



Emotional Attachment and Mutual Respect as Correlates of Marital Satisfaction Among Married Persons in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract. Marriage requires commitment, emotional connection, and mutual respect to foster a satisfying relationship that benefits couples, their children, and society. Rising marital conflicts and separations in Edo State, Nigeria, suggest that many couples may lack these essential qualities. Although previous studies have explored emotional attachment and marital satisfaction, limited attention has been given to the combined roles of spousal emotional attachment and mutual respect. This study investigated the relationships among spousal emotional attachment, mutual respect, and marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State. Using a correlational research design, data were collected from 450 married individuals with three standardized instruments: the Couple Satisfaction Index (CSI), the Marital Attachment Scale (MAS), and the Mutual Respect Scale (MRS). Data were analyzed using regression analysis in SPSS. The findings revealed significant positive relationships between spousal emotional attachment, mutual respect, and marital satisfaction, leading to the rejection of the null hypotheses. Specifically, stronger emotional attachment and greater mutual respect were associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction. The study concludes that fostering secure emotional attachment and mutual respect enhances marital quality, promotes satisfying dyadic relationships, and contributes to more stable and fulfilling marriages.

Keywords: Emotional attachment, Mutual respect, Marital satisfaction, Married persons, Edo State.

1. Introduction

Marriage, as it were, is a covenantal relationship entered into by a man and a woman. This covenant gives solid base and secures a master plan for spouses' commitment to one another. Marriage indeed, forms an integral part of our existence, regardless of creed,

ethnicity, society and cultural beliefs. Marriage serves as a social security for all the individuals since through the institution of marital relationship, society receives security of emotional needs and cares, and its subsistence and continuity is preserved. According to Anyanmene, et al (2020), people enter into dyadic relationship seeking pleasure, happiness and peace of mind, which they derive from mutual satisfaction, trust, understanding, the fulfillment of social obligations, and the enrichment of their personality development. Consequently, the marital relationship is often viewed as a social necessity that warrants preservation. The social necessity is rooted in the fact that, marriage is the primary means by which families are established and the family is considered the fundamental unit of human society (Angel, 2017). While people make choices to marry, they intend to live happily ever then as couple. They want to have a blissful, happy, and satisfactory dyadic relationship. A healthy dyadic relationship is demonstrated to be salutary, effectively satisfying companionship, sexual, love and belongingness needs. In essence, marital satisfaction is the state where married partners experience overall contentment and happiness with their relationship. Marital satisfaction is a rudimentary variable for a high-quality relationship and total well-being among married individuals in Edo State coupling spouses. It is depicted by the skill to navigate relationship challenges together, emotional fulfillment, and mutual understanding.

1.1 Objective study

The general objective of this study was to determine the relationship between spousal emotional attachment, mutual respect and marital satisfaction among married people in Edo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Examine the significant relationship between spouses' emotional attachment and marital

satisfaction among married persons in Edo State.

- Ascertain the significant relationship between spouses' mutual respect and marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State.
- Determine significant relationship between spouses' emotional attachment, mutual respect and marital satisfaction when considered together among married persons in Edo State.

1.2 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- There is no significant relationship between spouses' emotional attachment and marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State.
- There is no significant relationship between spouses' mutual respect and marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State.
- There is no significant relationship between spouses' emotional attachment and mutual respect when combined, and marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is obviously crucial to the healthiness and quality of the marriage. Marital satisfaction seems to be a fundamental factor that play an important role in marital sustainability and the stability of the family system. Ghaibi et al (2022) explained it as a personal feeling of enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction, that a couple experiences when they have almost all their expectations achieved in a dyadic relationship. A dyadic relationship is considered enjoyable when it fulfills needs for fondness, affection, security and belongingness. Marital satisfaction is generally described as the state in which married couples are consistently pleased and happy with their marital relationship (Azizi et al. 2023; Angel, 2016; Onyekuru et al. 2017). It is characterized by mutual interests, care, meeting each needs, acceptance and understanding. A satisfactory marriage could be viewed as a relationship where spouses fundamentally uphold their own morals and principles, share common interests, intentionally committed to one another, and resolved to cleave together regardless

