



## Psycho-social factors as a Correlate of Marital Satisfaction among Couples in northwest Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria

Ishor Gever David <sup>1\*</sup>, Iorkosu Tyover Samuel <sup>2</sup>, Emeka Valentine Onyegbulem <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Social Work, Federal University of Lafia state, Nasarawa, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup> Ph.D. Department of Sociology, Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

<sup>3</sup> Ph.D. Department of Sociology, Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State, Nigeria

\* Corresponding Author: **Ishor Gever David**

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### Abstract

Marriage as a process of raising a family is an important institution in every society. As such, it has been assumed that a successful marriage is associated with both physiological and psychological health. However, these factors that correlate with marital satisfaction remain unclear and given little attention. The study, therefore, focuses on psychosocial factors as a correlate of marital satisfaction among Couples in the North West Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria. The social exchange theory was used to explain the factors that influence marital satisfaction among the couple in the area. To field carry out the study, the researchers adopted the survey research design. The target population of the study includes all the married couples in the North West Senatorial district of Benue State, Nigeria. The sample size of the study was 385 couples. The research instrument was a questionnaire. The data were collected using a questionnaire, and key informants' interviews. The mean and standard deviation of the main variables were calculated and presented with the use of SPSS. The Pearson correlation moment was used to test the correlation between independent variables and the dependent variable. The study revealed among others that psychological factors such as self-esteem, intimacy, and affection were correlated with marital satisfaction. The study also revealed that social factors such as communication, presence of child or children, sexual satisfaction, and closeness have a positive correlation on marital satisfaction among couples in the area. The study suggests among others that the governmental and non-government agencies should carry out more campaigns, workshops, symposiums, conferences to sensitised couples on the right attitudes for a satisfactory marriage for peaceful co-existence in the area.

**Keywords:** Psych-social factors, marital satisfaction, Benue North-West

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### 1. Introduction

Marital satisfaction is one of the common concepts used for assessing happiness and stability in a marriage. In fact, what is even more important than marriage itself is the success of marriage and the satisfaction of married couples. As such, it is an objective reality that all societies in the world recognize marriage as a fundamental part of the culture. Indeed, it is from the marital relationship that the family emerges and forms the most basic unit of society. Marriage is an institution as old as creation itself, is a fundamental human relationship because it provides the primary structure for establishing a family and rearing children. Marriage can be described as a union between two biologically unrelated females and males who live together and seek to derive benefits from such union such as sexual gratification, love, companionship, etc. and also use such a union as a legitimate means to procreate (Ada & Anake, 2015) <sup>[2]</sup>. Acknowledging that marriage is a basic institution in every society, Nukunya (2016) <sup>[11]</sup> on his part disclosed that despite the universality of marriage, there is no accepted definition for it. He, however, quoted one of the often-quoted definitions as contained in the official handbook of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain, as "a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized as a legitimate offspring of both parents."

Marriage is not just a social union or legal contract between man and woman or an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually intimate and sexual are acknowledged. Marriage is a close meaningful relationship is one of the most essential needs of human beings. Research shows that married people are happier with their life and they are physiologically healthier (Rosen-Grandon, Myers & Hattie, 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>.

According to Bramlett and Mosher as cited in research report in the USA released by the National Centre for Health statistics that one-fifth of first marriages ended within 5 years and one-third ended within ten years. First marriages of teenagers were disrupted faster than the first marriages of women who were ages 20 years and older at marriage. The same report estimated that approximately 50% of first marriages end in divorce, one of the lives most stressful events; that for those marriages that do not end in divorce, many are unhappy. It has been estimated that at any given time, approximately 20% of all married couples go through marital distress. Despite the risk associated with marriage, almost 90% of the population chooses to marry at least once, and nearly 75% of divorce individuals choose to remarry (Ada & Anake, 2015) <sup>[2]</sup>. According to Federal Statistics Service in the last few years for every 1000 marriages are about 500 divorces that make 50%. That is each second marriage is breaking up. According to the research, the greatest divorce is in marriages that lasted less than 3-5 years. A successful marriage is associated with both physiological and psychological health. Human beings go on their lives as a member of small or large groups. The most important one of these groups is the family which is called a special small group and provides a continuation of the human species (Dugal, El Baalbaki, & Lussier, 2014)) <sup>[4]</sup>. Compliance with certain conditions, you can create families with at least two individuals of the opposite sex to choose each other as partners. Choosing their partners, deciding with whom they will share their lives, family building, family responsibility, and living with their partners are some of the duties of the young adulthood period.

