

# International Journal of Psychology (IJP)

**Levels of Marital Satisfaction of Protestant Clergy and Their Spouses in Dagoretti  
South Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya**

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(PhD)

**Levels of Marital Satisfaction of Protestant Clergy and Their Spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya**



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**Article History**

*Received 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023*

*Received in Revised Form 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023*

*Accepted 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023*



How to cite in APA format:

Emusugut, E., Asatsa, S., & Okumu, S. . (2023). Levels of Marital Satisfaction of Protestant Clergy and Their Spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-County Nairobi, Kenya. *International Journal of Psychology*,8(3),23–38.  
<https://doi.org/10.47604/ijp.2058>

**Abstract**

**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to determine the levels of marital satisfaction among protestant clergy in Dagoretti South Sub-County

**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 show that most protestant clergy and their spouses have optimistic views and feelings about their relationships. However, marital contentment is a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon. This is due to the fact that stress is present in every marriage and that clergy and their wives face additional stresses from ministry work. According to the results, a moderate level of marital happiness was reported by 47.6% of the protestant clergy and their spouses in Dagoretti South Sub- County, Nairobi County, Kenya.

**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, Protestant Clergy and their Spouses*

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## INTRODUCTION

Marital happiness refers to the state of mind in which a married couple finds pleasure in their lives together. Happiness, contentment, and joy are the hallmarks of a fulfilled marriage, according to research by Gelo and Gonzalez-Lugo (2018). According to Rosiana, Zaman, Lutfiani, Simanjuntak, and Riany (2022), marital satisfaction is "the degree to which a person perceives that his or her static needs have been met within the context of his or her marital relationship" Communication, hobbies, religious beliefs, dispute resolution, money management, sex, friends, family, children, parenting, personality, and role equality are all factors in a happy marriage. Additionally, an individual's mental health is significantly impacted by marital contentment.

According to Downward, Rasciute, and Kumar's (2022) researched on the connection between psychological well-being and marital contentment in the United Kingdom. The studies they looked at all agreed on one thing: a happy marriage is crucial to a person's happiness. Using information from the BHPS, they employed a longitudinal observational research design that tracked participants through time. Their research era spans from 1991 until 2008. In the reviewed work, data was analyzed using fixed-effects and instrumental variable fixed-effects panel data estimates, and the sample size was 9024 people (42464 observations). The importance of being happy in one's marriage was highlighted in their research. In addition, the marital resource model suggests that not just marriage but also partnerships offer social, psychological, and economic assets that promote health (Downward, Rasciute, Kumar, 2022).

Physical and mental health might be negatively impacted if marital satisfaction is not fully established as a factor in bolstering the foundation of the family. Given that Asadi et al.'s (2020) study was conducted on an Iranian community, the present study is useful since it closes that gap by investigating the same topic in the setting of Kenya. Furthermore, the Iranian research did not examine the link between social support and marital happiness. As a result, our research set out to bridge a knowledge gap. Asadi et al.'s (2020) study used a semi-experimental approach, testing participants before and after intervention. Instead, the current research adopted an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, which involved a sample size of 273, a correlational quantitative approach, and a phenomenological qualitative approach.

On the other side, couples who enjoy fulfilling relationships get numerous advantages. Women, their spouses, and their children can all benefit from increased mental and physical health, as well as increased flexibility in the face of life's pressures (Yoshany et al., 2017). A lack of opportunities to express feelings may contribute to marital dissatisfaction among clergy couples. In addition, the reviewed study was undertaken in Iran, whereas the present investigation was carried out in Kenya. Also, the evaluated study did not make use of a mixed methods research design to emphasize the unique perspectives and difficulties of protestant clergy and their partners. This study used a mixed-method approach to examine clergy and spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya, to address a knowledge gap on social support dynamics and marital satisfaction. In addition, the sample size of the reviewed study was tiny, totaling just 100 people who were recruited at random, whereas the current study used a sample size of 273, with 12 people selected at random for qualitative purposes.

