Relationship between Demographic Characteristics and Marital Satisfaction for Career Couples in Kericho County, Kenya

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Abstract: The career family is an emergent family form in our society that offers new sources of satisfaction and at the same time presents new types of problems which threaten marital satisfaction. Careers represent a major innovation that calls into question traditional aspects of family life and division of labor. This study sought to explore the effect of demographic variables on career couples' marital satisfaction with an aim of coming up with interventions that could enhance marital satisfaction. The study was guided by the following objectives: To establish the relationship between demographic characteristics and marital satisfaction for career couples; To find out the joint contribution of demographic characteristics to marital satisfaction; and the differences in contribution of demographic on marital satisfaction. The theoretical framework adopted by the study is Talcot Parson's (1951) structural functionalism and Bowen's Family Systems Theory. The target population was 4057 career couples in Kericho County. A sample of 351 career couples was used. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in data collection. The instruments used to collect the data for the study were questionnaire for career couples and interviews to counselors. Quantitative data gathered was analyzed using the SSPS. The findings of this study were beneficial to professionals; added to the existing literature on marital satisfaction, and guided further research into this area of career marriages and counseling. The outcome is indicative of the fact that the independent variables jointly accounted for about 2.6% variation in the prediction of marital satisfaction of career couples while other variables not examined in this objective may have accounted for 97.4%. The joint contribution of the demographic characteristics is significant $p=0.013$ $p<0.05$). In addition, results of the study showed that gender contributed significantly to prediction of marital satisfaction among career couples (beta $=-.118$, $p=0.027$ $p<0.05$.) The correlations of age (beta $=0.105$, $p=0.054$, annual income (beta $= -0.081$, $p =-1.509$), Level of educational (beta$=0.048$, $p=0.364$) and number of children (beta $=-.455$, $p=0.649$) with marital satisfaction were not significant ($p>0.05$). The hypothesis that there would be no relationship between respondent demographics and marital satisfaction was upheld for gender, but was rejected for age, level of education, number of children and annual income.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an important institution in almost all societies in the world (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). "It is one of the most intense human relationships. The quality of this relationship is continually redefined by spouses and is potentially crucial to their overall experience of family life" (Pimentel, 2000). A stable marriage is associated with improved physical, intellectual, mental and emotional health of men, women and children, as well as equipping them with the values and habits that promote prosperous economic activity (Waite and Gallagher, 2000). Simon, 2002 emphasizes that the marriage relationship enhances mental health in both men and women. The effort to have satisfied marriage by Kenyan couples however is thwarted by the presence of strain resulting from rapid changes of life events. This strain could be as a result of trying to balance the multiple competing demands of couples time and energy as a result of work and family. Career couples are those couples where both the partners pursue their respective careers and at the same time manage their personal life. Many social indicators suggest that the number of career couples in this country will continue to increase. Despite their prevalence little is known about their marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction is an essential element for successful family life and personal growth. Marital satisfaction, referring to spouses' global evaluation of their marriage, has been extensively studied (e.g., Rosen-Grandon, Myers, & Hattie, 2004). It has been argued that marital satisfaction is related to physical and

psychological well-being of individuals as well as satisfaction with their lives (Hawkins & Booth, 2005). Many studies have reported a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and life satisfaction (e.g., Shek, 1995). This means that if a couple is satisfied they will live a longer life. Since every person wants to live a longer and satisfied life, then it is important to attain marital satisfaction. Previous studies have examined marital satisfaction in relation to a score of social, psychological, demographic, cultural, interpersonal, and health variables (e.g., Bradbury &Fincham, 1990; Gottman, 1994; Fincham& Beach, 2010;).