Notions like life satisfaction, life quality, marital satisfaction, family satisfaction to mention a few have been extensively studied over time both by social and psychological sciences. From a psychological point of view, these notions involve a subjective element. Although both longitudinal and transversal studies have been performed, Diener and Lucas, (2015) <sup>[7]</sup> said they are still unable to decode the complexity of the human relationships and what exactly causes the failure or the success of a relationship especially in the marital sphere because marital satisfaction is an important aspect of family the life that shapes people's health and wellbeing. Greater marital satisfaction is associated with less depression (Williams, 2003) <sup>[16]</sup>, better self-rated health, positive outcomes (Umberson, Williams, Powers, Liu, & Needham, 2006) <sup>[15]</sup>. The scientific literature suggests that a successful marriage could be defined based on several factors: marriage stability, joy, and marital satisfaction. It is stated that marital satisfaction is one of the main significant factors that influence the quality and stability of marriage. Although it is thought that marital satisfaction is important not only for the quality and stability of the marriage but also for the spouse's interpersonal interactions with each other, further research is needed in this field.

However, within a few decades, studies have shown that marital satisfaction is not so easily achieved because a wide

range of both psychological and socio-demographic factors that could affect husband's and wife's behaviour, thinking, feelings, communication, and other interpersonal interactions in marriage need to be taken into account when assessing satisfaction in marriage (Rosen-Grandon, 2014) <sup>[13]</sup>. Family life and marital satisfaction are very important and are known as the main predictors of overall quality of life. However, marital satisfaction can affect not only the physical and the mental health of both spouses, but also children's development, wellbeing, academic performance, social skills, and relationships (Cummings & Davies, 2010) <sup>[6]</sup>. Marital satisfaction is also a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person such that the more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and with the marriage partner (Cummings & Davies, 2010) <sup>[6]</sup>. The categories of how people express love to each other are potentially helpful. These expressions of affection suggest a framework for understanding how different people view positive moments. Although marital satisfaction and its relationship to different aspects of human life have been well researched, it continues to be an important topic of research among marriage, family, and couple therapists (Bradbury, Fincham, and Beach, 2000) <sup>[5]</sup> and have further observed that although they reviewed a decade of "research on nature and determinants of marital satisfaction, more than one hundred studies related to marital satisfaction and representing diverse orientations and goals. The sheer magnitude of this work attests to the continued relevance of this topic.

Communication is an essential element that affects all human inclinations and is an important determining factor in the quality of relationships between spouses and marital satisfaction. Communication plays a major role in marital satisfaction and intimacy between couples. Overall, relationships between spouses are formed based on four basic types of relationships: emotional relationship, cognitive (intellectual) relationship, economic relationship, and sexual relationship. Couples who readily communicate their thoughts and feelings with each other and can accept and understand each other's feelings experience greater marital satisfaction. Couples who spend more leisure time together and have common hobbies, as well as engage in verbal or emotional communication to a greater extent experience higher marital satisfaction.

Several studies have pointed to the impact of sexual satisfaction on marital satisfaction. Many researchers believe that the nature of sexual relations is the most important determining factor in married life. Dissatisfactory or unconvincing intercourse will lead to feelings of deprivation, frustration, and lack of safety and will likely endanger mental health, thereby disintegrating the family life.

