Age, Education and Economic Status as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among the Anglican Clergy

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ABSTRACT: The study examined age, education and economic status as predictors of marital ssatisfaction among the Anglican Clergy in Anambra State, Nigeria, with 435 participants sampled through cluster and random sampling methods. The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMSS), was applied on the study, this scale was developed by Fournier, Olson, & Druckman (1983), and the cross-sectional survey research design and multiple regression analysis statistics was adopted. Age, education and economic status had joint and independent prediction of marital satisfaction with the following P values: Age = .780, Education = .337 and Economic = .904 as against the critical value of P < .05. The joint influence is R = .058a and was contributed to by all the variables. The need for wealth creation or possible subsidiary financial ventures for the clergy and measures to reduce much disparity in age differences between couples in other to increase the level of marital satisfaction is highly recommended.

KEYWORDS: Age, Education, Economic Status, Marital Satisfaction, Clergy.

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage can be explained as the relationship between a man and a woman who have made a legal agreement to live together (Broderick, 1994). By implication, when a man marries a woman, they become a husband and wife. Marriage, which exists everywhere though its type and functions vary from culture to culture, is a socially approved practice that served for the conception of family institution, which in turn is perceived as the building blocks of any society. The prevailing view towards marriage is that it is based on emotional attachment between the partners and entered into voluntarily (Mathews, 2002). Marriage from the biblical point of view was instituted by God. In Genesis Chapter 2:18, God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.

Marriage is a socially sanctioned relationship, usually involving economic cooperation, sexual activity, and childbearing (Macionis, 2008).

Marital relationship is a process through which husband and wife exchange emotions and thoughts by verbal and non-verbal tools, such as listening, facial expressions, and various gestures. In addition, it is believed that marital satisfaction is a major contributor to the family survival and creation of the next generation (Naderi, Molavi & Nory, 2017). Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the marital relationship (Taylor, Peplau & Sear, 1997). Marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. It is a multidimensional concept that includes different factors such as personality features, financial matters, child rearing styles, and sexual relations (Tazekand et al., 2013). Marital satisfaction is an essential element for successful family life and personal growth. In this regard, marital satisfaction is a pertinent ingredient to the stability of any nation, given that the family is the basic unit of any nation (Samson, Michael, Peter & Naftali, 2015). Also, marital satisfaction is a complex process that has over time been thought to be influenced by many factors, including education, socioeconomic status, love, commitment, marital commitment, marital communication, conflict, gender, length of marriage, the presence of children, sexual relations and the division of labour (Hendrick & Hendrick, 1992). Aldous (1996) defined marital satisfaction as to how couples feel about one another.

For Khodabakhsh, Esfandiar and Seyed (2008) marital satisfaction is a special case of relationship satisfaction and the degree to which partners in marriage assess their approval of different aspects of the marital relation. Onyishi, Piotr, Agnieska, and Nathan (2012) see marital satisfaction as the number of children produced by couples. The family experiences diverse issues of psychological distress, financial lack to care for the children, communication between parents and

children and emotional problems and frustration; resulting in depression, health problem and unfulfilled marital life (Adigeb and Mbua, 2015). Thus, marital satisfaction is considered as one predictor for marital stability.

