Predictors of Marital Satisfaction Among Spouses of Inter-And Intra-Ethnic Marriages in Ghana: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

This study examined demographic factors (age, level of education, and duration of marriage) as predictors of marital satisfaction among spouses of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages in Ghana. The study applied the descriptive research survey design, using the stratified sampling procedure to select 576 participants for the study. The Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) developed by Essuman (2010) was used to collect data. The structural equation modelling was used to analyse the data collected. Demographic characteristics (age, level of education, and length of marriage) jointly explained 14% and 21% of the variances in marital satisfaction among couples in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages, respectively. Respondents who were 20 – 30 years significantly enjoyed marital satisfaction better than those aged 41 – 50 years. Based on the results, it was concluded that, age, duration of marriage and educational level are the predictors of marital satisfaction among spouses of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages in the Kumasi Metropolis. It is therefore, recommended that marriage counsellors assist couples to resolve problems arising from their demographic characteristics in order to attain marital satisfaction. It is therefore, recommended that marriage counsellors assist couples to know and understand that marital satisfaction is determined by age, duration of marriage and level of education in inter- and intra- ethnic marriages.

Keywords: counselling, marriage, demographic factors, marital satisfaction, inter-ethnic marriage, intra-ethnic marriage

Introduction

Marriage counselling is a process that helps couples to resolve problems affecting their marriage. For instance, it can help spouses to understand how their demographic characteristics influence marital satisfaction. Marriage is a state of being together as a husband and wife in a legal relationship. It was also possible to interpret the word 'marriage' as an intimate union and equal partnership between a man and a woman. Marriage is considered to be one of the world's most important institutions. It is a beautiful and wonderful, God-designed institution. How two individuals from completely different parents with different backgrounds come together as one in marriage is a mystery (Myers, Madathil & Tingle, 2005). However, when two people fall in love and desire to marry, no amount of pressure from families and friends can stop them and if eventually, they are stopped or prevented to marry, the end results are sometimes very disastrous.

In most Western and African societies, including Ghana, people marry with several motives in mind (Rahmani, Khoei, Sedeghi & Gholi, 2011). These include the need for friendship, social support, economic support, emotional support, love, and sex. People enter into marriage with the hope of having satisfaction in their emotional, physiological and physical well-being. Most of these dreams are however, shattered because of several factors. One of the most common desires in marriage is that individuals seek out and marry other individuals who share more similarities than differences in personality, history, culture, interests and behavioural patterns (Bruch & Skovholt, 1985). Regardless of the type of marriage, all married couples seek satisfaction in marriage. Counsellors have a critical role to play in marital satisfaction. They provide marriage counselling to couples. The major goal of marriage counselling is to promote marital

satisfaction among spouses.

The Ghanaian culture highly views ethnic differences with the highest regard and marrying outside one's tribe is unacceptable to certain tribes. These ethnic issues go beyond marriages. They also occur in Ghanaian politics, workplaces, schools and religious bodies. The historical and cultural events that took place in the past were the root of these ethnic distinctions. Such disparities are rooted in inter-ethnic feelings induced by nuanced inferiority and superiority. The feeling of superiority and the desire to maintain property within the lineage have caused members of one tribe to dissociate themselves from others (Afful, 2016).

In certain parts of Ghana, most people engage in intra-ethnic marriages because such people are mostly raised from the same background, with similar ideals and worldviews, thus creating spousal compatibility. They communicate better because they speak the same language. Their families can also relate better because they are culturally aligned and view marriage from the same perspective (Pardo, Weisfeld, Hill & Slatcher, 2012). As a result, intra-ethnic marriages are encouraged to the detriment of inter-ethnic marriages among the people of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The fact, however, is that no matter how alike people are, there is bound to be disagreement, dislikes and friction as the spouses relate to each other. They would still experience certain problems even if they were married to their kith and kin (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2013).