The presence of children in different ways can have both positive and negative effects on the family system. Parents' sense of happiness and pride can be positive effects, whereas the sense of tiredness, lack of personal time, and disagreement over childcare and homework can be negative effects. These issues can affect the quality of the relationship between couples. However, Abraham Maslow's theory of human motivation is adopted and comparing it with psychological factors such as (depression, self – esteem, love/intimacy, power-sharing, and satisfaction) that bring

about harmony marriage, Depression, poor communication discourage wife and husband to work harmoniously together to achieve a better-married life. A successful marriage is associated with both physiological and psychological health. Scholars like suggest that a successful marriage could be defined based on several factors such as marriage stability, joy, number of children, communication. This indicates that marital satisfaction is one of the main significant factors that influence the quality and stability of marriage. The concept of marital satisfaction is used to describe the extent to which a person enjoys his or her marriage. A higher level of satisfaction is seen as a measure of marital success. It is, therefore, important to study correlates of marital satisfaction to determine what variables could potentially predict the outcome of marital success because people get married in hopes of having a happy marriage, which is conceptualized as a successful marriage. It can be deduced that, although this concept may seem ambiguous, the growing field of research in this area demands attention.

There is however a strong urge in the continued study of how couples form successful marriages, to which the profusion of existing research can attest. It is against this background that the study intends to examine the influence of psychological factors and marital satisfaction among spouses in the North-west senatorial district of Benue State Nigeria with the view of providing empirical data that would guide couples government of Nigeria and Benue State, counselors, social workers on appropriate measures and good conflict resolution strategies in handling contending issues in marriage.

### 1.2 Statement of Problem

Data available in Nigeria's customary marriage (2014) indicates that a total of 818 marriages were dissolved out of 1,511 marriages registered. In January 2007, 46 out of the 136 registered marriages were dissolved. There has been some research in the Nigerian (and African) continent on marriage. Most (if not all) of such research has been done by non-psychologists, usually sociologists and anthropologists. However, there is not enough empirical research from a psychosocial point of view that has explored the concept of marriage and marital satisfaction in Nigeria; these works show that although these are good anthropological (ethnographic) and philosophical accounts, they have described marital life in one way or the other, without actual in-depth study from a psychological perspective to give an empirical social psychological account of the construction and experience of marital life. Invariably, many of these ethnographies are couched in the traditional individualism-collectivism frame (Hofstede, 2017) [9]. It is based on this fact that the researcher explore some psychosocial factors namely self-esteem, parental stress, premarital counselling (psychological factors), age at marriage, and gender (social factors) to see the role they play in an individual's marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction has become a crucial issue for research in recent times. This is understandable because marital instability, stress, breakdown, and divorce are becoming increasingly rampant in many parts of the world including Nigeria and Benue State in particular. Family stability is crucial to every social and national development. The family experiences diverse issues of psychological distress, financial lack, to care for the children, poor communication between parents and children, emotional problems, and frustration resulting in depression, health problems, and unfulfilled

marital life. Spouses also experience similar frustrating experiences such as social assault from in-laws, absence of children in marriage and homes, lack of proper communication that most times causes separation divorce, or a breakdown in a good marital relationship.

Scholars agreed such as that in Nigeria poor marital relationship is on the increase, especially among spouses. They agreed that all these pose a serious threat to social stability in the country. In Benue North-West senatorial district it was observed that separation desertion and divorce have become alarming among spouses. Conflict and crises of related family issues are no longer brought to the deck for settlement but rather are extended to the outside environment where two or three parties are engrossed in supposed family issues. In the face of all these, however, the nature of the marital relationship in Benue North-West senatorial district is unknown hence it becomes necessary to look at these issues and investigate possible ways to remedy the problem.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which psychosocial factors influence marital satisfaction among spouses in the North-West senatorial district of Benue State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to;

1. Examine the influence of psychological factors (intimacy, affection, and self-esteem) on marital satisfaction among spouses in Benue North-West senatorial district.
2. Investigate the influence of social factors (communication, closeness, sexual satisfaction, and the presence of child/children) on marital satisfaction in the Benue North-West senatorial district.

