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## Emotional Intelligence and Marital Satisfaction of Christian Couples in CAC, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Marriage is a union that is expected to be enjoyed by the couple but it is quite unfortunate that many Christian couples are not enjoying their marriage. Previous studies have focused on emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among couples in different societies but few studies focused on Christian couples particularly in Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) in Nigeria. Therefore, this study investigated emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among couples in CAC Akure, Nigeria. The study is anchored on the Dynamic Goal Theory of marital satisfaction. Descriptive research was adopted for this study and simple random sampling was used to select 180 couples. Data were collected using Wong & Long Emotional Intelligence Scale (0.81) and Marital Satisfaction scale (0.72). The data were analyzed using frequency descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment correlation. The findings showed high level of emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among couples. There was positive relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction  $\{r=.565, n=150(:000)< .05\}$ . It is recommended that the Church authority and counselors should collaborate to sustain training on emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among couples.

**Key words:** Emotional intelligence, marital satisfaction, Christ Apostolic Church, Akure.

**JEL Classification:** C31, G21, O13, O16, Q43

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### 1. Introduction

Marriage is a legal, religious, cultural and social concept that has been viewed and addressed by scholars in many fields such as counseling, sociology, psychology, religion and theology to mention but a few. Marriage is instituted by God initially and later reorganized by man as a social arrangement that involves a contract, including recognition of the rights and duties of parenthood, common residence for husband, wife, children, and reciprocal economic obligations. The system of marriage proved to be beneficial when satisfying the security, love and belongingness needs. Marital satisfaction is the state at which married couples are pleased and happy with their marital relationships. Based on submission of some scholars (Anghel, 2016;

Onyekuru &Ugwu; 2017; Bricker, 2005; Vadnals; 2005; Zarch, Marashi & Raji; 2014; Ilayas & Habib, 2014), marital satisfaction is based on some factors such, availability of children in marriage, counseling, patience, perseverance, sexual satisfaction, humility achievement of individual and collective goals among others.

Despite the fact that marriage was established as an institution for couple to enjoy as they satisfy one another, it is very unfortunate that many marriages in our churches have either collapsed or ready to collapse as a result of marital dissatisfaction. This marital dissatisfaction is a situation of not satisfying with spouse's dispositions towards marriage vow or oath. Dissatisfying marriages

have resulted in extra marital affairs, conflict, separation and divorce. Then, the emotions of couples are affected negatively when the situations arise and aftermath. Lack of emotional intelligence which is the ability to bring positive outcomes from intrapersonal, interpersonal relationships and poor emotional control in marital relationships **Fincham and Beach (2010)** has led to a lot of problems such as occasional and frequent verbal assaults and physical assaults among couples.

Emotional intelligence which entails social responsibility, interpersonal relationships and stress tolerance skills can be useful to determine marital satisfaction. As marriage is a social issue that involves performance of certain responsibilities on the part of the couples, relating in a way to bring positive interpersonal relationship between marriage partners in tolerating each other's personality (**Fincham and Beach (2010)**) It is sure that marital satisfaction can surface in a relationship if high emotional intelligence is demonstrated. Furthermore, it is assumed that couples with strong emotional attributes such as empathy, awareness of spouse emotions, emotional motivation and persuasive communication can ignite marital satisfaction. Some literature had indicated that emotional intelligence is associated with interpersonal relationships and human sustenance (**Adul Rauf, Yarmidi, Yaaziz & Zubar, 2013**); and teaching, research, learning, and quality of relationship (**Biria, and Zafari, 2014**). Also emotional intelligence has been associated with marital satisfaction of couples in Asia America and Europe but few have been cited in Nigeria especially among Christian couples. Many couples are not satisfying with their marriages as a result of low emotional intelligence. Emotional demonstrated, even, in some Christian marriages. Many couples demonstrated immaturity in handling marital relationships and emotionally insensitive to their partners .leading to poor interpersonal relationships. No wonder, many couples are not well adjusted and unstable in their marriages. Therefore this study investigated the influence of emotional intelligence among couples in Christ Apostolic Church Akure, Metropolis Nigeria. The principal aim of this research is to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected couples in CAC metropolis. The specific objectives include to: determine the level of emotional intelligence among selected couples in CAC Akure. Metropolis find out the level of marital satisfaction among selected couples in CAC Oke-Itura, Akure examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected couples in CAC Akure metropolis.

