



## Self-Esteem And Attachment Styles As Predictors Of Marital Satisfaction Among Secondary School Teachers In Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

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Lateef Omotosho Adegboyega, PhD

<sup>1</sup> Department of Educational Guidance and Counselling,  
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria  
[adegboyega.lo@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:adegboyega.lo@unilorin.edu.ng)

### Abstract

*This study investigated self-esteem and attachment styles as predictors of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. The study was a survey research. The population of this study comprised all secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State while a sample size of 200 teachers participated in the study. A questionnaire entitled "Self-esteem, Attachment Styles and Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire" (SASMSQ) was used to collect data for the study. Percentage was used to analyse the demographic data. Mean and rank order analysis was used to answer research questions while the four null hypotheses formulated were tested using regression, t-test, and ANOVA statistical techniques. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have high self-esteem, exhibit secure attachment styles, and experience high marital satisfaction. Self-esteem and attachment styles were found to significantly predict marital satisfaction. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that school administrators and policymakers implement workshops to boost self-esteem among teachers. Counsellors can employ techniques like cognitive-behavioural therapy and positive psychology interventions to reinforce healthy self-esteem. By promoting self-esteem and healthy attachment styles, educators can enhance marital satisfaction and overall well-being among teachers.*

**Keywords:** self-esteem, attachment styles, marital satisfaction, teachers

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## Introduction

It is common knowledge that man is a social being as no human being exists in complete isolation from others a phenomenon which helps to explain the rationale for the institution of marriage. Marriage is a divine situation that should be a special relationship for life and harmoniously integrate the husband and wife into becoming "one flesh" (Gbenda & Akande, 2022). Marriage itself is a sacred and permanent contract which assumed to be enacted when two people (usually a man and a woman) decide on their own accord and in the presence of, at least, two witnesses to exchange the formal consent to live a life of vocation of love and sharing for each other, to promote their mutual growth and welfare as persons in their journey together through life (Nwoye, 2015). According to Undiyaundeye and Ugal (2016), marriage in the modern sense is a situation of cohabitation between men and women as the case may be.

Marriage can be seen as the legalizing of a special relationship between a man and woman to which society gives its appeal. It places each partner under legal and social obligations to the other and the society. As a life-long agreement between the couple, marriage is supposed to be sacred and permanent contact which is assumed to outlive the couple. The social recognition of mating accorded to marriage gives children produced by the family (couples) legal recognition in the society. Therefore, if marriage is healthy and stable, the couples are satisfied with each other and live in harmony, and a society in which the family is the bedrock would be strongly built (Khandare, 2015).

Marital satisfaction is defined as personal feelings of happiness or pleasure and the spouses' happiness considering all current aspects of the marriage (Dinh et al., 2017). It also refers to an individual's positive assessment of his/her marital relations (Ofovwé et al., 2013). It could also be viewed as the individual's perception and assessment of the overall quality of marriage and the extent the individual sees the relationship as rewarding. According to Hendrick (2018), marital satisfaction refers to "the subjective experience of happiness, satisfaction, and pleasure experienced by partners in their relationship. This definition focuses on the emotional and affective components of marital satisfaction. Consistently, Bradbury et al., (2021) defined marital satisfaction as an individual's global evaluation of their marriage, including positive and negative dimensions of the relationship, as well as specific aspects such as communication, conflict resolution, and intimacy. This comprehensive definition incorporates both the overall evaluation and specific domains of the marital relationship.

Marital satisfaction has a significant impact on individual mental and physical health. Research has consistently shown that individuals in satisfying marriages tend to experience lower levels of psychological distress, depression, and anxiety (Whisman, 2018). Additionally, marital satisfaction is associated with better physical health outcomes, including lower rates of cardiovascular disease, improved immune function, and better overall longevity (Robles & Carroll, 2021). Moreover, marital satisfaction is closely linked to overall life satisfaction and subjective well-being. Individuals in happy and fulfilling marriages tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction and overall happiness compared to those in distressed or unhappy

marriages (Carr et al., 2014). This is particularly important as subjective well-being has been shown to have far-reaching implications for various life domains, including work productivity, interpersonal relationships, and overall quality of life.