Past research indicated that the demographic variables of gender (Alqashan, 2008; Glenn, 1990), age (Orathinkal&Vansteenwegen, 2007), number of children (Botha, Van den Berg, & Venter, 2009; Faulkner, Davey, & Davey, 2005), and presence of children (Collins & Coltrane, 1991; Kurdek, 1995) have significant contribution to marital satisfaction. Other demographic variables identified as potential contributors were educational level (Al-Othman, 2012; Alqashan, 2008; Moore, Jekielek, Bronte-Tinkew, Guzman, Ryan, &Redd, 2004), income (Alqashan, 2008; Kamo, 1993), employment status (Orathinkal&Vansteenwegen, 2007), and communication and religiosity (Ahmadi, Azad-Marzabadi, &Ashrafi, 2008; Al-Othman, 2012; Moore et al., 2004). The majority of these studies, however, were mainly conducted in couples from Western culture. However research is limited in African context and especially in Kenya. Research needed to be carried out to determine whether these demographic characteristics in Kenya affect marital satisfaction. This study ought to fill that gap by looking at the relationship between demographic characteristics and marital satisfaction.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many studies done in the Western countries on marital satisfaction. Alfons (2007) examined the effects of age, number of children, employment status, and length of marriage on marital satisfaction. They found that those who married later were more likely to remain married, but also that those who married younger and get divorced are more likely to remarry. Contrary to previously results, these researchers found that age had a significant negative effect on the sexual adjustment and marital adjustment of first-married adults. In other words, the older one was at the time of first marriage, the less adjusted the individual would be toward the marriage and, consequently, the less satisfaction one would express. Middle-aged adults seemed to have greater adjustment problems than both young and elderly participants involved in the study.

Mahin et al (2012) did a research for the purpose of examining the effects as a result of educational level and conflict resolution skills training on marital satisfaction among Iranian couples based on prepareenrich program. In that study, marital satisfaction was measured by enrich Marital Satisfaction. The methodology of this study was experimental method; with pre-test, post-test, and control group design. Purposive sampling was conducted to select the sample that was included 54 couples who were consisted of all couples referred to the researcher by counseling centers. The referrals were done for about two months in 2009. These couples were randomly assigned to an experimental and a control group as well. The dependent variables were marital satisfaction, and the independent variables were communication and conflict resolution skills training. Consequently, the results indicated that communication and conflict resolution skills training improved marital satisfaction due to education (p<.05). Moreover, the results showed that communication and conflict resolution training was effective in marital satisfaction in post-test (p<.05). In conclusion the findings of the study indicated that the on prepare-enrich program can be effective in improving marital satisfaction among Iranian couples.

Onyishi, Sorokowski, Sorokowska, Pipitone(2012) research compared number of children and level of education . The study was done among 374 people from the Igbo ethnic group (Nigeria) where the study assessed for levels of marital satisfaction and the number of children. In contrast to almost all previous findings Onyishi et al (2012) found a positive relationship between the number of children and marital satisfaction among parents. Number of children was the strongest predictor of marital satisfaction even when compared to other variables like wealth and education. Alder (2010) examined education and marital satisfaction where the purpose of the study was to determine whether there was a relationship between marital satisfaction (as measured by the Dyadic Adjustment Scale; Spanier, 1976) and the independent variables of age, education level, and courtship length (parsed into pre- and post-engagement periods). The participants were Africans but now living in United States of America (N = 60) who were required to complete surveys online regarding their experiences in their marriages. Results indicated that there was not a statistically significant relationship between marital satisfaction, and education level.

Michelle (2013) examined the association between educational attainment in married individuals, and the role of partner attachment by comparing educational attainment in predicting marital satisfaction. The study included 2 longitudinal studies of 207 newlywed marriages and findings revealed that new education attainment did not demonstrate marital satisfaction but rather attachment anxiety interacted to predict marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Nivischi (2009) studied education as one of the factors that affected marital satisfaction among black Jamaicans and African Americans living in the United States. The purpose of theprevious study of was to investigate among other factors education and marital satisfaction. The factors investigated included the effects

of age, gender, educational attainment, social support, and religion on the marital satisfaction of these two groups. One of the hypotheses for this previous study was that there is no relative significance between education and marital satisfaction. A Multinomial Logistic Regression analysis investigated the second research question and hypothesis that no predictive relationship existed between marital satisfaction with age, ethnicity gender, and educational attainment. Findings indicated that age, gender, and educational attainment level were significant predictors of marital satisfaction (p<0.05).

In Africa there are also some researches done on marital satisfaction. Golzari (2014) did a study and compared education and marital satisfaction level in infertile women in Rwanda. He worked on the assumption that most significant crises in one's lifetime which leads to stressful emotional problems and challenges couples' marital bondage could be dynamic due to education changes. As such he conducted a correlation study performed on infertile women who held bachelor's degrees, high school diplomas, and degrees below high school. The sample consisted of 180 women including 60 bachelors, 60 high school graduates, and 60 without high school diplomas. The infertile women were selected by convenient sampling out of Mehr Infertility Clinic referees who were being treated by assisted reproductive technology. Findings revealed women who had received post-secondary education enjoyed higher marital satisfaction as compared to the rest of samples.

