

Family Relationship and Dual-earners as Correlates of Marital Satisfaction among Married Couples

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In this study, the relationship between family relationship and dual-earners as correlates of marital satisfaction was examined among married couples. The participants were 394 married couples who volunteered from one randomly selected church in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra state. They are comprised of 130 males (32.9%) and 264 females (67%) with a mean age 43.94 years and standard deviation of 9.11 years. Two instruments were deployed for data collection; Index of Family Relation (IFR) by Hudson (1982) and Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS) by Hudson (1982). Dual-earnership information was derived from the demographic section. The correlation design was adopted; and data analysis was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Result of Zero Order Correlation Coefficient revealed that family relationship correlated positively and significantly with marital satisfaction $r = .36$, $p < .01$, while the association between dual-earners and marital satisfaction was negative $r = -.02$, $P < .05$. Therefore, hypothesis one was confirmed. It was concluded that family-relationship is a positive construct that enhances marital satisfaction. It was recommended that married couples should enrich their family relationship in order to achieve a more satisfactory marriage.

Keywords: Dual-earner, family relationship, marital satisfaction

Introduction

Background to the Study

Marriage appears to be a dream to most growing adults; and which each person may experience with positive emotions. Perhaps, similar emotions are also felt by parents, guardians and well-wishers of intending couples. To parents, it seems a time of relaxation and as well as of great uncertainty about the future and welfare of their children. It appears to be a moment when freedom for the young adults may blossom in full swing. Regrettably, this moment comes with great transition as the young adult makes lots of adjustments in preparation for leaving home in pursuit of a new life with a partner. Also, most young adults are motivated to leave home earlier than expected perhaps in avoidance of parental control and restrictions. At such periods, the future remains uncertain for the young adults. However, the pressure to get married usually seems higher and more intense than the desire to stay with one's parents. Therefore, the young adults begin marriage plans in earnest. In these

circumstances, one thing remains clear: in this contemporary time, young adults seem to reduce parental involvement in their choice of whom to marry. As a result, obvious pit falls are not envisaged.

Soon after the young adults had celebrated marriage and received wishes of happy marital life, they are metamorphosed to new challenges of married life. The practical aspect of marital life begins to wade into family relationship to test the strength and weakness of the marriage. Now, couples who were motivated to marry begin to learn the hard lessons of life. New and older couples are usually confronted with decisions that either push the family forward or backward. Such decisions may include: marital commitment and communication (Hou *et al.*, 2018), type of occupation and work-family conflict (Burch, 2019), family religiosity level (Aman, Abbas, Nurunnabi & Bano, 2019), and marital adjustment (Botha, den Berg & Venter, 2009; Mutlu, Erkut, Yildirim & Gundogdu, 2017). It is assumed, from a traditional perspective, that

provisions for the household may be an assignment within prerogative of the husband (as breadwinner). In this line of thought where the male is breadwinner, females are viewed as subordinates (Karim, 2018). Yet it appears that in contemporary time, as couples confront their respective dyadic and personal challenges, they begin to appreciate the role of finance in meeting up with such demands. Consequently, the need to secure a job for a wife becomes imperative.

In line with securing occupation for the wife, the new family automatically changes the culture of relationship in the home. According to Burch (2019) work-family conflict appears to be a microcosm of family relationship. Therefore, dual-earner may be perceived as a component of all interaction patterns existing in the family which is regarded as family relationship. Consequently, Brockwood (2007) posits that work and family are considered as two separate domains that influence each other in both positive and negative ways. Scholars posit that dual-earner couples have significantly replaced the traditional breadwinner-husband and homemaker-wife model; and much attention is being given to understanding the impact of this phenomenon (Shimazu *et al.*, 2013). However, authors Putri & Kinanthi (2016) argue that dual-earner may introduce pressure in the home and affect marital satisfaction. Indeed, the rise in female involvement in the labour market may indicate that the traditional male domination of the labour market has shifted to a more all gender inclusive labour force. Hence, there is need to examine the relationship between family relationship and dual-earners as correlates of marital satisfaction among couples.

