

## **Work-life balance and marital satisfaction among non-academic staff of Federal University, Oye-Ekiti**

**\*Helen F. Olagundoye & Kamal A. Odunjo-Saka**

Department of Psychology, Federal University Oye Ekiti, Nigeria.

\*Email: foluketosuccess@yahoo.com, Helen.olagundoye@fuoye.edu.ng

### **Abstract**

Studies have examined different factors as predictors of marital satisfaction among couples but the role of work-life balance dimensions on marital satisfaction especially among non-academic staff in a Nigerian tertiary institution is relatively scarce in the local literature. Hence the study examined the role of work-life balance (work-personal life enhancement, personal life interference and work-personal life interference) on marital satisfaction. A descriptive survey design was utilised in the study. The participants comprised 200 non-academic staff aged 29-55 years purposively selected from Federal University Oye-Ekiti in Ekiti state, South-Western Nigeria. Results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that there was significant joint prediction of work life dimensions (work-personal life enhancement, personal life interference and work-personal life interference) on marital satisfaction ( $F(3, 195) = 61.95, R^2 = .34; p < .05$ ). The study concluded that work-life balance (work-personal life enhancement) positively predicted marital satisfaction while work-life balance (personal life interference and work-personal life interference) negatively predicted marital satisfaction. Recommendations were given based on the findings of the study.

Keywords: Work-life balance, marital satisfaction, non-academic staff, Nigeria

### Introduction

Marriage is an essential and basic human bond that dates back to the beginning of time. It offers the foundation for starting a family and raising children. While there is a lot of literature on marriage as a man-woman relationship, new research shows that marital fulfillment is difficult to acquire (Thomas, 2002). This shows that a higher percentage of marriages are marked by insecurity and instability. Marriage therapists have major obstacles as a result of the dangers of ambiguity linked with the problem of marital discontent. According to Owuamanam and Osankinta (2005), some marriages even fail before their first anniversary. If marriage is healthy and stable, and both partners are happy, the society on which the family is formed will be strong.

The achievement of marital pleasure among partners is one of the key goals of modern marriages. Marital satisfaction, according to Ogungbola and Akomolafe (2019), refers to an individual's good attitude toward, or pleasant sentiments about, their marriage partner and relationship. According to Abidin et al. (2018), a happy marriage is essential for establishing a stable and fully functioning family structure in any culture. In recent times, the issue of marital satisfaction has continued to generate immense research attention among scholars due to the worrying dimensions and challenges linked to maintaining a marital institution globally and locally.

According to the United Nations Demographics and Social Statistics Division, divorce rate is about 53% in the USA. In European countries such as Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg, Czech Republic, and Hungary, there are also high divorce rates of more than 60% (Nations, 2012). In Asia, specifically Malaysia, the rate of divorce has

increased in recent times among married couples (Jones 2021). In Africa, for instance Ghana, marital divorce is still a serious issue among couples (Akuamoah 2013). In Nigeria, Makinde and Ayeyika (2014) noted that about 40% of the marriages contracted every year in Nigeria end up in divorce or separation as a result of marital conflict. Increase in life satisfaction in marriage has been linked with positive outcome such as personal well-being and better family well-being (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler 2007; Wilcox et al. 2005). On the other hand, marital dissatisfaction has been linked to lower life satisfaction, lower self-esteem and higher marital instability (Brown, Manning, & Payne 2015; Hawkins & Booth 2005).

Worldwide, many studies have been done on marital satisfaction such as relational humor (Satici & Deniz 2020), communication and coping strategy (Abidin et al 2018), mental health physical health, and work-family balance (Yucel 2017), pre-marital counseling, intimacy and self-esteem (Udofia et al 2020). Also, studies done in Nigeria on marital satisfaction examined factors such as length of marriage and number of children (Animasahun & Oladeni, 2012), locus of control and self-concept (Izuchi & Ekeh 2021). Despite the importance of these studies to marital satisfaction literature, no study according to the researcher's knowledge has investigated the role of work-life balance on marital satisfaction in Nigeria. The few studies (Shree 2012; Yucel 2017; Ashwini 2018) that examined work-life balance on marital satisfaction were done outside Nigeria. Also, most of these studies used nurses, working men and women as their respondents. This study differs from the foregoing as it investigated non-academic staff in a Nigeria university.

