

Influence of Socio-Economic Status on Marital Satisfaction among Makurdi Residents, Benue State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of socio-economic status on marital satisfaction among Makurdi residents. The study adopted a descriptive survey design where 304 participants were randomly drawn in Makurdi through random sampling method. Those who were from the ages of 18-29 were 92 (30.3%) and between 30 and above were 201 (66.1%); 157 (51.6%) males and 192 (42.4%) female were involved. One way analysis of variance was used as a statistic tool for analysis. The study postulated three hypothesis and the results shows that there was no statistical significant difference among people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction ($f(df = 287) = .242; p > 0.05$). Significant difference among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction exist ($f(df = 297) = 2.574; p < 0.05$). The study therefore recommended among

others that proper knowledge from education should be used to improve marital quality and the educational level of the husband should be relatively higher than that of the wife.

Introduction

Socio-economic status has been considered as one of the major factors that facilitate marital satisfaction. This concept is one of the important factors that strengthening the family relationships as well affect the type of marriage, family demographic and cultural components in the society. Importantly, components of marital satisfaction according to Shahabadi and Montazeri (2019) include personality characteristics, social class of couples and couple's mutual understanding.

The concept of marital satisfaction has been viewed in different perspectives by several scholars. Scholars like Bahari (2015), views the concept as a personal experience in marriage that can only be assessed individually by each party in response to the amount of pleasure in marital relationships. This can be accessed through of the adaptation of tastes, recognition of personality traits, creation of behavioural forces, and formation of interactive patterns. Bahari (2015) further argues that the couple's interest in each other and their positive attitude towards marriage, such as personal issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sex, children and parenting, family and friends are key components that constitute marital satisfaction.

According Shakerian (2010), the concept is viewed as a situation in which couples have the satisfaction and feel happy living together as husband and wife. This means that measurement of marital satisfaction among couples is paramount to lasting marriage. Where there is lack of marital satisfaction in the family, children also are seriously affected in one way or the other. Some of these negative effects include the following: emotional pain and suffering, feeling insecure, anxiety, lower self-esteem, aggressiveness, higher levels of anger, depression, poorer social skills, higher future divorce rates, and learning

problems (Bloem, 2013). This of course, will definitely lead to a wild society where there are challenges, problems and calamity.

Education and employment can brought independence, self-confidence, passion and a sense of identity among couples. As a matter of fact, when couples are educated and employed, they are better off because they can become acquainted to new knowledge, ready to exchange new and great ideas that would lead to marital satisfaction. For Bett, Kiptiony, and Sirera (2017), employment is one of the components that offer new sources of satisfaction among career couples and at the same time presents new types of problems that threaten their marital satisfaction. It is imperative for career couples to devise skills and strategies in balancing their career and marriage to achieve happiness and satisfaction in marriage.

Makurdi town is the capital of Benue State. The town is highly populated with both educated and uneducated, the rich and poor, civil servants workers or business men and women, and applicants who are married. The harsh economic situation in the state has posed a serious challenge by these married couples to experience marital satisfaction. This situation has made many couples to experience low marital satisfaction. It is from this perceived challenge that prompts the researchers to carry out this study to see if socio-economic status is the main challenge that is leading to low marital satisfaction among Makurdi town residents.

Statement of the Problem

The high rate of divorce is increasing every day as a result of low marital satisfaction. As a matter of fact, our society is become complex with high rate of separate parents who takes care of their children. This menace called divorce has impacted the lives of individual or society negatively. Derichs (2014) observes that “most people have periods of depression, sadness, anger, and fatigue around the loss of their relationship”. This leads to lack of marital satisfaction in the family circle or couples.

In Benue State, particularly, Makurdi residents have started experiencing marital challenges in the high rate as many married men and women are no longer staying together as husband and wife because of lack of marital satisfaction. Some of these common observable factors such as lack of income

to take care of the family needs and low level of educational attainment have led to this ugly situation that make it very difficult for couples to cope with their spouses. In order to tackle this problem, education should be given priorities by couples. This will help them to devise ways of handling and resolving their marital challenges.