Moreover, Faulkner (2002) stated that demographic, psychological, marital process, gender-based, and life transitional predictors influence marital satisfaction and marital conflict for husbands and for wives over time. Similarly, Zianah et al. (2012) argued that demographic factors like length of marriage, presence of children, and gender highly influences marital satisfaction of couples. The study conducted by Adigeb and Mbua (2015) also suggested that psychological factors (depression, affection and sexual activities) and social factors (number of children, communication and time spent together) has significant relationship with marital satisfaction.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some family stress therapists have noted that many clergy have ambiguous boundary between work and home life, this has brought about the problems in the congregation spilling over into a clergyperson's home life, whereby influencing the clergy marriage (Royle, 2005). Stressors reported by wives of male clergy include lack of defined boundaries between family and work, a "fishbowl" existence, inadequate finances, pressure/expectations from congregation and community to fulfill idealized roles, loss of personal identity, loss of control over personal living environment, adjustment to frequent moves, anger, perception of being second class, lack of tangible results of work, loneliness, lack of social support, work related time demands, unwelcome surprises, routine absence of spouse/father, lack of parallel growth, lack of spiritual care, and psychological disturbances are prone to negatively affect the quality of marriage (Baker, 1989; Baker & Scott, 1992; Douglas, 1961; Gleason, 1977; Valeriano, 1981). Despite the glaring stress the clergy family is subjected to, yet his family is seen as "perfect". The family can take on the unrealistic aura of 'the holy family' (Balswick, 1989). Like their husbands, clergy wives also experience family boundary intrusions to reduce levels of marital and parental satisfaction (Morris & Blanton, 1994b). In one study pastoral couples experienced significantly poorer marital satisfaction than non-pastoral couples, and a significantly higher level of loneliness (Warner & Carter, 1984). The finds of Warner and Carter (1984), and Adigeb and Mbua (2015) that psychological factors do affect the

marital satisfaction of the clergy was confirmed in Nigeria by Ohakwe, Imhonde, Mbachi, Idiakheua and Enike (2020). On the Demographic Variables affecting marital satisfaction Hendrick & Hendrick (1992) and (Tazekand et al., 2013) works testified to its positive influence although from a culture different from this present work, hence this study examines some aspects of the demographic variables influence on marital satisfaction of the Clergy in Nigeria, they are; age, education and economic status.

Objective of the study
1.   To investigate whether age, education and economic status would significantly have a joint and independent predicting influence on marital satisfaction among the clergy.

Research Question
1.   To what extent would age, education and economic status have a joint and independent predicting influence on marital satisfaction among the clergy?

Significance of the Study.
1 It is evident that much concrete studies have not been done on the clergy in Nigeria, with focus on the variables under consideration. Therefore, the outcome of this will yield a set of data within this society to what obtains in other parts of Nigeria and also other parts of the world.

2. Information on the marital satisfaction of the clergy and the factors that impact it will go a long way in adequately equipping the clergy the more in carrying out the important functions they perform for the family in particular and the society in general.

3. This study will provide pertinent information or a set of reliable data on the clergy, whereby providing the church direction on how well to strategically position their clergy for effective management.

4. The theoretical build-up as well as the findings of this study will assist the church and government in planning policy formation and specific packaging of intervention programmes for risk reduction whereby increasing the marital satisfaction of the clergy.

5. This study will also add to the number of existing literatures on marital satisfaction thereby providing a theoretical advantage.

Operational Definition of Terms.
1. Clergy: Body of persons, such as pastors, ministers, priests, who are trained and ordained for religious service.

2. Marital satisfaction: Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the marital relationship or the degree of satisfaction derived from each partner in marriage as they assess their approval of different aspects of marital relation.

3. Education: This explains the academic qualification as determined by the certificates.

4. Economic status: The level of income as determined by the salaries or stipend one receives.

5. Age: The number of years one had lived.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

The Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction by Li and Fung (2011)

The theory argues that people have multiple goals to achieve in their marriage. These marital goals can be classified into three categories: personal growth goals, companionship goals, and instrumental goals. The priority of the three types of marital goals is under dynamic changes across adulthood. Generally speaking, young couples emphasize the personal growth goals, middle-aged couples prioritize the instrumental goals, and old couples focus on the companionship goals. This theory of-course takes into consideration the age variable of the clergy. Whether the prioritized marital goals are achieved in marriage determines marital satisfaction. Other factors influencing marital satisfaction can be linked with marital goals in two ways. Some factors, such as life transitions and cultural values, can affect the priority of different marital goals; while other factors, such as communication pattern, problem solving, and attribution, can facilitate the achievement of the prioritized marital goals.