of circumstances, and work together. Researchers highlight various factors influencing marital satisfaction, including parenthood, counselling, patience, perseverance, bond, sexual satisfaction, respect, humility, achievements of individual and collective goals among others (Angel, 2016; Zarch, et al. 2014; Ilayas et al, 2014). Abiodun et al (2022) define it as the physical, emotional and mental state among couples marked by an overall feeling of happiness and contentment with their marriage. Other Scholars view it as a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional intimacy, communication, trust, mutual respect, and sexual satisfaction (Fincham & Beach, as cited in Abiodun et al., 2022). High levels of marital satisfaction are frequently associated with reduced stress and depression, greater life satisfaction, and more cohesive family functioning (Etele et al., 2023; Tumin et al., 2015). Marital satisfaction is a critical element for general well-being and influences both the individuals and the relationship. It encompasses various aspects of a marriage including communication, intimacy, trust, emotional support, sexual satisfaction and overall sense of partnership and support within the marriage. Marriage relies on various phenomenal to be satisfactory, such as fidelity, love, time, friendship, understanding, honesty, and loyalty. Satisfactory relationships offer numerous benefits, such as improved physical and mental health for both couples and their children, and increased resilience when confronting life problems. The continuance of the dyadic relationship, which serves important individual and societal functions, hinges on the mutual fulfilment of the couples biological, social, and psychological needs and motives (Zhumgalbekov et al 2023). Though marriage was instituted for spouses to catch fun and satisfy one another, it has become worrisome that many marriages in our society have either comatose or on the verge of breaking up consequent of marital dissatisfaction.

Marital dissatisfaction is explained as a state of unhappiness or failure to be satisfied with spouse's conduct or adherence to marital vows. According to Finchman, et al (2021), marital dissatisfaction includes an overall feeling of negativity in the marriage, comprising emotions such as tension, resentment, and irritation disagreement, conflicts, and unmet expectations. Marital dissatisfaction has been associated with "communication breakdowns, financial stress, lack of intimacy, and overall relational decline" (Lares et al, 2019; Balderrama in Uche, et al, 2025). Dissatisfied marriages frequently result in extra marital affairs, conflicts, separation and divorce. While numerous factors could foster marital satisfaction, emotional attachment as well as mutual respect among spouses are worthy of investigation

because of their vital roles in enhancing blissful and intimate relationship.

2.2 Emotional Attachment

Attachment is viewed as a lifelong paradigm that originates at birth, develops in early childhood, persists into later ages, and involves the feedback and attachment styles that the individual forms towards significant figures (Bowlby, in Gider et al, 2024). Consequently, attachment has a broad scope, encompassing emotional bonds with parents, siblings, friends, and romantic partners. When an attachment partner is perceived as inaccessible or unresponsive, compelling feelings of fears, anger, and sadness can emerge. The seeking and maintaining of contact with partners is considered the primary motivating principle in relationships and it serves as an innate survival mechanism, offering a safe haven and a secure base within a potentially threatening world (Bowlby, in Gider et al, 2024). Bowlby theorized that when attachment security is compromised in marriage, the typical response progression begins with protest and anger, followed by clinging/seeking behaviour, which may then lead to depression and despair. If the spouse refuse to respond, detachment or divorce may occur. Pietromonaco, et al (2021) asserted that emotional attachment in dyadic relationship explain the all-encompassing psychological bond that cleaves spouses, shaping how they relate, communicate, as well as assist each other throughout their marital life. Attachment researchers such as Hazan et al and Bartholomew et al in Gider et al (2024) classified adult attachment into four main styles: secure emotional attachment, anxious-preoccupied attachment, dismissive-avoidant attachment and fearful-avoidant attachment. The focus of this study is on secure emotional attachment. According to Mikulincer et al (2023), secure emotional attached partners normally feel comfortable with intimacy and generally warm, loving and responsive partners. In such marriage, spouses are always interested in the desires of each other, while they equally provide and receive solace during the period of sadness as well as maintain emotional stability relationship even in conflicts. Johnson, cited in Jesuorobo, et al (2019), noted that marriage characterized with secure attachment provides partners with a safe haven and the confidence that someone has their back as well as the boldness to delve into the world. Gottman (1989) observed that emotionally secure spouses express open, honest communication characterized by emotional attunement and responsiveness and moreover, they approach disputes as challenges to solve together rather than threat to relationship. Partners emotionally secured, is said to enjoy satisfying and connected