Marital satisfaction also plays a crucial role in the well-being of children and family dynamics. Children raised in households with high levels of marital satisfaction tend to exhibit better social, emotional, and academic outcomes compared to those raised in homes with high levels of marital conflict and dissatisfaction (Amato & Sobolewski, 2021). Additionally, marital satisfaction can foster a positive family environment and promote effective co-parenting, which is essential for healthy child development. Robles (2016) revealed that individuals in high-quality marriages exhibit lower rates of cardiovascular disease, including reduced risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, and stroke. Additionally, marital satisfaction has been linked to improved immune function, as evidenced by lower levels of inflammatory markers and better immune responses to vaccines (Kiecolt-Glaser, 2018).

Moreover, research has consistently shown that marital satisfaction is associated with increased longevity. A large-scale study by Waldinger et al. (2019) found that individuals in satisfying marriages lived significantly longer than those in distressed or unhappy marriages, even after controlling for various demographic and health factors. The mechanisms underlying the link between marital satisfaction and health outcomes are multifaceted, but they are thought to involve factors such as emotional support, stress regulation, and healthy lifestyle behaviors. Satisfying marriages can provide a sense of security, companionship, and emotional intimacy, which can buffer against the negative effects of stress and promote overall well-being (Robles & Carroll, 2021).

Gender differences in marital satisfaction have been a topic of interest for many researchers. According to Zaheri et al. (2016), women tend to report lower levels of marital satisfaction compared to men. However, Contreras et al. (2019) suggested that these gender differences may vary across cultural contexts and societal norms. Additionally, Soulsby and Bennett (2017) highlighted the importance of considering the interplay between gender and other factors, such as division of household labor and power dynamics, in understanding marital satisfaction.

Age and length of marriage have also been explored in relation to marital satisfaction among married adults. Bühler et al. (2022) conducted a longitudinal study spanning over 20 years and found that marital satisfaction tends to decline in the early years of marriage, but stabilizes or even increases in later years. Interestingly, their findings also suggested that couples who remain married for longer periods tend to report higher levels of marital satisfaction compared to those who divorced or separated. Conversely, Jamali and Yusoff (2020) reported that marital satisfaction may follow a U-shaped pattern, with higher levels in the early years of marriage, a decline in the middle years, and an increase again in later years, potentially due to changes in expectations, priorities, and life stages. It is important to note that self-esteem and attachment style could predict marital satisfaction.

Self-esteem is defined as an attitude of self, either positive or negative. It is an individual subjective calculation of his worth as a person. It is a factor that influences a person's comprehension, interpretation, and emotional reaction. It is like a

collection of outcomes and beliefs which has been stated in the relation between a person and his outer world (Akram, 2000). As "feeling that one is good enough" is a typical definition of self-esteem, self-esteem includes sentiments of self-acceptance and self-respect. High self-esteem individuals are assumed to be mentally content and in good health, whereas individuals with low self-esteem are assumed to be psychologically troubled and maybe even sad. Self-worth has a role in a couple's marital harmony. Self-esteem is seen to be a key component of marital success, and the environment has a significant impact on how it develops (Ravanbakhs, 2009).

Self-esteem depends on how well a married person believes in and evaluates themselves. It is typically impacted by how the other spouse feels about the partner's overall or specific attributes. The degree to which a married partner develops a high or low sense of self-worth and, consequently, whether they will experience a low or high level of marital harmony can be significantly influenced by their consistent positive or negative opinions of their partner's appearance, cooking abilities, sexual behavior, and other characteristics. Additionally, research has demonstrated that self-esteem is a consistently accurate predictor of couples' relationship satisfaction (Erol & Orth, 2016).

Gender differences in self-esteem among married adults have been explored by several researchers. Shackelford (2021) found that married men tend to report higher levels of self-esteem compared to married women. However, Maroufizadeh et al. (2018) suggested that these gender differences in self-esteem may be more pronounced in certain cultural contexts, with their study of Iranian couples revealing no significant gender differences in self-esteem. Additionally, Soulsby and Kulkarni (2020) highlighted the importance of considering the intersection of gender and other factors, such as socioeconomic status and relationship dynamics, in understanding self-esteem among married individuals.

