

## Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Married Couples in Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated emotional intelligence and self-esteem as predictors of marital satisfaction among married couples in Assemblies of God church, Abakaliki District, Ebonyi state, Nigeria. The sample of this research comprises 120 married couples, 65 men aged between 25 and 70 years (M= 47.5) and 55 women aged between 22 and 65 (M= 42.5). Schutte Self-report Emotional intelligence test (SSEIT) by Schutte et-al, (1998), Rosenberg Self-esteem scale by Morris Rosenberg, (1965) and Enrich Marital Satisfaction scale by Fowers & Olson,(1993) were used to measure the construct. Cross sectional survey design was adopted and regression analysis with statistical package for social sciences, version 20, was used to analyze the findings of data obtained. The hypotheses were: there will be no statistical significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction and there will be no statistical significant relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction. The result of the regression statistical analysis, indicated positive prediction of emotional intelligence and self-esteem on marital satisfaction ( R= 0.646; R<sup>2</sup>= 0.417; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>= 0.412, F (2,237)= 84.90, P<0.05). The implications of the findings to psychologist, family therapist, marriage counselors, behavioral scientist and policy makers is to get insights in improving marital satisfaction among couples.*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a form of legal commitment which holds significant implications for both the couples and the whole family. Marriage is the basic structure of life and family system and it plays a vital role in maintaining an individual's psychological wellbeing (Kim & mckenry, 2000). The family is a vital institution in the society, often serving as the principal source of social support for individuals.

Strong marriages provide spouses with a sense of meaning. They also provide a stable primary structure for establishing a family relationship and rearing the next generation. Though marriage is a common and highly desirable relationship, statistics indicate that satisfaction within the marital relationship is not maintained. Couples choose marriage for themselves hoping to build a future with one special person (Petty, 2010) but the young adults of the 21st century are at greater risk for marital failure than previous generations, as many have not had the personal example of a stable marital relationship. High rates of marriages, subsequent high rates of divorce, may indicate a general psycho- social- behavioral gap in understanding the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain a satisfying and stable marital relationship. Strong marriages provide spouses with a sense of meaning in their lives, as well as providing benefits to the family unit and society (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006).

As far as marital satisfaction is concerned, it is seen as the most Significant feature in the success of the marriage. There is no one complete agreed upon definition of marital satisfaction. Few of the widely stated definitions of marital satisfaction are included here.

Marital satisfaction can be seen as the amount of contentment that a couple feels about their relationship but Rho (1989) defined marital satisfaction as a subjective evaluation by an individual of the degree of happiness, pleasure or fulfillment experienced within the marital relationship between spouse and self. This can be a positive or a negative satisfaction towards the quality of marriage. Marital satisfaction is an essential element for successful family life and most personal growth. In this present regard, marital satisfaction is a pertinent Ingredient to the stability of societies, given that the family is the basic unit of any nation.

Also, marital satisfaction has been defined as a subjective manner, depending upon how a marriage lives up to the expectations of the individual concerned, also as a subjective evaluation about how an individual feels about his or her spouse, his or her marriage, his or her marital relationship (Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1976). Marital satisfaction is seen as a special case of relationship satisfaction, and is the degree which partners in marriage assess their approval of different aspects of their marital relationship. It depends upon individual

expectations, needs and desires in their marriage. Marital satisfaction is a mutual state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage partner. Marital satisfaction has been defined in terms of a husband and a wife's ability to accommodate each other at any given time. Others ( Sokolski & Hendrick,1999) describe marital satisfaction as including intra- personal qualities such as love, commitment, and sexual satisfaction. Included are, interaction, such as, communication, self-disclosure, spousal support, gender roles, couple strong sharing and equity. Environmental factors relating to employment, finances, illness, and a couples support network, are linked to marital satisfaction ( Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999).