In recent years, inter-ethnic marriages have become a common phenomenon in Ghana due urbanisation. Marriages between spouses of different ethnicity, tribe of birth, native language, or ethnic background have become common place in Ghana (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2013). In this study, inter-ethnic marriage may be defined as marriage between people who are from different cultural backgrounds and have grown up in different socio-cultural environments. In today's world peace is paramount for societal survival. Hence, inter-ethnic marriages could serve as one of the avenues for uniting people. This will then make it difficult for family members to fight or create conflict among themselves. Also, spouses would get the opportunity to learn about one another's cultural backgrounds and try to appreciate them more. This could drastically reduce ethnic conflicts (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2013).

Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted concept that comprises diverse features of marital relationships that include adjustment, happiness, truthfulness, and commitment (Bashiri, Dehghan, Ghazanfari Zarnagh, Dehghan & Abdollahzadeh, 2016). Marital satisfaction that emanates from intimate and emotional satisfaction is a measure of couples' relationship quality, showing their subjective evaluation of the quality of their relationship (Sayehmiri, Kareem, Abdi, Dalvand & Gheshlagh, 2020). According to Tavakol et al. (2017), several factors can influence marital satisfaction. Key among these factors are financial status and stability (Archuleta, Britt, Tonn, & Grable, 2011), emotional support (St.Vil, 2015), parenthood (Nourani, Shakeri & Mokhber, 2019), realisation of marriage goals (Li & Fung, 2011), commitment and honesty (DiMaggio, 2020), and communication, among other factors (Hou, Jiang & Wang, 2019) are pridictors os marital satisfaction.

Gillpatrick (2008) found that an effective relationship increases friendship, trust support and it improves communication between the spouses. Spouses who experience deep rational friendly and intimate emotional relationship together are satisfied in their marriages. Relationship satisfaction is embedded in intimacy, affection or love, which Yoo (2013) defined as "individuals' subjective experiences of closeness and connectedness with their romantic spouses, which emerge from couple relationship processes that involve self-disclosure, mutual trust and validation, empathy, and acceptance". Kochne's (2000) study found that intimacy is a voluntary closeness to one's spouse while maintaining distinct boundaries to themselves. Kochen found this to be the most significant predictor of marital satisfaction for men. Ayub and Iqbal (2012) indicated that in-laws relationships were significant factors that contribute extensively to marital satisfaction. Respondents with more friendly and more dominant temperaments and those with more

pleasant temperaments were happier in marriages, according to a study carried out by Danielle, Brick, Grainne, Fitzsimons, Tanya, Chartrand and Gavan (2017). Tolerance leads to peace in every marriage. Stevens, Kiger and Riley (2001) believe that satisfaction with the division of household labour is a useful predictor of marital satisfaction, particularly for women.

Several factors have been implicated in marital satisfaction. There are limited studies that have examined the influence of demographic factors such as age, level of education, and duration of marriage on marital satisfaction. Sorokowski et al., (2017) conducted a survey in 33 countries including Ghana, with 7, 767 couples with the average age of 40 years plus who have lived in their marriages for 14 years plus and are still marrying. They concluded that; age, gender, marriage duration, number of children, economics status, religiosity, education and collective cultural level of the individual are potential predictors of marital satisfaction.This was buttressed in a study conducted by Haris and Kumar (2018) who found that gender and other demographic factors influenced marital satisfaction.

Also, a study conducted by Farima et al. (2020), the authors examine 200 couples between the ages 20 to 40 years with marriage duration of 1 to 10 years. The results of the study revealed that self-compassion and forgiveness to a lesser extent could predict marital satisfaction among couples.

Further, a resent research conducted in Mississippi, USA by Jacobson et al. (2018) has suggested the role of age, gender and marriage duration should be controlled to bring about marital satisfaction. Heaton (2002) study revealed that women who were more educated were satisfied in their marriage than their counterparts who had lower education. Invariably, Janssen et al (1998) found that highly educated women had higher insatiable marriages and were not satisfied with their marriage.

 Furthermore, Lavner and Bradbury (2010) conducted a research using newlywed spouses qualitatively. Using 8 self-reports of satisfaction collected over 4 years from 464 newlywed spouse concluded that the number of years spouses spend together has shown to predict marital satisfaction. Schmitt et al., (2007) examined the role of both stable disposition factors and marital interaction in predicting marital satisfaction in a long term marriages in middle and old age from 588 married women and men. The longitudinal study examine age and gender differences in socio-economic status, personality and marital interaction as predictors of marital satisfaction. The results revealed that socio-economic status and personality factors did not predict marital satisfaction whereas, marital interaction was particularly a predictor for marital satisfaction for women.