The issue of marital satisfaction and the factors influencing it is a virgin area of research in Benue State in general and in Makurdi in particular. Consequently, this study was conducted to fill this knowledge gap by focusing on the socio-economic status such as education, income and occupation determinants of marital satisfaction. This study argues that socio-economic status is one of the ways of improving marital satisfaction among Makurdi residents of Benue State.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of socio-economic status on marital satisfaction among Makurdi residents, Benue State. To accomplish this goal, the following objectives are outline:

- i. To determine if there will be a significant difference among people in different income bracket in marital satisfaction among residents of Makurdi town.
- ii. To find out if there will be a significance difference among people in different occupation in marital satisfaction among Makurdi town residents.
- iii. To determine if there will be a significant different among people with diverse educational qualification in marital satisfaction among married people in Makurdi town.

Research Questions

The following research questions were put forward to guide the study:

- i. Will there be a significant difference among people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction among residents of Makurdi town?
- ii. Will there be a significance difference among people in different occupation on marital satisfaction of Makurdi town residents?

- iii. Will there be a significant difference among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction among married people in Makurdi town residents?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were postulated and tested at 0.05 significant:

- i. There will be no significant difference in marital satisfaction among people in different income brackets among Makurdi town residents.
- ii. There will be no significant difference among people in different occupation on marital satisfaction among Makurdi town residents.
- iii. There will be no significant difference among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction among married people in Makurdi town.

Literature Review

The study of this nature demands literature review in order to show the extent in which studies have been carried out on this discourse. This will help researchers to fill in the existing researcher gap. From the survey of literature, it is obvious to note that literature addressing marital satisfaction in general is quite many. However, there is little literature that handles the influence of socio-economic status on marital satisfaction. These few literature failed to combine indices of social economic status such as income, education and occupation among married persons which this study seeks to address.

Some Studies examined the relationship between economic situation and family income and concluded that the variables are associated with marital satisfaction (Pepping & Halford, 2012; Zainah et al, 2012). Shopiro, Gottman, and Carrere (2000) argue that low income and job insecurity, especially for men folk, is one of the components that are associated with low marital satisfaction. The authors further stress that when couples worry about income -money constantly it leads to decrease marital satisfaction. On the other hand, couples with higher income seem to experience greater marital satisfaction than those who have lower incomes. Contrary to the above studies, Schramm and Harris (2011) argue that

when economic status increases, marital satisfaction decreases. However, Rahmani, Merghati and Alah (2009) strongly believe that there is no relationship between the level of income and marital satisfaction.

Literature discussing the impact of occupation or job on marital satisfaction show positive influence on the life of couple in the family (Adigeb & Mbua, 2015). Bhattarai, Gurung and Kunwar (2015) argue that marital life is same across employment type; however, employment of spouse in government job leads to higher marital satisfaction. Some studies show no significant difference in marriage instability among couples with different careers (Animasahun & Fatile, 2011). Yadav and Gupta (2017) examine the effect of job satisfaction on marital adjustment of working women; found that there was a weak correlation between job satisfaction and marital adjustment of married working women. The findings showed no significant difference between job satisfaction of working women of private and government sector; there is no significant difference that exists between marital adjustment of working women of private and government sector.

Zare and Safyari (2015) conducted a study on marital satisfaction and its determinants on married women and men and found out that marital satisfaction has a significant relationship with love and interest, marriage duration, age difference of couples, socio-economic status, and couple's level of education. The study revealed that the relationship of marital satisfaction with other variables such as media usage, equal education of couples, family income, and women's employment status was not confirmed.

Anahita et al., (2016) investigate marital satisfaction and its relative factors among older adults and found that there was significant difference among marital satisfaction with level of education and remarriage. The study showed significant correlation between length of marriage and marital satisfaction and argues that gender, remarriage and physical disorders stayed in the model have a statistical relationship with the marital satisfaction. Jukwu, Woko and Onuoha (2016) examine the impact of educational attainment on marital stability among married persons. The study revealed that there was a positive relationship between married persons' low and high levels of educational attainment and marital stability while there was no significant relationship between those with medium level of educational attainment and their marital stability.