Clergy men tend to attract and be pursued by women who admire strong male leadership. Therefore, adultery within the clergy has become widespread. The spouses of clergymen who

are accused of wrongdoing often bear the brunt of public scorn. Despite this, clergy women rely significantly on their marriages as a source of strength because they have few other social networks to turn to (Luedtke & Sneed, 2018). If the abuser is a member of the clergy, this presents an even greater difficulty. Because of these challenges, clergy women require social assistance in order to feel happy in their marriages. The wives of clergy members are an unheard and unstudied group. While minister burnout, psychological suffering, and declining years of service have been well-studied, the minister's wife has been largely ignored, despite her obvious need for social assistance (Luedtke & Sneed, 2018). However, it appears that marital functioning has more of an effect on women's marital quality than on men's. Maintaining a healthy marriage has been shown to benefit the physical and mental well-being of both partners but, women in particular (Beam et al., 2018). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the dynamics of social support and their impact on marital satisfaction among protestant clergy and their partners.

Age, level of education, and the number of children all play a role in the level of happiness experienced inside a marriage. The first ten to twenty years of marriage are the least happy for couples (Leistner & Mark, 2020). Since women also tend to the home and raise children, they tend to experience a steeper decline in happiness than men do (Leistner & Mark, 2020). Marital satisfaction is lower among older women, who tend to be in that age bracket, than among younger women. They may be attributing it to their perception of a deterioration in their physical appeal with age. Women place a higher value on and are more affected by their outward looks than males.

Marital dissatisfaction, especially in terms of sexual connections, might result from an older woman's poor body image, according to research (Gelo & Gonzalez-Lugo, 2018). This may be especially true for clergywomen, who often become the center of social attention among churchgoers. Especially when they age and begin to feel less physically beautiful, clergy wives may see this as a threat to their marital happiness. Marriage happiness is positively correlated with educational attainment. Leistner and Mark 2020 found that couples with higher levels of education tended to have more mutually respectful relationships. They have a more optimistic outlook on marriage, are more receptive to new ideas, and have superior communication skills. Clergy and their wives with more education may have access to more suitable resources for dealing with their issues. As in the rest of the world, clergy and their spouses in Africa are facing difficulties in maintaining a happy marriage.

The happiness of a married couple in Africa also depends on things like their ability to communicate, their sexual satisfaction, their ability to solve problems, their understanding of gender roles, their ability to handle their finances well, and their level of love and regard for one another. Both men and women are equally vulnerable to developing major depressive disorder if their marriage is strained. Okoli, Ezeme, and Ofojebe (2019) conducted research in Nigeria to find out if marital discontent and perceived social support are related to an increased risk of depression for married people. This research project involved a cross-sectional survey of the Catholic men's organization (CMO) and the Catholic women's organization (CWO) in the Awka Diocese. In total, 276 people between the ages of 24 and 98 made up the sample. According to the results of the study, men and women with troubled marriages accounted for 80% of the depressed patients sent to the psychology service. Low levels of marital satisfaction are indicators of marital distress. Each partner's estimation of how unhappy they are in the marriage is their marital dissatisfaction. A source of marital discontent is when the earner

(often the husband) is unable to provide for his family. Thus, marital discontent might lead to a broken family. The clergy may experience lower marital happiness because of the stresses of their profession. This study aimed to address a gap in the literature by comparing marital satisfaction in Nigeria and Kenya, two countries that are geographically close but culturally distinct.

Asadi, Ghasemzadeh, Nazarifar, and Niroumand (2020) conducted research in Iran to determine whether or not emotion-focused pair therapy improved marital happiness and romantic sentiments between partners. The examined research employed a semi-experimental, before-and-after test design with a sample size of 14. According to the research we looked at, being happy in one's marriage contributes to overall happiness and good mental health. In addition, earlier research found that marital happiness is one of the most crucial indications of the strength of family performance, as it is the primary means by which a married couple may gauge whether or not they are content in their union. High-satisfaction marriages are associated with more good feelings, more positive recollections of the past, and a more favorable assessment of the present, as found in the evaluated research.