Another variable of concern in this study is self esteem which has also been linked to marital satisfaction. Self esteem is defined as an attitude to self, either positive or negative. The original definition by William James sees self-esteem as a ratio of successes compared to failures in areas of life that are important to a given individual or that individual's success to pretensions ratio (James 1890). He also described self-esteem as an "average self feeling...independent of objective reasons" a characteristic also known as self-worth, worthiness, or personal worth. Self esteem can be defined as a relationship between one's competence and one's worthiness which are to be perceived by the person. This definition sees self-esteem as the result of dealing with challenges of living in a worthy or respectable way and doing so consistently overtime.

A high self-esteem level is accompanied by the conviction that one is "sufficiently good". However, that does not have to mean that an individual with a high self- esteem level considers other people inferior. A low self-esteem level, in turn, is sui generis rejection of one's self, which is synonymous with a conscious, global attitude towards the self, and also emotions revealed towards the self, and connected with cognitive judgments about oneself (Rosenberg, 1965).

Self-esteem may be defined as a trait, or alternatively as a state. As a trait, it is partly genetically determined, and relatively stable, throughout one's life. In its case, both short, and also longtime, changes occur, and either of them may be gradual or sudden. It also refers to the sense a person has about the type of person who is generally valued and accepted by others. As a state, it refers to the fluctuation in person's feelings about themselves as a result of how they perceive others are currently valuing their relationship. Self-esteem is raised or lowered based on positive or negative feedback.

The concept of self-esteem is ubiquitous in contemporary life. In classrooms and workplaces, sporting events and music recitals, people generally assume that high self-esteem is critical to success in that domain. Indeed, the promotion of self-esteem, and the prevention of low self-esteem, is widely perceived as an important societal goal that merits widespread intervention. Yet until recently, the scientific literature provided few insights into the nature and development of self-esteem. In the past several years, a large number of longitudinal studies have significantly advanced the field.

Self-esteem refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person. Importantly, self-esteem does not necessarily reflect a person's objective talents and abilities or even how a person is evaluated by others. Moreover, self-esteem is commonly conceptualized as "feeling that one is 'good enough'," and consequently, individuals with high self-esteem do not necessarily believe they are superior to others (Rosenberg, 1965, p.31). Thus, self-esteem involves feelings of self-acceptance and self-respect. It is generally believed that there are many benefits to having a positive view of the self. Those who have high self-esteem are presumed to be psychologically happy and healthy (Branden, 1994; Taylor & Brown, 1988), whereas those with low self-esteem are believed to be psychologically distressed and perhaps even depressed ( Tennen & Affleck, 1993). Having high self-esteem apparently provides benefits to those who possess it: They feel good about themselves, they are able to cope effectively with challenges and negative feedback, and they live in a social world in which they believe that people value and respect them. Although, there are negative consequences associated with having extremely high self-esteem (Baumeister, 1998), most people with high self-esteem appear to lead happy and productive lives. By construct, people with low self-esteem see the world through a more negative filter, and their general dislike for themselves colors their perception of everything around them. Substantial evidence shows link between self-esteem and depression, shyness, loneliness, martial satisfaction and alienation- low self-esteem is aversive for those who have it. Thus, self-esteem affects the enjoyment of life even if it does not have a substantial impact on career success, productivity, or other objective outcome measures. Given the choice however, most people would prefer to have high self-esteem.

That self-esteem is vital for psychological health is evident in the popular media and in educational policy. Indeed, some educators have changed course curricular in their attempts to instill children with high self-esteem, even to the point that in some States, students are promoted to a higher grade even when they have failed to master the material from previous grade. These social promotions are based on the belief that positive self-esteem is of cardinal importance, and that many societal ills such as teenage pregnancy and drug abuse, violence, academic failure, and crime are caused by low self-esteem.

Self-esteem is considered as one of the important affective factors because success or failure of a

person depends mostly on the degree of one's self-esteem. Stevick (1990) stated that success depends less on materials, techniques and linguistic analysis, and more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom. Indeed, success is not measured of how much one gains but of how satisfied he is with his work (Daniel & King, 1995; Grand in, 2002). Moreover, Branden (1985) indicated that the biggest barrier to success is not lack of self-esteem. Further, Branden (1994) stated that the value of self-esteem lies not in the fact that it allows us to feel better but because it allows us to live better, to respond to challenges and opportunities.