### Hypothesis

**H1:** there is no significant correlation between psychological factors and marital satisfaction among couples.

**H2:** there is no significant correlation between social factors and marital satisfaction among couples.

### Literature Review

#### Concept of Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is the quantity of contentment that a spouse feels about their relationship, or as an immanent and subjective evaluation by an individual of the degree of pleasure, happiness or fulfillment felt within the marital relationship between spouse and self (Rho, 2016). This can be deduced that marital satisfaction is an extent to which marriage partners have a sense of accomplishment or fulfillment of the mutual needs, goals, and expectations in marriage. This mean the significance of marital satisfaction cannot be overlooked. Scholars suggest that a successful marriage could be describe on the cornerstone of many factors such as joy and marriage stability. Marital satisfaction is one of the main significant factors that influence the quality and stability of marriage.

#### Psycho-social factors and marital Satisfaction

Communication is an essential element that affects all human inclinations and is an important determining factor in the quality of relationships between spouses and marital satisfaction (Akpan, 2015) [3]. To agree with to relevance of communication to marital satisfaction, opine that communication plays a major role in marital satisfaction and intimacy between spouses. This entails that spouses who

readily communicate their thoughts and feelings with each other and can accept and understand each other's feelings experience greater marital satisfaction (Akpan, 2015) [3]. In addition, spouses who engage in verbal or emotional communication to a greater extent experience higher marital satisfaction. This of course needs to be investigated in the North West senatorial district of Benue state for counselling intervention.

Intimacy plays an important role in marital satisfaction and stability. Although intimacy is not limited to the marital relationship, most people marry for the sake of intimacy (Bélanger, Schiavie, Sabourindf, Dugal, El Baalbaki, & Lussier (2014) [4]. This means that the married spouses form the core relationship that influences the happiness and level of functioning of the family life. Better knowledge of important aspects of the marital relationship, such as the experience of intimacy, could contribute to the development of more effective marital enrichment programs and marital therapy, which in turn will have a positive effect on family and societal functioning (Target, 2017) [14]. Facets of intimacy that are emphasized by researchers include intention, involvement, and emotion among others. It has been observed that the time spent together by spouses is the pillar on which all activities of a good marriage rely (Ada & Anake, 2015) [2]. Spouses who spend time together are happier and more fulfilled. Spouses who spend time together tend not to experience marital instability rather they enjoy marital satisfaction. This factor of course needs to be investigated in the area.

Another factor that influences marital satisfaction is sexual activities. Several studies have pointed to the impact of sexual satisfaction on marital satisfaction. For instance, averred that the nature of sexual relations is the most important determining factor in married life. Dissatisfactory or unconvincing intercourse will lead to feelings of deprivation, frustration, and lack of safety and will likely endanger mental health, thereby disintegrating the family life. Sexual affairs are at the first rank in married life and sexual satisfaction can bring about a favourable and convenient marriage (Target, 2017) [14]. The sex life of married spouses could be their building matrix and a source of dissatisfaction as well. Spouses who find their partners satisfactory in terms of sex are bound to find some contempt in their marriage but those that are not satisfied sexually are bound to look out for satisfaction. This act of promiscuity leads to a troubled marriage and satisfaction. To some extent as most people seem to be conservative when it comes to their sex life, the real cause of marital dissatisfaction is never made public yet the trouble never seems to have a solution (Bélanger, Schiavie, Sabourindf, Dugal, Baalbaki, & Lussier, 2014) [4]. This is most likely results in divorce and/or polygamy.