Similarly, Yoshany, Morowatisharifabad, Mihanpour, Bahri, and Jadgal (2017) examined the effect of husbands' education regarding menopausal health on the marital satisfaction of their wives in Iran. The research was conducted as a randomized controlled trial with two identical groups. One hundred Yazd women between the ages of 45 and 55 and their spouses participated in the study. Fifty couples (subjects) were split evenly between an intervention group and a control group. Two questionnaires were used to collect the information. According to the results of the study, a strong family unit is crucial to the physical and emotional well-being of married people, and the absence of such a unit can have far-reaching implications.

By taking advantage of the unique context in which four major religious groups (Buddhists, Protestants, Catholics, and none religious) coexist in South Korea, Lee and Lee (2023) investigated whether and how the relationship between religious homogamy (i.e., whether spouses have the same religious affiliation) and marital satisfaction varies across religious affiliations. The examined studies found a favorable correlation between religious homogamy and marital happiness among Protestants and Catholics, but no such correlation among Buddhists. Only among Protestants did the study find that a higher frequency of religious attendance strengthens the positive correlation between religious homogamy and marital happiness. Since the reviewed study was conducted in South Korea, this study's focus on Kenya helps to close the knowledge gap that resulted. Dagoretti South Sub-County is located in Nairobi County, Kenya, and the study's primary population was the Protestant clergy and their families living there.

Among Chinese American church leaders, Fung, Lin, Joo, and Wong (2021) investigated the causes of burnout, marital strife, and dissatisfaction with one's life. A survey research strategy was used, and 124 Chinese American church leaders, ranging in age from 25 to 68, were included in the study's sample. The factors of self-criticism, self-compassion, and bicultural identification were studied. According to the reviewed study, church leaders and clergy face special challenges and stress. In addition to self-criticism being harmful to marriage and happiness, the study found that self-compassion was a protective factor against ministry burnout. Previous research has indicated that strain and pressures may have an effect on clergy and their spouses' levels of marital satisfaction. The current study intended to bridge a contextual research vacuum by doing research in the Kenyan context, while the evaluated study

was conducted on Chinese Americans. In addition, the new study fills in the gaps left by the previous research by analyzing the independent variables. The current study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, integrating a correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative method with a sample size of 273. The reviewed study adopted a survey research methodology with 124 participants.

In addition, the literature study reveals that clergy wives lack confidence in their abilities to lead in tandem with their husbands (Harris, 2017). Anxiety among clergy spouses may arise for a number of reasons, including but not limited to the following: (1) self-imposed demands; (2) unrealistically high performance expectations from congregations and church leaders; and (3) a lack of clarity on specific role. Because of the pressure placed on clergy spouses to be strong, capable leaders in their homes, churches, and communities, some couples feel they have no choice but to hide the difficulties they are experiencing.

Okoli, Ezeme, and Ofojebe (2019) claim that unhappiness in a marriage might have significant effects on both partners' physical and mental health. For instance, it raises the possibility of damaging conflict patterns. It causes the immune system to become less effective and is linked to physiological reactivity. In the meantime, the lack of coping mechanisms leads to emotional distress. This is associated with low mood, impatience, and a lack of desire to engage in sexual activity. Discontent in a marriage is a major contributor to domestic strife.

The frequency of depression among pastors was found to be 19% in a study undertaken among members of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church in southern Nigeria (Solomon, Michael & Sokiprim, 2020). These results highlight the nature of the people clergy spouses interact with and the increased requirement for social support to meet the needs of clergy marriages. The wives of clergy members were not included in the study. The study also did not examine the factors that this one does. Therefore, the current research required to fill that void.

According to Rukenya's (2018) research into the difficulties pastors' wives in Kenya's PCEA-Nairobi Region face emotionally, these women face a number of difficulties. Reasons and results. A descriptive research strategy was used for this investigation. Twenty-six randomly selected spouses of pastors participated in the study. The study found that the biggest problems clergy and their families face are substandard housing, a lack of appreciation, and a lack of quality family time. Furthermore, their research showed that among the emotional effects of hardships, loneliness was the most detrimental. All of these things have an effect on how happy clergy couples feel in their marriages. Both studies were conducted in Nairobi, however while the former was limited to the PCEA in the greater Nairobi area, the latter included all of the churches in the Dagoretti South Sub-County of Nairobi County. Since the prior study was limited to discussing the dynamics of social support and marital contentment, this present study successfully filled that informational void.