Emotional intelligence is another variable of concern and has also been linked to marital satisfaction. The psychological concept known as emotional intelligence or emotional quotient is a phenomenon of the last quarter century, although has roots in much older social and psychological theories. After the publication of behavioral researcher Daniel Goleman's bestselling book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter More Than IQ* (1995), the wider public was introduced to the theory of "emotional intelligence". Mr. Coleman was not the creator of this new psychometric; however, he borrowed this term from the psychologist Peter Salovey and John Mayer, and expanded it into a popular theme. According to Goleman, everybody has some level of emotional quotient and anyone can enhance their emotional intelligence to monitor their own emotions and emotional states.

Mayer and Salovey (1997), regard emotional intelligence as a series of skills that combine cognition's (thoughts) and emotions (feelings). They define emotional intelligence in various ways: the ability to recognize emotions, to access and use emotions to help support cognitive processes, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to handle or regulate emotions in order to promote emotional and intellectual development (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Put another way, emotional intelligence, according to these authors, is made up of four distinct components: identifying emotions (the ability to recognize emotions in the self and others); using emotions (the ability to invoke and reason with emotions); understanding emotions (the ability to understand complicated emotions and emotional states, especially how these emotions shift from moment to moment); and managing emotions (controlling emotions in the self and others). Another prominent researcher of the emotional intelligence construct is Reuven Bar-On, the originator of the term "emotional quotient". Possessing a slightly different outlook, he defines emotional intelligence as being concerned with understanding oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental demands (Bar-On, 1997), regardless of the discrepancies between definitions of emotional intelligence, it is clear that what is being referred to is distinct from standard intelligence or intelligence quotient.

Researchers who have developed and investigated emotional intelligence maintain that "emotional quotient" test for emotional intelligence are important predictors of educational and occupational skills and can account for differences that tests cognitive ability are unable to predict (Matthews, Roberts & Zeider, 2004).

## **II. GENERAL CONCEPT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND RELATED STUDIES**

General concept of emotional intelligence suggests that an individual can recognize emotions in himself or herself and in others, and can use that recognition as basis for cognition and action. An individual with a high level of emotional intelligence is said to more likely demonstrate a high quality of social and interpersonal relationships, and likely to express love and other emotions. Landsberger and Meyers (2002) in their study on the direct and indirect pathways between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction explored direct, mediated, and moderated associations between adult attachment style and marital satisfaction using a community-based sample of 73 married women. Results reviewed that continuous ratings of secure, avoidant, and ambivalent attachment styles were related to levels of marital satisfaction. However, psychological distress mediated the association between secure attachment and marital satisfaction, and social support mediated the relation between avoidant attachment and marital satisfaction. In addition, psychological distress moderated the relation between both secure and avoidant attachment styles and marital satisfaction. However, this study in the words of the authors is limited by its methodology. To them "measuring adult attachment using multiple-item ratings (e.g. Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) may enhance the robustness of these findings. Thus exclusive use of self-report instruments gathered from the same source may have contained common sources of error variation".

Bartholomew & Horowitz (1991) investigated continuous ratings of four partnership specific adult attachment prototype descriptions and relationship satisfaction among 333 married. Using multiple regression analysis, findings suggested that individual's own attachment predicts marital satisfaction. It was also found to predict the partner's attachment, and the interaction between them. In general, marital satisfaction was found to be related with secure attachment, while insecure attachment relates to lower marital satisfaction. It was also realized however that, the positive effects of secure and the negative effects of insecure attachment styles were either amplified or attenuated depending on the attachment of the spouse.

Moreso, Steuber (2005) examined a comprehensive model integrating adult attachment style, conflict style, and relationship satisfaction. The research sought to determine if adult attachment acted as a predictor of

conflict style and if attachment style, mediated by conflict style, influenced relationship satisfaction. Three hundred and twenty-one undergraduate students in romantic relationships ( $n = 321$ ) completed questionnaires measuring attachment style, relational conflict style, and relationship satisfaction. Results indicated that highly avoidant individuals are more likely to engage in hostile relational conflict with their partners and feel significantly less satisfaction from their adult romantic relationships than their non-avoidant counterparts. Findings also suggested that avoidance and hostility may be more influential on relationship satisfaction levels than anxiety and validation.