Age and length of marriage have also been explored in relation to self-esteem among married adults. Orth et al. (2018) conducted a longitudinal study spanning 25 years and found that self-esteem tends to increase during early and middle adulthood, but may decline in later adulthood. Interestingly, their findings also suggested that longer marriages are associated with higher levels of self-esteem for both husbands and wives. Conversely, Classen (2019) reported that self-esteem may initially decrease in the early years of marriage, potentially due to the challenges of adjusting to the new role and dynamics, but tend to increase over time as couples navigate and overcome these challenges together.

Self-esteem has been identified as a significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Several studies have examined this relationship and found a positive association between high self-esteem and increased marital satisfaction. For instance, Erol and Orth (2016) stated that individuals with higher levels of self-esteem at the beginning of the study reported greater marital satisfaction over time, even after controlling for other factors such as income, education, and personality traits. This suggests that self-esteem may play a causal role in shaping marital satisfaction. Similarly, Khajehei (2016) found a positive correlation between self-esteem and marital satisfaction, with individuals who had higher self-esteem reporting greater levels of satisfaction in their marriages. The study also highlighted the mediating role of communication

patterns, suggesting that self-esteem may influence marital satisfaction through its impact on effective communication between partners.

Sciangula and Morry (2009) found a robust positive correlation across various relationship types, including marital relationships. The authors proposed that individuals with higher self-esteem may be better equipped to navigate challenges and conflicts within their relationships, leading to greater overall satisfaction. Macias et al. (2020) indicated that not only does self-esteem predict marital satisfaction, but marital satisfaction can also influence an individual's self-esteem over time. This highlights the dynamic interplay between these two constructs and the importance of considering their reciprocal effects. Attachment style was also reported as a factor influencing marital satisfaction.

Attachment styles have been conceptualized and defined in various ways by different authors in recent years. Levy et al. (2015) defined attachment styles as systematic patterns of relational expectations, needs, emotions, and social behavior that result from a particular history of attachment experiences. Mikulincer and Shaver (2016) described attachment styles as systematic patterns of expectations, needs, emotion regulation strategies, and social behavior that result from the internalization of a particular history of attachment experiences. Conversely, Nofle and Shaver (2006) emphasized the dimensional approach, defining attachment styles along the dimensions of anxiety and avoidance, with secure individuals scoring low on both dimensions.

Attachment styles can have a significant impact on the dynamics and quality of marital relationships. According to Sadikaj et al. (2015), securely attached individuals tend to experience greater marital satisfaction, better communication, and more effective conflict resolution strategies in their marriages. In contrast, insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant attachment, are often associated with higher levels of marital distress, poorer communication, and less effective coping strategies (Chung, 2019). Interestingly, Hosseini et al. (2021) found that attachment anxiety and avoidance can manifest differently in married couples, with attachment anxiety being linked to higher levels of marital burnout and attachment avoidance being associated with lower levels of marital burnout. Additionally, Saavedra et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of considering the interplay between partners' attachment styles, as the combination of different attachment orientations can shape the overall relationship dynamics.

According to Del Giudice (2019), women tend to exhibit higher levels of attachment anxiety compared to men, while men are more likely to display higher levels of attachment avoidance. However, Mohr et al. (2017) suggested that these gender differences may be influenced by cultural and social norms, with their study of German couples revealing minimal gender differences in attachment styles. Additionally, Senchak and Leonard (2022) highlighted the importance of considering the interaction between gender and other factors, such as trauma history and relationship dynamics, in understanding attachment styles among married individuals.

Age and length of marriage have also been explored about attachment styles among married adults. Chopik et al. (2019) conducted a longitudinal study spanning over 20

years and found that attachment anxiety tends to decrease with age, while attachment avoidance remains relatively stable. Interestingly, their findings also suggested that longer marriages are associated with lower levels of both attachment anxiety and avoidance. Conversely, Sadikaj et al. (2017) reported that attachment insecurity (both anxiety and avoidance) may initially increase in the early years of marriage, potentially due to the challenges of adjusting to the new role and dynamics, but tend to decrease over time as couples develop greater security and stability in their relationship.