sexual experiences that enhance emotional closeness (Mikulincer et al 2023). Secure attachment in marriage can be achieved through consistent, positive interactions practices such as; spouses spending quality time together, habitual expression of appreciation as well as promptly resolving conflicts. In this present generation of relationship dysfunction, nurturing an emotionally secure attachment in marriage could be the prize couples can pay for long lasting satisfying marital relationship. Research studies by Johnson et al 2022; Gottman 1989; Özabacı 2019; Celik 2018; Bedair et al 2020; Ein-Dor et al 2022; Chen et al 2023; Zhang et al 2024; Gider et al 2024; Pietromonaco et al (2021), have demonstrated that emotionally secure attached dyadic relationship enhances marital bliss and satisfaction however, their studies were carried out in foreign countries hence, the need for a local investigation.

2.3 Mutual Respect

Another phenomenon worthy of consideration as a vital ingredient for a lasting and satisfying dyadic relationship, could be spousal mutual respect. It is commonly observed that, in the beginning of marital relationship, partners do have great admiration and adoration for each other, as well as always engulf in a blistering fervent emotion that can make them seemingly incapable of finding any fault with one another. They often call each other sweet names, overlook individual weaknesses and shower respect on each other very often. Over time, with much closeness without boundaries, their flaws begin to reveal, subsequently, they may start taking each other for granted and thereby lose mutual respect. The popular saying “familiarity breeds contempt” has found its way into the hitherto respectful relationship.

In the case of marital satisfaction, researchers have showed that mutual respect is a crucial factor capable of enhancing satisfying marriage (Amirmovin et al, 2018). Perel (2020) define respect as the daily practice of seeing a spouse as a separate evolving person rather than a static role. As Gottman et al (2022) puts it, “mutual respect in marriage is more than politeness; it is fundamentally valuing your partner humanity, individuality, and contributions to the relationship. Respect in marriage is not passive rather, it is an active practice in and outside the home, it is a daily resolution make by partners to reverence the inherent worth of each other”. Psychology Today (2019) opined that marital relationship driven by mutual respect overcomes life challenges and provide blissful atmosphere for the partners. Sexes (2024) explained mutual respect in marriage as “a two-way street in which each person in the relationship values,

acknowledges, and perceives the feelings and opinions of the other person". Katharine McPhee (cited in Johnson, 2020) emphasized that, mutual respect strengthens daily efforts to maintain relationship and sustain marital union, and the lack thereof is a crisis factor capable of destabilizing even the strongest marital foundation. Religious texts, such as the Holy Bible admonish couples: wives should respect their husbands, who, in turn should love their wives as they would their own bodies. It is logical to assert that these conditions are mutually dependent: a husband may struggle to continue loving a wife who lacks respect for him or his role, just as a wife would struggle to respect a husband who does not love her. Respect and love are reciprocal variables in every marital union; thus, spouses are obligated to provide both. Failure to do so can fuel relationship disharmony and discontent. Mutual respect forms the base for a healthy and thriving marriage where both partners feel valued and heard. Arshad et al cited in Jesuorobo et al (2019), proposed two elements in marriage: the bodily (sexual desire, affections) and the divine (love, respect, adore etc.). Towards the end of life both elements are coming closer and closer and at a particular point of time the latter aspect (love, respect, adoration). They suggest that as life progresses, these elements converge, with the latter (love, respect, adoration) becoming more prominent. Markman et al (2010) asserted that mutual respect entails recognizing and valuing one's spouse as an individual, treating spouse with dignity and consideration as well as acknowledging partner's unique qualities. In the opinion of Perel (2020), mutual respect is "the daily practice of seeing one's partner as a separate, evolving person" rather than a static role. Horesh et al (2020) found that marriages with high mutual respect had lower rates of pandemic related conflict due to better emotional attunement. Israel (2020) also observed that respect for differing viewpoints buffers marital strain in political divided households. This goes to suggest that spouses that committedly express mutual respect enjoys tolerance, understanding and compromise. Research studies by Laner et al (2016), Zimmer-Gembeck et al (2020), & Kachadourian et al (2018) found out that mutual respect is a vital variable for marital satisfaction. Existing literature highlights the importance of emotional bonds and mutual respect as distinct variable, in sustaining lasting marital satisfaction. Some investigate attachment styles with other factors (such as parenting stress (Feeney, et al (2023), finance (Dew et al (2022). communication patterns (Overall, et al. (2023), health (Pietromonaco, et al. (2023), personality traits (Malouff, et al (2023), and cultural gender (Zhang, et al (2024). However, combined relationship of spousal emotional attachment and

