

Relationship Between Gender Role Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction among Millennial Married Individuals in Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Gender-role expectations concerning provision, care giving, authority, and shared responsibility may shape how married individuals evaluate their relationships. This study examined the relationship between gender-role attitudes and marital satisfaction among millennial married individuals affiliated with Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study employed correlational 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, Gender Role Attitude Scale and the 16-item Couples Satisfaction Index. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, mean and percentages) and Pearson correlation analysis with SPSS. The results showed Gender-role attitudes were positively associated with marital satisfaction, $r(253) = .375, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.264, .476]$. The regression model was significant, $F(1, 253) = 41.39, p < .001$, and explained 14.1% of the variance in satisfaction ($R^2 = .141$). More egalitarian attitudes were therefore associated with higher marital satisfaction, although causation and within-couple effects cannot be inferred. These findings support context-sensitive counselling initiatives within urban Kenyan faith communities. Marriage support programs should address role expectations alongside communication, fairness, and collaborative problem-solving.

Keywords: Relationship, gender role attitudes, marital satisfaction, millennial married individuals, Nairobi County, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction concerns whether individuals' beliefs about appropriate marital roles are associated with how positively they evaluate their marriages. Gender role attitudes may influence satisfaction by shaping expectations regarding provision, domestic responsibilities, care-giving, authority, and decision-making. Satisfaction may be strengthened when experienced marital arrangements correspond with an individual's role expectations, while persistent differences between expectations and lived arrangements may contribute to conflict or dissatisfaction.

From the global level, Park et al. (2025) analysed more than 34,294 reports obtained from 7,183 mixed-gender couples in the United States and Germany. Gender role attitudes were congruent among 45.4% of American couples and 34.2% of German couples, while satisfaction was generally higher when partners shared strongly egalitarian or strongly traditional attitudes than when they shared neutral attitudes. The curvature of the congruence line was significant for American men, $\alpha_2 = .15, p < .001$, American women, $\alpha_2 = .09, p = .009$, German men, $\alpha_2 = .07, p < .001$, and German women, $\alpha_2 = .08, p < .001$. In China, Yu and Liu (2021) found that 83.9% of women and 90.3% of men reported positive marital satisfaction, and spouses with similar gender role attitudes generally reported higher satisfaction. Yoo (2022) studied 4,059 South Korean dual-earner respondents and found that gender role ideology was indirectly associated with marital satisfaction through family-to-work conflict among men, but not among women.

Horrell et al. (2022) surveyed 363 Evangelical Christian women and found no statistically significant bivariate relationship between gender role ideology and marital satisfaction. Relatedly, Kanter et al. (2022) synthesized

64 dyadic studies and found that positive communication predicted later relationship quality at the within-partner level, $r = .15$, $p < .001$, whereas negative communication was inversely related to later relationship quality, $r = -.17$, $p < .001$, indicating a possible relational pathway through which role expectations may influence satisfaction.

Within Africa, direct quantitative evidence linking gender role attitudes to marital satisfaction remains limited. The Malawi study by Triulzi et al. (2024) measured gender-equitable attitudes and household decision-making but did not measure marital satisfaction. Conversely, Malm et al. (2023) examined marital satisfaction in Ghana but did not use a standardized gender role attitudes variable. Mbachu et al. (2025) demonstrated generational and demographic differences in gender norms in Nigeria, but marital satisfaction was not included as an outcome. Therefore, the available African studies establish that gender norms and marital experiences are measurable, but they do not provide a direct correlation coefficient between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction.

In East Africa, Sedlander et al. (2024) found a moderate positive correlation between descriptive and injunctive gender norms among Ugandan women, $r = .46$, $p < .001$. More equitable injunctive norms were associated with lower agreement that contraceptive use would produce marital conflict, $b = -.082$, 95% CI $[-.14, -.02]$. This finding suggests that equitable gender attitudes may reduce conflict surrounding decision-making within marriage. However, marital conflict concerning contraception is not equivalent to overall marital satisfaction, and the study did not correlate gender role attitude scores with a standardized marital satisfaction measure. East African evidence therefore remains indirect and does not adequately answer the present study's research question.

In Kenya, Pinto (2023) found a significant positive relationship between gender role perceptions and marital stability, $r_{ps} = .393$, $p < .05$. Gender role performance was also significantly related to marital stability, $r_{ps} = .414$, $p < .05$. Although these results provide relevant local evidence, marital stability concerns the continuation and perceived security of marriage and is not identical to marital satisfaction. Ngugi and Musili (2025) found that collaborative conflict resolution was positively correlated with marital satisfaction in Nairobi, $r = .465$, $p < .05$, but the study did not measure gender role attitudes. The present study addressed this gap by directly examining the relationship between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction among individual millennial married respondents at Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road.