Furthermore, self-esteem is another factor that influences marital satisfaction among spouses. Similarly, Erol & Orth, (2013) [8] explored stable personality traits such as self-esteem the personality traits such as affective and temperament as a correlate of marital satisfaction. Following this perspective, it would be interesting to explore the relationship between self-esteem, situation-specific coping strategies, and their contribution to marital satisfaction. It was found by scholars that marital satisfaction is positively related to self-esteem (Target, 2017) [14]. It would be valuable to extend the understanding of self-esteem in marriage beyond this single ending, hence the need for this study. Also, the presence of child/children in different ways can

have both positive and negative effects on the family system. In Nigeria, scholars agreed that marriage and children are perceived as extremely important. The children are the most wonderful and meaningful gifts in marriage, but having children in most can bring about additional stress and instability into marriage because caregiving requires more responsibility as well as change in roles, providing more fodder for disagreement and strain. Despite this, it is an objective reality that having children in the lives of spouses is a thing of joy and this in most cases reduces instability among the spouses. Children are a lovely addition to a family even though their addition to the lives of spouses brings about a lot of stress and instability but are still a major factor that facilitates marital satisfaction (Target, 2017) [14].

### Theoretical framework

The broadest social exchange theories are those of the American social psychologists, the American sociologists. Homans defined social exchange as the exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costing between the two persons. Social exchange theory is a sociological and psychological theory that studies the social behaviour in the interaction of two parties that implement a cost-benefit analysis to influence risks and benefits. The theory also necessitates economic relationships the cost-benefit analysis occurs when each party has goods and characters that the other parties value. Social exchange theory proposes that these calculations take place in romantic relationships, friendships, professional relationships, and ephemeral relationships as simple as exchanging words with a customer at the cash register. Social exchange theory supposes that if the costs of the relationship are higher than the rewards, such as if a lot of effort or money were put into a relationship and not reciprocated, then the relationship may be terminated or deserted. The most extensive application of social exchange has been in the area of interpersonal relationships. However, social exchange theory materializes in many different situations with the same idea of the exchange of resources. Self-Interest can encourage individuals to make decisions that will benefit themselves overall. The theory can be applied in the sense that the stability of marriage is well determined by the relation of reward to the cost in marital relationship. Rewards in the marriage include material resources, care, love, self-esteem communication, closeness, presence of children among others and practical day to day support or physical love and companionship among the couple. All these rewards enhance and influence marital satisfaction.

### Method

The researchers adopted a survey research design. The target population of the study includes all the married couples in the Benue state. The accessible population consist of couple in North west senatorial district. In attempting to select a representative sample size for the study, the sample size determination formula developed was used. The source recommended the following sample size determination formula for populations; usually those between 10,000 to 100,000 in size:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:



$n_0$  = required sample size.

$Z$  = Standard normal deviate, usually set at 1.96, which corresponds to 95% confidence level.

$p$  = Proportion of the population estimated to have a particular characteristic. When there is no reasonable characteristic, 50% (0.50) is used.

$q$  = 1.0- $p$

$e$  = Desired level of precision, usually set at 0.05 or occasionally 0.03. The size of the study population-couple in Benue State North west is greater than 10000. Thus, the formula is appropriate. Applying the formula, the sample size will be:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

$$= \frac{(1.96)^2(0.50)(1-0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{(1.96)^2(0.50)(0.50)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{0.9604}{0.0025}$$

$$= 384.16$$

$$= 385 \text{ (Rule of integer)}$$

The research instrument was a questionnaire comprised of twelve items on psychological and 12 items on social factors making it twenty-four items. The data were collected using a questionnaire, and key informants' interviews. The independent variable was psychosocial factors and the dependent variable is marital satisfaction. The mean and standard deviation of the main variable was calculated and presented with the use of SPSS. The Pearson correlation moment was used to test the correlation between independent variables and the dependent variable.