mutual respect on marital satisfaction, remains underexplored.

This study seeks to examine the synergistic relationship between emotional attachment, mutual respect on marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State, thereby providing empirical evidence on how these dynamics contribute to a fulfilling marriage within the specific population. By investigating these correlates, the research aims to offer valuable insights for couples, therapists, and relationship counsellors seeking to enhance marital satisfaction and stability

2.4 Justification of the Study

Society existence is unequivocally based on the continuity of marriage institution. Marital relationship is consummated to provide spouses the opportunity for the secured and protected satisfaction needs for sexual expression, companionship, and affection. It encompasses the most intimate type of emotional relationship between two individuals. Marital satisfaction is a necessary determinant of relationship stability and individual well-being. However, many couples experience declining dyadic satisfaction over time. The researchers observed that most married people seem to be unhappy because their relationships are crises-ridden characterized with frequent disagreements, which some time degenerate to separation or divorce. Moreover, researchers have reported that "married persons in Edo State go through incessant quarrelling, maltreatment, emotional stress, communication problem, financial mismanagement, domestic violence, and sexual dissatisfaction, resulting to painful and unsatisfactory dyadic relationship" (Igbinedion, 2020; Aghahowa, et al 2023; Okhawere, et al 2021). Lack of marital satisfaction Can result in depression, anxiety, sexual problems, aggressiveness, sleep disturbances, decreased intimacy, communication breakdown, frustration. and unhappiness. It can also affect couples physical and mental health and has been linked to increased level of stress. Dissatisfied relationship will obviously fail to meet the expectations of the people as what a successful home should be. Dissatisfied couples could create a home that is more like sources of irritations, discomforts and misgivings. The alleviation of marital dissatisfaction is important because of the serious negative consequences associated with dissatisfaction as a predisposing risk factor for many psychological disorders like mood disorders, anxiety disorder, alcohol abuse, and psychoses. According to Jesuorobo (2023), a marriage that is experiencing dissatisfaction will invariably create hostile environment and uncomfortable home for the children to efficiently and successfully develop

emotionally, socially and psychologically. Conversely, research shows that children raised in a conducive environment where partners are joyful, are more likely to excel in school and other aspects of life including their own future marital lives (Omorogiuwa, et al, 2016). Understanding the correlation between emotional attachment, mutual respect, and marital satisfaction could provide valuable insights for couples, therapists, and marriage counselors seeking to improve relationship quality. While prior research has identified various factors influencing marital quality, the specific roles of emotional attachment and mutual respect remain underexplored, particularly in how they interact to sustain long-term marital happiness in Edo State. Emotional attachment, which fosters intimacy and security, and mutual respect, which promotes equality and constructive conflict resolution, are both necessary to strengthen marital bonds. However, there is limited empirical evidence on the extent to which these two factors jointly contribute to marital satisfaction. Therefore, this study is carried out to investigate significant relationship between spouses' emotional attachment, mutual respect, and marital satisfaction among married persons in Benin City, Edo State.

3. Research Methodology

The method applied by the researchers was a correlational research design. Uche et al (2025) asserted that a research correlational design shows the direction and extent of the relationship between two or more variables. This design was considered fit because the study aim was to determine the relationship between spousal emotional attachment, mutual respect, and marital satisfaction. The design allows for the statistical evaluation of the direction and magnitude of relationships between variables in their natural setting.