Rezaee et al (2013) studied the level of family life education and its effectiveness on marital satisfaction among women attending in Isfahan counseling centers. The methodology of this research was quasi experimental with pre-test and post-test design and control group. Statistical populations were women attending in Isfahan city counseling centers. For selecting statistical sample, 30 women from women attending in counseling centers were selected as volunteers and randomly distributed between experimental and control groups. The main hypothesis of the research stated that family the level of family life Education increases marital satisfaction and their subscales in women. In this study, the dependent variable was marital-satisfaction and the independent variable was family life education conducted to case group in 10 sessions. The results of this survey show that the level of education in family life improved marital satisfaction (P<0.01).

Anim (2011) study set out to examine how much distress men and women experience in their marital relationships, and whether or not education level is associated with marital distress and serenity in Ghana. This was done by using the Marital Happiness Scale, and a questionnaire that measured demographic characteristics, as measuring instruments. 4 research questions were formulated and 4 hypotheses were tested. They covered the differences that exist in the marital distress experiences among husbands and wives, and differences in education and their impact on marital distress. A total of eighty (100) married men and women were conveniently and purposively selected to take part in the study. Descriptive statistics and t- Tests were used to analyze the data to bring out differences and to determine associations among variables. The findings showed that there were no significant differences between husbands and wives of low education and those of high education in their distress. Those with high education were not less distressed than those with low education. From these studies it is evident that demographic characteristics play a role in marital satisfaction. However the Kenyan context may be different. Research has not also been carried out on career couples and how the demographic characteristics affect marital satisfaction.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) defines the descriptive survey design as a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the status of the subjects(behavior, attitudes, values and characteristics) in a study. The research sought to obtain information that described existing phenomena by asking individuals about their behavior, perceptions attitudes and values with an aim of answering some research questions hence the decision to use it as a design for the present study. Surveys also aim at obtaining information, which can be analyzed, patterns extracted and comparison made (Bell, 1993), hence its choice for this study. To achieve the stated objectives of the study, a questionnaire was developed and used to collect quantitative data. Qualitative data was collected through structured interviews, focused group discussions and key informants. The instruments were validated and the reliability established. To ensure validity of results, the instrument was piloted on a randomly selected sample of twenty spouses. The sample was picked outside the divisions designated for actual data collection study. To ensure reliability the researcher used split halves method. The test items were divided into halves, each half scored independently of the other with the items of the two halves matched on content and difficulty. The findings from the two tests were correlated to ensure the tests were reliable. This was aimed at finding out if the results were consistent to determine the reliability of the instrument.

This study generated both qualitative and quantitative data; hence descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. Descriptive statistics involved the use of means, frequencies, percentages and tabulation. Inferential statistics were analyzed using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version17 for windows. The data was further subjected to significant test using Pearson product-moment correlation technique to establish

linear relationship between the variables. Qualitative data was cleaned, coded and summarized into working themes in line with the study objectives. Key words related to the research objectives were identified for example: role and responsibilities, challenges faced, psychological effect, copying mechanisms etc. Codes were then given in line with the themes and all materials related were placed together. A summary report was then developed identifying the major themes and the relationship between them.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION
4.1 Demographic Characteristics
Demographic characteristics of the respondents including the gender, age, educational level and the number of children were established. The information is presented in tables 1 to 5:

Table 1: Gender of the Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	male	206	57.7	57.7	57.7
	female	151	42.3	42.3	100.0
	Total	357	100.0	100.0	

A total of 206 males and 151 females responded to the questionnaire hence a total of 357respondents. These represented proportions of 57.7% and 42.3%, respectively across the County. This implies that there are more males in career than females and this could be because of gender imbalance.

