among couples. Odebumi and Babajide (2017) assert that marriage, rooted in divine creation, entails the union of genders to complement one another, embodying a religious commitment and fulfillment recognized across diverse global societies.

Marital satisfaction refers to the adept management of household affairs by married individuals. According to Mehrabi and Veshki (2022), it stands as a pivotal indicator of positive rapport between married couples. Mwansisya and Mwampagatwa (2022) emphasize the participant composition in marriage, highlighting the categorization of married heterosexual couples into distinct groups based on gender. The roles played by spouses significantly impact the factors influencing satisfaction within marriage (Motakeffar et al., 2022). The significance of marital satisfaction lies in its potential to mitigate emotional disturbances and adverse effects within a household. As per the Social Regulation Cycle Theory elucidated by Papadopoulos et al. (2019), individuals consciously influence the emotions of others during interpersonal interactions. Within couple dynamics, individuals identify their spouse's emotions, assess the need for emotional regulation, and determine suitable regulatory strategies. Ayesha et al. (2020) posit that individuals exhibiting heightened emotional reactions may often be perceived as unfriendly or hostile by their partners, subsequently diminishing the frequency of their behavioral responses."

The perception of spousal satisfaction is influenced by the responsiveness individuals exhibit towards their partner's needs, significantly shaping the quality of marital relationships. Addressing flaws and working collaboratively is crucial in fostering positive marital satisfaction. For instance, Abdulkareem (2023) notes that consistent positive responses from a wife towards her husband's needs can contribute to a more satisfactory home environment. Conversely, individuals displaying heightened emotional reactivity tend to exhibit negative avoidance responses toward their spouse, leading to a reduced perception of partner satisfaction, as suggested by Alonso-Ferres et al. (2020). Researchers have consistently found that most individuals face various challenges within their marriages. The ability to effectively manage and navigate these challenges or adverse life events is indicative of marital satisfaction (Mwansisya & Mwampagatwa, 2022). Essentially, marital satisfaction manifests when married individuals exert control over their thoughts, reasoning, and emotional responses within their marital experiences. As highlighted by Murphy (2018), the foundation of marital satisfaction lies in the collaborative effort of couples to build and sustain successful marriages. Yuan et al., (2022) suggested that a strong marriage, characterized by good quality and marital satisfaction, signifies a robust relationship for the individual. Moreover, high levels of marital satisfaction and attachment to one's spouse serve as significant indicators

for enduring relationships and can profoundly impact the overall well-being of married individuals.

Furthermore, various socio-economic and psychological factors contribute to marital satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State. Financial stability, work-life balance, and effective communication have been identified as essential determinants of a fulfilling marriage (Akinwale & Yusuf, 2021). Teachers often experience work-related stress, which can spill over into their personal lives, affecting their relationships and overall marital happiness. The ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal commitments plays a crucial role in maintaining a harmonious marital relationship. Additionally, Adejumo and Oladimeji (2020) highlight the importance of emotional intelligence in marriage, emphasizing that spouses who can manage their emotions effectively are more likely to enjoy satisfying and long-lasting relationships.

Social support systems, including extended family, friends, and religious institutions, also play a crucial role in shaping marital satisfaction (Okeke & Nwosu, 2019). In African societies, family involvement in marriage can serve as both a source of strength and potential conflict. Supportive families contribute positively to marital stability by providing guidance and emotional encouragement, whereas excessive interference may lead to disagreements between couples. Moreover, cultural expectations regarding gender roles and responsibilities influence the way teachers in Kwara State perceive and experience their marriages. Gender norms often dictate household responsibilities, decision-making power, and emotional expression, all of which impact the overall quality of marital relationships (Okeke & Nwosu, 2019).

In conclusion, marital satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State is influenced by a myriad of factors, including emotional regulation, communication patterns, socio-economic stability, and cultural expectations (Yuan et al., 2022). A strong marital bond requires mutual effort, emotional intelligence, and a supportive environment. Future research should explore interventions that promote marital satisfaction and well-being, particularly among professionals facing work-related stress. By fostering healthy communication, equitable division of responsibilities, and emotional awareness, teachers in Kwara State can enhance their marital satisfaction and overall quality of life.