Again, in determining the factors that influence the association between adult attachment and marital satisfaction, Hatch (2008) examined several mediating mechanisms that may explain the relationship between adult attachment dimensions and marital satisfaction. Specifically, relationship expectations, four types of responses to accommodative dilemmas (exit, neglect, voice, and loyalty), and three forms of empathy (Empathic concern, perspective taking, empathic personal distress) were hypothesized to mediate the relationship between adult attachment and marital satisfaction. Self-report data were collected from both partners of 193 heterosexual, married couples. The attachment dimension of avoidance for husbands and wives was consistently associated with each couple member's respective marital satisfaction. Attachment anxiety was never directly associated with either husbands' or wives' marital satisfaction. Wives' marital satisfaction was explained by their own relationship expectations and exit responses. Additionally, wives' marital satisfaction was explained by their husband's relationship expectations, exit responses, empathic perspective taking, and loyalty responses. Husbands' marital satisfaction was explained by their own relationship expectations, exit responses, neglect responses, voice responses, loyalty responses, and empathic perspective taking.

Hollist and Miller (2005) found from their study on Perceptions of Attachment Style and Marital Quality in Midlife Marriage that insecure attachment styles were associated with marital quality, whereas secure attachment was not. This study was based on theoretical framework of Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT); which theorizes that attachment styles influence marital quality. Hollist and Miller (2005) examined this issue using data from 429 married people between the ages of 40 and 50. The authors concluded that, EFT therapists can help midlife couples in distressed relationships move from insecure to secure attachment styles while still questioning the use of EFT to help couples who have secure attachment styles.

In religion and marital satisfaction, several studies have examined the effects of religiosity on various outcomes related to marriage, such as marital satisfaction, marital conflict, divorce, marital stability and commitment, and cohabitation/marital outcomes among children of religious parents. Religiosity as measured by religious service attendance has been linked to higher levels of marital satisfaction, marital stability, less marital conflict, lower risk of divorce, and the probability of marriage among young adults (Call & Heaton, 1997).

Other studies have found less clear relationships between religiosity and marital satisfaction (Sullivan, 2001; Booth, Johnson, Branaman & Sica, 1995). Hunler and Genchuz (2005) focused on revealing the effects of religiousness on marital satisfaction, and also to test the mediator role of perceived marital problem solving between religiousness and marital satisfaction relationship in a Turkish sample. Subjects were 92 married couples, or a total of 184 participants. Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that after controlling for the variance accounted for by the control variables, namely duration of marriage, marital style, educational level, hopelessness, and submissive acts; religiousness had a major effect on marital satisfaction, but a mediator role of problem solving was not observed.

Haseley (2006) also explored marital satisfaction among newly married couples: associations with religiosity and romantic attachment style with the purpose of examining the combined role of religious commitment and attachment in marital satisfaction. Heterosexual couples ( $N = 184$ ; 92 husbands, 92 wives) without children and married 1-5 years were administered a background information questionnaire, the Religious Commitment Inventory-10, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and the Experiences in Close Relationships Inventory. Results indicated that couples with congruent religious commitment reported higher marital satisfaction than couples with large discrepancies in religious commitment. Religious commitment did not mediate the relationship between attachment and marital satisfaction, but instead was found to moderate this relationship.

A study investigated the associations between parenting style and quality of child-mother attachment in middle childhood ( $n = 202$ ; grades 4-6) and adolescence ( $n = 212$ ; grades 7-11). Participants rated warm involvement, psychological autonomy granting, and behavioral monitoring (Steinberg, Lamborn, Darling, Mounts & Dornbusch, 1994). Attachment orientation was assessed using the Network of Relationships Questionnaire (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985), Coping Styles Questionnaire (Finnegan, Hodges & Perry, 1996) and Relationship Questionnaire (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Overall, a positive association was found between authoritative parenting (higher scores on all three dimensions) and secure attachment, whereas negligent parenting (lower scores on all three dimensions) predicted avoidant-attachment. Moreover, a unique pattern of associations emerged between particular dimensions of parenting and each attachment style. Marital adjustment affects many aspects of people's individual and social life. Self-esteem is one of the factors that may

affect marital satisfaction.