## 2. Literature Review

Concepts of emotional intelligence, marital satisfaction and the link between the two concepts are germane to the present study. **Bar-On (2006)** theory presented emotional Intelligence as reflection of our ability to deal successfully with different categories of people in our environment and with our feelings. He developed and validated measures of emotional intelligence that reflects one's ability to deal with daily environmental challenges and promote one's success.. The elements cover five areas: such as. Intra-personal, interpersonal, adaptability, stress management and general mood according to **Ogunwuyi (2018)**.

Then, **Hein (2005)** in his own view, defines emotional intelligence as: "The mental ability we are born with which gives our emotional sensitivity and potential for emotional management skills that help us maximize our long term health, happiness and survival". More importantly, Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia) (2010) describes emotional intelligence (EI) as a concept that involves the ability, capacity, skill or a self-perceived ability, to identify, assess, and manage the emotions of one's self, of others, and of groups. It is an acquired skill and competence that predicts positive outcomes (**Olatoye, Akintunde & Yankasi, 2010**); predicts teaching effectiveness (**Awoyemi & Ogunwuyi, 2010**) helps in managing stressful situations (**Ajibade & Ounwuyi 2011**). Also, it enhances productivity (**Salami & Ogundokun, 2009, Salami, 2010**). Emotional intelligence empowers emotion as a source of human information, confidence, creativity and effectiveness. It propels the recognition of emotion in self and others in social situations (**Schutte & Malouf, 2002**). **Bradberry & Greaves (2009)** add to the above conception of emotional intelligence as ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others, and ability to use this awareness to manage behavior and relationships for marital satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction is an individual positive perception and assessment of marital relationship (**Anyamene, 2020**). It is a situation when marital needs or goals are met in marriage. Satisfying marriage is a result of adjusted and stable marriage. According to **Ayamene, (2020)**, marital satisfaction is determined by factors such as compatibility of personality, educational homogamy, religious similarity, level of education, income level, age at marriage and age of marriage. Really, satisfying marriage can promote physical, mental, emotional and overall health of couple (**Mohammadimehl & Ayatollah, 2017**). Marital satisfaction as seen by **Fincham and Beach (2010)** is the attitude of an individual person towards his or her marital relationship. However, marital satisfaction deals with the workability of relationships that contribute to survival of marriage. Marital satisfaction is promoted by factors such as marital counseling, marriage education, enhancement and likewise avoidance of other behaviors that may contribute to a decrease in marital satisfaction. Higher satisfaction are based on the high positive contributions of couples to marriage relationship in the realm of challenges and circumstances such as economic, socio cultural and family background (**Janicki, et al, 2006;**) but marital satisfaction according to **Cutroma (2003)** is low among couples with low-income.

This study is anchored on Dynamic Goal Theory of marital satisfaction. According to **Li & Fung (2011)**. The theory presents three goals that are pursued in marriage: The personal growth goals, companionship goals and instrumental goals. The priority of the goals depends on dynamic changes across adulthood. It is believed that the young couples usually emphasized personal growth goal and the middle-aged coupled pursue instrumental goals while old couples focus on the companionship goals. Marital satisfaction according to the theories depends on achievement of the three goals. Then, marital satisfaction can be influenced by life transition, cultural values,

communication pattern in the of couple and problem-solving skills.

On the link between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction, positive association between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction was established. Emotional intelligence manipulates marital satisfaction. Similarly, [Soleymani and Akram \(2009\)](#) findings showed that positive correlation between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction was established. The research also indicated positive correlation between components of marital satisfaction and emotional intelligence (attention clearance emotional reconstruction). The results also indicated that emotional intelligence is significantly higher in women. In another study conducted in Nigeria, findings indicated that emotional management, social relationship skills and

emotional sensitivity skills have significant effects on marital satisfaction. And competencies of emotional intelligence are associated with marital satisfaction ([Ortese & Tor-Anyiin, 2008](#)). [Bricker \(2008\)](#) had also established in their different studies that relationship existed between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. The results showed that there was significant relationship between EI and certain aspects of marital satisfaction. Positive and significant relationship existed between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction and relationship in many studies ([Anghel, 2016](#); [Onyekuru & Ugwu, 2017](#); [Bricker, 2005](#); [Vadnals, 2005](#); [Zarch, Marashi & Raji, 2014](#); [Ilayas & Habib, 2014](#)) but low relationship existed between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction in the study of [Anyamene \(2020\)](#).