The literature shows a connection between marital satisfaction and attachment style (Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020). Theoretically, how spouses relate to each other is, in part, an expression of their attachment style (Diamond et al., 2018). Research shows that individuals with an insecure attachment style tend to view the relationship through the lenses of fear and anxiety while those with a secure attachment style tend to perceive the relationship with a more trusting attitude (Abbasi et al., 2016; Amani & Khosroshahi, 2021; Bedair et al., 2020; Wijaya & Widyaningsih, 2020). Notably, Abbasi et al. (2016) observed that married Iranian couples reporting secure attachment styles show higher levels of marital satisfaction whereas participants reporting avoidant and ambivalent styles display lower levels of marital satisfaction. Similarly, Wijaya and Widyaningsih (2020) study on the mediating role of dyadic cohesion between secure attachment and marital satisfaction shows that spouses with secure attachment display more harmony in the relationship. It is against the background that the study examined self-esteem and attachment styles as predictors of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

### **Problem**

Marital satisfaction is a crucial aspect of overall well-being and life satisfaction, as it impacts not only the individuals involved but also their families and professional lives. However, maintaining a satisfying and fulfilling marital relationship can be challenging, particularly for individuals in demanding professions such as teaching. Secondary school teachers face numerous stressors, including heavy workloads, classroom management issues, and ongoing professional development requirements. These challenges can potentially spill over into their personal lives, affecting their marital relationships and overall well-being. While several factors have been identified as contributors to marital satisfaction, two psychological constructs that have garnered significant attention are self-esteem and attachment styles.

Several studies were conducted on self-esteem, attachment style, and marital satisfaction. For instance, Ebeh (2019) investigated mental well-being and self-esteem as predictors of marital satisfaction among catholic women organization members. Results showed that high mental well-being and self-esteem scores were significant predictors of marital satisfaction among married catholic women. Similarly, Yadalijamalaje et al. (2016) explored the relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction among married women in Najafabad and Fualdshahr. They found a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and self-esteem with higher self-esteem resulting in greater marital satisfaction among women in both



cities. In another study, Uwaoma et al. (2016) investigated the influence of self-esteem and gender on marital satisfaction among Igbo married couples. The study which involved 250 participants identified that self-esteem significantly influences marital satisfaction among Igbo married couples. Also, Tavakolizadeh and Nejad (2016) found a significant relationship between sexual self-esteem and marital satisfaction among mothers with normal and mentally retarded children respectively.

MacLean (2012) worked on attachment in marriage: predicting marital satisfaction from partner matching using a three-group typology of adult attachment style. As predicted, wives and husbands with the highest marital satisfaction were in secure-secure attachment combinations whereas the most dissatisfied wives were in avoidant-avoidant combinations. Iboro and Uduakabasi (2011) examined the predicting marital satisfaction from the attachment styles and gender of a culturally and religiously homogenous population. The results showed a statistically significant difference in marital satisfaction between participants with secure and insecure attachment styles as well as a significant difference between participants with secure and insecure attachment styles on marital satisfaction, indicating that attachment styles are salient indicators of marital satisfaction.

Despite the potential impact of self-esteem and attachment styles on marital satisfaction, there is a dearth of research specifically examining these factors among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis to the best of the researcher's knowledge. Given the unique challenges and demands faced by this profession, it is imperative to understand how self-esteem and attachment styles influence marital satisfaction within this population. Therefore, this study investigated self-esteem and attachment styles as predictors of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What is the level of self-esteem of married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?
2. What are the attachment styles of married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?
3. What is the level of marital satisfaction of married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in the study:

1. Self-esteem and attachment styles will not significantly predict marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender
3. There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on age
4. There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on length of years in marriage

## Methods

The research design employed for this study was a descriptive survey of the correlational type. Stangor (2004) maintained that correlational designs are apt for measuring such complexities of the patterns of relationships that exist among measured variables. Thus, the researcher considered the correlational type suitable for this study, since the study is investigating self-esteem and attachment styles as predictors of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

The population for this study comprised all secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. The target population for this study was selected married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. 200 married secondary school teachers constituted the sample for this study. Daramola (2006) defined sample as a selected group that is a fair representation of the entire population of interest. Given the foregoing, simple random sampling technique is a method of drawing a portion of a population in such a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected (Daramola, 2006).