Bolo (2017) investigated on Christian couples in the SDA churches of the Ruaraka constituency of Nairobi County on their communication habits in relation to their marital satisfaction. The researcher in the reviewed study took an exploratory approach. A total of 328 religious institutions were included in the analysis. The results showed that communication in the conflict did not have a statistically significant effect on marital fulfillment among Christian couples, while daily and regular communication, open and honest expression of thoughts and feeling did have a moderate positive significant effect. Bolo (2017) researched the connection between Christian couples' communication styles and their level of marital

contentment at Ruarka's Seventh-day Adventist churches. However, the purpose of the current research focused exclusively on protestant clergy and their partners to analyze the relationships between social support and marital happiness. Whereas the reviewed study used an exploratory research methodology, the current study used both a correlational quantitative and phenomenological qualitative method for an explanatory sequential mixed methods design.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Media and other government and non-government organizations have reported an increase in incidents of marital strife, indicating the need for assistance. External and internal pressures in the marriages of Protestant clergy are experienced equally by both partners (Paniagua, 2020). Like other married couples, protestant clergy and their spouses need social support, which might be difficult to come by in some situations. Due to their status as community role models, they are held to the highest ethical standards (Drumm, et al., 2017). Expectations that one places on oneself can also be a source of stress and depression (Solomon, Michael, & Sokiirim, 2020).

They are very sensitive to criticism and lack an emotional outlet because of their public persona (Rukenya, 2018). This is problematic because it means that some married people may be covering up the fact that they are having marital problems by acting as though everything is fine while, in fact, they are suffering in secret. Dagoretti South Sub-County is a part of Nairobi County, however there has been no research done there on this topic. Numerous studies in this field have been conducted on groups that are not African and are hence not applicable to the African community at large.

Protestant clergy and their partners in Dagoretti South Sub-County, Nairobi County, were surveyed to determine the relationship between social support and marital happiness. This research contributes to our understanding of clergy and family members' access to and utilization of psychological support services. The research also aimed to learn how protestant clergy couples improve their relationships with each other. Compared to other parts of the country, Dagoretti Sub- County has the highest concentration of protestant clergy and their families, hence it was chosen for this study (Gikonyo & Kiruthu, 2021). The Sub-County is also the fourth largest in population size out of the seventeen Sub-Counties in Nairobi County (KNBS, 2019).

### **Research Gaps**

Most research in this field has been conducted on subjects from outside of Africa, raising concerns that the results may not apply to the continent as a whole. The current research used an African population, which may have distinctive cultural features. This was important for assessing the extent to which previous investigations displayed any cultural biases. The point at which clergy and their spouses should be provided social support was also not consistent across research. Researchers can uncover previously uncharted territory in the marital satisfaction levels by drawing on a wide range of research approaches. In contrast, the present research expanded its scope beyond the examination of clergy and their wives' level of satisfaction as well as the causes and the interventions during stressful times to include its potential role as a preventative strategy for a variety of mental and physical health issues.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **The Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction**

Li and Fung (2011) put out the Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Happiness. The idea elucidates and examines the connection between couples' respective life goals and their level of happiness in their marriage. From a lifetime vantage point, this model categorizes relationship objectives by stage. The significance of marriage goals and their connection to marital happiness are both explicitly mentioned in the model's guiding statements. The authors distinguish between companionship goals (based on people's need for belongingness, intimacy, and commitment), personal growth goals (including the development of one's interests, social contacts, the opportunity to construct one's own identity, accepting challenges, or building competences), and instrumental goals (also known as the practical side of marriage, such as sharing responsibilities, managing finances, or raising children). Prioritization of marital goals shifts throughout time, as stated by Li and Fung (2011). In one's early 20s, self-improvement objectives take precedence over professional or material ones. Goals that are instrumental in nature are most important throughout mid-adulthood, whereas those that are social in nature are most important during late adulthood.