### Research Questions

The following research questions will be answered in this study.

- i. What is the level of emotional intelligence among selected couples in C.A.C. Akure metropolis?
- ii. What is the level of marital satisfaction among selected couples in C.A.C. Akure metropolis?
- iii. Is there any relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected couples in C.A.C. Akure metropolis?

## 3. Methods

### Design

The descriptive survey research design which involved the use of questionnaire to collect quantitative data was adopted for data collection. The design was considered appropriate since the study actually examined the statistical reported views of married couples on emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. [Ridwan and Joseph \(2021\)](#) noted that descriptive survey is best suited when researcher aims to collect quantitative data using questionnaire.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The population of the study consists married couples in Christ Apostolic Church, in Akure metropolis. CAC is the largest church in Akure metropolis with about 10,000 worshippers, out of which 700 were married and age 25years and above. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 180 volunteered couples among couples who are 25 years and above, representing 25.7%. Simple random sampling was used as results of the fact that Really, 8(5.3%) respondents were between 25-35 years, 51(34.0%) were between 36-45 years, 50(33.3%) were between 46-55 years, 35(23.3%) were between 56-65 years, and 6(4.0%) were above 66 years. Then, 32(21.3%) respondents had been married for less than 10 years, 62(41.3%) had been married for between 11-20 years, 32(21.3%) had been married for between 21-30 years, 23(15.3%) had been married for 31-40

years, and 1(0.7%) had been married for more than 40 years.

### Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents of this study. The questionnaire was tagged 'Emotional Intelligence and Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire'. The questionnaire contains three sections: the first section contains demographic variables such as age, gender, years of marriage, district and marital status. The second section contains Emotional Intelligence (EI) scale adapted from [Wong and Law \(2002\)](#). The scale was used to collect information on emotional intelligence of couples. It is a 16-item scale with four-point Likert format with reliability coefficient of 0.81 after adaption using Cronbach alpha. The third section contains Marital Satisfaction (MS) adapted by the researchers which was used to collect marital satisfaction information from couples. The items were examined by experts in marriage counseling for appropriateness of the instrument. Their comments and suggestions were used to determine the validity of the instrument. The items were later modified and reduced to 12 items with four point Likert format and reliability coefficient of 0.72 using Cronbach alpha.

### Procedure for Data Collection

Since the researchers are members of CAC, it was not difficult to approve the conduction of the present study. The respondents were asked to wait after the church service and the questionnaire was administered randomly to the volunteered married couples in the churches by the researchers with the help of the presiding Pastors of each CAC assemblies in Akure metropolis after securing due permission from the church authority and the consent of the couples. Out of 180 questionnaires administered, only 150 were found valid for analysis.

### Methods of Data Analysis

Simple statistics of frequency counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation was used to analyze research questions 1 and 2 while Pearson product movement correlation was used to analyze question 3.