 The study could be beneficial to marriage counsellors, since spouses could be helped to know and understand how their demographic characteristics influence marital satisfaction. Besides, would-be spouses could benefit from the study. They would also be helped to know how their demographic characteristics could influence marital satisfaction. Given that all these findings convey the importance of diverse demographic variables in marital satisfaction, none of these studies focused on intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic married couples. Again, there is a paucity of empirical evidence on how demographic factors influence marital satisfaction, particularly in the Ghanaian setting. This represents a literature gap. It is against this background that the study, based on the objective of this study, hypothesized that demographic variables, namely, age, level of education, and duration of marriage would not predict marital satisfaction among spouses in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages.

Research Methods

Design

The descriptive survey design was applied in this study. In a cross-sectional study, the researcher looks at the result as well as the study participants' exposures all at specific point in time (Creswell & Creswell,

2017). Since descriptive survey design provides an advanced degree of general capability in representing a large population, the descriptive survey design was deemed appropriate for this study (Walter, 2019).

Study setting

The Kumasi Metropolis, which is located in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, is the study area for this research. Located in the transitional forest region of Ghana, with an area of 214.3 square kilometers (km2), the Metropolis is about 270 km north-west of Accra, the national capital of Ghana. The Metropolis is the nation's second largest and most populous city (Kumasi Metropolitan Archives, 2015). It is the capital of the Ashanti Region, and has a unique centrality as a traversing point from all parts of the country which has made it a major commercial centre (Kumasi Metropolitan Archives, 2015).

Population

The study worked with an accessible population of 1,218,045 which represents 36.7% of the general population of the Kumasi Metropolis. This is made-up of people who are married from age 20 years up to 50 years and above. Out of this, 593,595 are males and 674,095 are females (Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly Archives, 2015). The target population was however, made up of 2,069,655 married people.

Participants

The sample size for the study was made up of 576 spouses drawn from the accessible population. In order to get a sample size from the population of married people in the Metropolis, the Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of determining sample size was employed. Having chosen a sample of 576, the stratified sampling procedure was employed to select respondents for the study. The stratified sampling method was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to do content analysis and also to ensure that the sample is representative of the Kumasi Metropolis in terms of sub-metro size and location and then randomly selecting the final subjects proportionally from the different strata. More than half (50.6%) of the participants were male, and majority (45.6%) were between 31 and 40 years. With respect to level of education, 40.6% had Bachelor's degree. Finally, 37.5% of the participants had a length of marriage between 6 and 10 years.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used in collecting data for the study. The questionnaire for this study was an adopted instrument, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) developed by Essuman (2010). The questionnaire was made up of 36 items and structured in two parts. Part 'A' consisted of six items which solicited information on the background characteristics of the respondents. The background characteristics were gender, age, educational level, duration of marriage, type of marriage (intra-or inter-ethnic) and lineage. Part 'B' contained 30 items. It was designed to help married people figure out the degree to which they are satisfied with their marriage. The 30 items for both men and women have been grouped into seven scales that assess marital satisfaction with respect to Relationship, Affection, Love and Appreciation, Character, Temperament, In-law Issues, Marital Roles, and General Evaluation. The least number of items a scale has is three (3) and the greatest number is six (6). The MSI is a four-point, Likert-type scale which ranges from 'Very True' (4), 'True' (3), 'Not True' (2) and 'Not At All True' (1). Each scale helps to find out how satisfied a spouse is in marriage. Again, as the study sought to measure the extent of marital satisfaction of the respondents, the cut-off point established in the SMI manual to determine the level of satisfaction were adopted. These are as follows: 30-45 not at all satisfied, 46-75 not satisfied, 76-105 as satisfied and 106-120 as very satisfied. The overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the MSI in this study was .85, implying that the MSI is a highly reliable instrument for the assessment of marital satisfaction.