Literature that examines relationship between educational attainment and marital satisfaction show that educational qualification is associated with marital satisfaction. Some of the studies indicate that educational attainment has been recognized or viewed as a predictor to marital satisfaction (Shakerian, 2010; Pepping & Halford, 2012). Tabatabaei et al. (2012) argue that couples who acquired higher education qualification have a better understanding of life realities, which make them well equipped to solve their problems and avoid conflicts that always lead to low marital satisfaction. Madanianan and Syed (2013) found that more educated couples experienced a higher degree of marital satisfaction and better mental health compared with less educated couples. There is no doubt, couples with higher educational levels, improved social skills and have fewer problems related to marital satisfaction. Jadiri, Jan and Tabatabai (2009) observe that low or lack of educational attainment leads to disagreement or divorce among couples. In recent times, some studies show no significant influence on educational level and marital satisfaction, therefore, concluded that educational attainment does not have a significant influence on marital satisfaction (Rahmani, Merghati, & Alah, 2009; Zare, et al., 2014).

A study concerning marital satisfaction among married women was conducted by Shahabadi and Montazeri (2019). The study establishes that marital satisfaction among married women was at moderate level. Marital satisfaction was higher among the villagers, non-familial marriages and housewives than other groups. The study further showed that forced marriage has a significant relationship with lack of life satisfaction while there was a higher degree of satisfaction found among unforced marriages. The study revealed that couple's age differences, education level differences, duration of marriage, and type of marriage (forced and unforced) showed the dependent variable variations. It was concluded that an increase in the education level of couples decreased their life satisfaction; whereas, marital satisfaction increased by increase of age, duration of marriage, number of children. Moreover, marital satisfaction was lower in forced marriages.

Methodology:

For the purpose of achieving the research objectives, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. Using random sampling, a total of 304 married

people in Makurdi took part in the study. 157 (51.6%) were male and 129 (42.4%) were females. 18 (5.9%) people did not indicate their gender status. with respect to educational level, 32 (10.5%) reported obtaining masters degree and above, 164 (53.9%) first degree, 65 (21.4%), NCE/Diploma, 35 (11.5%) reported having SSCE, 5 (1.6%) did not indicate their level of education, 1 (0.3%) first school leaving certificate and 2 (0.7%) were illiterate. Regarding income, 112 (38.89%) reported earning greater than N500, 000, 89 (30.90%) reported earning 20,000-49, 999, 56 (19.44%) 10, 000-19999, 19 (6.60%) people reported earning 1000-2499. 12 (4.17%) reported earning 2500-4999. In respect to occupation 66 (22.5%) were working in central, state/public undertaking or owners of a company employing greater than 20 persons. 144 (48.12%) service in private sector or independent business or equivalent. 75 (25.50%) service at shop 9 (3.07%) self employed while 2 (0.68%) did not indicate their occupational status.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was made up of three (3) sections range from section A to C.

Section A constitutes questions based on personal data while section B jointly assessed the three indices of social economic status (income, education and occupation) with a total of eleven (11) items. Section C of the questionnaire has a total of 32 items to measure marital satisfaction in respect to the indices of social economic status stated earlier.

Procedures for Data Collection

The researchers obtained informed consents of participants. The researchers personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents. The participants were instructed to complete all the items on the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected by the researchers after completion.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The software was used to analyze simple percentage and frequencies

for demographic variable. One way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the research hypothesis postulated.

Results

Hypothesis one: There will be no significant difference in marital satisfaction among people in different income brackets among Makurdi town residents.

Table 1: ANOVA summary table showing result for difference among people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction

Source of Variables	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Remark
Between Group	347.127	4	86.782		
				.242	
Insignificant Within Group	101387.342	283	358.259		
Total	101,734.469	287			

Insignificant at $p > 0.05$

The result on table one above shows that there is no statistically significant difference among people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction ($F(df = 287) = 242; p > 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted and the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

Hypotheses two: There will be no significance difference among people in different occupation on marital satisfaction.

Table 2: ANOVA summary table showing result for difference among people in different occupation on marital satisfaction

Source of Variables	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Remark
Between Group	3374.878	4	843.719		

				2.438	
Significant					
Within					
Group	9976.385	288	346.099		
Total	13,351.263	292			

Significant at $p < 0.05$

The results from Table (2) showed that there is a statistically significant influence of occupation on marital satisfaction ($F (df = 292) = 2.438; p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted.

Hypothesis three: There is no significant different among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction among married people in Makurdi town.

Table 3: ANOVA summary table showing result for the difference among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction

Source of Variables	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Remark
Between					
Group	4537.057	4	907.411		
				2.574	
Significant					
Within					
Group	102926.929	292	352.489		
Total	107463.986	297			

Significant at $p < 0.05$

The result on the table (3) above confirmed a statistically significant difference among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction ($F (df = 297) = 2.574; p < 0.05$). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis accepted and the null hypothesis rejected.