Mohammed Ehsan Taghizadeh & Elham Kalhori, (2015) investigated the relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction in women employed in Payame Noor University of Shahre Rey in 2014. This is a descriptive-correlational study of cross-sectional type. Its population included 94 people. Inclusion criteria were: Iranian nationality, married with at least one year of married life, etc. Results show that the majority of participants (55.6 %) had relative and moderate marital satisfaction. The majority of the samples (92 %) had high self-esteem. There was a significant relationship between marital satisfaction, economic status and sexual satisfaction. The results of the logistic regression analysis showed that probability of marital dissatisfaction in individual with low self-esteem is 9 times higher than normal people, 5 times among those with low sexual satisfaction, and 3 times among people dealing with bad economic condition. Results show that there is a significant relation between marital dissatisfaction and self-esteem, sexual satisfaction and economic status.

Another study by Zahra Tadalijamaloye et al; (2013) explores relationships between self-esteem and marital satisfaction among women in Najafabad and Fuladshahr in Iran. The case study was 757 women (381 respondents in Najafabad and 376 in Fuladshahr) who were married for at least 3 years. Findings show that there is a significant relation between age of women, marriage duration and marital satisfaction. Also generally the rate of marital satisfaction was higher between Fuladshahr women. Marital satisfaction was found to be positively correlated with self-esteem in both cities, so that higher self-esteem was associated with greater satisfaction. Another finding was that level of marital satisfaction; number of children and duration of the marriage were negatively correlated for women. The result of multiple regression analysis showed that factors including: number of children, marriage duration, the number of children and self-esteem could predict 19.5 % ( $R^2=19.5$ ) of dependant variable variations in Najafabad and age of woman, marriage duration, the number of children and self-esteem could explain 0.28 % ( $R^2=0.28$ ) of the marital satisfaction among women in Fuladshahr. In addition to this, Rezvan Homaeil, Zahra Dasht Bozorgiii, Maryam Sadat Mirbabaei Ghahfarokhi & Shima Hosseinpour (2015), investigated the relationship between Optimism, Religiosity and Self-esteem with Marital Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction in married university students. The research method was a descriptive study kind of correlation. The sample group included 200 married students that were selected using a simple random sampling method. The findings indicated that marital satisfaction not life satisfaction was predicted by Optimism, Religiosity and Self-esteem. Religiosity showed the greatest relationship with marital satisfaction.

Atta et al (2013) examined the role of trust in marital satisfaction in a sample of 140 couples including 70 single & 70 dual-career couples. Moreover, gender differences were also studied. Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (Fowers & Olson, 1993), and Trust Scale (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985) were used to measure the constructs. The age of the sample ranged from 25 to 61 years ( $M = 40.90$ ,  $SD = 9.62$ ). Multiple regression analysis demonstrated trust as significant predictor of marital satisfaction for single career couples, dual-career couples and for the whole sample respectively. Significant gender differences were found in trust for both single and dual-career couples.

Myriam L. McCray (2015) explored the relationship of marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence among different professionals. The sample comprised of  $N= 200$  participants ( $n= 100$  men and  $n= 100$  women). The age range of the sample was 25 to 45 years with 5 to 10 year marriage duration. Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) by Schutte (1998) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) by Spanier, (1976) were administered to measure the variables of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. Pearson product moment correlation and independent sample t-test was used for statistical analysis. The findings of the study indicated significant relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence. Results also supported that working women have higher emotional intelligence as compare to working men.