According to the author (Li & Fung, 2011), there are three categories of goals: instrumental, companionship, and personal development. The model accounts for shifts in viewpoint from the field of life-span psychology, which is shaped by shifting values as people age and their relationships evolve. An important determinant in marital happiness, as identified by Li and Fung (2011), is the accomplishment of shared goals. The degree to which a marriage satisfies the wants, desires, and aspirations of each partner is a major factor in the happiness of the couple as a whole. However, when objectives are not met, mental health might suffer. In particular, people experience dejection-related negative feelings like disappointment and frustration when their ideal-self goals are not met, but they experience agitation-related bad emotions like guilt and anxiety when their ought-self goals are not met.

Indeed, in the context of marital happiness, both closeness and commitment are directly linked to the companionship objectives. Relationship improvement and self-actualization are examples of personal growth goals. Having supportive people around you is crucial to making progress in your life. With a clear objective in mind, it was much easier to find and rate potential friends and allies who could lend a hand. A large portion of our intentions while forming social connections are self-interested. It has been found that self-development—the process of gaining new identities, experience, knowledge, and social networks—is crucial to both entering into and maintaining a marriage (Li & Fung, 2011).

## **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. For inferential analysis, we used SPSS version 23 for the social sciences.

## RESULTS

### Demographic Characteristics of the Quantitative Participants

The researcher carefully analyzed the respondents' demographic information. Mills (2020) described demographic data as information on the traits that distinguish a person or group from others. He added that collecting demographic data is crucial for academics to gain insight into the people who would be affected by their studies. Participants were asked about their gender, age, education, marital status, and whether or not they were ordained ministers or clergy spouses. To determine whether or not the people in a study are a representative sample of the target population for generalization purposes, it is necessary to collect data on their demographic characteristics, as suggested by Ray and Rubenstein (2020). The researcher's ability to accurately interpret the results relied in large part on the information provided by the respondents' demographic information. Subthemes that followed expanded on the respondents' demographic information.

### Distribution of Participants by Gender

The participants' genders were evaluated to get an accurate cross-section of the population. Since gender is one of the many demographic variables that potentially influence the findings, it played a significant role in this research. According to Beam, Marcus, Turkheimer, and Emery (2018), spouses' perceptions of the quality of their relationship can vary because of the many common experiences and interactions they have. So, in terms of social support dynamics in marriage and marital satisfaction among Protestant clergy and their partners, gender provides a particularly vulnerable profile of an individual.

**Table 1: Distribution of Participants by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	164	60.1
Female	108	39.6
Missing System	1	0.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>100.1</b>

Table 1 displays a very even split between male and female responders. There were 164 males (60.1% of the total) and 108 females (39.6%), according to the results of this study. The results indicate that there were more male participants (60.1% of the total) compared to female participants (39.6%). This suggests that the majority of the participants in the study were male. The gender distribution may reflect the gender composition of the Protestant clergy in Dagoretti South Sub- County.

Additionally, it is important to consider potential gender differences in social support dynamics within the context of marital relationships. Therefore, exploring how these gender differences in social support provision and utilization influence marital satisfaction can provide valuable insights. The distribution of participants by gender may also be influenced by societal gender roles and expectations within the context of the Protestant clergy in Dagoretti South Sub-County. These roles and expectations can shape the dynamics of social support and marital satisfaction. Investigating the interplay between gender roles, support systems, and marital relationships can help identify potential challenges or disparities that may arise.

Furthermore, the gender distribution provides an opportunity to examine gender-related experiences and challenges within the context of the Protestant clergy and their spouses. For example, exploring the impact of gender roles, power dynamics, and societal expectations on social support networks and marital satisfaction can offer insights into the unique experiences of male and female participants.