## Result

**Table 1:** Showing the Duration of Marriage of couples

Duration of marriage	Number of respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 yr	45	12.7
Less than 3 yrs	53	15.0
Less than 5 yrs	61	17.3
More than 5 yrs	194	55.0
Total	353	100
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 20 yrs	40	11.3
Less than 30 yrs	67	19.0
Less than 40 yrs	72	20.4
More than 40 yrs	174	49.3
Total	353	100
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Non formal education	45	12.7
FSLC	53	15.0
GCE/SSCE	150	42.5
ND,NCE, Degree, Master, PhD	105	29.8
Total	353	100

Source: fieldwork, 2021

The row data in the table indicates that 21.7% of the respondents spent less than a year in marriage, 15.5% spent less than 3 years, 17.3% spent less than 5 years and the majority of the couple spent more than 5 years in marriage. This implies that the study was reasonable enough by eliciting information among couples who spent their time in different duration. Data on the age range of the respondents indicate that 11.3% were less than 20 years old, 19.0% were less than 20 years, and the majority of the respondents 49.5 were more than 40 years old. This implies respondents were aged enough to provide adequate answer bothered on the study. Data on the qualification of the couples indicate that 12.7% have non formal education, 15.0% obtained FSLC, 42.5% obtained GCE/SSCE, 29.8% obtained higher educational certificates. This was subsequently categorised into low education, average educational attainment, and higher educational attainment.

### Mean and standard Deviation of items on couple education and marital satisfaction

**Table 2**

Educational level	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Couple with Low Education	88	2.17	0.99
Couple with Average Education	156	2.56	0.92
Couple with High Education	109	2.77	0.97
Total			

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table shows the means and standard deviations of items on educational qualification and marital satisfaction. The table revealed that couples with low educational qualifications had a mean score of 2.17 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.99. Since the mean was less than 2.5, it shows that couples with low educational qualifications have less marital satisfaction. The table revealed that couples with average educational qualifications had a mean score of 2.56 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.92. Since the mean was more than 2.5, it shows that couples with average educational qualifications have higher marital satisfaction. The table also revealed that couples with higher educational qualifications had a mean score of 2.77 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.97. Since the mean

was more than 2.5, it shows that couples with higher educational qualifications have higher marital satisfaction.

### Mean and standard Deviation of items on couple Age and marital satisfaction

Table 3

Age	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Less than 20yrs	58	2.27	0.79
Less than 30yrs	100	2.58	0.62
less than than 40yrs	88	2.51	0.67
More than 40yrs	107	2.61	0.60
Total	353		

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table shows the means and standard deviations of items on age and marital satisfaction. The table revealed that couples with less than 20 years had a mean score of 2.27 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.79. Since the mean was less than 2.5, it shows that couples with less than 20 years have less marital satisfaction. The table revealed that couples with less than 30 years had a mean score of 2.58 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.62 since the mean was more than 2.5, it shows that couples with less than 30 but more than twenty years have higher marital satisfaction. The table also revealed that couples less than 40 years of age had a mean score of 2.51 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.67. Since the mean was more than 2.5, it shows that couples with less than 40 years but more than 30 years of age have higher marital satisfaction. Also, show data shows that couples aged more than 40 years and above have a mean score of 2.61 with a corresponding standard deviation of 0.60. This means that couples aged 40 years and above have higher marital satisfaction.

### Mean and standard deviation of the variable on psychological factors on marital satisfaction

Table 4

Variables	X	SD
Intimacy	30.13	1.56
Self-esteem	18.56	1.41
Affection	25.35	1.48
Total	74.04	4.7

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table shows that psychological factors such as intimacy, self-esteem, and affection are correlated with marital satisfaction among couples. This is because the standard deviation was 4.7 which is above the cut-off score of 2.5. It also entails that the variables have a significant influence on marital satisfaction among couples.

