

Levels of Marital Satisfaction among Millennial Married Individuals in Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality and overall fulfilment experienced within marriage. It encompasses perceptions of affection, communication, emotional connection, conflict management, role performance, decision-making, intimacy, and shared responsibilities. The current study examined the levels of marital satisfaction among millennial married individuals affiliated with Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed descriptive research design with a sample size of 255 millennial married individual participants who were aged between 26–41 years and had been married for at least one year. Data were collected using demographic characteristics of the participants and the 16-item Couples Satisfaction Index. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and particularly frequencies, mean and percentages with SPSS. The results showed marital satisfaction was low for 31.4%, moderate for 46.7%, and high for 22.0% of respondents. The study recommends to future studies to examine the factors leading to low marital satisfaction among the millenials married individuals and come up with strategies that can be utilized in promoting marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Levels, marital satisfaction, millennial married individuals, Nairobi County, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the quality and overall fulfilment experienced within marriage. It encompasses perceptions of affection, communication, emotional connection, conflict management, role performance, decision-making, intimacy, and shared responsibilities. Because marital satisfaction is evaluated individually, spouses within the same marriage may report different levels of satisfaction based on their personal experiences and expectations. Quantitative studies commonly measure the variable using standardized scales and classify respondents as having low, moderate, or high marital satisfaction. Numerical indicators such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and score ranges are necessary for establishing the level of satisfaction within a particular population.

From global level, Bühler et al. (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of 165 independent samples involving 165,039 participants. Across the age and relationship-duration comparisons, marital satisfaction scores ranged from approximately 77.02% to 83.61% of the maximum possible scale scores, suggesting generally high satisfaction despite changes across the life course.

Nevertheless, satisfaction declined at an estimated rate of 1.688 percentage points per year during periods of decline, 95% CI [-2.093, -1.283]. Dupuis et al. (2025) followed 1,520 New Zealand adults for 14 years and found that relationship satisfaction increased before marriage, decreased shortly after marriage, and continued declining during the subsequent years.

In a ten-year study of 300 mixed-gender couples, Roth et al. (2025) found that approximately 65% belonged to a high and stable satisfaction group, 19% to a high but declining group, and 17% to a low but increasing group. These numerical patterns show that high satisfaction may be common, but average scores can conceal substantial differences in individual marital trajectories.

Within Africa, Michael et al. (2022) surveyed 432 married primary healthcare users in Nigeria, of whom 67.8% were women and whose mean age was 30 years. The study found that 56.5% experienced marital dissatisfaction, 44.2% reported family dysfunction, and 50.5% showed probable exposure to intimate partner violence. These findings indicate that more than half of the relatively young married sample experienced dissatisfaction during the COVID-19 restrictions. In Ghana, Malm et al. (2023) studied 231 married individuals and found that affection, companionship, family commitment, and financial support were associated with satisfaction, while selfishness, disrespect, annoying habits, and physical aggression were associated with dissatisfaction. However, the Ghanaian study concentrated on factors associated with satisfaction and dissatisfaction rather than categorizing respondents into low, moderate, and high marital satisfaction levels.

In East Africa, Gelashe et al. (2023) collected quantitative data from 398 married women in Ethiopia and achieved a response rate of 94.3%. Approximately 44.7% of the respondents reported moderate sexual satisfaction, 95% CI [43.2%, 45.5%]. The finding indicates that fewer than half of the women occupied the moderate category, although the study did not provide corresponding proportions for overall marital satisfaction. Sexual satisfaction represents an important dimension of marital well-being, but it does not capture communication, affection, conflict management, role performance, and overall relationship evaluation. Consequently, the study provides only partial evidence concerning the level of marital satisfaction among East African married individuals.