Role-identity theory of Marital Satisfaction by Parmelee Patricia (1987)

Role-identity theory supports the position that marital satisfaction is influenced by shared identities to a salient recreation role and by role support provided by a spouse for a salient recreation role identity for her or his partner. In addition, some previous studies have suggested that these effects are more prominent among women, but other research indicates that the effect is stronger among men. The theory indicates that as the runner's (clergy and wife) perceived role support decreased, marital satisfaction also decreased. This is suggestive of the fact that some clergy wives may not be in support of the role their husband play as a clergy, which means they would have preferred if their husbands were not a clergy. On the other hand the wives role support may have decrease over time.

Evolutionary theory of Marital Satisfaction by David Buss 1986.

Darwin became intrigued by the disconcerting ways in which animals had developed characteristics that seemed to interfere with their survival such as bright plumage and horns. The answer lies in the fact that these features led to individual sexual success and provided a competitive advantage in acquiring a desirable partner and continuing the genetic lineage (Tooby & Cosmides, 2005). In that sense, Darwin's theory of evolution explains pairing behaviours by identifying two decisive processes: the preference for a specific partner and the struggle for that partner. On one hand, an evolutionary approach proposes that in order to conserve the union, the individuals in the couple should be faithful, have children together, be well-to-do, friendly, generous, understanding, and they should not sexually reject or neglect their partners (Buss, 2007). That is, in order to maintain a relationship, its members are expected to display desirable attitudes in their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, reflecting in that manner, the best possible version of themselves. The initial satisfaction of a relationship diminishes in time, as the resources that each member should provide become depleted. The relationship might end when it is perceived that others might provide those resources (alternatives) and that there are no significant barriers to leaving the current relationship. Buss (2007) posits that unless each member of a couple makes his or her respective contributions in order for the relationship to continue, he or she runs the risk of being abandoned. Additionally, the partner provides a model for comparison; in other words, the decision to conserve a partner or free oneself of him or her depends on the result of a comparison to others. If the man no longer provides social status, maturity, and financial resources (resource acquisition in potential, according to Buss, 1989), the woman may contemplate the option of other men (alternatives) and the same can happen if the woman loses her youthful appearance and is no longer physically attractive. The evolutionary theory explains the effect of economic status on marital satisfaction.

IV. EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Age progression on Marital Satisfaction

We find that men tend to be more satisfied with younger wives and less satisfied with older wives. Interestingly, women likewise tend to be more satisfied with younger husbands and less satisfied with older husbands. Marital satisfaction

declines with marital duration for both men and women in differently-aged couples relative to those in similarly-aged couples. These relative declines erase the initial higher levels of marital satisfaction experienced by men married to younger wives and women married to younger husbands within 6 to 10 years of marriage (Lee & McKinnish, 2018). As age increases, marital satisfaction decreases (Shakerian, 2010 & Teimourpour, Moshtagh, Bidokhti, & Pourshanbaz 2012), which might explain why middle-aged couples report more marital problems than young couples (Jose & Alfons, 2007). It should be noted that elderly couples compared with middle-aged couples have fewer problems in their relationships (Gorchoff, John & Helson, 2008). Perhaps the decline in marital satisfaction in middle-aged couples is due to an increase in couples' responsibilities, birth of children, and financial problems associated with raising children. Thus, in old age when children leave home, an increase in marital satisfaction is seen (Tabatabaei, Panahandeh, Hasanabadi, Roshani & Attari, 2012).