Global evidence concerning the relationship between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction remains inconsistent, with some studies reporting benefits from egalitarian attitudes or partner congruence and others finding no significant bivariate relationship. African and East African studies largely examined gender norms and marital experiences separately, without reporting a direct correlation between standardized measures of gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction. In Kenya, Pinto (2023) found significant relationships between gender role perceptions and marital stability, $r_{ps} = .393$, $p < .05$, and between gender role performance and marital stability, $r_{ps} = .414$, $p < .05$. However, marital stability is conceptually different from marital satisfaction. Ngugi and Musili (2025) reported a positive relationship between collaborative conflict resolution and marital satisfaction, $r = .465$, $p < .05$, but did not measure gender role attitudes. The present study therefore addressed the absence of direct Kenyan evidence by using Pearson's product-moment correlation and simple linear regression to examine the relationship between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction among individual millennial married respondents at Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road.

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted correlational research design to examine relationship between gender role attitudes and 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 married individuals 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 $S = 255$ 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 three 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 measured gender role attitudes using the Gender Role Attitude Scale developed by Pramanik et al. (2025) for adult respondents. The scale contains eight Likert-type items organized into Mutual Understanding and Equity domains, with reported internal consistency of $\alpha = .75$ and $\alpha = .80$, respectively (Pramanik et al., 2025). Part C 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 (frequencies, mean and percentages) and Pearson correlation analysis with SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current study was set to examine the relationship between gender role attitudes and 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 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.

Relationship between Gender-Role Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction among millennial married respondents in Nairobi Chapel

The study was to determine the relationship between gender-role attitudes and marital satisfaction. A scatter plot was run to check the relationship between gender roles and marital satisfaction and results are presented in figure 1.

Figure 1: Relationship between Gender-Role Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction



Note. Points are jittered slightly for visual separation; all analyses used the original unfiltered total scores. GRAS = Gender Role Attitude Scale; CSI = Couples Satisfaction Index.

Results in Figure 1 indicated an approximately linear positive pattern without a single case dominating the fitted line. The regression residuals showed limited skewness and kurtosis, and the Jarque–Bera test did not reject residual normality, $JB = 2.51$, $p = .285$. The Breusch–Pagan test was also nonsignificant, $LM = 0.01$, $p = .927$, providing no evidence of nonconstant residual variance.

Furthermore, a Pearson correlation analysis was run to establish the relationship between gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction and results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Gender-Role Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction

Variable	1	2
1. GRAS total	—	.375***
2. CSI total	.375***	—

Note. $N = 255$. GRAS = Gender Role Attitude Scale; CSI = Couples Satisfaction Index. Values are two-tailed Pearson correlations. *** $p < .001$.

Results from Pearson product–moment correlation showed a statistically significant positive relationship between gender-role attitudes and marital satisfaction, $r(253) = .375$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.264, .476]. Higher, more egalitarian GRAS scores were associated with higher CSI scores. The magnitude of the correlation was small to moderate and the confidence interval remained entirely above zero. Because the analysis uses individual records without partner-pairing codes, the coefficient represents a respondent-level association rather than agreement or interdependence within couples. Table 9 presents the correlation matrix.

Moreover, results in table 3 from simple linear regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 253) = 41.39$, $p < .001$. The model yielded $R^2 = .141$ and adjusted $R^2 = .137$, indicating that gender-role attitudes accounted for 14.1% of the observed variance in marital satisfaction. The standard error of the estimate was 8.984 CSI points. Nine observations exceeded the conservative Cook’s distance screening threshold of $4/N$, but the largest Cook’s distance was only .042 and no standardized residual exceeded $|3|$. A sensitivity analysis excluding those nine cases produced a stronger positive association, indicating that the direction of the primary all-case result was not dependent on them.

Table 3: Simple Linear Regression Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	SE estimate	F	df1	df2	p
.375	.141	.137	8.984	41.39	1	253	< .001

Outcome variable = CSI total. Predictor = GRAS total.

The unstandardized slope for the GRAS total was positive and statistically significant, $B = 1.476$, $SE = 0.229$, $\beta = .375$, $t = 6.43$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.025, 1.928]. Within the observed score range, each one-point increase in the GRAS total was associated with an estimated 1.476-point increase in the CSI total. The fitted equation was $CSI = 15.687 + 1.476(GRAS)$. The intercept was statistically significant, $B = 15.687$, $SE = 6.423$, $t = 2.44$, $p = .015$, but it has limited substantive meaning because a GRAS score of zero lies outside the observed range. Table 4 reports the regression coefficients.

Table 4: Coefficients for the Regression of Marital Satisfaction on Gender-Role Attitudes

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	15.687	6.423	—	2.44	.015	[3.037, 28.337]
GRAS total	1.476	0.229	.375	6.43	< .001	[1.025, 1.928]

Note. $N = 255$. Outcome variable = CSI total. B = unstandardized coefficient; β = standardized coefficient; CI = confidence interval.

The positive correlation indicates that respondents with more egalitarian gender-role attitudes tended to report higher marital satisfaction. The confidence interval remained above zero, and the regression slope was

statistically significant, which supports the direction of the association. Its magnitude was small to moderate rather than strong. Consequently, egalitarian attitudes appear relevant to marital satisfaction in this sample, but they are not a sufficient explanation of marital quality. The findings were consistent with findings of Park et al. (2025) who found that relationship satisfaction depends partly on the pattern of agreement between partners, with higher satisfaction in several contexts when spouses shared stronger traditional or egalitarian positions rather than neutral positions. Their dyadic results provide a useful qualification to the present respondent-level association. The positive GRAS-CSI correlation shows how one respondent's attitude score relates to that respondent's satisfaction, but it cannot show whether spouses were congruent, mismatched, or differently affected by the same arrangement. A future paired design could therefore reveal whether the observed association reflects individual egalitarianism, partner similarity, or both.