In Kenya, Ngugi and Musili (2025) surveyed 400 married respondents in Nairobi City County, comprising 200 men and 200 women. The respondents recorded a mean marital satisfaction score of $M = 33.94$ ($SD = 9.72$), with observed scores ranging from 8 to 49. Approximately 48% reported high marital satisfaction, 40% moderate satisfaction, and 12% low satisfaction. Osur et al. (2021) similarly surveyed 194 married individuals in Kenya and found that sexual satisfaction decreased from 73.4% before the COVID-19 pandemic to 58.4% during the pandemic. Correspondingly, sexual dissatisfaction increased from 26.6% to 41.6%, $\chi^2 = 38.86$, $p < .001$. Although the Kenyan studies provide substantial numerical evidence, limited information remains about the overall marital satisfaction levels of millennial married individuals participating in a specific Nairobi church congregation.

Although the reviewed studies provided numerical evidence on marital satisfaction, their findings varied considerably across geographical and social contexts. Global studies generally reported moderate to high satisfaction, while some African studies found that more than half of their respondents experienced marital dissatisfaction. East African evidence was limited and frequently measured sexual satisfaction rather than overall marital satisfaction. Kenyan studies provided useful percentages and mean scores, but they examined general married populations, conflict-resolution practices, or changes in sexual satisfaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, limited quantitative evidence existed concerning the proportion of millennial married individuals experiencing low, moderate, or high overall marital satisfaction within a Nairobi faith community. The present study addressed this gap by using a standardized marital satisfaction scale to determine the level of satisfaction among individual millennial married respondents at Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road.

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted descriptive research design to examine the levels of marital satisfaction among individual millennial married respondents at Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road. This study was conducted at Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, located in Nairobi County, Kenya. Nairobi is a major urban setting with diverse socio-cultural influences that shape contemporary marital expectations, particularly among adults in early-to-mid adulthood. Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road provides an institutional context in which millennial couples regularly engage in structured church life, including worship, fellowship, and family-oriented programming, making it a relevant site for accessing the target population for this study. The location was suitable because the study focuses on millennial married individuals within a faith community where gender role expectations and marital ideals are not only privately held but also socially reinforced through shared teachings, peer interaction, and community norms. What this implies is that attitudes toward gender roles and evaluations of marital satisfaction are likely to be articulated within a coherent moral and relational environment, allowing the study to examine the variables as they occur in everyday community life.

The target population for this study comprised 750 millennial married individuals affiliated with Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi County, Kenya. The population is bounded to Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road because the study investigates gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction within a shared faith-community environment where role expectations are shaped through ongoing discipleship structures and congregational life. Sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan finite-population formula at 95% confidence and a 5% margin of error, with $p = .50$ to maximize variability. The formula is $S = (X^2NP(1 - P)) / (d^2(N - 1) + X^2P(1 - P))$, where S is the required sample size, X^2 is the chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at 95% confidence (3.841), N is the population size, P is the population proportion, and d is the margin of error (0.05). This study used $N = 750$ eligible millennial married individuals from the sampling frame. Substituting values gives $S = (3.841 \times 750 \times 0.5 \times 0.5) / (0.05^2 \times 749 + 3.841 \times 0.5 \times 0.5) = 720.19 / 2.833 = 254.24$. The sample size was rounded up to $S = 255$ millennial married individuals to ensure adequate precision and to accommodate minor non-response without undermining inferential power (Ahmed, 2024; EANSO, 2025).

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire comprising two parts. Part A captured demographic information relevant to eligibility and interpretation, including age of each spouse, length of marriage, education, employment, and number of children. Part B measures marital satisfaction using the 16-item Couples Satisfaction Index, developed in 2007 for adults in intimate relationships. Recent evidence indicates excellent internal consistency for marital satisfaction measurement using the CSI-16 ($\alpha = .98$; Tashkeh et al., 2024). The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics particularly frequencies, mean and percentages with SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current study was set to examine the levels of marital satisfaction among millennial married individuals affiliated with Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi County, Kenya. The section begins by presenting the demographic of the participants followed by the findings of the study.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

To understand the demographic of the respondents, the descriptive statistics was conducted and the results are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	n	%
Age group	26–30 years	58	22.7
	31–35 years	87	34.1
	36–41 years	110	43.1
Gender	Male	133	52.2
	Female	122	47.8
Years married	1–5 years	88	34.5
	6–10 years	119	46.7
	More than 10 years	48	18.8
Education level	Secondary school	0	0.0
	College/Diploma	63	24.7
	Bachelor's degree	79	31.0
	Postgraduate education	113	44.3
Employment status	Employed	135	52.9
	Self-employed	84	32.9
	Unemployed	36	14.1
	Student	0	0.0
Has children	Yes	167	65.5
	No	88	34.5
Church attendance	Weekly	149	58.4