### **Age of the Participants**

The age of the respondents was considered, as there may be significant differences in the amount of social assistance a person receives at different ages. Age was also deemed a key research variable since it may have an effect on marital satisfaction and the ability to develop and change in the face of adversity. People who have been married for longer tend to know how to effectively navigate typical marital difficulties. Analysis of participants' self-reported ages is shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Age of the Participants**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
21-30	25	9.2
31-40	72	26.4
41-50	96	35.2
51-60	68	24.9
61 +	12	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100.1</b>

There was a clear majority (96, or 35.2%) of participants between the ages of 41 and 50, according to this survey. The majority of responders are between the ages of 40 and 60, an age bracket associated with a desire to plant seeds for the future through mentoring others or making lasting contributions to society (McLeod, 2022). Seventy-two respondents, or 26.4%, were between the ages of 31 and 40; 68 were between the ages of 51 and 60; 25 were between the ages of 21 and 30; 12 were 61 or older. These results show that 96 participants (35.2% of the total) all fell within the same age range, which is significant for drawing conclusions about the impact of social support dynamics on marital satisfaction among people of this age. Sorokowski, Kowal, and Sorokowska (2019) found that younger persons showed higher levels of marital happiness, suggesting that there is a correlation between marital satisfaction and age.

### **Education Level of the Participants**

The participants' educational attainment was of particular interest to the researcher because of its potential bearing on the strength of their social networks and the quality of their marriages. Individuals with greater knowledge are more likely to come up with creative solutions to marital problems, which increases marital satisfaction. Table 3 displays the outcomes of the respondents' educational levels in the current investigation.

**Table 3: Educational Level**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Primary	42	15.4
Secondary	75	27.5
College	86	31.5
Bachelor's degree	41	15.0
Postgraduate degree	29	10.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100</b>

This study found that a large percentage of participants, 86 (31.5%), reported having finished some level of higher education. Seventy-five respondents (27.5% of the total) had completed high school, making them the second most educated group. The remaining 42 respondents (15.4%) fell into the category of having completed elementary school. Of those, 41 (15%) held a bachelor's degree or higher. Finally, 29 respondents (10.6%) have some level of higher education.

Based on the findings indicates that a significant percentage (31.5%) of the participants had completed some level of higher education, such as a bachelor's degree or higher. This suggests that a substantial number of Protestant ministers and their partners in Dagoretti South Sub-county have pursued higher education, which can have implications for their marital satisfaction. Higher education may contribute to increased knowledge, skills, and personal development, potentially influencing communication patterns, problem-solving abilities, and overall satisfaction within marital relationships.

In addition, the prevalence of college graduates among the Protestant ministers and their spouses (15%) suggests that this group may have access to a wider range of social support networks. Higher education often exposes individuals to diverse social circles, including colleagues, classmates, and alumni networks, which can provide additional avenues for social support. These networks may play a role in enhancing social support dynamics within marital relationships.

The findings also highlight educational disparities within the sample. Only a small percentage (15.4%) of the participants had completed elementary school, which suggests a relatively lower level of educational attainment within this group. Understanding these disparities can be essential for assessing potential differences in social support dynamics and marital satisfaction. Further investigation can explore whether educational disparities impact access to support systems and how it influences marital relationships.

The higher prevalence of higher education among the participants may indicate that individuals with advanced educational backgrounds may have different experiences, expectations, and resources in terms of social support and marital satisfaction. This finding opens avenues for studying the potential influence of educational attainment on social support networks, communication patterns, conflict resolution skills, and overall marital well-being. However, it is important to note that educational attainment is just one factor that can influence social support dynamics and marital satisfaction. Other factors, such as cultural norms, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, and personal characteristics, should also be considered to obtain a comprehensive understanding.

### Duration in Marriage

One aspect of social support dynamics that this study attempted to investigate was the participants' length of marriage as an important type of human relationships. A person's ability to deal with or find solutions to marital difficulties over time is influenced by his or her life experiences. Table 4 displays the statistics about the number of years spent married.