3.1 Population / Sample Size

Study population consisted married persons in Edo State. The State has a large population of mixed multitude and given the lack of a reliable census for the actual number of married persons, as some individuals marry through traditional method and as such, do not register their marriage, the population was considered indefinite. Consequently, a convenience sampling technique was used to select the study sample. Efforts were made to ensure diversified and extended coverage of the study area through purposive random sampling of three Local Government Areas (LGAs) in Benin City (Oredo, Ikpoba-okha, and Egor) due to purposely selected because they are most populated among others. A sample size of 450

respondents was drawn, with 150 respondents selected from each of the three Local Government Area, comprised of 200 males and 250 females.

3.2 Variables under Study

Three variables were examined in this current study. The dependent variable was marital satisfaction, while independent variables were marital emotional attachment, and mutual respect in marriage

3.3 Delimitation of the Study

The research findings are limited to the married persons residing in Benin City, the capital city of Edo State. Also, the results are restricted on the independent variables and dependent variable assessed by the researchers.

3.4 Limitations

The study has several limitations:

Marital satisfaction was measured using a single-item scale (or a scale adapted from national data sets often limited to a single item), raising concerns regarding its construct validity.

The study did not incorporate the marital dyad. Questions concerning marital satisfaction, spousal emotional attachment and mutual respect were assessed with only one individual in a marriage, not both. This limits the understanding of the mutual influence between spouses.

The data collected was limited to Benin City (three LGAs), which restricts the generalizability of the findings to the entire Edo State.

The truthfulness of the findings is dependent upon the honesty of the respondents.

3.5 Instrument Used

Three standardized instruments were used for data collection. The first one was Couple Satisfactory Index (CSI) originally spell out by Funk et al (2007), the CSI was adapted to assess relationship satisfaction across multiple domains. It consists of 16 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagreed to 4=Strongly Agreed). The scale measures the respondent's key dimensions of marital satisfaction such as general marital satisfaction, meeting of spouse's needs, fulfilled expectations, marital affection, appreciation, communication, shared goals, and intimacy. The second scale was Marital

Attachment Scale (MAS) formulated by Bouthillier et al (2002). The MAS which contained 12 items was adapted to measure emotional accessibility, comforting behaviours and secure base in marriage. Responses were recorded on a 4-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagreed to 4= Strongly Agreed). The scale typically assessed the respondent's emotionally attachment to spouse, spouse responsive to emotional needs, understanding of one's spouse, and sharing of deepest feeling with spouse. While the third scale was Mutual Respect Scale (MRS) originally developed by Hendrick et al (2006). The MRS was (8 items) was adapted to assess respect in close relationships. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging (1=Strongly Disagreed to 4=Strongly Agreed). The scale contained such issues mutual respect in marriage, respect for spouse's opinions, acknowledgement of each other's strengths, listening to each carefully, partner's worthiness, appreciation for each other's contributions, and honour for each other's boundaries. Content validity was established by three experts from the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, University of Benin. They

reviewed the items and made appropriate corrections. Suggestions and corrections made by them were included into the instrument. These include clarity of terms, grammatical structures, as well as capability to measure the intended variable. They looked at whether the items were adequate, well-constructed and arranged, and related to variables of the study. Internal Consistency Reliability was established using a pilot sample of 50 spouses outside the study sample. The data was analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha Statistics, yielded a reliability coefficient of: 0.86 for the couple satisfaction index, 0.87 for the marital attachment scale, and 0.88 for the marital respect scale. The researchers administered the questionnaires to married persons in churches, mosques, market centers, offices and social gatherings where large population of married persons are always found. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and informed consent was obtained. Regression Analysis was used to test the hypotheses. Hypotheses examined at the 0.05 level of significance. Statistical analysis was carried out with the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. Results

Hypothesis One: Spouse emotional attachment does not significantly influence marital satisfaction among married persons in Benin City, Edo state

To test this hypothesis, regression analysis was performed using data from the two scales

Table 1: Regression summary table on the influence of spouse emotional attachment on marital satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient		t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta			
Constant	4.483	1.552			2.888	.004
Total on marital emotional attachment scale (MEAS)	.932	.023	.887		40.641	.000

Dependent Variable: Couple satisfaction index (CSI)

Independent Variable: Marital; emotional attachment

Model Summary: R = .887, R² = .787, Adj. R² = .786, Std. Error = 1.4470

F (1, 448) = 1651.695, P < .000 < 0.05

Table 1 above showed that marital emotional attachment significantly influences marital satisfaction among couples in Benin city, Edo state (Beta = .887, P < 0.05). Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implications, marital emotional attachment had significant positive influence on couple marital satisfaction in Benin city, Edo state. The adjusted R² value of .786 indicates that 78.6% variation on marital satisfaction of couples can be explained by marital emotional attachment.