Procedure

After obtaining approval from Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast, the researcher collected a letter of introduction from Department of Guidance and Counselling to confirm my identity and introduce me as the researcher to the various religious institutions. Further discussions were held with the respondents with regard to what the study was all about and the number of respondents needed for the study. The researcher contacted the selected respondents from three (3) religious groups, namely, Orthodox churches, Charismatic churches and Ahamadiyya Mission mosque after which dates were pre-arranged for the administration of the questionnaire. The researcher recruited and trained four graduate students to help in the collection of the data. The research assistants and I took the time to explain the items on the questionnaire before the respondents filled them. Each respondent used 30 minutes and a maximum 45 minutes in responding to the items. Most of the completed questionnaires were collected back the same day, while few others were collected between 5 and 10 days. After collecting the data, respondents were appreciated with a pen and a note pad. Before the administration of the questionnaire informed consent was obtained from the respondents and voluntary participation was elicited. Confidentiality and anonymity for respondents were also assured for the respondents to feel at home to respond to the questionnaire.

Data analyses

Data collected were categorised and entered into Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS) software. The data were cleaned by checking for outliers and normality testing was conducted. Demographic data gathered were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The research hypothesis was tested using structural equation modelling.

The hypothesis was to determine how demographic characteristics (age, level of education, and duration of marriage) would predict marital satisfaction of spouses in intra – and inter-ethnic marriages. In addition, it was aimed at determining whether or not the predictions in the path model are heterogeneous and the evaluations of variables in the model yielding significant different predictions in terms of type of marriage (intra and inter marriages). The predictor variables were age, level of education, and duration of marriage, and the criterion variable was scores of marital satisfactions. The SEM-multi-group analysis was used to compare parameters (path coefficients) between groups of data. In such an instance, Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2014) assumed that there is a categorical moderator variable (type of marriage) that influences the relationships in the path model. This implies that variations in the predictions are as a result of the moderator variable. This might affect the strength or even direction of specific path relationships. Failure to consider heterogeneity can be a threat to the validity of SEM results since it can lead to incorrect conclusions (Hair et al., 2014).

Specifically, when conducting a multi-group analysis, the interest is to test the null hypothesis (H0) that the path coefficients are not significantly different (i.e., P1 = P2). Thus, the path coefficients (P1) for inter-ethnic group are equal to the path coefficients (P2) of intra-ethnic group. Specifically, the hypothesis was tested using the variance-based SEM (PLS-SEM).

Results

Null Hypothesis: Demographic variables of age, level of education, and duration of marriage will not predict marital satisfaction among spouses in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages.

The aim of the hypothesis was to determine the influence of age, level of education, duration of marriage on marital satisfaction among spouses from different backgrounds. The criterion (endogenous) variable was marital satisfaction. This was measured on a continuous basis. The predictor (exogenous) variables are age,

level of education, and duration of marriage. These variables were categorical, therefore, they were dummy-coded. The following were used as the reference groups. For age, 20-30 years was used; for level of education, Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) was used, and 2-5 years was used for that of length of marriage. This hypothesis was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Multi-group analysis. Specifically, SmartPLS was used for the analysis. The VIFs (variance inflation factors) for all the predictor variables were equal to 1. This suggests that there was no multicollinearity since all the VIFs were less than 5. Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1: Path Coefficients for Demographic Characteristics and Marital Satisfaction

	B		t-value		p-value		f^2	
Path	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra	Inter	Intra
Age								
31-40yrs -> satisfaction	-0.158	0.149	1.699	1.793	.089	.073	0.012	0.01
41-50yrs -> satisfaction	-0.358*	-0.071	3.049	0.846	.002	.398	0.048	0.002
51 plus -> satisfaction	-0.193	-0.085	1.697	1.123	.09	.261	0.014	0.004
Educational level								
Above degree -> satisfaction	0.279*	0.289*	2.045	2.857	.041	.004	0.022	0.024
Degree -> satisfaction	0.202	0.241	0.997	1.401	.319	.161	0.005	0.006
Diploma -> satisfaction	0.189	0.085	0.909	0.503	.364	.615	0.005	0.001
SHS -> satisfaction	0.268	-0.007	1.847	0.066	.065	.947	0.019	<.001
Length of marriage								
ex11-15yrs -> satisfaction	-0.178	-0.368*	1.857	4.896	.063	<.001	0.019	0.086
ex16-20yrs -> satisfaction	0.009	-0.133	0.117	1.9	.907	.058	<.001	0.016
ex25yrs plus -> satisfaction	-0.066	0.024	0.679	0.286	.497	.775	0.003	<.001
ex6-10yrs -> satisfaction	-0.17*	-0.349*	2.262	4.9	.024	<.001	0.022	0.081

