

Informational Support on Marital Satisfaction of Protestant Clergy and Their Spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The aim of the study was to examine informational support of protestant clergy and their spouses on marital satisfaction in Dagoretti South Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya.

Methodology: This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design. The study used a sample size of 273 protestant clergy and their spouses, chosen using a simple random sampling technique for quantitative, and 12 participants who were purposefully selected for qualitative, low and high performance on levels of marital satisfaction. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMSS) and the Scales of Perceived Social Support were used to collect quantitative data, with the former having a reliability coefficient of 0.834 and the latter of 0.954, respectively. The researcher used both standardized questionnaires and an in-depth interview guide questionnaire to obtain data. Descriptive analysis and thematic analysis were used to examine the data. The data was presented in form of tables. SPSS version 23 for the social sciences was for inferential analysis.

Findings: The results of this study showed a weak negative and statistically significant associations between information support and marital happiness. The results indicated that the general marital satisfaction of protestant clergy and their spouses fell as informational support increased. Unintentional distortion due to a lack of information, such as inability of the communicator of the information, uncertainties, or difficulties in interpersonal contacts, may account for the weak, negative, and statistically significant relationship between information support and marital satisfaction.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study was anchored on the dynamic goal theory of marital satisfaction. The study also recommends that the policymaker's plan and strategize to engage counselling psychologists with the intent to deal with specific issues that married couples present. It is high time for the government to stop being reactive to issues pertaining marital and family and engage the mental health professionals on the best prevention intervention for marriage and family in general.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Informational Support, Protestant Clergy and their Spouses

INTRODUCTION

Advice, direction, ideas, and other forms of informational support were defined by Scott and Susman (2020). Advice-givers and information-sharers help people figure out what they should do next by compiling and disseminating data on what has worked for others in similar situations. The potential of information to promote health and happiness cannot be overstated. Like any other marriage, clergy and their partners can benefit from informational resources aimed at strengthening their union. This is because ministerial pressures, including

time constraints, role conflicts, and the weight of personal responsibility, can pile on top of those imposed by the congregation.

The happiness of clergy couples may be affected, however, by processes involving the sharing of information. External stressors and trajectories of marital quality in the first years of Chinese marriage, as well as the buffering effects of resources at various ecological levels (Li, Curran, Butler, Toomey, Cao & Fang, 2021). Two hundred and sixty-eight heterosexual Chinese newlywed couples participated in the previous study, which used a survey research design to collect its data.

The reviewed studies suggested that in order to help couples cope with stressors, it is essential to include resources that are accessible at multiple level of ecology (personal, relational, social network) and to take into account the possibility that social-cultural backgrounds may have influenced the efficacy of a specific resource (Li et al., 2021). While the reviewed studies focused on the external stressors and trajectories of marital quality in the early years of Chinese marriage as well as the buffering effects of resources at multiple ecological levels, the current study looked at the relationship between perceived social support (informational, appraisal, emotional, and instrumental) and satisfaction with marriage among the protestant clergy and their partners.

The current study was conducted in Dagoretti South Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya, whereas the reviewed study was conducted in China. In addition, a total of 268 people were surveyed as part of the research process in the study under evaluation. Instead, an explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used in the present investigation, which included correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative methodologies. In addition to the qualitative participants who were chosen in a more deliberate fashion, the current study used a sample of 273 respondents selected using basic random sampling approaches.

Tong, Jia, Fang, Su, He, Liu, and Fang (2023) conducted a similar study during the COVID-19 pandemic in China to investigate how and when stress affects individual (i.e. psychological health) and interpersonal well-being (i.e. marital satisfaction). Data from the family connection survey and intervention conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic were used in the reviewed study, which took a large-scale survey approach. Advertisements in schools and on the internet were used to recruit families in which (1) at least one child was enrolled in elementary or secondary school and (2) the child lived with both biological parents. There were a total of 3,888 adult respondents and 2,551 kid respondents who finished the online survey.

The Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Henan, Jilin, and Zhejiang were surveyed between April 10 and May 10, 2020. According to the studies that were looked at, the impact of stress on individuals and relationships may depend on the kind of the communication that exists between spouses. The reviewed research looked at the effects of stress on the health of Chinese adults and children during the 2009 COVID-19 pandemic. However, the current investigation targeted the perceived social support, and marital contentment of the protestant clergy. The current research focused on a subset of that population—ministers—because of the distinctive traits associated with their chosen field. Since this research was carried out in Kenya's Dagoretti South Sub-County, it also helped fill in some missing background information. While the reviewed study used a survey research design, the current study employed an explanatory sequential mixed methods strategy that combined correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative methods to explain the results. Although stress has been shown to negatively affect both individuals and relationships, the extent of the harm may differ according to how partners interact while stressed (Nguyen, Williamson, Karney, & Bradbury, 2017).

Researchers Melguizo-Garn1, Hombrados-Mendieta, Martos-Méndez, and Ruiz-Rodríguez (2021) looked into the impact of social support on the well-being of parents whose children had cancer. The study used a survey as its method of data collection. There were 112 parents whose children were treated for cancer at the Mother and Child Hospital in Malaga (Spain). According to the reviewed studies, there are substantial real-world consequences for the psychological care given to parents of children with cancer.

The analyzed research also highlighted the importance of tailoring assistance to individual needs, as advocated by the specificity of support theorists. In addition, the results of the prior study demonstrated that people who are provided with informational support are able to address their concerns by obtaining answers from a variety of sources within a given setting. The current study was conducted in Dagoretti South Sub-County in Nairobi,

Kenya, whereas the reviewed study was conducted in Malaga, Spain. Parents of children being treated at the Mother and Child Hospital for cancer were the primary subjects of the study under consideration. Instead, this research looked specifically at Protestant clergy and their partners. A total of 273 people were surveyed in contrast to the 112 who participated in the earlier study. In the earlier study, researchers used a survey-based methodology. However, this investigation employed a sequential explanatory mixed methods methodology, fusing correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative methodologies.

Jones (2020) explored on the correlation between ministry stress and burnout among clergy couples serving congregations of more than 250 people in the Hampton Roads area of Virginia. The investigation was conducted with a quantitative correlational approach. A total of 142 pastors and their spouses from churches that are autonomous across the seven cities of Hampton Roads were used as participants in the study.

The reviewed research found that ministerial demands significantly predicted burnout. Researchers found that clergy members marry and frequently involve their families in ministry activities. This suggests that clergy spouses also face considerable stress as a result of their loved one's ministry commitments. They endure extra stress as their husbands' primary social supports. The question of whether or not clergy spouses receive social help for their own marital needs remains unanswered. The question of role ambiguity, raised by the lack of defining elements of what comprises role expectations, can have negative implications for the mental health and life satisfaction of clergy spouses (Jones, 2020). This is because role ambiguity occurs when people are confused about their place in society and the workplace.

Since the reviewed study was conducted in Virginia, USA, which may have a different cultural background than Kenyan culture, the current study helped to close this contextual gap. However, the current study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design that combined correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative approaches to provide an explanatory framework, while the reviewed study used a quantitative correlational research strategy. There was also a significant difference in sample size between the prior study (n=142) and the current study (n=273).

Seventh-day Adventist pastors' wives were the subjects of a study by Drumm, Cooper, Seifert, McBride, and Sedlacek (2017). The research used a mixed-method approach, consisting of both a quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups with Seventh-day Adventist clergy and their families throughout North America. There were 39 people in the study's sample. Hispanics, African-Americans, Caucasians, and Asians were all represented in the evaluated study. According to the studies we looked at, ministry obligations are likely to increase family stress. There was a stronger correlation between ministry expectations and burnout, ministry optimism, well-being, and life satisfaction (especially in the areas of personal criticism and family criticism).

The reviewed research also showed that clergy spouses, who often work hand in hand with their partners in ministry, feel the effects of ministry pressures. The spouses of clergy members remain an unexplored and unheard demographic. The literature on clergy burnout, psychological discomfort, and dwindling years of service is extensive, but clergy wives have not been given a voice and are left wanting for their needs to be met in the context of marriage. Since the current study was conducted in Kenya and the reviewed study was conducted in North America, there was also a contextual gap between the two. The prior study also employed a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews.