**Table 4: Duration in Marriage**

<b>Duration in Marriage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Less than 5 years	30	11.0
6-10 years	38	13.9
11-15 years	51	18.7
16-20 years	35	12.8
Over 20 years	119	43.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows that respondents were fairly spread out in terms of how long they've been married. The results showed that over half of the participants (119 or 43.6%) were married for more than 20 years. This suggests that most members of the protestant clergy and their spouses persevere in their marriages despite difficulties. The second group consisted of the 51 (18.7%) respondents who had been married between 11 and 15 years. Thirty-eight (13.9%) of the respondents fell into the third group, which consisted of those who had been married for six or more years. Thirty-five (12.8%) of the married couples had been together for between 16 and 20 years, while thirty (11.0%) had been married for no more than five years. This indicates that the social support dynamics and marital levels of fulfillment of the protestant clergy and their spouses differ depending on the degree of experience each pair possesses.

The fact that over half of the participants (43.6%) had been married for more than 20 years suggests a high level of endurance and commitment within the marriages of the Protestant clergy and their spouses. Despite potential difficulties or challenges faced throughout their marriages, these couples have remained committed to their relationships. The distribution of participants across different marriage duration categories indicates a level of stability and longevity within the marriages. The second largest group (18.7%) consisted of those married between 11 and 15 years, followed by the third group (13.9%) married for six or more years. This suggests that a significant proportion of the participants have been able to maintain their marital relationships for a considerable period, fostering stability within their partnerships.

The duration of marriage can potentially influence marital satisfaction. Couples who have been married for a longer time may have developed stronger bonds, deeper understanding, and effective coping mechanisms, which can positively impact their satisfaction levels. However, it's important to note that individual experiences and other factors can also influence marital satisfaction, so further analysis and investigation are needed to establish a direct relationship.

The longevity of marriages among the Protestant clergy and their spouses may indicate the presence of strong social support networks within their religious community. These networks, which can include fellow clergy members, congregants, and other community members, may provide emotional, practical, and spiritual support that contributes to marital satisfaction and resilience.

The distribution of participants across different marriage duration categories provides insight into the diversity of experiences within the sample. This diversity can be explored further to understand how social support dynamics and marital satisfaction may differ based on the length of the marriage. For instance, comparing the experiences and support systems of couples married for more than 20 years with those married for fewer years can provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of marital relationships.

### **Clergy or Spouse**

One of the facets of interpersonal dynamics and marital fulfillment that the study attempted to investigate was the impact of the participants' category, whether they were clergy or spouse of the clergy. You can see the outcomes in Table 5 below.

**Table 5: Participants Status (Clergy or Spouse to Clergy)**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Clergy	184	67.4
Spouse	86	31.5
Missing System	3	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the study's participants were clergy (184, or 67.4%), while only 86, or 31.5%, were partners or spouses. However, the system was missing three of them (1.1%). Most protestant clergy spouses take care of children and household duties while their partners participate in conferences. As a result, some clergy spouses were not present at the scheduled time of the conference convened by the protestant leadership. The inclusion of partners or spouses as participants (31.5%) acknowledges the importance of considering their experiences and perspectives. This allows for a comprehensive examination of social support dynamics and marital satisfaction, taking into account the viewpoints of both the clergy members and their spouses. It recognizes that the support and satisfaction experienced within the marital relationship are influenced by the experiences and roles of both partners.

### **Levels of Marital Satisfaction of Protestant Clergy and their Spouses**

The first research question aimed to look at how happy protestant clergy couples were according to EMSS. According to Gelo and Gonzalez-Lugo (2018), marital happiness is achieved when both partners feel emotionally fulfilled by their shared interactions, experiences, and hopes for the future. Consequently, factors such as roles and duties, interactions, decision making, conflict resolution, individual behaviors of the partnership, financial decisions, expressions of affection and sexuality, religious beliefs, expectations, and value practices, were used to gauge the level of marital satisfaction among protestant clergy and their spouses. There was a significant percentage difference between the lowest and highest ratings for marital satisfaction. Table 1 displays the study's findings.