Mariam Leresque McCray (2015) investigated the relationship between perceived likelihood of spousal infidelity, trust, marital commitment, and marital satisfaction in a sample of 127 military wives whose husbands were deployed overseas. The "Events with Others" questionnaire, Dyadic Trust Scale, Commitment Inventory Revised, Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale, and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale were used. Results indicated that length of deployment did not have a statistically significant impact on marital satisfaction. Bivariate correlation analysis indicated statistically significant relationships among wives' perceived likelihood of spousal infidelity, trust, marital commitment, and marital satisfaction. After controlling for wives' attachment style, marital commitment and trust were significant explanatory variables of marital satisfaction.

Emotional communication and economic factors play an important role in having a satisfying relationship and a more successful marriage. In this regard, Zohre N.Z et al.,(2014) investigated the 10-year outcome of partners from three different economic levels regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and marital satisfaction. The research was designed as a descriptive-correlative survey and data were analyzed using Pearson correlation test and stepwise regression. Participants were 159 couples who were randomly selected through clustered sampling. The questionnaires included: Bar-on Emotional Intelligence (1997) and Enrich Marital satisfaction (1989). Results of the findings revealed that the average values of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction were high in the under-rich region. Moreover, there was no

significant relationship between interpersonal and marital satisfaction within the under-rich region. On average, emotional intelligence accounted for 40.8% of marital satisfaction within those three regions. The results of the regression analysis showed that general mood is the most effective factor changing marital satisfaction in the three studied regions and semi-rich regions.

Sadia Llyas & Shazia Habib, (2014) explored the relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence among different professionals. The sample comprised of N= 200 participants (n= 100 men and n= 100 women). Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) by Schutte (1998) and Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) by Spanier, (1976) were administered to measure the variables of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. The findings of the study indicated significant relationship between marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence. Results also supported that working women have higher emotional intelligence as compare to working men.

Ahmad Ali Eslami, Akbar Hasanzadeh & Farid Jamshidi (2014) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence health and marital satisfaction among married people. Done on 226 people including 114 persons having marital conflicts, and 112 people having marital satisfaction, by cluster random sampling from 13 districts of the city of Isfahan, the correlation analysis showed that there was a significant and positive relation between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction (  $P < 0.001$ ,  $r = 0.529$ ). The results of linear regression also showed that the general emotional intelligence predicts the quality of marital satisfaction.

### **III. HYPOTHESES:**

- (i) There will be no statistical significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction
- (ii) There will be no statistical significant relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction

### **IV. METHOD:**

#### **Participants**

The participants were people of Igbo ethnic group in Nigeria . Igbos are located in five States in south-eastern, Nigeria and they are one of the largest and most influential ethnic groups in Nigeria (approximately 27 million people). They speak various igbo dialects, with English frequently spoken as well. In the present study, 120 people living with a wife or husband participated. The participants were 65 men aged between 25 and 70 years ( mean= 47.5) and 55 women aged between 22 and 65 years ( mean =42.5). The participants included members of different institutions (academic, commercial etc). Their level of education were bachelor's degree and above.

#### **Instruments**

Three instruments were used for this study.

1. Schutte self-report Emotional intelligence test (SSEIT) by Schutte, Malouff, Hall, Haggerty, Gold, and Dornhein (1998)
2. Rosenberg self-esteem scale by Morris Rosenberg, (1965)
3. Enrich Marital satisfaction scale (EMS) developed by Fowers & Olson, (1993).

#### **The Schutte self- report Emotional Intelligence Test.**

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) developed by schutte et al., (1998) is a method of measuring general Emotional Intelligence (EI), using four sub-scales: emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self- relevant emotions, and managing others' emotions. The SSEIT is structured off of the EI model by Salovey and Mayer (1990). The SSEIT model is closely associated with the EQ-I model of Emotional Intelligence. The SSEIT includes a 33-item self-report using a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. Each sub-test score is graded and then added together to give the total score for the participant. Schutte and her colleges report a reliability rating of 0.90 for their emotional intelligence scale. The EI score, overall, is fairly reliable for adults and adolescents; however, the utilizing emotions sub-scale has shown poor reliability (Ciarrochi, Chan & Bajgar, 2001). Also, they report a mediocre correlation of the SSRI with such areas as self-estimated EI, the Big Five EI scale (0.51), and life satisfaction (Petrides and Furnham, 2000). SSRI correlation with well-being criteria showed the worst outcome with less than 0.20.