According to Larson and Holman (1994) marriage is the most important and fundamental of human relationships because it provides the primary structure for establishing a family relationship and rearing the next generation. Scholars hold that marital satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that includes various factors such as personality attributes, finances, parenting styles, and sexual relations (Lotfi & Vaziri, 2011). A plethora of researchers hold that communication, mutual trust, mutual interest, understanding and exchange of thoughts and feelings are closely related to marital satisfaction (Kaslow & Robinson, 1996). According to

Khodabakhsh, Mahdi, Ali & Mohammad (2010), marital satisfaction is as a global evaluation of the state of one's marriage. A global evaluation of one's marriage involves an in-depth assessment of how one perceives his or her marriage. Others hold that marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person (sk.sagepub.com/reference/socialpsychology), or an individual's subjective experience of the marriage which fulfils personal needs, desires and dreams (<https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu>). Similarly, other researchers report of other dimensions of marital satisfaction: sexual satisfaction, receiving support from partner, partner's health, communication; personality attributes, relationship with others, participation in decision making, and relationship with partner's family, leisure time, common religion and religious belief and social support (Rostami & Cheraghali, 2014; Javanmard & Mohammadi, 2013; Molden, Finkel, Kumashiro & Rusbult, 2009; Wang & Goodwin, 2009). Perhaps, the nature and scope of marital satisfaction is the reason why there is lack of unanimous acceptance of a definition of marital satisfaction. Surprisingly, statistics reveal that marital satisfaction is not easily achieved (Gholam & Rogayeh, 2013). These definitions seem to have some elements of commonalities such as: personal examination of efforts as costs and rewards, fulfilled dreams and expectations. Basically, one may define marital satisfaction as one's personal evaluation of one's dreams and expectations before marriage and how the present conditions could lead towards achievement of such expectations.

Scholarship works have been quite explicit on the positive consequences of marital satisfaction. Also, studies in marital satisfaction explored other concepts such as; spousal support and marital satisfaction (Ebenuwa-Okoh, Edu & Elizabeth, 2016); emotional expression, and spousal support as predictors of marital satisfaction (Yedirir, 2015). Earlier, Fowler (1991) reported that marital satisfaction enhances greater mental health benefit. Recently, Fatima Shaima, Hassane, Saad and Hamzeh (2017) argue that marital satisfaction predicts individual well-being as measured by life satisfaction and self-esteem. Study revealed that life satisfaction is

positively and significantly related to family relationships (Guo & Chen, 2016). Therefore, it is expected that since marital satisfaction shared positive and significant association with life satisfaction, family relationship will positively relate with marital satisfaction.

Family-relationship is an important concept in the determination of marital satisfaction yet not much is known about it. Despite the importance of family relationship, the dearth of knowledge in the relationship between family relationship and marital satisfaction may be a reason why divorce rate among couples could be on a rise. In view of literature examined in family relationship, it was observed that there was a limited number of works done relating to family relationship and marital satisfaction. Earlier, scholars examined some concepts within the fulcrum of family relationship. Some hold that family relationship is perceived as: couple-level work-family conflict Burch (2019), religiosity (Aman *et al.* (2019), family structure and family relationship (Dinisman, Andresen, Montserrat & Strozik, 2017), family problem solving on marital satisfaction (Khoda bakhsh, Mahdi, Ali & Mohammad, 2010), marital commitment and communication (Hou, 2018), marital adjustment (Mutlu, 2018) and family-of-origin (Venter, Botha & Berg 2009), family relation, adjustment and well-being of children in care (Anderson, 2005). According to Hudson (1982), family relationship is a global appraisal of one's subjective evaluation of his family's interactions. Subsequently, Venter, Botha & Van den Berg (2009) defined family relationship as behaviours such as problem solving, commitment, roles, affective involvement, and behavioural commitment among members. A common factor in both definitions is the focus on one's global assessment of all positive and negative feeling of the family behaviours. One could define family relationship as, one's general evaluation of all positive and negative feelings of his/her family. Empirical assumption holds that family relationship may have positive association with dual-earners. However, according to Minnotte, Minnotte & Bonstron (2015) relationship between work and family is reciprocal: work can negatively affect family (i.e. work-family conflict), and family can negatively affect work

(i.e., family-to-work conflict). Also, Amstad *et al.* (2011) reported that work-family conflict might affect non-work outcome such as marital satisfaction.