**Table 6: Levels of Marital Satisfaction of Protestant Clergy and their Spouses**

	Frequency	Percentage
Low Marital Satisfaction	6	2.2
Moderate Marital Satisfaction	130	47.6
High Marital Satisfaction	116	42.5
Missing System	21	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100</b>

The average marital satisfaction score in this study was 130 (47.6%). The remaining 116 (42.5%) had a high marriage satisfaction score, while 6 (2.2%) got a low score, and 21 (7.7%) were unaccounted for. The results of this study show that most clergy and their spouses have optimistic views and feelings about their relationships. According to studies, married couples report feeling fulfilled when their union lives up to their hopes and dreams (Sayehmiri, 2020). However, marital contentment is a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon. All marriages face challenges, but the clergy and their partners face additional pressures due to their vocation.

According to the results, a moderate score of 47.6% indicates marital happiness among the protestant clergy and their spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-county, Nairobi County in Kenya. That's encouraging, and it might be because they're teaching one another to solve marital problems by praying and performing other spiritual rituals and, above all, by putting their faith in a higher force (God). The findings corroborate those of prior research showing that a strong religious faith has a positive effect on marital happiness (Khezri et al., 2020).

Many studies have found a favorable correlation between a couple's level of happiness in their marriage and the degree to which they prioritize their spiritual and religious connections outside the home (Pandya, 2018). The aforementioned theoretical framework suggests that religious belief provides the foundation for increased levels of tolerance, dedication, and selflessness in marital interactions. When it comes to strengthening their relationships, clergy couples in the Protestant tradition often rely on their shared religious beliefs to get them through tough times.

Marriage happiness is linked to overall happiness and psychological well-being, according to research by Asadi, Ghasemzadeh, Nazarifar, and Niroumand (2020). Results from this survey reveal that the protestant clergy and their spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-County had a moderate level of life happiness and decent mental health, as indicated by a satisfaction score of 47.6%. Yoshany, Morowatisharifabad, Mihanpour, Bahri, and Jadgal (2017) found that a strong family foundation is crucial to the physical and mental health of married people, and that if that foundation is weak, it can have far-reaching consequences. Clergy and church leaders face special challenges due to the nature of their work, as discovered by Fung, Lin, Joo, and Wong (2021). Self-criticism was found to be a risk factor for marital relationships and life happiness, whereas self-compassion was found to be protective against ministry burnout. It's possible that this is one of the reasons why protestant clergy couples tend to be happier overall.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Summary**

The average marital satisfaction score in this study was 130 (47.6%). The remaining 116 (42.5%) had a high marital satisfaction level, whereas 6 (2.2%) got a low score, and 21 (7.7%) were not included in the calculation. The results of this study show that most protestant clergy and their spouses have optimistic views and feelings about their relationships. However, marital contentment is a multifaceted and intricate phenomenon. This is due to the fact that stress is present in every marriage and that clergy and their wives face additional stresses from ministry work. According to the results, a moderate level of marital happiness was reported by 47.6% of the protestant clergy and their spouses in Dagoretti South Sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya. This is encouraging, and it may be attributable in large part to the fact that they are teaching one another how to deal with marital problems by modeling religious observances and putting their faith in a higher force (God).

### **Conclusion**

The results of the survey showed that there were no statistically significant differences in marital happiness between the ages of the protestant clergy and their spouses, except for those related to education. The biggest mean differences, which were similar scores on total marital satisfaction, were found among those with a bachelor's degree or higher. Participants who had been married for less than five years reported higher levels of marital satisfaction on average than those who had been married for longer. Additionally, the male participants reported higher marriage satisfaction than the female individuals. The results showed that the mean level of marital satisfaction was marginally greater for the spouses of clergy members than it was for clergy members themselves.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommends that the protestant clergy and their spouses set up peer to peer support groups that will enable them to overload their marital challenges. This is because the findings of the study indicated that, the protestant clergy and their spouses do not have a place to overload their marital issues due to their status in the society. In addition, the findings of the study showed that, the protestant clergy and their spouses experienced moderate level of marital satisfaction and few having low marital satisfaction level. This calls for an intervention since the findings are not conclusive on higher satisfaction in their marital relationships.

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.

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