	Twice a month	44	17.3
	Once a month	0	0.0
	Rarely	62	24.3
Group/ministry involvement	Yes	88	34.5
	No	167	65.5

Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the 255 respondents. The largest age category was 36–41 years, accounting for 43.1% of the sample, followed by 31–35 years at 34.1% and 26–30 years at 22.7%. Men represented 52.2% of respondents and women represented 47.8%. Nearly half of the respondents had been married for 6–10 years, and 65.5% reported having children. The sample was also highly educated, with 44.3% reporting postgraduate education and 31.0% holding a bachelor’s degree. Employment was common in the sample, as 52.9% were employed and 32.9% were self-employed. Weekly church attendance was reported by 58.4%, while 17.3% attended twice a month and 24.3% attended rarely. Participation in an Group or ministry was reported by 34.5% of respondents. No respondent selected secondary school as the highest education level or student as the employment status. These figures describe the individual respondents represented in the dataset and should not be interpreted as characteristics of matched couples.

Level of Marital Satisfaction among millennial married respondents in Nairobi Chapel

The aim of the current study was to determine the level of marital satisfaction among the respondents in Nairobi Chapel. To determine the levels of marital satisfaction, a descriptive statistics was run and the results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Couples Satisfaction Index Items

Item	Item meaning	M	SD
CSI01	Overall relationship happiness	3.831	0.909
CSI02	Frequency of things going well	3.416	0.784
CSI03	Relationship is strong	3.604	0.916
CSI04	Relationship makes the respondent happy	3.506	0.813
CSI05	Warm and comfortable relationship	3.596	0.831
CSI06	Feeling like part of a team	3.631	0.854
CSI07	Relationship is rewarding	3.529	0.855
CSI08	Partner meets the respondent’s needs	3.455	0.724
CSI09	Relationship meets original expectations	3.227	0.830
CSI10	Overall relationship satisfaction	3.447	0.840
CSI11	Interesting rather than boring	3.663	0.766
CSI12	Good rather than bad	3.533	0.792
CSI13	Full rather than empty	3.604	0.745
CSI14	Sturdy rather than fragile	3.549	0.830
CSI15	Hopeful rather than discouraging	3.584	0.715
CSI16	Enjoyable rather than miserable	3.678	0.841

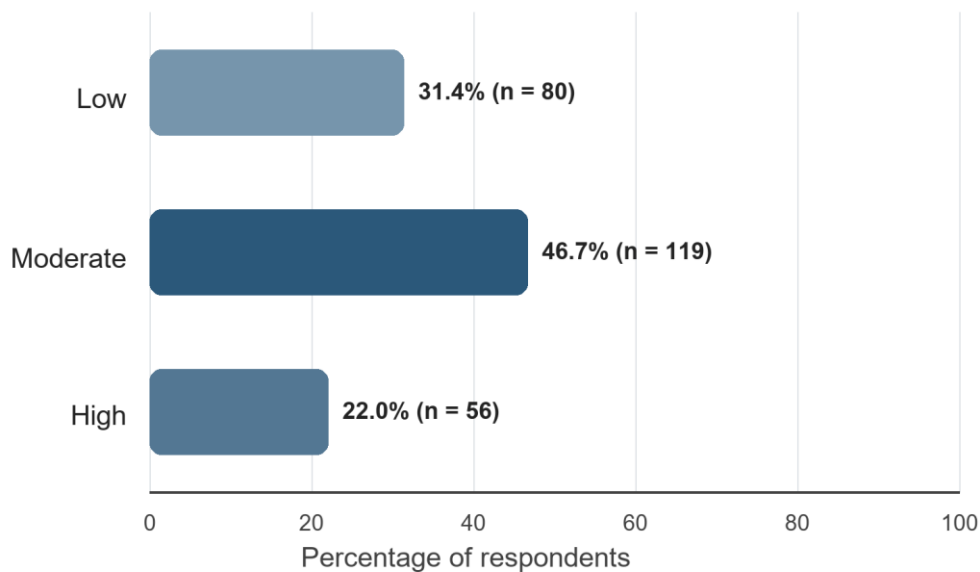
Note. N = 255. The table reports the supplied scored item values used to compute the CSI-16 total.