Age Gap between the Couples on Marital Satisfaction

It seems that the age difference can be a major factor with regard to understanding and sexual activities of couples and could therefore affect marital satisfaction (Rahmani, Alahgholi, Merghati & Khuee, 2009). However, there is no consensus among the researchers to determine the right age gap between couples. Some researchers suggest five years of gap and others less than three years (Nasehi, Raeis, Jafari & Rahmani, 2004). However, in general, if the age gap between couples is less than ten years, compared with more than ten years, marital satisfaction is higher (Rahmani, Merghati, Sadeghi, & Allahgholi, 2011). One reason for the decline in marital satisfaction with increasing age difference between couples might be that with increasing age, sexual desires will change and the spouses expect different sexual activities from each other, and this resulting mismatch of sexual activity creates areas of dissatisfaction among couples who have a wider age gap (Shirmohamadi, 2004)). However, some researchers did not find any statistically significant relation between these two variables (Guo, & Huang 2005). The age difference between spouses cannot be generalized. In other words, it cannot be expected from all cultures and communities that wives should always be younger than husbands.

Level of Education on Marital Satisfaction

Some studies have shown that educational attainment is associated with marital satisfaction and has been recognized as a predictor of marital satisfaction (Shakerian, (2010); Wagheiy, Miri, Ghasemipour (2009); Orathinkal, Vansteenwegen, (2006) & Pepping & Halford, (2012). A study in Malaysia showed that more educated couples experienced a higher degree of marital satisfaction and better mental health compared with less educated couples (Madanianan, Syed (2013). This finding is justified by improved social functioning of highly educated people compared with the less educated ones. In fact, when couples are better educated, they have a better understanding of the realities of life, which makes them better equipped to solve their problems and avoid conflicts (Tabatabaei, Panahandeh, Hasanabadi, Roshani, Attari, 2012). It is expected for couples with higher educational levels and improved social skills to have fewer problems related to marital satisfaction. Furthermore, lack of education can lead to disagreement or even divorce (Jadiri, Jan, Tabatabai (2009). However, according to some studies, educational level does not have a significant influence on marital satisfaction (Rahmani, Merghati, & Alah (2009); Zare, Golmakani, Shareh, Shakeri & Khadem (2014).

Economic Status of the Family on Marital Satisfaction

Studies have shown that the economic situation and family income are associated with marital Satisfaction (Pepping & Halford (2012); Zainah, Nasir, Ruzy & Noraini (2012). Research indicates that low income and job insecurity (especially for men) is associated with lower marital satisfaction. When couples have to worry about money constantly, their marital satisfaction will decrease (Shopiro, Gottman & Carrere (2000). Couples, who have a higher income than those who have lower incomes, experience greater marital satisfaction. However, other studies have not shown any relationship between the level of income and marital satisfaction (Rahmani, Merghati & Alah (2009), or even, have shown an inverse correlation between them. As the economic status increases, marital satisfaction decreases (Schramm & Harris (2011).

Hypothesis

Ho: Age, education and economic status will not have a statistical significant joint and independent predicting influence on marital satisfaction among the clergy.

Hi: Age, education and economic status will have a statistical significant joint and independent predicting influence on marital satisfaction among the clergy.

V. METHODS:

Participants

The participants were drawn from a population of Anglican clergy, in Anambra state Nigeria. The state is located in the South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. The state capital is Awka. Anambra state is made up of nine (9) Anglican dioceses, with a total population of one thousand and fifty (1050) clergymen: (1). The Diocese on The Niger which is comprised of five local government areas of the state (Idemili North, Idemili South, Oyi, Onitsha North and Onitsha South).With a population of 205 clergymen who are married and 7 clergymen who were not married. (2). The Diocese of Awka which is also comprised of five local government areas of the state (Awka-North, Awka-South, Njikoka, Dunukofia and Anaocha). With a population of 195 clergymen who are married and 5 clergymen who were not married. (3). The Diocese of Nnewi which is comprised of three local government areas (Nnewi-South, Nnewi-North and Ekwusigo), with a population of 143 clergymen who are married and 4 clergymen who were not married. (4). The Diocese of Aguata which is comprised of three local government areas (Aguata, Orumba-North and Orumba-South), with a population of 136 clergymen who are married and 3 clergymen who were not married. (5). The Diocese of Ihiala which is comprised of one local government area of the state (Ihiala), with a population of 55 clergymen. (6). The Diocese of Niger-West which is comprised of two local government areas of the state (Ayamelum and Anambra- East), with a population of 81 clergymen. (7). The Diocese of Mbamili which is comprised of one local government area of the state (Anambra-West), with a population of 48 clergymen. (8). The Diocese of Ogbaru which is comprised of one local government area of the state (Ogbaru), with a population of 98 clergymen. (9). The Diocese of Amichi which is comprised of part of Nnewi-South and Nnewi-North local government areas of the state with a population of 70 clergymen.