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used in the present investigation by merging correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative methodologies. While the current study only included protestant clergy and their wives, the sample also included pastors, spouses, and adult children of pastors from the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The sample size of the reviewed study was 39 people, while the sample size of the current study was 273. Pastors, pastor's spouses, and adult children of pastors in the Seventh-day Adventist Church participated in a quantitative survey and qualitative focus groups for this study.

Jones (2020) claims that most pastors are men, and that their wives often work alongside them in the church as unpaid volunteers. Even if the spouses don't experience any actual pressure from the ministry or the congregation, they nonetheless perceive that they must live up to certain expectations because of their positions. Wives discuss their private feelings about the role of a pastor's spouse in the church. Nonetheless, it

has been discovered that contentment with compensation ultimately contributes significantly to total job satisfaction for a variety of jobs. Compensation is not the most important factor in clerical job happiness, but the negative effects of poor compensation are commonly overlooked in the religious and professional sectors. The numerous obligations and, at times, excessive expectations placed on clergy wives are another source of stress for these families. Unrealistic expectations and demands have been shown to have a detrimental effect on the mental health, happiness, and family life of clergy members (Jones, 2020).

Informational support is highlighted by Okoli, Ezeme, and Ofojebe (2019) as a factor that boosts confidence and helps people deal with life's challenges by pooling their knowledge and expertise. Njeri (2019) confirms this in his research on marital satisfaction in Murang'a, Kenya, highlighting the importance of community information assistance in providing understanding and abilities to couples to aid them in making decisions and resolving conflicts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Family Stress Theory (also known as the ABCX model; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) is a paradigm for studying the effects of stress on families. Reuben Hill created it in 1949, and since then it has been improved and fine-tuned by many other academics (Robinson, 2017). Smith (2021) explains how to make sense of the ABC-X model's parts as follows: The letter A stands for a wide range of factors, including personal traits, family dynamics, and environmental pressures. The letter B stands for backing and assistance. The letter C concludes our alphabetic tour with family conflicts and their facilitation. In theory, X is the result of these three components coming into contact with one another. Depending on the help and resources at hand, the result could be good or bad. Robinson (2017) suggests that families, with the right set of circumstances and available resources, might mitigate the harmful effects of stressors on people's well-being and functioning. According to the family stress hypothesis, having friends and family around can lessen the effects of stress on a marriage. The concept is crucial to the current investigation since it emphasizes the importance of both external resources (such as friends and family) and internal resources (such as one's own sense of pride, values, and beliefs).

The double ABC-X model incorporates a key understanding of family functioning: in times of crisis, concrete behaviors inside a family are the only way to address intangible elements like available resources and perceptions (Robinson, 2017). This means that even families that have the knowledge and perspective they need to adapt to a crisis or cope with a stressor may fail to do so if they do not put that knowledge and perspective into action. The approach connects two distinct areas of thought by highlighting the mutual influence of material means, sensory input, and behavioral outcomes. The double ABC-X model's post-crisis part considers not just how a family learns to cope with a catastrophe, but also how that learning leads to long-term adaptation. Families are better able to weather a storm if they have access to and make use of the appropriate resources and perspectives. Adjustment is the process of making temporary changes in reaction to a new scenario, while adaptation is the process of making permanent changes within a family in response to a crisis situation (Daneshpour, 2017). However, a crisis (X) develops when the family is unable to strike a healthy balance between needs and resources without adjusting its structure and interaction patterns. To recover from a traumatic event, families need to adopt novel coping mechanisms, such as reorganizing and regrouping (consolidating and restructuring) as they develop new rules, patterns of communication, and roles. The concept of boundary ambiguity has emerged as a useful tool for comprehending the reasons why even healthy families occasionally struggle with this.

At its core, family stress theory rests on the idea that families aren't helpless in the face of adversity, but rather that they can thrive by drawing on available resources and finding value in their experiences (Robinson, 2017). According to family stress theory, all families are subject to recurrent, short-term stresses. Personal and family crises, such as physical, emotional, or relational trauma, can result when these stressors accumulate over time or when the individual or family does not have the support of significant relationships (Daneshpour, 2017). Examples of family crises include divorce, illness due to compromised immune systems, accidents, child abuse/neglect, and acts of domestic violence.