Work-life balance, as defined by Igbinomwanhia, Iyayi, and Iyayi (2012), is the correct balance between one's work and life duties, as well as feeling comfortable with both work and non-work commitments. Work-life balance refers to how employees manage their time and energy at work and at home (Ojo, Falola & Mordi, 2012). Work-life balance, which primarily concerns an individual's capacity to prioritize work and other aspects of his or her life such as social life, health, and family, is strongly connected to employee productivity and performance. Individuals' attempts to fulfil these contradictory tasks adequately can lead to increased interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict. In this study, work-life balance has three dimensions, namely work interference with personal life, personal life interference with work, and work-personal life enhancement. Studies have looked at work-life balance on marital satisfaction. For instance, Shree (2012) examined the role of work-life balance on marital satisfaction among nurses. The study found that work-life balance negatively predicts marital satisfaction.

Ashwini (2018) explored the relationship between work-life balance and marital satisfaction among 407 working men and women and found that work-life balance had a significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction. Sharma and Suresh (2021) explored work-life balance on marital satisfaction of faculty members. The study identified that increase in work-spouse conflict tends to reduced marital satisfaction. Yucel (2017) examined the mediating effect of mental and physical health in the relationship between work-family balance and marital satisfaction. The

results suggest that mental health and physical health both fully mediate the effect of work-to-family conflict, while mental health and physical health both partially mediate the effect of work-to-family enrichment on marital satisfaction. Studies such as Galovan et al. (2010), Minnotte et al. (2013) and Minnotte et al. (2015) assert that family-to-work conflict reduces marital satisfaction. Prior studies also aver that work-to-family enrichment significantly predicted marital satisfaction (van Steenbergen, Kluwer, & Karney 2014). However, we can draw inferences from existing studies to develop our hypothesis.

### **Hypothesis**

There will be significant prediction of work-life balance on marital satisfaction among non-academic staff in Ekiti State.

### **Methods**

#### **Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design is considered relevant because data will be collected using a structured questionnaire without manipulation of variables. The predictor variable is work-life balance while the criterion variable is marital satisfaction.

#### **Participants**

A total number of two hundred (200) participants, aged between 29 years to 55 years completed the questionnaire. Female respondents represented 45.5% while the males were 54.5%. The mean age is 35.14years ( $SD = 6.19$ ). Most of the respondents were from the two major religious affiliations namely Christianity and Islam. Table 1 revealed the distribution of the socio-demographics:

**Table 1:** Distribution of Social-demographics

<b>N = 200</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	109	54.5
Female	91	45.5
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	103	51.5
Married	97	48.5
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>		
Christianity	117	58.5
Islam	71	35.5
Traditional	12	6.0
<b>Highest Qualification</b>		
National Diploma	26	13
HND/B.SC	43	21.5
Masters	85	42.5
PhD	46	23
<b>Years of Working Experience</b>		
0-5 years	118	59
6 years above	82	41

## Measures

The structured questionnaire consisted of three sections:

*First section* comprised socio-demographics information including gender, age, marital status, educational attainment, religion and year of working experience.

*Second section* comprised the 15 item EMS Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Fournier Olson and Druckman (1983). The scale has a response format ranging from 1 = Disagree strongly, 2 = Disagree a little, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = Agree a little, 5 = strongly Agree. High score on this scale signifies satisfaction with marriage, while low score on the scale indicates dissatisfaction with the marriage. The scale developer reported a Cronbach alpha of  $\alpha = .92$ . In this study a Cronbach's alpha of 0.73 was gotten.

*Third section* consists of 15 item work life balance scale adapted by Hayman (2005). The scale consisted of 15 items, designed to assess three dimensions of work life

balance, i.e., work interference with personal life (WIPL-7 items), personal life interference with work (PLIW-4 items), and work/personal life enhancement (WPLE-4 items). Examples of the items include "My work suffers because of my personal life" and "It is hard to work because of personal matters". the scale was scored on a 5 point (Strongly Disagree -1, Disagree - 2, Neither Agree nor Disagree- 3, Agree -4, Strongly Agree -5). In this study, a Cronbach alpha of 0.85 was reported for the full scale.

## Procedure

Prior to data analysis, permission was sought from the university management and verbal approval was gotten to conduct the study among the respondents. Before data collection, the researcher, alongside one research assistant, helped to enlighten the participants on the importance and rationale of the study. Only consenting participants participated in the study. 210 copies of the questionnaire were distributed across

different departments at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti. Only 200 copies were retrieved and subjected to data analysis.

**Statistical analysis**

Data was analysed using IBM-SPSS v24. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse the socio-demographic such as mean, standard

deviation, percentages and frequency distribution while the inferential statistics such as Pearson moment correlation and multiple regression was used to examine the relationships between variables and also test the hypothesis all at 0.05 level of significance.