Twenty (20) public and private secondary schools were randomly selected in Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State using the dip-hat sampling method. The dip-hat sampling method is a method where the researcher writes the names of the secondary schools (both public and private schools) in Ilorin metropolis on different sheets of paper, puts them in a bag, shakes them, and then dips his/her hand into the bag to pick a sample. This method was used to select 20 secondary schools for the study. Thus, 10 respondents were randomly selected from each of the schools selected using random sampling techniques. The participants were selected using stratified sampling on the basis of gender, age and length of years in marriage. Therefore, a total number of two hundred respondents (20x10) were used for this study.

The instrument adopted for this study was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Self-esteem, Attachment Styles and Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire" (SASMSQ). The questionnaire comprises 4 sections (Sections A, B, C & D). The first section comprised the demographic data of the respondents such as gender, age and length of years in marriage. Sections B, C and D comprised statements on self-esteem, attachment styles and marital satisfaction respectively. Four point Likert-type Scale with the scoring format of: Very True of Me (VTM) = 4 points, True of Me (TM) = 3 points, Not Really True (NRT) = 2 points, Not Very True of Me (NVTM) – 1 point.

According to Olayiwola (2007), validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Five copies of the research instrument were given to five experts in counselling and sociology to check and remove the unnecessary areas and incorporate useful aspects to ascertain the content validity of the instrument. Content validity is one of the most powerful techniques available to the researcher through which data-gathering instruments like questionnaires can be validated (Daramola, 2006).

To measure the reliability of the instrument, the test re-test method was adopted. The researcher administered the instrument to 20 married secondary school teachers who were not part of the sample and later re-administered the instrument



a second time to the same group after three weeks interval of the initial administration. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to correlate the two sets of scores and reliability coefficients of 0.78, 0.81, and 0.83 were obtained for the self-esteem scale, attachment styles scale, and marital satisfaction scale respectively.

The data analyses of the study were done using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results obtained from the demographic data (Section A) was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, while the data obtained from Section B was analyzed using mean score and inferential statistics such as regression, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistical tools were used to test all the formulated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### Demographic Data

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in frequency and percentages.

**Table 1:** Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	83	41.5
Female	117	58.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender. The table reveals that 84 (41.5%) of the respondents were male, while 117 (58.5%) of the respondents were female. This indicates that female respondents participated more than male respondents in this study.

**Table 2:** Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Age

Year	Frequency	Percentage
20-35 years	74	37.0
36-50 years	66	33.0
51 years and above	60	30.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on age. The table reveals that 74 (37.0%) of the respondents were between 20-35 years of age, 66 (33.0%) of the respondents were between 36-50 years of age while 60 (30.0%) of the respondents were 51 years of age and above. This indicates that respondents who were between 20-35 years of age participated more in this study.

**Table 3:** Percentage Distribution of Respondents Based on Length of Years in Marriage

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	80	40.0
6-10 years	53	26.5
11 years and above	67	33.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 reveals that 80 (40.0%) of the respondents spent between 1-5 years in marriage, 53 (26.5%) of the respondents spent between 6-10 years in marriage and 67 (33.5%) of the respondents spent 11 years in marriage and above. This indicates that more respondents spent between 1-5 years in marriage compared to their counterparts in this study.

**Research Question One:** What is the level of self-esteem of married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?

**Table 4:** Mean, Standard Deviation, and Rank Order Analysis of the Respondents' Level of Self-Esteem

Item No.	As far as I am concerned, I:	Mean	S.D.	Rank
1	feel confident in handling new challenges	3.50	.501	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	am satisfied with myself as a person	3.41	.494	2 <sup>nd</sup>
8	am proud of my accomplishments	3.37	.484	3 <sup>rd</sup>
3	feel good about who I am	3.30	.457	4 <sup>th</sup>
15	believe that I have a lot to offer	3.27	.480	5 <sup>th</sup>
5	often doubt my abilities and skills	3.24	.870	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	am comfortable asserting my opinions	3.22	.503	7 <sup>th</sup>
11	am able to bounce back quickly from setbacks	3.20	1.01	8 <sup>th</sup>
6	often compare myself negatively to others	3.15	.700	9 <sup>th</sup>
14	feel deserving of happiness and success	3.10	1.08	10 <sup>th</sup>
10	am capable of making positive changes in my life	3.10	.842	11 <sup>th</sup>
13	am generally optimistic about my future	3.09	1.08	12 <sup>th</sup>
9	accept myself, flaws and all	3.08	.798	13 <sup>th</sup>
12	believe in my ability to achieve my goals	2.73	1.48	14 <sup>th</sup>
4	am valuable and worthy of respect	2.57	1.11	15 <sup>th</sup>
	<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>3.15</b>		