### 4. Results

**Research Question One:** What is the level of emotional intelligence among selected couples in C.A.C Akure metropolis?

**Table 1: Level of Emotional Intelligence of Couples in C.A.C Akure Metropolis**

s/n	Emotional intelligence	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$	S.D
1	I have a good sense of why I have certain feelings most of the time	10 6.7%	10 6.7%	72 48.0%	58 38.7%	3.19	0.83
2	I have good understanding of my own emotions	7 4.7%	9 6.0%	56 37.3%	78 52.0%	3.37	0.80
3	I really understand what I feel	9 6.0%	12 8.0%	57 38.0%	72 48.0%	3.28	0.85
4	I always know whether I am happy or not	11 7.3%	7 4.7%	53 35.3%	79 52.7%	3.33	0.87
5	I always know my spouse's emotion from the behavior	6 4.0%	34 22.7%	76 50.7%	34 22.7%	2.92	0.78
6	I am a good observer of my spouse's emotion	6 4.0%	26 17.3%	80 53.3%	38 25.3%	3.00	0.77
7	I am sensitive to the feelings and emotion of my spouse	6 4.0%	16 10.7%	89 59.3%	39 26.0%	3.07	0.72
8	I have good understandings of the emotion of my spouse	6 4.0%	34 22.7%	87 58.0%	23 15.3%	2.85	0.72
9	I always tell myself and then try my best to achieve marital satisfaction	6 4.0%	10 6.7%	75 50.0%	59 39.3%	3.25	0.75
10	I always tell myself that I am a competent person	5 3.3%	17 11.3%	71 47.3%	57 38.0%	3.20	0.77
11	I am a self-motivated person	6 4.0%	10 6.7%	62 41.3%	72 48.0%	3.33	0.77
12	I always encourage myself to try my best	6 4.0%	7 4.7%	50 33.3%	87 58.0%	3.45	0.76
13	I am quite able to control my temper so that I can handle difficulties rationally	2 1.3%	16 10.7%	86 57.3%	46 30.7%	3.17	0.66
14	I am capable of controlling my own emotion	7 4.7%	17 11.3%	86 57.3%	40 26.7%	3.06	0.75
15	I can always calm down quickly when I am very angry	7 4.7%	17 11.3%	79 52.7%	47 31.3%	3.11	.78
16	I have good control of my own emotion	7 4.7%	13 8.7%	87 58.0%	43 28.7%	3.11	0.74
Weighted mean = 3.17							

Table 1 shows the perception of the respondents about emotional intelligence among selected couples in C.A.C Akure metropolis.

**Table 2: Test of Norm Showing the Level of Emotional Intelligence among Selected Couples in C.A.C Akure**

Interval	Mean index	level of emotional intelligence	Frequency	Percentage
1-32		Low	8	5.3
33-64	50.6867	High	142	94.7

Table 2 shows the summary of level of emotional intelligence among selected couples in C.A.C Akure. 5.3% (n=8) of the respondents had a low emotional intelligence, and 94.7% (n=142) had a high level of

emotional intelligence. Hence, this shows that there is a high level of emotional intelligence among the selected couples.

**Research Question Two:** What is the level of marital satisfaction among selected couples in C.A.C Akure metropolis?

**Table 3: Level of Marital Satisfaction of Couples in C.A.C Akure Metropolis**

s/n	Marital satisfaction	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$	S.D
1	I am satisfied with my spouse	12 8.0%	3 2.0%	63 42.0%	72 48.0%	3.30	0.86
2	I enjoy my marriage	11	5	64	70	3.29	0.85

		7.3%	3.3%	42.7%	46.7%		
3	I understand my spouse	12 8.0%	4 2.7%	78 52.0%	56 37.3%	3.19	0.83
4	I am in healthy relationship with my spouse	9 6.0%	3 2.0%	69 46.0%	69 46.0%	3.32	0.79
5	I am fulfilling my purpose for marrying my spouse	7 4.7%	4 2.9%	65 43.3%	74 49.3%	3.37	0.76
6	It is a pleasure marrying my spouse	10 6.7%	2 1.3%	65 43.3%	73 48.7%	3.34	0.81
7	I am satisfied with the level /way my spouse perform his or her responsibilities	9 6.0%	13 8.7%	80 53.3%	48 32.0%	3.11	0.80
8	I am satisfied with my spouse contributions to our marriage	8 5.3%	11 7.3%	73 48.7%	58 38.7%	3.21	0.80
9	I am gratified that my marriage produced satisfying children	9 6.0%	2 1.3%	44 29.3%	95 63.3%	3.50	0.80
10	I am satisfied with my spouse's parents' dispositions to my marriage	9 6.0%	13 8.7%	80 53.3%	48 32.0%	3.11	0.80
11	My marriage is a good example to others	12 8.0%	2 1.3%	73 48.7%	63 42.0%	3.25	0.83
12	I am satisfied with my spouse personality and disposition in marriage	11 7.3%	4 2.7%	82 54.7%	53 35.3%	3.18	0.80
Weighted mean =3.26							

Table 3 shows the perception of the respondents about marital satisfaction among selected couples in C.A.C Akure metropolis.