#### **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale by Morris Rosenberg, (1965).**

It was developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg of the University of Maryland, and it became the most popular tool of measuring self-esteem, interpreted as conviction concerning one's own value. This scale measures general self-esteem levels, considered to be a relatively constant property (Dzwonkowska et al, 2008). Rosenberg self-esteem scale is designed similar to social survey questionnaires. It is a ten-item likert type scale with items answered on a four point scales from strongly agree, to strongly disagree. Five of the items have positively worded statements and five have negatively warded ones. The scale measures state self-esteem by

asking respondents to reflect on their current feelings. The original sample for which the scale was developed consisted of 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from 10 randomly selected schools in New York State. The Rosenberg self-esteem scale is considered a reliable (internal reliability (alpha .92) and valid quantitative tool for self-esteem assessment. The scale is extensively used in cross-cultural studies in up to 53 different nations.

**Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale (Fowers & Olson,1993).**

To measure Marital satisfaction of couples, Enrich marital satisfaction scale was used. EMS contains 15- items. 10 of the scales survey 10 domains of marital quality. The other 5 items compose of a marital conventionalization scale to correct for the tendency to endorse unrealistically positive descriptions of marriage. It provides a means to obtain both dyadic and individual satisfaction scores. It has a likert type 5 point rating response format from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree and contains questions like "our relationship is a perfect success". The scale was found to be reliable and to have strong correlations with other measures of marital satisfaction and moderate relationship with measures of family satisfaction and consideration of divorce. The EMS scale offers an important alternative to researchers who require a brief but, nevertheless, valid and reliable measure of marital quality.

It is likewise found to have an alpha coefficient of .81 and a test retest reliability of .86 (Olson et al.,1987). Furthermore, its criterion and construct validity have been supported in previous research (Fowers & Olson, 1993). The scale was translated and adopted into Persian by Soleymanian. He found the internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) for EMS to be 0.92 and split half reliability coefficient as 0.86.

**Procedure:**

The questionnaire was administered individually to married couples in different departments of Assemblies of God church Ishieke, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State, South-Eastern Nigeria during church activities and some administered in their homes. Respondents were assured of their anonymity in their responses. The respondents were allowed to complete the questionnaires at their convenience and the researchers returned to collect the completed questionnaires at a time agreed upon by the respondents.

**Design/Statistics**

The study adopted the cross-sectional survey design and regression analysis with Statistical package for social sciences version 20 software was used to analyze the findings of data obtained from the respondents/participants.

**V. RESULT**

**Table 1: showed the mean and standard deviation on influence of Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem on Marital Satisfaction.**

Variables	mean	standard deviation
Marital Satisfaction	29.36	12.592
Emotional Intelligence	76.68	44.92s
Self-Esteem	35.95	12.407

Note: N=240

Results from table 1 shows that variables of emotional intelligence had (M=76.68, SD=144.92), variable self-esteem had (M=35.95, SD=2.407) while the dependent variable Marital Satisfaction had (M= 29.36, SD= 12.59). This implies that Emotional Intelligence had the largest mean and standard deviation than self-Esteem on Marital Satisfaction.

**Table 2: shows that the regression analysis for prediction of Marital Satisfaction through Emotional Intelligence and Self-Esteem variables.**

Variables	B	$\beta$	t	p	SE
Marital Satisfaction	17.642	-	8.518	0.000	2.071
Emotional Intelligence	-.116	-.414	-8.243	0.000	0.59
Self-Esteem	.573	.565	11.256	0.000	0.63

R= 0,646; R<sup>2</sup>=0.417; Adjusted R<sup>2</sup>=0.412. F (2,237) = 84.90, P<0.05.

In the variable model, two of the predictor variables were statistically significant with Self-Esteem recording higher beta value ( $\beta$ =0.565, P<0.001) than Emotional Intelligence ( $\beta$ =0.414, P<0.001). This indicated that Self-Esteem had the highest predictive power on Marital Satisfaction followed by Emotional Intelligence.