## 2. METHOD

Literature review or literature review is an important part of research that functions to examine theories, concepts, and previous research results that are relevant to the topic being studied. According to Creswell (2014), literature review functions as a theoretical basis that helps in understanding the background of the problem, identifying research abuse, and providing a conceptual framework in research.

Marital satisfaction is an individual's evaluation of the quality of their marital relationship. Factors such as communication, commitment, emotional happiness, and conflict resolution play an important role in determining this level of satisfaction. In the context of the teaching profession, the dual role as an educator and a life partner can affect the dynamics of marriage. Marital satisfaction has a significant impact on the integrity of the husband and wife relationship. However, achieving this satisfaction is not always easy, especially for couples with high professional responsibilities such as teachers. This study emphasizes the importance of understanding the factors that influence marital satisfaction to support the well-being of couples (Widodo, 2021).

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Concept of Marital Satisfaction

Marriage satisfaction plays a pivotal role in a successful union, encompassing an individual's ability to maintain emotional balance during challenging circumstances. This aspect is vital for supporting a fulfilling relationship between partners, reflecting a person's maturity and emotional control without exacerbating issues (Murphy, 2018). The experiences of one spouse can often become shared challenges for both parties to address together (Han et al., 2022). Within marital relationships, satisfaction is seen as a fundamental measure of the quality of the union. Partners with positive emotional stability tend to provide mutual support when confronted with daily stressors (Vijayarasa, 2022). Notably, different individuals may respond diversely to the same pressure owing to their distinct response characteristics (Abdelrahman et al., 2022).

In defining marital satisfaction, various terms such as marital contentment, quality, stability, adjustment, friendship, and others are used interchangeably, delineating the nuances of relationship quality (Bem, 2018). These terms are often used synonymously with marital satisfaction, forming an umbrella term that encompasses diverse interpretations. Exploring these distinctions reveals unique meanings within these terms. For instance, while marital satisfaction represents an individual's subjective evaluation of their marriage's overall quality (Mehrabi&Veshki, 2019). It often intersects with related concepts. Satisfaction in marriage might indicate marital adjustment (Han et al., 2022), yet marital satisfaction remains a distinct term used specifically to gauge marital quality. Additionally, marital happiness and quality are separate measurements of satisfaction, though they are occasionally used interchangeably to describe each other.

The distinction among classifications of marital satisfaction, as per Lee et al. (2021), and prior perspectives primarily lies in the assessment measures used. This variation in assessment measures becomes the defining factor distinguishing one concept from another. The absence of a universally accepted definition for marital satisfaction complicates its conceptualization due to the multitude of interpretations. Perceiving that one's spouse actively responds to their needs, desires, and interests fosters feelings of understanding, care, and value, contributing to improved marital quality (Merwin& Rosen, 2020). Studies consistently highlight the pivotal role of emotionally stable partners in initiating and nurturing intimate relationships (Tasfiliz et al., 2018). According to couple interaction theory, the quality of a marriage hinges on both the frequency and quality of interactions between partners. Positive interactions bolster emotional connections and enhance marital quality (Barba, 2022).

Abdelrahman et al. (2022) define marital satisfaction as the ability of an emotional system to maintain equilibrium automatically; deviations from this equilibrium indicate dissatisfaction. Effective communication, as suggested by Olson et al. (2019), fosters family cohesion and adaptability. Open and positive family communication enhances family function, thereby contributing to improved marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction is characterized by couples feeling content and happy together, rooted in their ability to meet each other's needs and expectations within the marriage. The establishment of marriage introduces various challenges such as conflicts, work-family balance, financial strain, and child-rearing (Closson et al., 2018 ; Barba et al., 2022). Negative emotions stemming from these challenges not only hinder problem-solving but also detrimentally impact marital relationship development and quality (Olson et al., 2019).

Marital satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State forms the focal point of this comprehensive review. It's essential to understand the various facets contributing to their contentment within marriage.

### 3.2 Understanding Multifaceted Dimensions of Marital Satisfaction

The dimension of marital satisfaction two different aspects which include Intrapersonal and Interpersonaldynamic.