Hypothesis Two: Spouse mutual respect does not significantly influence marital satisfaction among married persons in Benin City, Edo state

To test this hypothesis, regression analysis was performed using data obtained from the two scales

Table 2: Regression summary table on the influence of spouse mutual respect on marital satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	7.230	1.922		3.761	.000
Total on mutual respect scale (MRS)	.895	.029	.829	31.392	.000

Dependent Variable: Couple satisfaction index (CSI)

Independent Variable: Marita; emotional attachment

Model Summary: R = .829, R² = .687, Adj. R² = .687, Std. Error = 1.748

F (1, 448) = 985.480, P < .000 < 0.05

Table 2 above showed that mutual respect significantly influences marital satisfaction among couples in Benin city, Edo state (Beta = .829, P < 0.05). Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implications, spouse mutual respect had significant positive influence on couple marital satisfaction in Benin city, Edo state. The adjusted R² value of .687 indicates that 68.7% variation on couple mutual respect of couples can be explained by spouse mutual respect.

Hypothesis Three: Combined spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect does not significantly influence marital satisfaction among married people in Benin city, Edo state

To test this hypothesis, regression analysis was performed using data obtained from the three scales

Table 3: Regression summary table on the combined influence spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect on marital satisfaction

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	β	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	3.518	1.601		2.198	.028
Total on marital emotional attachment scale (MEAS)	.816	.056	.776	14.681	.000
Total on mutual respect scale (MRS)	.131	.057	.122	2.305	.022

Dependent Variable: Couple satisfaction index (CSI)

Independent Variable: spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect

Model Summary: R = .888, R² = .789, Adj. R² = .788, Std. Error = 1.43

F (1, 2,447) = 836.457, P < .000 < 0.05

Table 3 above showed that the combined spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect have significantly positive influence on marital satisfaction among couples in Benin City, Edo state (Beta = .776 and .122 for spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect respectively, P < 0.05). Based on this, the null hypothesis is rejected. By implications, the combined spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect have significant positive influence on couple marital satisfaction in Benin city, Edo state. The combined adjusted R² value of .788 indicates that 78.8% variation on couple marital satisfaction can be explained by the combination of spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect. From the analysis, it is clear that the combination of the two independent variables has a higher influence on couple marital satisfaction.

5. Discussion

The first major finding of this study established a significant positive relationship between spousal marital attachment and marital satisfaction. The analysis yielded an adjustment coefficient of determination (Adj. R²) of .786, indicating that approximately 78.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction can be accounted for by the level of spousal emotional attachment. This suggests that higher scores in emotional attachment correspond with a notable increase in marital satisfaction scores, and vice-versa. This implies that most spouses whose scores are high on marital attachment, earn high scores on marital satisfaction, while some whose scores are low on marital attachment, earn low score on marital satisfaction. The application of linear regression analysis confirmed this relationship as statistically significant (p= 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 level of significance). This result implies that the stronger the psychological bond and security between

spouses, the greater their reported satisfaction with the marriage. This outcome is theoretically aligned with attachment theory, which posits that, seeking and maintaining emotional contact is a primary motivating principle in relationships, serving as an innate survival mechanism that, provides the couple with a safe haven and desirable joy. Moreover, it is generally observed that, emotional attachment in marriage culminates to the all-encompassing psychological bond that cleaves spouses, shaping how they relate, communicate, as well as assist each other to enjoy a quality. The current result corroborates the findings of Johnson et al (2022), Özabacı (2019), Celik (2018), Bedair et al (2020), Ein-Dor et al (2022), Chen et al (2023), Zhang et al (2024), Gider (2024), and Pietromonaco et al (2021), who revealed that emotionally secure attachment enhances marital bliss and satisfaction across diverse geographical contexts.