In an interview with a couple in Gboko (the husband 42 years, a wife 34 years who married for about 10 years ago said that: We are into married for 10 years now, but to the best of my knowledge, we have to endure and tolerate each other even though it is not easy at all. Endurance, love (affection) is the key to a successful marriage. I have endured my husband and he has endured me. The husband also agreed with the wife. Another couple of 35 and 32 years respectively who also marriage for 5 years opine that:

My brother, for a relationship to sustain, the parties must endure and love themselves to the fullest. I love my wife and she also loves me, we tolerate each other. Indeed, we

sometimes have a different view, but we tried to sort out our differences and continue because we love ourselves.

### Mean and standard deviation of the variable on social factors on marital satisfaction

Table 5

Variables	X	SD
Communication	15.56	1.07
Closeness	20.45	1.11
Sexual satisfaction	20.53	1.17
Marriage with children	21.34	1.13
Total	77.88	4.5

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

The table shows that social factors such as communication, closeness, sexual satisfaction, and marriage with children are correlated with marital satisfaction. This is because the standard deviation was 4.5 which is above the cut-off score of 2.5. It also entails that the variables have a significant influence on marital satisfaction among couples in the area.

A couple who are 66 and 55 years respectively and marriage for 20 years in an interview alluded in Tiv dialect that:

‘‘Doo u kwase man nom veal u kuakua. Shi u hemban doon je yo doo u vea yaven hen kya sha shima ve. Shi ka I doo kpishi zum u ka ve lu a wan shin mbayev yo’’. This can be translated as: It is good for husband and wife to be close, and more importantly when they both satisfy themselves sexually. Most importantly when marriage is blessed with a child and children.

Another couple in Makurdi who married for 14 years without a child lamented that:

Life is hell in marriage without a child. My husband people use to embarrass me for not giving birth. I am not happy. I need a child so that my husband will love me more. The husband on his part simply lamented that I need a child, this I am disturbed. But I hope that God will surely give us a child. Another couple in Tarka who married for 7 years said that:

I sexually satisfy my husband and he satisfies me too, and this makes our relationship strong. The presence of children to us is a thing of joy and happiness. My husband always talks to me in a friendly manner, and he can attest that I talk to him in a friendly manner too. Our closeness strengthens our mutual relationship. We understand each other well. We live happily.

### Pearson product-moment correlation analysis of the relationship between psychological factors and marital satisfaction among couples (N=353)

Hypothesis 1: there is no significant correlation between psychological factors and marital satisfaction among couples. The independent variable here is depression, self-esteem, and affection, whereas the dependent variable is marital satisfaction. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used to test this hypothesis as presented below:

Table 6

Variables	$\Sigma x \Sigma y$	$\Sigma y^2 \Sigma y$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Intimacy x1	5145	17345		0.38*
Self-esteem y2	1355	14576	123675	0.34*
Affection y3	1424	13476	13452	0.23*
Total Satisfaction	7924	45397	137127	-0.23

\* Significant at, 05 levels, critical  $r=0.061$ ,  $df=1143$

The result in the table shows that the calculated R-values for depression (0.38), self-esteem (0.34), affection (0.23), and total satisfaction (0.23) are each higher than the critical value of .061 at a .05 level of significance with correspondent df of 1143. This statistically indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected. It means that intimacy, self-esteem, and affection significantly correlate with marital satisfaction among the couples in the North-West senatorial district of Benue State, Nigeria.

### Pearson product-moment correlation analysis of the relationship between social factors and marital satisfaction among couples (N=353)

Hypothesis 2: there is no significant correlation between social factors and marital satisfaction among couples.