VI. INSTRUMENTS

Section A: Demographic characteristics

This section consisted of demographic information of the participants such as age, highest academic qualification, marital status, and annual income.

Section B: Measurement of marital Satisfaction

The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMSS), measured the marital satisfaction, this scale was developed by Fournier, Olson, & Druckman (1983). The EMS scale is a 15-item scale comprising the idealistic distortion and marital satisfaction scale. With a 5-point response ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The instrument had Cronbach's alpha reliability of .86. Test-retest reliability of 0.85. The scale had been used in Nigeria and was found to have a cronbach´s alpha reliability of 0.89 (Mbam, Oginyi, & Onyishi, 2015).

Procedure/Sampling Technique

The study made use of clustered random sampling method. The Anglican dioceses in Anambra state which is comprised of nine (9) dioceses shall be grouped into three categories for the purpose of this research depending on their sizes which is determined by the number of local government areas in each diocese. Dioceses on the Niger and Awka occupy five local government areas each. Dioceses of Nnewi and Aguata occupies three local government areas each, while dioceses of Ihiala, Mbamili and Ogbaru occupies one local government area each, with the exception of diocese of Niger-west that occupies two local government areas. Diocese of Amichi is made up of some part of Nnewi-South and Nnewi-North. With the above classification of dioceses and the numbers of local government areas they are situated in, there are three major clusters: Cluster A - (On the Niger and Awka with five local government areas each). Cluster B - (Nnewi and Aguata with three local government areas each) Cluster C - (Ihiala, Niger-West, Amichi, Mbamili and Ogbaru). With the simple random sampling method, specifically the lottery method of sampling, Awka, Aguata, Ihiala and Ogbaru would be selected. This was arrived at by writing the name of each of the dioceses in the same cluster on a paper, the paper will be squeezed and put in a hat, and one was ask to choose once for cluster A and B, and for cluster C one was ask to choose twice. Invariably out of the twenty-one local government areas of the state, ten local government areas were chosen for the study. The participants were chosen from four dioceses of the entire nine (9) dioceses. Therefore, a total sample size of four hundred and eight-four (484) married clergymen were used for the study. (Awka-195, Aguata-136, Ihiala-55 and Ogbaru- 98).

Design and Statistics

The cross-sectional survey research design was adopted for the study. The regression analysis

was used to examine the predictive value of marital satisfaction which is the dependent variable of the study on the clergy's age, educational level and economic status which are the independent variables. The essence of using regression analysis is to establish the relationship (if any) between the independent variables and the dependent variable, as well as exploring the nature of the relationship. The SPSS version 20 software was used for the data analysis.

FIGURE :1
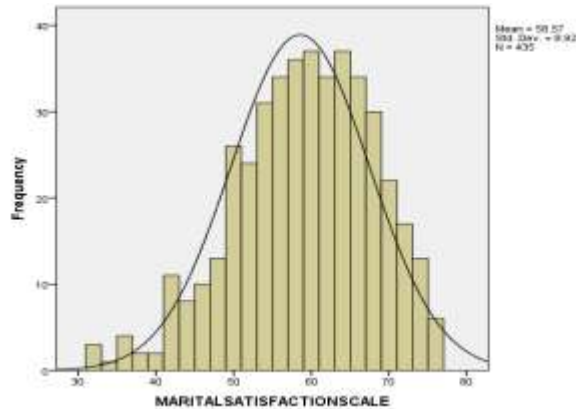
Histogram showing the Marital Satisfaction of the Clergy of Anambra State, Nigeria.
Source: Analysis of the researcher's collected primary data.