Empirical studies revealed that studies on dual-earners have been on the rise since the 1990s (Karambayya & Reilly, 1992). Consequently, definitions of dual-earners are quite on the increase. Based on literature earlier studied, it appears that not much is known of the link between dual-earners and marital satisfaction. Adisa, Osabutey and Gbadamosi (2017) define dual-earners as couples: husbands and wives or partners in civil relationships who are gainfully employed in the form of paid employment and maintain family lives alongside such employment. This definition focuses on the aspect of couples with occupation and who sustain their families mutually from rewards they receive from work. According to Shimazu *et al.* (2013) the term 'dual-earners' has come to replace the traditional breadwinner model of husbands being in charge of provision of family finance and wives being home-makers. In this respect, Bloemen & Stancanelli (2015) reported a new perspective which focuses on situations in which wives are striving to replace their husbands as breadwinners. In this emerging trend, scholars observe that a situation where the wife earns more than her husband may have a destabilising effect on marital relationship because of non-conventional power structure (Lin & Vikat, 2004; Lin & Vikat, 2004). It appears that this perspective may be evident in western cultures. Perhaps, active female participation in the labour market may include: to augment the family's financial resource base, women's desire for fulfillment and independence, making a case for gender equity (OECD, 2001), and rise in women gaining university degree which also increases their desire to use their acquired knowledge and experience (Padula, 1994). Furthermore, it seems that there are two types of dual-earners: commuter dual-earner and single dual-earner couples (Adisa *et al.*, 2017). Accordingly, commuter dual-earners refers to couples that live in two separate residences due to their work demands for at least part of the week, while single dual-earner couples refers to couples who live in the same residence.

Finally, family relationship is a multifaceted concept which addresses the numerous interaction patterns that exist among couples and their children which may have the capacity to diminish marital satisfaction. According to studies, years devoted to raising children could be associated with diminished personal happiness, marital satisfaction, and wellbeing, particularly for mothers. Similarly, dual-earners which may promise so much in terms of augmenting the financial base of the family resource may pose another source of marital stress that may threaten marital satisfaction. Researchers in the present study therefore explore the link between family relationship and dual-earners as correlates of marital satisfaction among married couples.

Statement of the problem

Since the recent influx of women in the labour market, the conventional family norm appears to be in stress. Studies in family relationship and dual-earners on marital satisfaction have been motivated to examine the nexus in the relationship. Scholarship studies report studies that examined link between couple-level work-family conflict and marital satisfaction (Burch, 2019), religiosity (Aman *et al.*, 2019), marital commitment and communication on marital satisfaction (Hou *et al.* 2018), marital adjustment (Mutlu *et al.*, 2018), and family-of-origin (2009). Yet, evidence from the examined literature review on relationship between family relationship and marital satisfaction reveal that earlier scholars did not approach the concept as an overall evaluation of the feelings individuals have for their family. As a result, the absence of such global evaluation creates a vacuum in knowledge. Similarly, earlier studies were concerned with positive and negative emotions experienced in daily life among dual-earner couples with children (Campos, Plaksina, Repetti, Ochs, Wang, Schoebi & Beck, 2013), dual-earner: attitude and actions in reconstructing work-to-family (Karambayya & Reilly, 1992) marital satisfaction among dual-earner couples: commuter versus single residence couples (Christanie, Ginanjar & Primasan, 2018), job stress and marital satisfaction among husbands in dual-earner marriages (Putri & Kinanthi, 2016) and longitudinal link between work experiences and marital satisfaction in African dual-earner

couples (Sun, McHale, Crouter & Jones, 2017). Evidence suggests that among these studies examined, there appears to be dearth of knowledge between dual-earners and marital satisfaction. For instance, earlier works focused on dual-earners as dependent variable. However, in the present study, dual-earner is perceived as an independent variable as well as subjective evaluation. Also, the present sample appears not to have been examined in earlier studies in the context of the concepts of interests.

Hypotheses

1. Family-relationship will significantly and positively correlate with marital satisfaction among married couples.
2. Dual-earners will significantly and positively correlate with marital satisfaction among married couples.

Family relationships and marital satisfaction

In a study reported by Burch (2019) on “all in the family: the link between couple-level work-family conflict (component of family relationship) and family satisfaction (component of marital satisfaction) and its impact on the composition of the family over time”, couples' work-family conflict was examined in relation with how it influences future satisfaction within the family domain and subsequent couple separation and family expansion. Results suggest that work-family conflict does alter the couple's work-family interface indirectly by negatively influencing satisfaction within the family domain, which in turn influences future couple separation and family expansion through birth or adoption. The result show that the effect of work-family conflict can change the structure and composition of the family unit. Results from the study are similar to the study variables under investigation. Work-family (a component of family conflict) and family satisfaction (a component of marital satisfaction) were negatively related, for instance.