Table 2: Age of the Participants

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-29 years	22	6.2	6.2	6.2
	30-39 years	81	22.7	22.7	28.9
	40-49 years	165	46.2	46.2	75.1
	50-59 years	89	24.9	24.9	100.0
	Total	**357**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The youngest of the participants was 20 years old and the oldest was 59years old. The ages were grouped into five categories: 20-19years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years and 60 years and above. The highest number of participants came from the third category with 165 participants (46.2%) , followed by the fourth category with 89 (24.9%), while the second category followed with 81(22.7%) participants , The group with the least participants is the first category with 22 (6.2%) (Table 2)
The study also sought to know the number of children the participants had. Table 4 gives the results:

Table 3: Number of Children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-1	77	21.6	21.6	21.6
	2-3	135	37.8	37.8	59.4
	4-5	123	34.5	34.5	93.8
	above 6	22	6.2	6.2	100.0
	Total	**357**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Participants ranged from those who had no child, to those who had more than six children. The group with 2-3 children had the highest frequency (135; 37.8%) followed closely by couples who had 4-5 children (123; 34.5%), then those with 0-1 children (77; 21.6%) and lastly is the group with more than six children at 22(6.2%). This implies that careers take more time and as a result couples have resorted to having fewer children so as to get opportunities to develop their careers. Literature has also shown that some couples put aside getting children to first of all develop their careers and later get a child. Next was the level of education of the participants

Table 4: Participants Educational level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	p1certificate	67	18.8	18.8	18.8
	diploma	79	22.1	22.1	40.9
	degree	126	35.3	35.3	76.2
	masters	53	14.8	14.8	91.0
	PHD	32	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	**357**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The participants' educational levels ranged from p1 certificate as the lowest level to PhD level as the highest. The majority of the respondents were those with degree with a frequency of 126 (35.5%). this was followed by those with diploma at 79 (22.1%) and p 1 certificate at 67 (18.8%). The PhD holders formed the smallest percentage at 32(9%). The Income of the participants was also sought and table 5 summarized the responses

Table 5: Income of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	below 10000	7	2.3	2.3	2.3
	100000-300000	131	44.0	44.0	46.3
	300001-500000	13	4.4	4.4	50.7
	500001-700000	62	20.8	20.8	71.5
	700001-1000000	1	.3	.3	71.8
	above 1000000	84	28.2	28.2	100.0
	Total	**298**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

The group with the highest participants had an annual income of 100,000-300,000 (131;44%), followed by those who earned above 1 million (84; 28.2%) and those who earned between 500,001- 700,000. The group with the least participants were those who earned between 700,001- 1,000, 000. Next was the level of education of the participants

4.2 Results and Discussion
In objective one the study sought to determine the relationship between demographic characteristics of the respondents and marital satisfaction. The hypothesis that there is no statistical significant relationship between demographic characteristics and marital satisfaction among spouses in Kericho County was determined. A Pearson correlation was calculated between the demographic characteristics and marital satisfaction and table 4.6 presents the findings:

Table 6: Correlation between demographic characteristics and marital satisfaction

		1	2	3	4	5
gender	Pearson Correlation	1	.062	.079	-.054	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.243	.136	.305	.084
	N	357	357	357	357	357
age	Pearson Correlation	.062	1	-.204[**]	.107[*]	-.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.243		.000	.043	.219
	N	357	357	357	357	357
annual income	Pearson Correlation	.079	-.204[**]	1	.050	-.039
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.136	.000		.345	.466
	N	357	357	357	357	357
highest level of education	Pearson Correlation	-.054	.107[*]	.050	1	.003
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.305	.043	.345		.951
	N	357	357	357	357	357
have how many children	Pearson Correlation	.092	-.065	-.039	.003	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.084	.219	.466	.951	

	N	357	357	357	357	357
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

From table 6it can be observed that there is a weak correlation between gender and age r=0.62 which is not significant at p=0.243. The correlation between gender and annual income is 0.079, a result completely close to zero and is not significant at p= 0.136. The correlation between gender and annual income is r=-.054 and not also significant at p=.305 and gender with the number of children is also a very weak relationship at r=.092 p=.84. The correlation between age and income level is significant at 0.01 at r=-204**. The correlation between age and number of children is negative _r= -0.065 p=.219. The relationship between annual income and educational level is also close to zero at r=.050 p=.345. The relationship between level of education and number of children is r=-0.003; p=.951 and the number of children and age is r=-.065 P=.219, children and annual income is -0.039 p=.466. The descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables as shown in table 6 reveal that marital satisfaction of career couples in Kericho is not significantly correlated with the demographic characteristics. The implication of this outcome is that the strength of the relationship as well as the direction of the relationship interacts with each other to influence marital satisfaction of career couples in Kenya. The joint contribution of independent variables on marital satisfaction was determined. The hypothesis which stated that the independent variables (gender, age, number of children, annual income and level of education) will not have any significant joint contribution to the prediction of marital satisfaction of career couples was rejected as presented on table 7. A Multiple regression analysis of the combined prediction of independent variables on marital satisfaction was done and the summary is presented.