**Table 4: Test of Norm showing the Level of Marital Satisfaction among Selected Couples in C.A.C Akure**

Interval	Mean index	level of marital satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-24		Low	10	6.7
25-48	39.1667	High	140	93.3

Table 4 shows the level of marital satisfaction among selected couples in C.A.C Akure. 6.7% (n=10) of the respondents had a low level of marital satisfaction and

93.3% (n=140) had a high level of marital satisfaction. Hence, there is a high level of marital satisfaction among selected Couples in the study.

**Research Question Three:** Is there any relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected Couples in C.A.C Akure metropolis?

**Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Marital Satisfaction of married Couples in Akure Metropolis.**

Variables	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	R	p-value	Remarks
Emotional intelligence	50.6867	8.78921	150	.565*	.000	Sig.
Marital satisfaction	39.1667	8.10453				

\* Sig. at 0.05 Level of significance

Table 5 shows that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected Couples in C.A.C Akure metropolis (r = .565, n=150, p(.000)<.05). Hence emotional intelligence

influenced marital satisfaction among Couples in C.A.C Akure in the study. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected Couples in Akure metropolis.

**5. Discussion**

The outcome of the finding shows that the level of emotional intelligence of the couples is high. It means that irrespective of age and gender, couples show emotional understanding, empathy, perseverance, emotional control and motivation to each other (Bradberry and Greeves, 2009), able to turn negative feeling to positive and unhealthy feeling to healthy one in their relationships with their spouses. These attributes promote high level of emotional intelligence among the couples. The couples' high emotional intelligence could also be as result of their ability to withstand stress and cope with challenging situations in marriage relationships.

Really, the couples' level of marital satisfaction is also high. The couples are highly satisfied with their marriages. This supports Janicki, etal, (2006), that couples having understanding, and are satisfied with their spouse behavior and attitude in their marriages. It is then implies that the couples tendencies to have higher satisfaction are based on their positive contributions to their marriages in the realm of challenges and circumstances such as challenges in economic, socio-cultural and family background but the finding contradicts Cutroma (2003) that marital satisfaction of couples are low among low-income earners.

However, emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction are related (Anghel, 2016., Onyekuru & Ugwu., 2017., Bricker, 2005., Vadnals; 2005; Zarch, Marashi & Raji; 2014; Ilayas & Habib, 2014) but contradicts the study of Anyamene (2020) who showed that low relationship existed between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction. It means couples with high emotional intelligence will promote higher marital satisfaction (Lavalekar, et al, 2010., Soleymani & Akram, 2009., Ortese & Tor-Anyin, 2008., Bricker, 2008). Emotional intelligence of couples manipulates marital satisfaction of couples. Most couples showed emotional maturity, social responsibility empathy, perseverance and emotional sensitivity that make their marriage relationships satisfying. It is then, important that emotional intelligence skills are essential for couples to promote satisfying relationships in their marriages.

### Conclusion

This study presented background information and evidence to support the topic and purpose of conducting relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction among selected couples in C.A.C. Akure metropolis. Relevant literatures and researches of scholars were reviewed to give insight and information on the examination of the topic based on justifiable and verifiable concept. The literature reviewed served as theoretical and empirical foundation for this study. Data collected through the tool of questionnaire were presented and analyzed with a reliable and proven method. The results of this study showed that selected couples in C.A.C. Akure metropolis showed a high level of emotional intelligence and satisfaction in their marriage. Then, positive relationship between emotional intelligence and marital satisfaction.

### Recommendations

Based on the significance and findings of this study, the following are recommended:

1. Couples should continue to embrace and apply emotional intelligence in solidifying their marriage for better satisfaction.
2. Church Authorities should embrace the concept of emotional intelligence and its effects on marital satisfaction in church seminars and refresher courses for church workers.
3. Pastors should organize family counseling programmes that will treat causes of marital dissatisfaction among couples.
4. Counselors should continue to organize marriage satisfaction seminars and symposiums for couples and intending couples where the role of emotional intelligence on marital satisfaction will be emphasized.

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### Competing Interests

Authors declare no competing interests.

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