In a related study, Aman *et al.* (2019) reported a study on the relationship of religiosity (component of family relationship) and marital satisfaction: the role of religious commitment and practices on marital satisfaction among Pakistani respondents. Participants for the study were 508 (254, males and 254 females). Participants were

predominantly Muslims. Instruments for the study were Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (KMSS), the religious commitment inventory (RCI-10) and Religious Practice Scale. Results show that religious commitment and practice are necessary for marital satisfaction. The result of earlier study was not consistent with Aman *et al.* (2019). Burch (2019) reported negative relationship between family relationship and marital satisfaction while Aman *et al.* (2019) reported positive relationship. It appears that sample participants in the two studies also differed demographically.

In another study, Hou (2018) examined marital commitment (component of family relationship), communication (component of family relationship) and marital satisfaction: An analysis based on actor-partner interdependence model among the Chinese. Participants for the study were 400 couples. Results show that both couples show asymmetric associations for marital commitment, communication and satisfaction. Specifically, wives are more attuned to the path from marital commitment to marital satisfaction via communication. The result of the study by Hou (2018) seem to be consistent with Aman *et al.* (2019) but differed from Burch (2019). The reason for such variation could be from sample of the studies with respect to religious background.

Similarly, Mutlu *et al.* (2017) reported a review on the relationship between marital adjustment (component of family relationship) and maternal attachment (component of marital relationship) among Turkish couples. Participants for the study were 113 mothers. Instruments deployed as data collection tools for data collection were Marital Adjustment Scale (MAS) and Maternal Attachment Scale (MAS). Results show weak but positive relationship between family relationship and marital relationship. Mutlu *et al.* (2017) seems to be different from latest studies. While Aman *et al.* (2019) and Burch (2019) report a significantly positive family relationship with marital relationship, Mutlu *et al.* (2017) report a weak but positive relationship. The reason for such variation may have been from the participants' characteristics.

Earlier, Den Berg (2009) reported a study on the relationship between family-of-origin

(component of family relationship) and marital satisfaction. Instruments deployed for data assessment tools were Locke and Wallace Marital Adjustment Test and McMaster Family Assessment Device. Accordingly, family-of-origin factors which included: problem solving, communication, roles, affective involvement and behavioural control were investigated. Participants for the study were 47 married couples. Results show a significant positive relationship between family relationship and marital satisfaction. This is similar to other studies: Aman *et al.* (2019), Hou (2018); Mutlu *et al.* (2017) and Den Berg (2009); but differs from Burch (2019). Perhaps, the areas of similarity and differences may be on culture and sample characteristics.

Dual-earners and marital satisfaction

Christianie *et al.* (2018) reported a study on marital satisfaction among dual-earner married couples: commuter versus single residence couples. Participants for the study were 239 couples. Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI) was used as instrument for data collection. Statistical tool applied was One Way ANOVA which was used to compare the two groups. Results show that commuter married couples have higher marital satisfaction compared to single residence dual-earner couples. Men reported higher marital satisfaction than women. Christianie *et al.* (2018) seems to have focused more on other aspects of dual-earners. Therefore, it varies with the present concerns of this investigation.

In a related study, Sun *et al.* (2017) reported a study on longitudinal links between work experiences (dual-earner) and marital satisfaction in African dual-earner couples. Participants were 164 African American dual-earner couples who were interviewed annually across three years. Results show that wives' work-pressure was negatively linked to marital satisfaction only when their husbands reported high pressure. Husband's work-pressure was negatively linked to marital satisfaction when their wives reported low pressure. Christianie *et al.* (2018) show variations in result; it reports positive association between dual-earners and marital satisfaction, and further explained that the commuter type of

dual earners is more satisfying to male than female spouses.

In another study, Putri & Kinanthi (2016) reports a study on job stress (component of dual-earners) and marital satisfaction among husbands in dual-earner marriages. Participants for the study were 100 husbands. Instruments deployed were Job Stress Scale and the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (1993), descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. Results show a significant negative relationship between job stress and marital satisfaction. This means that higher job stress relates with decreased marital satisfaction. Putri and Kunanthi's (2016) work appears similar to Sun *et al.* (2017) but differs with Christianie *et al.* (2018).