Source: Field data, 2020

*Significant, $p < .05$; Inter – Inter-ethnic marriage; Intra – Intra-ethnic marriage

Adjusted R^2: Inter-ethnic = .137; Intra-ethnic = .214

Q^2: Inter-ethnic= .168; Intra-ethnic = .094

The results in Table 1 show that demographic characteristics (age, level of education, and length of marriage) jointly explained 13.7% and 21.4% of the variances in marital satisfaction for couples in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages respectively (Adjusted R^2 = .137 and .214). This variation was considered weak since most of respondents appears to be satisfied with their marriages (Hair et al., 2014). The result further shows that among the respondents in inter-ethnic marriage, respondents aged 41-50 years (B = -.36, p = .002), compared with those aged 20-30 years are .36 standard deviation units less likely to enjoy marital satisfaction. This implies that respondents with ages 20 -30 years significantly enjoy marital satisfaction better than those aged 41-50 years. The result was, however, not statically significant for those in intra-ethnic marriage. Similarly, all the other age groups compared with those aged 20-30 years did not differ for both respondents in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages.

With respect to level of education, the results showed that both respondents in inter-ethnic (B = .28, p = .041) and intra-ethnic (B = .29, p = .004) marriages who had qualification above degree, compared with those with three years Junior High School (JHS) after six years of primary school education were .28 and

.29 standard deviation units more likely to enjoy marital satisfaction. These results imply that respondents who have higher educational qualification enjoy better satisfaction in marriage compared to those with JHS qualification. The results were, however, not statistically significant for the other educational qualifications.

With regard to length of marriage, for both respondents in intra-ethnic (B = -.35, $p<$ .001) and intra-ethnic (B = -.17, p = .024) marriages who have been married for 2-5 years, comparatively are more likely to enjoy marital satisfaction than those spouses who have been married for 6-10 years by .35 and .17 standard deviation units respectively. In a similar vein, among the respondents in intra-ethnic marriage, those who have married for 11-15 years, compared with those from 2-5 years are .37 standard deviation units less likely to enjoy marital satisfaction (B = -.37, $p<$ .001). This was not the case for their counterparts in inter-ethnic marriage.

Figures 1 and 2 present the structural models for inter-and intra-ethnic groups respectively.
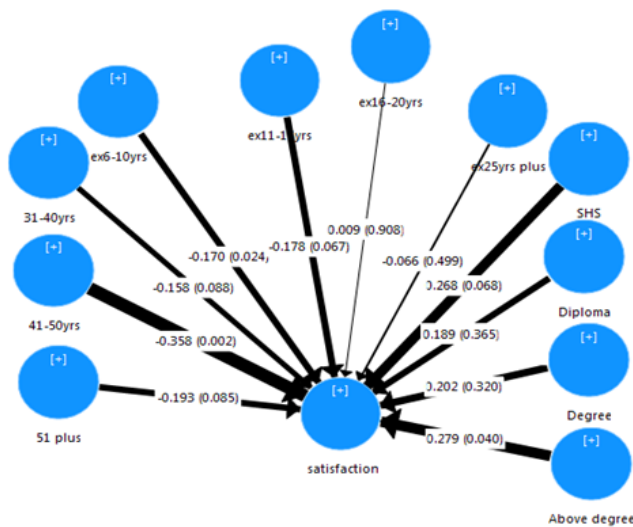