**Results**

**Table 2:** Zero-order correlation showing dimensions of work-life balance and marital satisfaction

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1 Work Personal life enhancement	62.94	14.06	-			
2 Personal Life interference	42.78	7.37	.29**	-		
3 Work Personal life interference	11.55	5.09	-.37**	-.21**	-	
4 Marital satisfaction	21.16	6.56	.46**	-.43**	-.36**	

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

The result shows that there was significant positive relationship between work-personal life enhancement and marital satisfaction [r (198) = .46, p<.01]. This finding implies that non-academic staff who reported high work personal life enhancement tend to have increased marital satisfaction. There was also significant negative relationship between personal life interference and marital satisfaction [r (198) = -.43, p<.01]. This finding also implies that non-academic staff who experience high level of personal life interference tend to have low marital

satisfaction. Finally, there was also significant negative relationship between work personal life interference and marital satisfaction [r (198) = -.36, p = p<.05]. This means that non-academic staff that have high marital satisfaction tend to have low marital satisfaction.

*Hypothesis Testing*

Work-life balance will jointly and independently predict marital satisfaction among non-academic staff in the study location.

**Table 3:** Summary of standard multiple regression table showing joint and independent prediction of work life balance dimensions and marital satisfaction

Variables	Beta	t	P	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
Work Personal life enhancement	.30	6.44	<.05				
Personal Life interference	-.18	-3.92	<.05	.58	.34	61.95	<.05
Work Personal life interference	-.30	-6.79	<.05				

Table 3 above revealed that there was significant joint prediction of work-life dimensions (work-personal life enhancement, personal life interference and work-personal life interference) on marital satisfaction F(3, 195) = 61.95, R<sup>2</sup> = 34;

p<.05). The R<sup>2</sup>=0.34 indicates that the independent variables work life dimensions (work-personal life enhancement, personal life interference and work-personal life interference) explained 34% variation in dependent variable (marital satisfaction).

Further results show that work-personal life enhancement ( $\beta = .30$ ;  $t = -6.44$ ;  $p < .05$ ), personal life interference ( $\beta = -.18$ ;  $t = -3.92$ ;  $p < .05$ ), and work-personal life interference ( $\beta = -.30$ ;  $t = -6.79$ ;  $p < .05$ ), independently predict marital satisfaction among the sampled respondents. The stated hypothesis is therefore accepted.

### Discussion

The study examined the predictive role of work-life balance on marital satisfaction among non-academic staff. Based on the hypothesis postulated, the study identified that work-life balance (work-personal life enhancement, personal life interference and work-personal life interference) predicts marital satisfaction among non-academic staff. These were in line with Shree (2012), which found that work-life balance negatively predicts marital satisfaction. The finding was also in accordance with Ashwini (2018), which submitted that work life balance had a significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction. The findings also corroborate Sharma and Suresh's (2021) identification that increase in work-spouse conflict tends to reduced marital satisfaction as well as Yucel's (2017) submission that mental health and physical health both fully mediate the effect of work-to-family conflict. Galovan et al., (2010), Minnotte et al. (2013) and Minnotte et al. (2015) also support the observation that family-to-work conflict reduces marital satisfaction. The justification for this finding is hinged on the reality that non-academic staff often feel happy when they are given some level of autonomy regarding their life and work activities which may contribute positively to their marital life. On the other hand, when non-academic staff are faced with personal life and work-personal life, they tend to have negative emotion which affect their marital life.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study has added to marital satisfaction literature through investigating the work life balance (work-personal life enhancement, personal life interference and work-personal life interference) on marital satisfaction among a sample of non-academic staff in a federal university in Nigeria. The study concluded that work-life balance (work-personal life enhancement) positively predicts marital satisfaction while work-life balance (personal life interference and work personal life interference) negatively predicts marital satisfaction. Based on this conclusion, the study recommends that the management of the Federal University Oye-Ekiti (FUOYE) should adopt some work-personal enhancement such as flexi-work time, as this mechanism would help improve marital satisfaction among non-academic staff. The study also recommends that psychologists should develop workshops for non-academic staff on techniques that can be adopted to reduce some work that are affecting their individual personal lives and those aspects of personal lives that are affecting work as this could also help improve marital satisfaction among this important population in the university environment.

### Limitations

Despite the strength of the study, it still faced with some limitations. Firstly, the sample size used is relatively small and only from a section of a university system. Hence generalisation of the study outcome should be interpreted with caution. Secondly, the use of self-reported questionnaire could have generated some biases as some respondents might fake their response because of the sensitive nature of the problem under investigation. Lastly, time was also a major limitation. To circumnavigate these limitations, future

studies should use larger sample size that can cut across different universities. Also, incorporating qualitative approaches such as interview and focus group discussion may also increase the validity of the findings. Lastly, more psychological variables such as psychological capital and personality traits can also be investigated as likely predictors of marital satisfaction.

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