In another study reported by Campos *et al.* (2013) on positive and negative emotions in daily life of dual-earner couples with children. Participants for the study were 30 dual-earner couples with young children. Results show that mild positive emotion was generally characteristic of both mother and father. However, only mothers' positive emotion dropped during the evening period between 5-8pm. Plaksina *et al.* (2013) is similar to Christianie *et al.* (2018) but differs from Sun *et al.* (2017) and Putri & Kunanthi (2016).

Theoretical framework

The social exchange theory (SET) was considered the most plausible theory for the current study. The SET demonstrated link between family relationship and dual-earner on marital satisfaction. Accordingly, the SET is a theory of interpersonal attraction. The basic assumption of the social exchange theory is that people's feelings about a relationship depends on their perception of rewards and costs of the relationship, the kind of relationship they deserve and their chances of having a better relationship with someone else. The SET may be reduced to four basic steps: reward, cost, outcome and comparison level.

Rewards are positive and gratifying aspects of relationship that make it worthwhile and reinforcing. Rewards may come in form of our ability to acquire external resources by virtue of knowing the person, beauty, handsomeness and show of charisma, such as gaining money, status,

activities, or other interesting people (Lott & Lotts, 1974). Costs are the other side of rewards. Costs are necessary sides of all romantic relationships. Costs are those annoying characteristics and habits partners have which the other may bear in course of relationships. Outcome refers to the mathematical formula where reward equals relationship minus cost. If the answer is minus then the relationship is in poor state. Relationship in minus terms emphasises dissatisfaction (outcome). Again, the comparison level is the final stage of social exchange theory. Comparison level is what one expects the outcome of his or her relationship to be like in terms of rewards and costs. Based on one's amassed history of relationships before marriage, he or she already has a mental expectation of what the present and the future relationship should be like. If one's comparison level is high, then the individual would be unhappy in the present relationship, however, if it is low, such a person will be happy in the present relationship. Also, individuals who have high comparative levels for alternatives would be dissatisfied in the present relationship because they believe that the world is made up of fabulous people waiting to meet them, while others who have low comparative level for alternatives would remain in costly relationships.

Method

Design

The design for the study was correlation design and the statistics applied was Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 22.0 was used for data management.

Participants

Three hundred and ninety-four (394) married couples who volunteered from one randomly selected Catholic Church in Awka Parish participated in the study. The church that participated was randomly selected from the 28 parishes within Awka metropolis using a simple random sampling (deep stick). This randomly selected church is St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church, Awka. The ages of participants were between 25 to 59 years, with mean age of 43.94 years and a standard deviation of 9.11 years. One hundred and thirty of the participants were males

(32.9%) while two hundred and sixty-four were females. Gender discrepancy of sample of the study was 130(32.9%) males and 264(67.9%) females. Participants were Christians because the sample was drawn after Sunday church service.

Instruments

Two instruments were deployed for data collection: Index of family relations and Index of marital satisfaction (IMS). Index of marital satisfaction (IMS) was developed by Hudson (1982). Index of marital satisfaction measures the degree to which one is satisfied with the present marriage. Index showed positive association with life satisfaction scale by Diener, Suh, Smith & Shao (1995). The IMS is a 25 item scale, with 5-point response category (1-rarely or none of the time to 5 most of or all of the time). Items: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 7 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 24 and 25 are reversed while other items were normally scored. The psychometric properties of the IMS was provided by Hudson (1982) and Anene (1994). The reliability coefficient of .96 and concurrent validity of .48 were provided respectively. The reliability of the index of Marital Satisfaction Inventory for the present sample was established at .85 alpha coefficient. Index of Family Relations (IFR) was used to test family relations, while; Dual-Earner couple was assessed using some demographic information “Does your work earn you money every month?” “Do you spend some of the money on your household?” “Are you happy about the contributions you make to your family?”

Index of family relations was developed by Hudson (1982). It contains 25 items and response pattern was a five point response category 1 strongly disagree to category 5 strongly agree. Items 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 19, 22, 24, and 25 are reversely scored, while other items are positively scored. Validity of the Index of Family Relation (IFR) was established at $r = .49$ by correlating the IFR with Subjective Wellbeing Scale by Diener *et al.*, (1995), while the Cronbach alpha reliability of .85 was obtained among the present sample.