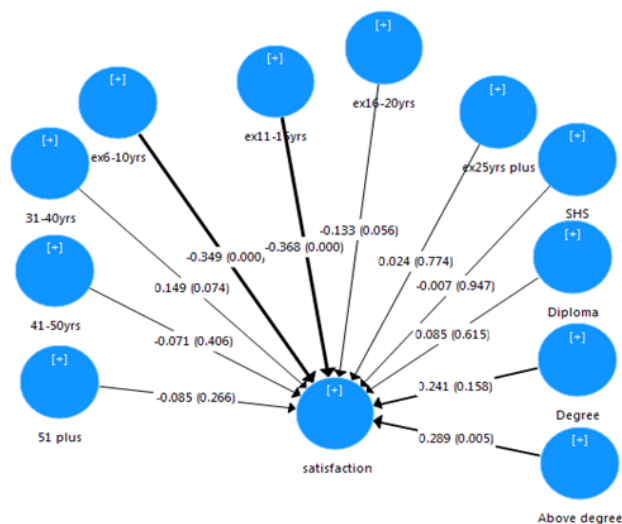**Figure 1- A path model for inter-ethnic marriage**

Figure 2- Path model for intra-ethnic marriage

Practically, the magnitude of the effect for all the paths across inter- and intra-ethnic marriage couples as indicated by the f^2 were between small and medium. This was so because the least among the f^2 was less than .001 and the highest was .086. Generally, f^2 with values .02, .15, and .35 are interpreted as small, medium, and large effects respectively. In addition, all the Q^2s (.137 and .094) are greater than 0, therefore,

the predictions were relevant. Table 2 presents the results on the multi-group analysis.

From Table 2, there was a statistically significant difference in the path coefficients for respondents in intra-tribe and those of inter-ethnic in terms of the age brackets of 31 – 40 years (? = .31, p = .014) and 41 – 50 years (? = .29, p = .042). However, there were no statistically significant differences in all other path coefficients (p> .05).

Table 2: Multi-group for Path Coefficients for Demographic Characteristics and Marital Satisfaction

Path	B Intra– Inter	*t*-value Intra vs Inter	*p*-value Intra vs Inter
Age			
31-40yrs -> satisfaction	0.308*	2.454	0.014
41-50yrs -> satisfaction	0.287*	2.04	0.042
51 plus -> satisfaction	0.108	0.821	0.412
Education level			
Above degree -> satisfaction	0.009	0.055	0.956
Degree -> satisfaction	0.039	0.149	0.882
Diploma -> satisfaction	-0.105	0.395	0.693
SHS -> satisfaction	-0.276	1.55	0.122
Length of marriage			
ex11-15yrs -> satisfaction	-0.19	1.582	0.114
ex16-20yrs -> satisfaction	-0.142	1.376	0.169
ex25yrs plus -> satisfaction	0.09	0.7	0.484
ex6-10yrs -> satisfaction	-0.179	1.706	0.089

Source: Field data, 2020

*Significant, *p*< .05; Inter-Inter-ethnic marriage; Intra-Intra-ethnic marriage; ? = Difference between Intra-ethnic and Inter-ethnic

Based on the results, the initial null hypothesis was partially support as demographic variables level of education and length of marriage did not significantly predict marital satisfaction among spouses in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages. However, age significantly predicted marital satisfaction among spouses in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages.

Discussion

Demographic characteristics (age, level of education, and length of marriage) jointly explained 13.7% and 21.4% of the variances in marital satisfaction among couples in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages

respectively. Respondents with the ages within 20-30 years significantly enjoy marital satisfaction better than those aged 41-50 years. The results of this study are in line with Jose and Alfons (2007) who indicated that lower marital satisfaction levels were reported in the middle years relative to early and late marriage years. It also confirms the proposition by Jackson, Miller, Oka, and Henry (2014), who reported that marital satisfaction declines as the age of couples increases.

The decline on marital satisfaction might be due to general adjustment problems as time passed. The result was, however, not statistically significant for those in intra-ethnic marriage. Similarly, all the other age groups compared with those aged 20-30 years did not differ significantly for both respondents in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages.