**Intrapersonal Aspects:** This dimension involves the individual's internal feelings, happiness, and fulfillment within their marital relationship. Factors such as personal contentment, emotional well-being, and individual growth play significant roles. Intrapersonal dimension of marital satisfaction include: Personal Contentment, Emotional Well-being, Individual Growth, Communication and Expression, Intimacy and Personal Fulfillment:

**1. Personal Contentment: This can be classified into two namely;**

**Self-Fulfillment:** This aspect involves the feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment derived from personal goals and contributions within the marriage. It includes satisfaction from roles as a partner, parent, or contributor to the family's well-being.

**Life Satisfaction:** Individuals assess their overall life circumstances, including family life, career achievements, personal growth, and satisfaction in these various life domains, which significantly impact their marital contentment.

**Emotional Well-being:** Understanding and nurturing emotional well-being within the marital relationship are crucial for sustaining satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State. It involves creating a supportive, empathetic, and understanding environment where emotional needs are recognized, respected, and fulfilled. The emotional connection between spouses is crucial. It involves the depth of attachment, trust, and understanding shared within the marriage. Mental well-being significantly influences marital satisfaction (Yuan et al., 2022). High levels of stress, anxiety, or depression can adversely affect how individuals perceive and experience their marriage.

**Individual Growth:** This aspect focuses on personal growth within the marital relationship. It includes emotional maturity, evolving perspectives, and acquiring new skills or experiences that contribute to personal growth. Balancing personal identity and autonomy within the context of the marital relationship without feeling stifled or constrained in some cases (Adegboyega, 2021).

**Communication and Expression:** The ability to express thoughts, feelings, and concerns openly and honestly within the marriage fosters understanding and emotional connection between partners. The capacity to manage conflicts constructively, negotiates differences, and arrives at mutually beneficial resolutions without damaging the relationship (Alonso-Ferres et al., 2021).

**Intimacy and Personal Fulfillment:** It is important to note the importance of physical intimacy and personal fulfillment. Physical Intimacy is the satisfaction derived from physical aspects of the relationship, including sexual intimacy and physical closeness. Personal Fulfillment on the other hand connotes how well the marriage meets the individual's emotional, physical, and psychological needs, contributing to a sense of fulfillment and happiness (Hann et al., 2022). The interplay of these factors within the intrapersonal dimension creates a comprehensive landscape of an individual's feelings, experiences, and self-assessment within their marital relationship. These aspects collectively contribute to their overall satisfaction and happiness within the marriage. Understanding and addressing these elements are crucial for enhancing marital satisfaction among teachers in Kwara State.

**2. Interpersonal Dynamics: Explores the interactions and mutual understanding**



Interpersonal Dynamics: Explores the interactions and mutual understanding between partners. It encompasses elements like intimacy, consensus, agreement, and how conflicts are managed and resolved within the marital union.

Insights for Counselors and Educators:

Implications for Counseling: A thorough exploration of these dimensions provides counselors with an in-depth understanding of the complexities affecting marital satisfaction among teachers. It equips them to tailor counseling approaches to address specific needs effectively. Educational Implications: Understanding the correlation between teachers' marital satisfaction and their professional lives can assist educators and educational institutions in creating supportive environments that positively impact teachers' overall performance. Holistic Approach: Emphasizing the significance of a holistic perspective in assessing marital satisfaction is crucial. By considering both personal well-being and relational dynamics, a more comprehensive understanding can be achieved.

Suggestions, The following suggestions were made:

- a. There should be collaborative efforts between various stakeholders such as marriage counselors, educational institutions, governmental bodies, religious institutions, and NGOs are to organize educational seminars and workshops in order to educate both prospective couples and married individuals about nurturing a happy and peaceful home environment.
- b. Counsellors should advocate for teachers to develop effective problem-solving skills to navigate challenges and improve marital satisfaction.
- c. Collaborative Conflict Resolution should be encouraged among counsellors and teachers to resolve conflicts among married secondary school teachers, as it has shown efficacy in fostering satisfactory marriages.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This review aims to present a nuanced understanding of the intricate nature of marital satisfaction among married teachers in Kwara State. It underscores the importance of considering diverse dimensions for counsellors and educators to effectively support and enhance the marital well-being of this specific demographic.

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