Table 4 presents the mean, standard deviation and rank order of the respondents' level of self-esteem. The Table showed the aggregate mean of 3.15 with is greater than 2.50 mean cut-off point. The table also indicates that items 1, 2 and 8 which state that as far as I am concerned, I: feel confident in handling new challenges; am satisfied with myself as a person; and am proud of my accomplishments ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd with the mean scores of 3.50, 3.41 and 3.37. Likewise, items 9, 12 and 4 which state that as far as I am concerned, I: accept myself, flaws and all; believe in my ability to achieve my goals; and am valuable and worthy of respect ranked 13th, 14th and 15th with the mean scores of 3.08, 2.73 and 2.57 respectively. Since aggregate mean and all items have mean scores that is above 2.50, this implies that respondents have high level of self-esteem.

**Research Question Two:**  
married secondary school  
Ilorin metropolis?

What are the attachment styles of  
teachers in

**Table 5:** Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order Analysis of the Respondents' Attachment Style

Item No.	As an individual:	Mean	S.D.	Rank
	<b>Secure Attachment</b>			
1.	It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others	3.07	.630	
2.	I am comfortable depending on others	3.20	.787	
3.	I am comfortable when others depend on me	3.39	.631	
4.	I do not worry about being alone	3.45	.616	
5.	I am comfortable without close emotional relationships	3.40	.695	
	<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>3.30</b>		2 <sup>nd</sup>
	<b>Anxious/Preoccupied Attachment</b>			
6	I do not worry when others do not accept me	3.40	.633	
7	I found that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like	3.30	.695	
8	I sometimes worry that others do not value me as much as I value them	2.90	.866	
9	I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others	3.42	.636	
10	I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely	3.33	.549	
11	I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others	2.57	1.119	
	<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>3.78</b>		1 <sup>st</sup>
	<b>Avoidant Attachment</b>			
12	It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient	3.40	.695	
13	I prefer not to depend on others	3.20	1.019	
14	I prefer not having others depend on me	2.73	1.487	
15	I find it difficult to depend on others completely	3.09	1.085	
	<b>Aggregate mean</b>	<b>2.48</b>		3 <sup>rd</sup>

Table 5 presents the mean, standard deviation and rank order of the respondents' attachment style. The Table showed the anxious/preoccupied attachment ranked 1st with an aggregate mean of 3.78. Secure attachment ranked 2nd with the aggregate mean of 3.30 while avoidant attachment ranked 3rd with aggregate mean of 2.48. Since two out of three attachment styles ranked above 2.50 mean cut-off points, it implies that respondents engaged in more of anxious/preoccupied and secure attachment styles than avoidant attachment style.

**Research Question Three:** What is the level of marital satisfaction of married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis?

**Table 6:** Mean, Standard Deviation and Rank Order Analysis of the Respondents' Level of Marital Satisfaction

Item No.	In my marriage:	Mean	S.D.	Rank
11	I always count on my spouse's intelligence and abilities	3.60	.492	1 <sup>st</sup>
15	I can easily talk to my spouse about anything related to our sexual life	3.46	.890	2 <sup>nd</sup>
5	My spouse and I spend free-time very well together	3.45	.616	3 <sup>rd</sup>

6	When we quarrel, my spouse helps us to find a midway	3.40	.695	4 <sup>th</sup>
4	We are best friends for each other	3.39	.631	5 <sup>th</sup>
3	We have intense love and affection in our relationship	3.37	.484	6 <sup>th</sup>
1	I believe that we have a successful relationship	3.30	.457	7 <sup>th</sup>
12	I allocate time for the things I share with my spouse everyday	3.26	.745	8 <sup>th</sup>
9	I admire many features of my spouse	3.24	.870	9 <sup>th</sup>
8	Our relationship makes me happy	3.22	.503	10 <sup>th</sup>
13	There are more good aspects of our relationship than bad aspects	3.18	.742	11 <sup>th</sup>
14	I trust my spouse about everything	3.16	.515	12 <sup>th</sup>
7	We never get bored when we are together	3.15	.700	13 <sup>th</sup>
10	My spouse take pleasures as much as I do in our sexual intercourses	3.08	.798	14 <sup>th</sup>
2	We have a satisfying relationship	2.57	1.119	15 <sup>th</sup>
		<b>3.25</b>		