Procedure

The instrument for research require each participant to endorse a consent form. However,

due to the fact that the participants were met after the close of Sunday service as they were leaving the church, the contents of the consent form was read and those that declared willingness to participate were administered questionnaires. According to Mensah (2013), the minimum number required of participants for drawing a sample where the standard deviation is not known is 386. Incidental random sampling was used to administer to any available married couple until the expected number was met. Four research assistants in company of the researchers distributed the questionnaires. It took each participant about ten minutes to fill the questionnaire, hence, the data was collected within thirty minutes. Upon completion, the questionnaires were collected immediately. A total number of 400 questionnaires were administered out of which 394 were properly filled, collated and used for data analysis.

Result

Table 1: Zero-order coefficient result of family relations and breadwinnership on marital satisfaction

	1	2	3
1. Dual-Earner	1		
2. Family Relationship	.54**	1	
3. Marital Satisfaction	-.02	.36**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The result of zero-order correlation coefficient of family relationship and dual-earner couple on marital satisfaction among married couples revealed that; family relationship correlated positively and significantly with dual-earner couple at $r = .54^{**}$, $P < .01$. This means that both concepts are positive constructs. Family relationship also correlated positively and significantly with marital satisfaction at $r = .36^{**}$, $P < .01$. This means that hypothesis one was confirmed. However, dual-earner couples correlated negatively with marital satisfaction at $r = -.02$, $P < .01$, this result obtained showed that hypothesis two was not confirmed.

Discussion

The study examined the relationship between family relationship and dual-earners on marital satisfaction among married couples. The finding point of contact between family relationship and marital satisfaction was consistent with earlier works (Aman *et al.*, 2019; Hou, 2018; Multu *et al.*, 2017). Earlier studies as examined in the review of literature revealed that family relationship manifested in various forms: family religiosity, family structure and family relationship, family problem solving on marital satisfaction, marital commitment and communication, marital adjustment, and family-of-origin, family relation, adjustment and well-being of children in care. Therefore, family relationship may be viewed as a multidimensional concept. Scholars may have been motivated to see which of the microcosm would yield higher level of marital satisfaction. According to the findings of this study, family relationship of sample participants yielded positive and significant association with marital satisfaction. Thus, this is an indication of a positive appraisal of experiences married couples

enjoy. Furthermore, it is a reflection of the couples' work life, children interaction, day to day interactions, stress management, interest in others' welfare, financial base and general wellbeing. In line with this report, the participants appear to be happy with their marriages; this is a positive component of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, despite the couples' engagement with occupation outside the home, they still devote time for each other, do the house chores together, and see to the welfare of their children. It means that they collectively focus on solving family problems as a group, thereby ensuring that each other's welfare is held in high esteem. In a nutshell, the family is perceived by participants in the study as a home where everyone is important and loved.

Although, one may think that such positive assessment might have risen from the fact that the samples were drawn from a church group, yet, couples that attend the same religious group may not have similar levels of belief and may not all be in the same demographical circumstances. Furthermore, Burch (2019) reported that family relationship has negative correlation with marital satisfaction. This result may have been a reflection of his sample participants or the aspect of family relationship under examination. Burch (2019) focused on Levels of work-family conflict (which is a component of family relationship). A careful examination of work-family conflict level already points to the fact that the level of work-stress has some undertone in family relationship. For instance, if couples get home after work and are quite exhausted from work, it may be a lot difficult for them to effectively engage in domestic business. Therefore, over time they may report dissatisfaction with the marriage. The findings in this study may have explanation in the social exchange theory (SET).

According to Social Exchange theory (SET), couples' feelings about their present relationship depends on; perception of reward and cost of the relationship, the kind of relationship they deserve and chances of having a better relationship with someone else. The SET may be reduced to reward, cost, outcome and comparison levels. In line with present findings, reward refers to benefits that family-relation provides in marriage. These benefits could be in form of caring for one another, enjoyment, dependability, closeness among members of the family, understanding, respect, love, joy, sense of belonging, comfort and happiness. Therefore, couples in the present study value family relationship so much that it influences their level of marital satisfaction. Therefore, such perception of reward with respect to family-relationship is a manifestation of outcome according to the SET which is a result of reward and costs. Similarly, a positive outcome implies satisfaction in marital relationship. Accordingly, results reveal that participants in the present study report low comparison levels with reference to their earlier relationships and consequently, low comparison levels for alternatives. As a result, couples who have such perception report marital satisfaction and would most likely stay in the marriage.