The idea highlights the effects of unpredictable actions and the absence of regular patterns of behavior, which are mitigated by buffering elements like beliefs and interpersonal connections. These supportive elements aid in coping, allowing clergy and their partners to continue to take pleasure in their marriage despite the many pressures they face (Smith, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed an explanatory sequential mixed method design. The study used a sample size of 273

protestant clergy and their spouses, chosen using a simple random sampling technique for quantitative, and 12 participants who were purposefully selected for qualitative, low and high performance on levels of marital satisfaction. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMSS) and the Scales of Perceived Social Support were used to collect quantitative data, with the former having a reliability coefficient of 0.834 and the latter of 0.954, respectively. To better understand how protestant clergy and their partners are handling difficulties in their marriage, we conducted in-depth one-on-one interviews with them, using a set of predetermined questions to lead the conversation. Descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and thematic analysis were used to examine the data.

RESULTS

The objective of the research was to examine how communication patterns within couples affected their level of happiness in their marriages. Table 1 displays the results.

Table 1 Informational Support and Marital Satisfaction

Correlations			
		Overall Marital Satisfaction	Informational Support
Overall Marital Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	-.470**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	252	224
Informational Support	Pearson Correlation	-.470**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	224	237
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Informational support was found to have a weak, negative, and statistically significant connection with marital satisfaction ($r = -.470$; $p < 0.05$). This suggests that the dynamics of providing and receiving information have an adverse effect on marital happiness. The results showed that the general marital satisfaction of protestant clergy and their spouses fell as informational support increased. There is a possibility that misunderstandings are to blame for the lower rates of marital happiness among the Protestant clergy and their partners.

Unintentional distortion due to lack of information, such as incompetence of the communicator of the information, uncertainties, or difficulties in interpersonal contacts, may account for the weak, negative, and significant relationship between information support and marital satisfaction. Particularly unprofessional conduct on the part of the information-bearer. For example, participants' low levels of marital happiness may be attributable to their lack of knowledge and experience. There is also a possibility that the sender's message was misunderstood.

Bolo (2017) found that communication in the conflict did not have a statistically significant effect on marital satisfaction among Christian couples, while daily and regular communication and open and honest expression

of thoughts and feelings had a moderate positive significant effect. Furthermore, previous research suggests that when assisting couples in coping with stressors, it is important to include available resources at multiple environmental levels, including personal, relational, and social network resources, and to consider whether social-cultural backgrounds may have influenced the effectiveness of a particular resource (Li et al., 2021).

According to Pitts's research (2023), not having someone in your life in whom you can confide can make any existing mental health problems or feelings of loneliness much worse. Individuals may experience greater stress if they lack a social network and supportive friends and family. More evidence was presented by Okoli, Ezeme, and Ofojebe (2019) on the value of informational assistance as a factor that boosts confidence and equips people to deal with life's challenges by pooling their knowledge and expertise. Njeri's (2019) research highlights the importance of community information support in providing knowledge and skills to couples in improving their decision-making, problem-solving, and marital satisfaction.

Clerics and their spouses would benefit from seminars and workshops designed to address the unique issues they face in terms of perceived social support and marital satisfaction, according to the survey's respondents. A sense of self-worth and a tool for coping with life's challenges can be gained through the exchange of information, as stated by Okoli, Ezeme, and Ofojebe (2019). According to Lee, Kim, Cheon, and Kim (2023), this data-driven guidance makes it possible to better cater interventions to the unique needs of each client. As a result, this may serve as a more helpful guide for married people looking to make changes.

The study's authors, Alipour, Kazemi, Kheirabadi, and Eslami (2020), found that training programs that emphasize the needs of married clerics and their spouses and that emphasize communication skills training through seminars and workshops can boost marital satisfaction and psychological well-being. Pitts (2023) found that providing clergy and their spouses with psychoeducation about healthy coping skills could reduce the likelihood that they will experience burnout or stress. It is possible that the members of the protestant clergy and their wives could benefit from this peer program because of its emphasis on education and the promotion of physical, emotional, spiritual, and relational wellness and guidance.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of informational support on marital satisfaction experienced by protestant clergy and their partners in Dagoretti South Sub-County Nairobi County, Kenya clergy and their partners in Dagoretti South Sub-County Nairobi County.