Discussions

This study focuses mainly on the influence of socio-economic status on marital satisfaction among Makurdi residents. The concept of marital satisfaction

focuses on extent to which a person enjoys his/her marriage. A higher level of satisfaction is seen as a measure of marital success. The concern for the study was to determine significant difference among people in different income bracket in marital satisfaction, different occupation on marital satisfaction and diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction among married people Makurdi town. The study was delimited to married men and women.

The results from the first hypothesis show no statistical significant difference among people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction ($F (df = 287) = 242; p > 0.05$). The findings are in agreement with some of the literature reviewed of those include Rahmani, Merghati and Alah (2009) and Schramm and Harris (2011) who earlier confirmed that there is no significant difference among people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction. Income bracket among couple is not an indication that leads to marital satisfaction. In another words, there is no relationship between the level of income and marital satisfaction among couples. The findings are not consistent with some of other studies carryout on this discourse. Scholars like Shopiro, Gottman, and Carrere (2000), Pepping & Halfor (2012) and Zainah et al., (2012) concluded that economic situation and family income are variables associated with high marital satisfaction.

The results from the second hypothesis showed that there is a statistically significant influence of occupation on marital satisfaction ($F (df = 292) = 2.438; p < 0.05$). The findings are consistent with some of the studies carried out by Adigeb and Mbua (2015), Bhattarai, Gurung and Kunwar (2015) who confirmed that occupation has a positive influence on the life of couple in the family. This shows that couples who are employed by government experience higher marital satisfaction than those who are in private sector and self-employed. Surprisingly, Animasahun and Fatile (2011) argue that there is no significant difference on marital satisfaction among couples with different careers

The results from the third hypothesis confirmed a statistically significant difference among people with diverse educational qualification on marital satisfaction ($F (df = 297) = 2.574; p < 0.05$). The findings are in agreement with some of the studies earlier conducted that confirmed educational attainment as the predictor to marital satisfaction (Shakerian, 2010; Pepping & Halford,

2012). According to Tabatabaei et al. (2012), couples who acquired higher education qualifications acquired skills to solve their problems that lead to low marital satisfaction. Couples with low educational qualification experience high disagreement or divorce (Jadiri, Jan and Tabatabai, 2009). The quality of marital relationships is positively associated with partners' educational attainment. The findings are contrary to earlier studies of Rahmani, Merghati and Alah (2009) and Zare, et al., (2014) who concluded that there is no significant difference between educational attainment among couples and educational attainment does not have a significant influence on marital satisfaction.

Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, no significant difference was found to exist between people in different income bracket on marital satisfaction. This means that level of income is never a prime determinant of marital satisfaction. Also, in relation to the above findings, a significant difference was found between among people with different occupation and with different educational level. This implies that marital satisfaction varies among couples as a result of type of occupation a partner has and the level of educational qualification.

Recommendations

The findings of the study show the underlying aspects of education, income and occupation on marital satisfaction of residents in Makurdi town. Based on these findings, the following recommendations were drawn:

- i. Prospective couples or spouse should understand that the income or amount of money that the couples have per say is not important factor in determining the quality of marriage but the attitudes and behaviour with regard to the income management that matters. Also, social support and affection in this case including the cognition and perception of spouse matters.
- ii. Despite the assertion by many researches that all families living in poverty are more likely to be victims of violence and thus dissatisfaction, many couples who are richly endowed still suffer dissatisfaction and even divorce. Therefore this study recommends

that emphases should not be laid on social economic status as an end to itself.

- iii. In reference to occupation researchers, couples should know that although research by many scholars including Kruger (2006) argued that spouse gainfully employed tends to be less dependent upon others for the simple reason that they have resources to accomplish many tasks of adaptation but there are many implications as couples do not have sufficient time for themselves and still lack time for home management as well as transferring aggression from work to home couples should therefore engage in effective relationship management strategies to cope with the task of working and still ensuring satisfied marital relationship, else, dissatisfaction
- iv. Education has a great impact on improving human understanding although in relations to marital satisfactions divorce is higher in highly educated couples. The researchers therefore recommend that proper knowledge from education should be used to improve marital quality and the educational level of the husband should be relatively higher than the wife.

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