Perceived fairness offers another plausible explanation for the association. Hiekel and Ivanova (2023) found that changes in perceived fairness in the division of paid and unpaid labor were associated with changes in relationship satisfaction across parenthood transitions. Townsend et al. (2024) similarly reported that viewing gender roles as changeable can reduce women's work-family conflict, with work-family conflict linked to lower relationship satisfaction. Neither fairness nor work-family conflict was tested as a pathway in the current analysis, so these studies should be treated as interpretive comparisons rather than confirmation of a mechanism.

The regression explained 14.1% of the variance in CSI scores, leaving 85.9% associated with other measured or unmeasured influences and random variation. Kanter et al. (2022) found small but reliable longitudinal associations between communication behaviour and later relationship quality, while Ngugi and Musili (2025) reported a positive association between collaborative conflict resolution and marital satisfaction in Nairobi City County. These comparisons support recommendations that role expectations be addressed alongside communication and problem-solving rather than treated as an isolated source of marital satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction is also interdependent within couples. Johnson et al. (2022) showed that both women's and men's satisfaction predicted their own and their partners' subsequent satisfaction, challenging explanations that assign relational influence to only one spouse. The absence of couple-pairing codes in the present dataset prevents a comparable actor-partner analysis. Accordingly, the current coefficient should be understood as a respondent-level relationship and not as evidence about mutual influence, agreement, or the direction of effects between spouses.

CONCLUSION

Gender-role attitudes had a statistically significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction. The study concluded that more egalitarian gender-role attitudes were associated with higher marital satisfaction scores. The effect was small to moderate, and of the variance in CSI scores remained outside the one-predictor model. The analysis does not establish that gender-role attitudes caused marital satisfaction, nor does it show whether spouses agreed with each other because no paired-couple identifiers were available.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Nairobi Chapel Ngong Road

Marriage-enrichment and premarital programs should include structured discussion of expectations about decision-making, provision, employment, care-giving, domestic work, and parenting. The high prevalence of egalitarian attitudes should not lead facilitators to assume that role expectations are fully aligned or that satisfaction is uniformly high. Programs can help partners compare expectations, identify domains of disagreement, and negotiate arrangements perceived as fair and workable. Outcome monitoring should include marital satisfaction and specific role-expectation indicators rather than attendance alone.

Counsellors and Marital Practitioners

Counsellors working with millennial couples should assess each partner's gender-role expectations separately before drawing conclusions about the couple's shared position. Attention should be given to the fit between

stated beliefs and daily practices, particularly around responsibilities, decision-making, employment, and care. Since the regression left most variance unexplained, assessment should also cover communication, conflict resolution, stress, support, financial strain, parenting demands, and relationship expectations.

Couple-Focused Programs

Couple-focused sessions should emphasize flexible negotiation rather than prescribing one arrangement as suitable for every marriage. Structured exercises can ask spouses to state current responsibilities, desired responsibilities, and perceived fairness, then agree on specific adjustments and review dates. Practitioners should evaluate whether agreed changes improve satisfaction instead of assuming that a stated egalitarian identity guarantees effective collaboration.

Measurement and Program Evaluation

Future institutional assessments should use anonymous identifiers that allow willing spouses to be paired without revealing their identities. Pairing would permit analysis of attitude congruence and partner effects while preserving confidentiality. The GRAS should also be reviewed and pilot-tested in the local context because its internal consistency was below the conventional benchmark. Items that do not function consistently should be revised or replaced only after appropriate psychometric evaluation, and any revised measure should be validated before use in program decisions.

Suggestions for Further Research

First, a 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.

Second, longitudinal research should measure gender-role attitudes and marital satisfaction at several points. Repeated measurement would clarify temporal ordering and determine whether changes in attitudes correspond to later changes in satisfaction. It could also examine whether the association varies across marriage duration, parenthood transitions, or major employment changes without making causal claims from a single cross-sectional observation.

Third, future regression models should include additional quantitative predictors suggested by the unexplained variance in the present model. Relevant variables include perceived fairness, communication quality, conflict-resolution style, work-family conflict, parenting demands, financial strain, social support, and marriage duration. Testing these predictors through multivariable models would show whether gender-role attitudes retain an independent association with marital satisfaction after related factors are considered.

Fourth, the psychometric performance of the GRAS should be examined in larger and more diverse Kenyan samples. Confirmatory factor analysis, item-total correlations, measurement invariance, and test-retest reliability would help determine whether the current domains function consistently across gender, age, education, and relationship duration. Comparative quantitative studies across congregations, community samples, and counties could then assess whether the high egalitarian profile observed here is specific to this setting or part of a broader pattern.

Lastly, future studies should employ a true dyadic design utilizing the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) to capture true partner congruence and mutual influence within Kenyan marriages.

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