The histogram of figure 1 showing the sample of the marital satisfaction of the participants, with the mean (58.57) and standard deviation (8.923) for N = 435. All the performance of the marital satisfaction are within the normal curve except for a negligible proportion, which indicated an established norm that can be likened to the performance culture of the Clergy being satisfied with their marriage.

TABLE 1.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	P
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	56.882	1.671		34.043	.000
	Age Bracket	.217	.774	.014	.280	.780
	Highest Qualification	.659	.685	.052	.961	.337
	Income Per Annum	.059	.486	.007	.121	.904

Regression Analysis summary table showing the joint and independent prediction of age, education and economic status on marital satisfaction among the Anglican clergy.
Source: Analysis of the researcher's collected primary data

The result on table 1 shows that age, education and economic status are jointly and independently having a statistical significant prediction of the marital satisfaction of the Anglican clergy with the following P values: Age = .780, Education = .337 and Economic = .904 as against the P < .05. The joint influence is R = .058a and was contributed to by all the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho) which stated that age, education and economic status will not have a statistical joint and independent prediction of marital satisfaction among the Anglican clergy was rejected, whereas, the alternative hypothesis

(Hi) which stated that age, education and economic status will have a statistical significant joint and independent prediction of marital satisfaction among the Anglican clergy was accepted.

VII. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

1. Age, education and economic status are jointly having a significant interaction effect on marital satisfaction.
2. Age, education and economic status are independently having a significant interaction effect on marital satisfaction.

VIII. DISCUSSION

This study investigated the predictive influence of age, education and economic status on marital satisfaction among the Anglican clergy. The independent variable was marital satisfaction, while the dependent variables were age, education and economic status. The null hypothesis (Ho) was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis (Hi) was accepted. In other words, that age, education and economic status jointly and independently have a statistically significant interaction with marital satisfaction. The following studies corroborate these findings; firstly in regard to age (Lee & McKinnish, 2018); (Shakerian, 2010 & Teimourpour, Moshtagh, Bidokhti, & Pourshanbaz 2012) and Jose & Alfons (2007). Secondly, considering education (Shakerian, (2010); Wagheiy, Miri, Ghasemipour (2009); Orathinkal, Vansteenwegen, (2006) & Pepping & Halford, (2012).The economic status had the following studies supporting its positive influence (Pepping & Halford (2012); Zainah, Nasir, Ruzy & Noraini (2012). Contrary to the outcome of this study some of the earlier studies did not succumb to this findings – On age (Guo, & Huang 2005); education ((Rahmani, Merghati, & Alah (2009); Zare, Golmakani, Shareh, Shakeri & Khadem (2014) and economic status- Rahmani, Merghati & Alah (2009). It should be noted that culture and the value system of the different people do affect studies, more especially of this sort.

IX. CONCLUSION

The result of the analysis of the data as presented in table 1, economic status (income) had much influence on marital satisfaction with P Value of .904 followed by age of .780 and education (highest qualification) of .337. This is a strong indication that economic factor plays significant role in determining marital satisfaction of the clergy. In a total different study by Ohakwe, Imhonde and Mbachi (2020) age and income played a significant influence in the level of anxiety and psychological well-being in pregnant women.

Recommendations

1. There is need for wealth creation or possible subsidiary financial ventures for the clergy in other to increase the level of marital satisfaction.
2. The need for the church to provide financial support will be an advantage to this regard.

Suggestions for further studies

1. The result of this study is specific to male Clergy population and within a particular geographical area of the country, there is need to extend further studies to female Clergy population and other geographical entities to broadening the generalization.
2. Further studies should include other demographic variables, for examples, family size, and differentiation between stipendiary and non-stipendiary clergy.
3. Extending this study to the Clergy of other denominations would contribute to the frontiers of knowledge.

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