The second finding of the study also indicated a significant positive relationship between marital mutual respect and marital satisfaction. The beta coefficient (β) of 0.829 (with $P < 0.05$) strongly suggests that that spousal mutual respect is a powerful predictor of marital satisfaction in the study population of Benin City, Edo State. Obviously, marital relationship anchor by mutual respect overcomes life challenges and provide blissful ambience for the spouses to navigate. Mutual respect conceptualized as a “two-way street where each partner actively values, acknowledges, and considers the feelings and opinions of the other person so that no one feels hurt”. Mutual respect forms the base for a healthy and thriving marriage where both partners feel valued, importance and heard. When spouses consistently express mutual respect, they enjoy cultivate tolerance, understanding and compromise, which are viable ingredients for lasting blissful dyadic relationship. This finding is consistent with prior empirical research establishing mutual respect as a vital variable for marital satisfaction, including the studies by Laner et al (2016), Zimmer-Gembeck et al (2020), & Kachadourian et al (2018).

The third and key finding revealed that combination of spousal emotional attachment and mutual respect have significantly positive influence on marital satisfaction among couples in Benin city, Edo state. The combined adjusted R^2 value of .788 indicates that 78.8% variation on couple marital satisfaction can be explained by the combination of spouse emotional attachment and mutual respect. As it were, emotional attachment fosters intimacy and unshakable security, while mutual respect promotes equality and constructive healthy conflict resolution, and both has the capacity to strengthen marital bonds. A

combination of emotional attachment and mutual respect in marriage, is a powerful synergy that generate blissful and lasting dyadic satisfaction. Emotional attachment birth closeness, physical intimacy, and shared experiences in a relationship. Mutual respect makes marital intimacy sweet and sustainable. Attachment in marriage provides the passion, warmth, and vulnerability that make marriage lively and fulfilling. Spousal mutual respect produces harmony, equality and admiration that enable marriage safe, sustainable, and solid. It was not surprising therefore, that a marriage rich in both, have a higher positive influence on couple marital satisfaction. This aspect of the current study relates and synthesizes the work of researchers who investigated emotional attachment in combination with other factors in marital relationship, such as parenting stress (Feeney et al. 2023), financial status (Dew et al. 2022), communication patterns (Overall et al. 2023), health (Pietromonaco, et al. 2023), personality traits (Malouff, et al. 2023), and cultural gender roles (Zhang, et al. 2024). By demonstrating the combined effect of attachment and respect, this research provides novel, localized empirical evidence on a core synergistic mechanism for sustaining marital satisfaction in Benin City.

6. Implications

Dyadic relationship education programs should blend both emotional and respect-based teachings to give learners a holistic understanding of marital dynamics

The government educational policies should integrate family-life education as compulsory component of secondary and tertiary curricula.

Social studies or Civic education teachers can be trained to incorporate relationship values as part of their teaching outcomes.

Through community awareness programmes, marriage and family education enlightenment can be used to promote awareness about how emotional attachment and respectful relationships improve family and marital quality.

Counsellors should be well-equipped to teach married spouses emotional attachment, active listening, mutual adjustment, and respect in marital relationship, so that children can grow in a conducive learning environment.

7. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of the empirical submission and discussion of findings, the study effectively addressed

its objectives concerning the relationship between spousal emotional attachment, mutual respect, and marital satisfaction among married persons in Edo State, Nigeria. The results of this study implicitly showed that spousal emotional attachment as well as mutual respect enhance satisfactory dyadic relationship and make marriage enjoyable among married persons.

8. Recommendations

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

- Persons in marriage should embrace and apply spousal emotional attachment as well as mutual respect in solidifying their relationship for contentment and blissful coupling.
- Marriage counsellors should embrace the concept of spousal emotional attachment and mutual respect and their effects on quality marriage in seminars and refresher courses for married couples.
- School counsellors should organize family counseling programmes even in schools that will treat the importance of marital satisfaction among couples to children academic achievement.
- Counsellors should continue to organize marriage satisfaction workshops and symposiums for couples and intending couples where impacts of spousal emotional attachment and mutual respect on marital satisfaction will be well emphasized.

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