An overview of the problems faced by protestant clergy and their spouses in regards to informational support and marital satisfaction was presented in the first chapter of the study. In recent years, there has been a rise in incidents of domestic violence in which spouses assault each other, their children, and other family members. There has been a rise in the prevalence of a wide range of marital problems, including but not limited to: separation, divorce, suicide, homicide, and even the murder of one's own children. The authors of this study shed light on the complex relationship between clergy and their partner's levels of psychological distress, social support, and marital satisfaction. The research aimed to teach psychologists working in counselling settings how to better understand the unique challenges faced by protestant clergy couples and how to help them work through their differences in order to strengthen their marriages. The protestant clergy and their partners also benefit from learning effective communication and conflict resolution skills.

The research also may help dispel the myth that protestant clergy and their spouses have it all together and do not require any help from the rest of society. Their views of the church and their families improves as a result of this research. The church and society as a whole gain insight into how to best aid clergy families so that they can go about the business of raising happy, healthy children despite economic hardship. This research provides more evidence that people of all classes and backgrounds need to look out for one another.

In addition, the results give the general population a chance to reflect on their own views and opinions of those in authority, including the clergy and their families. In the long run, this will help people see clergy as

regular people who, like everyone else, struggle in their marriages. The second chapter provided a critical analysis of the underlying theories that informed the study. The literature was also analyzed from a worldwide, regional, and local vantage point. This was done in a methodical fashion, with empirical research being evaluated and research gaps being found based on the questions being asked. The conceptual framework was effectively presented to metaphorically show how the many factors interact with one another. The third chapter included a detailed account of the methodology and procedures employed throughout the research itself, which served to answer the study's primary questions and achieve its stated goals. The research site, population of interest, sample size, sampling techniques, and instruments used to collect data, instruments' validity and reliability, piloting and instrument reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations were all covered in detail.

The research results were provided in the fourth chapter. Using quantitative methods, data from 273 participants was collected, analyzed, and interpreted to answer the study's core issues. Means, standard deviations, analyses of variance (ANOVA), and correlations were used to draw conclusions on the relationship between perceived social support and marital satisfaction. The compiled information was displayed in tables. Chapter five presents an overview of the study's main findings. The final verdict on the problems investigated is presented. The research was utilized to provide perceived social support and marital satisfaction of protestant clergy and their spouses. At last, the researcher offers suggestions for where the field could go from here.

This research found that the protestant clergy and their spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya had stronger informational support than the general population. Weak negative and statistically significant associations were discovered between information support and marital happiness. The results showed that the general marital satisfaction of protestant clergy and their spouses fell as informational support increased. Unintentional distortion due to a lack of information, such as inability of the communicator of the information, uncertainties, or difficulties in interpersonal contacts, may account for the weak, negative, and statistically significant relationship between information support and marital satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to learn more about information support and marital satisfaction among the protestant clergy and their spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study found a modest, negative, and statistically significant association with marital satisfaction among protestant clergy and their partners. Based on the research findings, a method is given not just to boost marriage tie and commitment, but more importantly, the quality of life for protestant clergy couples and families, by identifying which factors seem to increase marital satisfaction levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study further recommends that, there should be seminars and workshops specifically for the protestant clergy and their spouses. Since if there are seminars and workshops in the church, the protestant clergy and their spouses are usually the ones who normally moderate those training, there is need for seminars and workshop which are purely for them to address their marital challenges.

This study recommends that all the stakeholders including the government, clergy leadership and counseling psychologists to immediately start conducting advocacy awareness on the importance of the protestant clergy and their spouses to acquire higher levels of education. This is because the findings of this study indicated that those protestant clergies and their spouses who had higher education levels reported higher satisfaction in their marital relationships.

The study also recommends that policymaker's plan and strategize to engage counselling psychologists with the intent to deal with specific issues that married couples present. It is high time for the government to stop being reactive to issues pertaining marriage and family and engage the mental health professionals on the best prevention intervention for marriage and family in general.

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