In terms of level of education, both respondents in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages who had qualification above first degree enjoy better satisfaction in marriage compared to those with Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) qualification after nine year of formal education. This is in agreement with Bumpass (2003) who opined that spouses with higher levels of education showed and enjoyed higher level of marital satisfaction than their counterparts with lower levels of education. However, Mehrki, Hosseini, Hosseini, and Maghami (2017) also confirm that educational level of spouse plays a positive and constructive role in each spouse's life. The spouses' different educational background gave them higher level of understanding and awareness of various issues in their marriages and as such try to avoid committing unacceptable behaviours and thereby become happy and satisfied in their marriages.

Also, Guo and Huang (2005) and Jose and Alfons (2007) support the view that education was a significant contributor to marital satisfaction. The current results were, however, not statistically significant for the other educational qualifications such as Diploma, Higher National Diploma (HND). With regard to length of marriage, for respondents in intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic marriages who have married for 6-10 years, compared with those who have married for 2-5 years, enjoy less marital satisfaction.

This contradicts with Zainah, Nasir, Ruzy and Yusof (2015) whose study indicated that the longer the duration of marriage, the more satisfied the spouses were with their marriage. In a similar vein among the respondents in intra-ethnic marriage, those who have married for 11-15 years, compared with those from 2-5 years enjoy less marital satisfaction. This was not the case for their counterparts in inter-ethnic marriages. There was a statistically significant difference in the path coefficients for respondents in intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic in terms the age brackets of 31-40 years and 40-50 years only.

Conclusions

1. Age is a predictor of marital satisfaction, since the results of the study indicated that, spouses who were 20-30 years significantly enjoyed their marriages more than those aged 41-50 years.
2. Level of education is a predictor of marital satisfaction since spouses in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages who had qualification above a first degree enjoyed better satisfaction in marriage compared to those with Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) qualification.
3. Length of marriage is a predictor of marital satisfaction because spouses in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriages, who had been married for 2 – 5 years, enjoyed their marriages more and were satisfied in their marriages than their counterparts who had been married for 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16 years and above.

Implications for Counselling

The following implications are made for marriage counsellors:

1. Counsellors in the various religious institutions should continuously organize workshops, seminars

and talks on how to deal with demographic differences in order to attain marital satisfaction.

2. Marriage counsellors should educate would-be couples on demographic factors affecting marital satisfaction mismatch in terms of their demographic variables, namely, age, level of education and length of marriage so that they can be satisfied in their marriages.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. The results of the study indicated that, spouses who were 20-30 years significantly enjoyed their marriages more than those aged 41-50 years. It is therefore, recommended that marriage counsellors during their counselling sessions in the various religious organisations should continuously organise programmes such as talks, seminars for the young spouses and most especially, the matured spouse who were not satisfied with their marriage to spice up their marital satisfaction.
2. It was concluded that, spouses who had bachelor degree and above were much happier and satisfied in their marriages. It is therefore, recommended that family and counsellors during their premarital counselling session encourage would-be couples whose educational level fall below bachelor degree to read more on marriages and also should be encouraged to up-grade or further their education to broaden their horizon.
3. The study revealed that spouses who have been married between 2 and 5 years were more satisfied in their marriages. The researcher recommends that, family and marriage counsellors and leaders in the various Churches and Mosques should encourage counsellors to conduct post marital (during marriage) counselling to continue to address pertinent issues in the marriage to bring about satisfaction between spouses.

Limitations of the study

The researcher used closed-ended questionnaire to collect data. This limited the respondents' ability to freely express their feelings to delve deep into the issues under study. More so, the researcher believed that the respondents might not have been honest in their response to the items on the questionnaire administered to them, because most of the issues were very sensitive.

Suggestions for further studies

1. The study was pivoted on a quantitative research method. Future research could focus on using a qualitative approach to give an in-depth understanding and comprehensive information on the causes of marital satisfaction, the effects of marital satisfaction and how spouses could manage their home for a healthy marriage and family interaction.
2. This study was cross sectional. It is suggested that, a longitudinal study could be conducted in relation to age, duration of marriage and educational level as factors that lead to marital satisfaction.

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