Table7: Multiple Regression on Role of Demographic Characteristics on Marital Satisfaction

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.812	5	.162	2.921	.013[b]
	Residual	19.511	351	.056		
	Total	20.323	356			
a. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Age Number of children, Education level, Annual income						

Result of Multiple Regression presented in table 7 show that the independent variables (gender, age, annual income and level of education) have composite contribution to the prediction of marital satisfaction among young couples. This is confirmed by the result of coefficient of multiple correlations (R); = .200; (R^2) = .040, and Multiple adjusted R^2 = .026. The outcome is indicative of the fact that the independent variables jointly accounted for about 2.6% variation in the prediction of marital satisfaction of career couples while other variables not examined in this objective may have accounted for 97.4%. The joint contribution of the demographic characteristics is significant $p=0.013$ $p<0.05$). The study also sought to find out which of the demographic characteristics contributed significantly to marital satisfaction.

Table 8: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.557	.080		31.771	.000
	Gender	-.057	.026	-.118	-2.226	.027
	Age	.030	.015	.105	1.936	.054
	Annual income	-.012	.008	-.081	-1.509	.132
	Level of education	.010	.011	.048	.908	.364
	Number of Children	-.007	.015	-.024	-.455	.649
a. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction						

Result of Multiple Regression presented on table 8 showed that gender contributed significantly to prediction of marital satisfaction among career couples (beta =-.118, $p=0.027$ $p<0.05$.) The correlations of age (beta =0.105, p=0.054, annual income (beta = -0.081, p =-1.509), level of educational (beta=0.048, p=0.364) and number of children (beta =-.455, p=0.649) with marital satisfaction were not significant (p>0.05). This implies that gender plays a significant role in marital satisfaction. These results are similar to those by Jose and

Alfons (2007) who demonstrated that women report more marital problems than men, meaning that women tend to report lower marital satisfaction than men. Additionally, Guo and Huang (2005) showed men's level of relationship satisfaction to be higher than women's relationship satisfaction among married people.However the results are contrary to what Hamamcı (2005) stated that men and women do not differ in their marital satisfaction. In a similar way, Christensen et al. (2006) also showed that gender is not a significant predictor for marital satisfaction.

V.   CONCLUSION

Result of the study showed that the independent variables (gender, age, annual income and level of education) have composite contribution to the prediction of marital satisfaction among young couples. This is confirmed by the result of coefficient of multiple correlations (R); = .200; (R^2) = .040, and Multiple adjusted R^2 =0.026. The outcome is indicative of the fact that the independent variables jointly accounted for about 2.6% variation in the prediction of marital satisfaction of career couples while other variables not examined in this objective may have accounted for 97.4%. The joint contribution of the demographic characteristics is significant p=0.013 p<0.05). In addition, results of the study showed that gender contributed significantly to prediction of marital satisfaction among career couples (beta =-.118, p=0.027 p<0.05.) The correlations of age (beta =0.105, p=0.054, annual income (beta = -0.081, p =-1.509), Level of educational (beta=0.048, p=0.364) and number of children (beta =-.455, p=0.649) with marital satisfaction were not significant (p>0.05). The hypothesis that there would be no relationship between respondent demographics and marital satisfaction was upheld for gender, but was rejected for age, level of education, number of children and annual income. Ongoing research is also needed to examine the contribution of other characteristics to marital satisfaction.

5.1 Implications for Marriage Counseling

This study has proven that there are significant relationships in marital satisfaction based on gender, age, number of children and level of education. Counselors working with married couples may want to enhance their effectiveness by understanding the nature of the demands, expectations and stress experienced by married couples that could hinder in their attaining towards marital satisfaction. This is very important because a lot of the counselor's response, strategies and approaches would rely on their understanding of the clients' situation in relation to all those demands and expectations.

5.2 Recommendation
1. Counseling, workshops, symposia, conferences should be organized regularly for career couples on effects of demographic factors on marital satisfaction.
2. Counselors should teach couples the balance between careerand family responsibilities
3. Counselors should guide career couples on dangers of career developments at the expense of marital satisfaction.

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