The independent variable here is communication, closeness, sexual satisfaction, and marriage with children, whereas the dependent variable is marital satisfaction. The Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used to test this hypothesis as presented below:

Table 7

Variables	$\Sigma x \Sigma y$	$\Sigma y^2 \Sigma y$	$\Sigma xy$	r-value
Communication	14531	12587		0.23*
Closeness	13467	14214	162341	0.43*
Sexual satisfaction	32651	12113	14765	0.65*
Marriage with children	14576	15874	21365	0.72*
Total Satisfaction	75225	54788	198471	0.6*

\* Significant at, 05 level, critical  $r=.061$ ,  $df=1143$

The result in the table shows that the calculated R-values for communication (0.23), closeness (0.43), sexual satisfaction (0.65), marriage with children (0.72), and the total satisfaction (0.6) are each higher than the critical value of .061 at .05 level of significance with correspondent df of 1143. This statistically indicates that the null hypothesis was rejected. It means that communication, closeness, sexual satisfaction, and marriage with children significantly correlate with the marital satisfaction among the couples in the North-West senatorial district of Benue State, Nigeria.

### Discussion of Findings

The finding on the correlation of psychological factors on marital satisfaction. The study revealed that psychological factors such as self-esteem, intimacy, and affection were correlated with marital satisfaction. The study revealed that marital satisfaction is positively related to self-esteem. The research again suggests that self-esteem, intimacy, and affection predict higher marital satisfaction. This finding tallies with the study who revealed that self-esteem predicts higher marital satisfaction among couples. The study also agreed with research on 110 participants from Kerala revealed that self-esteem is positively correlated with marital satisfaction. It can be deduced from the study that emotional intimacy, self-esteem, and affection, are positively correlated with marital satisfaction among couples.

The finding on objective two about the social factors as a correlate of marital satisfaction among couples indicates that social factors such as communication, presence of child or children, sexual satisfaction, and closeness have a positive correlation on marital satisfaction among couples in the area. This is in tandem with a study by Anthony (2008) who found that dyadic relationships including marital satisfaction exerted a strong influence on family cohesion and

adaptability among married parents in South California. He pointed out that although childless couples experience a decline in marital satisfaction over time, parents are significantly less satisfied than non-parents are, and the presence of children is reliably related to marital satisfaction averred that being the parent of a younger child also correlates with high marital satisfaction among the couples. The finding corresponded with who opines that communication plays a major role in marital satisfaction and intimacy among the spouses. He concluded that spouses who readily communicate their thoughts and feelings with each other and can accept each other's feelings receive greater marital satisfaction. The study tallies with who averred that the nature of sexual relations is the most important determining factor in married life. Dissatisfaction or unconvincing sexual intercourse will lead to feelings of deprivation, frustration, and lack of safety and will likely endanger marital life, thereby disintegrating the family life.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Marriage as a process of family institution is as old as creation itself, and a fundamental human relationship because it provides the primary structure for establishing a family and rearing children. It can be described as a union between two biologically unrelated females and males who live together and seek to derive benefits from such union such as sexual gratification, love, companionship, etc. and also use such a union as a legitimate means to procreate. The scientific literature suggests that a successful marriage could be defined based on several factors: marriage stability, joy, and marital satisfaction. It is stated that marital satisfaction is one of the main significant factors that influence the quality and stability of marriage. However, within a few decades, studies have shown that marital satisfaction is not so easily achieved because of a wide range of both psychological and socio-demographic factors that could affect a husband's and wife's behaviour. Such psychological factors hindered or endangered marital satisfaction among the couples. It is worthy to note the alarming increase of divorce in the area as a result of the failure of the couples to apply the right attitudes for marital satisfaction. Hence there is a need to proffer a solution capable of addressing alarming divorce. It is a reality that marriage is an important institution in society, and therefore there is a felt need to effectively manage it for a peaceful society. Flowing from this, the following recommendations were made.

1. The governmental and non-government agencies should carry out more campaigns, workshops, symposiums, conferences to sensitised couples on the right attitudes for a satisfactory marriage.
2. There should be the enactment of the law to make it compulsory for the intending persons to undertake a marriage course before getting married.
3. The traditional ruler through government should make it compulsory for intending person to undertake marriage course before traditional marriage take place as it is done in the Christians and Muslim wedding in the church and Mosque respectively.

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