**VI. DISCUSSION**

The current study investigated emotional intelligence and self-esteem as predictors of marital satisfaction among couples of Assemblies of God Church, Abakaliki, South- Eastern Nigeria. For this purpose

two hypothesis were formulated. The first hypothesis which States that there will be no statistically significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among married couples ( $\beta = 0.414$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) was rejected. This implies that there was significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among married couples. This present research is supported by Zohre N.Z et al., 2014; sadia llyas & Shazia Habib 2014; Ahmad Ali Eslamic et al., 2014; Orathinkal & Vanteewegan, 2006; whose studies showed that there was a positive relationships between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction.

The second hypothesis which stated that there will be no statistically significant relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction among married couples ( $\beta = 0.565$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction among married couples. This result is in conformity with the findings of Mohammed Edhan Taghizadeh & Elham Kalhori (2015); Zohre Tadalijamaloye et al (2013). They all found out that self-esteem and marital satisfaction are significantly correlated.

## **VII. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

The addition of this research to the body of knowledge is an implication for positive change such that findings may inform family or marriage counselors PR therapists and married couples about the impact emotional intelligence and self-esteem has on marital satisfaction among couples. The impact of marital dissatisfaction on physical, mental and emotional wellbeing is far reaching across communities, and into local and global organizations. It is also known that marital satisfaction is a prime indicator for marital success and dissolution. As variables that contribute to marital satisfaction are identified and explored, interventions can be promoted to increase couples marital satisfaction, consequently, reducing the rate of divorce or separation. Couples may be better educated on how to deal with emotional intelligence and self-esteem to increase marital satisfaction of couples in all phases of marriage. With their theory and practice in couples and family counseling, clinicians can influence the emotional intelligence and self-esteem of couples. The present study increases our knowledge and understanding of the psychological impact of emotional intelligence and self-esteem of married couples. Theoretical explanations and empirical research continues to be needed to understand the impact of emotional intelligence and self-esteem on marriages. The result of the study implies that emotional intelligence and self-esteem can be significant predictors of marital satisfaction. The present study provides insight into how marital satisfaction, emotional intelligence and self-esteem theorists can assist family therapists, marriage counselors and clinicians to increase marital satisfaction.

## **VIII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The sample of the present study was selected from limited locality, therefore, the findings cannot be generalized beyond the specific settings and all of the participants were educated reporting significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction than the normal population. Furthermore, certain demographic variables like socio-economic status, occupation, participant's family system, duration of marriage and type (love marriage versus arranged marriage) have not been controlled in the present study which might have been relevant to the constructs of the present study.

## **IX. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Considering the results of the present study and other researches in this field, the following can be suggested: emotional intelligence and self-esteem can be considered as one of the predictive criteria for a successful marital satisfaction if studied across different cultures. Further studies should look at demographic variables such as educational background, gender, social-economic status, family status, duration of marriage and type of marriage since it seem to influence marital satisfaction.

## **Recommendation**

Marriage programs may benefit from this study by including tasks and education that would improve partner's levels of emotional intelligence and self-esteem among couples. Emotional intelligence and self-esteem should be checked always because it guides for rules for sexual relations, sexual roles, sanctification, and removing marital conflicts and marital dissatisfaction. The research findings of this study demonstrated that further research is needed to obtain a better understanding of support needed to strengthen couple's marital satisfaction. One future recommendation for future study is to explore factors such as emotional intelligence and self-esteem.

## **X. CONCLUSION**

This research has shown that marriages are faced with challenges such as infidelity, mistrust, divorce, as a result of low self-esteem, low emotional intelligence, lack of commitment etc. The present study was conducted in response to the recommendation to better understand the predictors of marital satisfaction among

married couples. The empirical evidence from this study has shown that goals, attachment style, identity, behavior help couple live a satisfied married life. The present study has established the predictive power of emotional intelligence and self-esteem in bringing about marital satisfaction.

Results posit that marital satisfaction might have not only been preserved but could also be enhanced had the couple taken certain measures to establish self-esteem and emotional intelligence in marriage.

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