Results in table 2 showed CSI total had a mean of 56.855 and a standard deviation of 9.672, with observed scores ranging from 35 to 76. The corresponding item mean was 3.553 with a standard deviation of 0.604. At item level, means ranged from 3.227 for the extent to which the relationship met original expectations to 3.831 for overall relationship happiness. The descriptive results therefore show variability in marital satisfaction across respondents while retaining a mid-to-upper concentration on the supplied scoring ranges.

Using the categories recorded in the response export, 80 respondents were classified as having low marital satisfaction, 119 as moderate, and 56 as high. The moderate category was the largest and represented 46.7% of the sample. Taken together, 175 respondents, or 68.6%, were in the moderate or high categories. Low satisfaction

was reported for 31.4% of the sample. Figure 1 shows that moderate marital satisfaction was the predominant category.

Figure 1: Distribution of Marital Satisfaction Levels



Note. N = 255. Low scores were 51 or below, moderate scores were 52–65, and high scores were 66 or above, consistent with the classification used in the response export.

Moderate marital satisfaction was the most common category, and 68.6% of respondents were classified as moderate or high. The distribution therefore reflects generally functional relationship evaluations without implying uniformly high satisfaction. The 31.4% low-satisfaction group is substantial and shows that the strongly egalitarian attitude profile did not translate into high marital satisfaction for every respondent. The coexistence of broad egalitarian endorsement and varied satisfaction suggests that marital quality is shaped by more than role attitudes alone.

The distribution differs from the Nairobi City County results reported by Ngugi and Musili (2025), where 48% of respondents had high marital satisfaction, 40% had moderate satisfaction, and 12% had low satisfaction. In the present sample, high satisfaction was lower at 22.0% and low satisfaction was higher at 31.4%. These contrasts may reflect differences in instruments, category thresholds, recruitment, relationship characteristics, or the composition of the two samples. They should not be interpreted as evidence that one Nairobi population has better marriages than another without harmonized measurement and sampling.

The findings are also compatible with the life-course variation summarized by Bühler et al. (2021). Their meta-analysis showed that relationship satisfaction changes across adulthood and relationship duration, with average declines during early-to-middle adulthood and across the first years of a relationship before later changes. Most respondents in the current sample were aged 31 to 41 years, and nearly two thirds had been married for at least six years, placing many within periods where role coordination and accumulated relationship demands may be especially relevant. Because the present design was cross-sectional, however, it cannot determine whether respondents' satisfaction was stable, declining, or improving.

The difference between the highest-rated item, overall happiness, and the lowest-rated item, fulfilment of original expectations, adds detail to the categorical result. A respondent may regard the marriage as generally happy while still perceiving gaps between expectations and lived experience. For counselling and marital enrichment, this distinction suggests that broad satisfaction questions should be followed by structured assessment of expectations, responsibilities, communication, and perceived support. Such assessment would avoid assuming that a moderate total score represents the same relational concerns for every person.

CONCLUSION

Marital satisfaction was predominantly moderate rather than uniformly high. More than two thirds of respondents were in the moderate or high categories, but 31.4% reported low satisfaction. The distribution indicates that many respondents evaluated their marriages positively while a sizeable subgroup experienced low satisfaction. Overall happiness and fulfilment of prior expectations also differed, showing that general contentment can coexist with unmet expectations. Quantitative dyadic study should collect matched responses from both spouses and apply actor-partner interdependence models. Such a design would test whether an individual's attitude predicts personal satisfaction, partner satisfaction, or both, and whether congruence has additional explanatory value. It would directly address the limitation created by the absence of couple-pairing codes in the current dataset. Further analysis of demographic or relational factors associated with low satisfaction could also strengthen the future studies.

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