Results of the study reveal that hypothesis two was not confirmed in the relationship between dual-earners and marital satisfaction among married couples. The result of the present work is consistent with earlier studies in the relationship between dual-earners and marital satisfaction (Sun *et al.*, 2017; Putri & Kunanthi, 2016). Earlier studies approached dual-earners from the perspective of commuter and single dual earners, work pressure, job stress, and negative and positive emotions. The result of the present study indicates a negative relationship between dual-earners and marital satisfaction. Perhaps, this could be as a result of the level of demand that dual-earner couples face in line with discharge of duties. In other to satisfactorily discharge duties well, the couple go beyond limits. However, domestic chores may be quite demanding and regular work induced exhaustion may result in lack of ability to fix the home front properly. Furthermore, the couple may gradually be confronted with appraisal of how they feel

about their marriage. It is expected that couples with children may be overwhelmed with the level of work-family conflict that the condition of being dual-earners come with. It becomes a point of reference that, while the resource base of the family is enhanced, being dual earners take a toll on family culture, and general happiness. Apart from the negative relationship that being dual-earners may have on marital satisfaction it may usher in some health consequences alongside. However, other studies report positive association between dual-earners and marital satisfaction (Christianie *et al.*, 2018; Campos *et al.*, 2013). The inconsistency in these results may have been in the types of dual-earners the scholars focused on. Christianei *et al.* (2018) focused on differences in marital satisfaction between commuter and single live-in dual-earners, while Campos *et al.* (2013) examined positive and negative emotions of dual-earner married couples. Now, evidence suggest that the purpose of the studies was different from the present study, as well as the sample of study. Therefore, the studies advanced different statistics in pursuit of their respective goals. The social exchange theory (SET) may find explanation in the finding of relationship between dual-earners and marital satisfaction.

According to the SET, perception of reward and cost of the relationship, the kind of relationship one deserves and chances of having a better relationship with someone else could result either in marital satisfaction or marital dissatisfaction. Theoretical explanations of the result of the present study show that couples who are dual-earners may usher in some level of stress in the family culture. Financial boost, for instance, may be perceived as reward that the couples enjoy. However, to an extent, finance may stop serving as reward when compared with other aspects of family relationship. Bearing in mind that at some point humans adjust to situations, they may perhaps ask for other forms of gratification apart from finance or even demand for more of it. In this situation, the stress level in the home may assume a new height. In the face of this, some couples may not be in the position to manage it. The next point of call may be appraisal of the state of their marriage. According to SET, this is comparison level. At

this point of high comparison level, couples are automatically making evaluation of cost and reward. If the cost of being in the marriage is higher than the reward, they may begin the comparison of the kind of marriage they deserve with the one they are in. However, if the chances of getting a better one is promising, couples report dissatisfaction with the marriage and may start looking for opportunity for an alternative. However, if chances of getting a better marriage is low, they may report dissatisfaction with the marriage but still stay and manage the marital relationship. According to the SET, chances of leaving one's marriage may be dependent on prospects of finding a deserved marriage. Otherwise, couples manage marital relationship.

Limitations of study

The sample size of the present study was 394 participants. This sample is only a small portion of the entire population of members of the Catholic Churches in Awka South Parishes. As such, the choice of St Thomas Aquinas in which a low number of participants was found, is considered a limitation.

Conclusion

Evidence suggest that the family is the most important institution in human society. The survival of the family unit is quite essential for the general survival of the human race. Family-relationship is a positive concept that may enhance the survival and continued existence of humankind because of its positive relationship with marital satisfaction among married couples. Similarly, in the new age of changing family patterns which includes the dual-earner couples, it is reported that dual-earner couples have the advantage of enhancement of family financial base. However, studies reveal the possible stress it could impose on marital satisfaction. In view of this, a careful examination of the new trend and challenges that being dual-earner couples come with is absolutely necessary.

Recommendations

1. It was recommended that family-relationship should be embraced among couples so as to enhance marital satisfaction among married couples.

2. Dual-earners couples should align their work with work demands in other to secure their marriages.

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