Table 6 presents the mean, standard deviation and rank order of the respondents' level of marital satisfaction. The Table showed the aggregate mean of 3.25 with is greater than 2.50 mean cut-off point. The table also indicates that items 11, 15 and 5 which state that in my marriage: I always count on my spouse's intelligence and abilities; I can easily talk to my spouse about anything related to our sexual life; and my spouse and I spend free-time very well together ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd with the mean scores of 3.60, 3.46 and 3.45. Likewise, items 7, 10 and 2 which state that in my marriage: we never get bored when we are together; my spouse takes pleasures as much as I do in our sexual intercourses; and we have a satisfying relationship ranked 13th, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15th with the mean scores of 3.15, 3.08 and 2.57 respectively. Since the aggregate mean and all items have mean scores that are above 2.50, this implies that respondents experienced a high level of marital satisfaction.

### Hypotheses Testing

Four null hypotheses were postulated and tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using regression, t-test and ANOVA statistical methods at 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis One:** *Self-esteem and attachment styles will not significantly predict of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis*

**Table 7a:** Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.799 <sup>a</sup>	.638	.634	2.633

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Esteem, Attachment Style

**Table 7b:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p-value
Regression	2402.75	2	1201.37	173.33*	.000 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	1365.39	197	6.93		
Total	3768.15	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Esteem, Attachment Style

**Table 7c:** Regression Coefficient showing Self-Esteem, Attachment Style Predicting Marital Satisfaction of the Respondents

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	16.94	1.731		9.78	.000
Self-Esteem	.341	.047	.424	7.30*	.000
Attachment Style	.329	.043	.449	7.72*	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

\* Significant,  $p < 0.05$

Table 7a (Model 1) shows R square of .638 and Adjusted R square of .634. The R of .799<sup>a</sup> translates to 79.9% which is the extent to which self-esteem and attachment style predict with marital satisfaction when combined.

In the Table 7b, the result of the ANOVA table indicates an F- value of 173.33 with p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 significant level. Since the calculated p-value is less than significant level hence, the null hypothesis one is rejected. Thus, self-esteem and attachment styles significantly predicted of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

Table 7c indicates contribution of variables (self-esteem and attachment style) to marital satisfaction. Self-esteem has a Beta weight ( $\beta$ ) of .424,  $t = 7.30$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Attachment style has a Beta weight ( $\beta$ ) of .449,  $t = 7.72$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Based on the result, it could be seen that self-esteem and attachment styles significantly predicted of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis.

**Hypothesis Two:** *There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender*

**Table 8:** Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing difference in the Respondents' Level of Marital Satisfaction Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	83	49.12	4.36	198	.836	1.96	.404
Female	117	48.60	4.34				

Table 8 shows that the calculated t-value of .836 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 with a corresponding p-value of .404 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis one is accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

### Hypothesis Three:

*There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on age*

**Table 9:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing difference in the Respondents' Level of Marital Satisfaction Based on Age

Source	SS	Df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	.304	2	.152	.008	3.00	.992
Within Groups	3767.851	197	19.126			
Total	3768.155	199				

Table 9 shows the calculated F-ratio of .008 is less than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .992 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is more than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on age.

### Hypothesis Four:

*There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on length of years in marriage*

**Table 10:** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) showing difference in the Respondents' Level of Marital Satisfaction Based on Length of Years in Marriage

Source	SS	Df	Mean Square	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	5.308	2	2.654	.139	3.00	.870
Within Groups	3762.847	197	19.101			
Total	3768.155	199				

Table 10 shows the calculated F-ratio of .139 is less than the critical F-value of 3.00 with a corresponding p-value of .870 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated p-value is more than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on length of years in marriage.

### Discussion

The findings revealed that married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis have high level of self-esteem. This could be attributed to the emotional support and companionship that marriage often provides, which can bolster an individual's self-worth and confidence. Furthermore, the stability and security of a supportive marital relationship can mitigate stress and enhance personal growth, contributing to higher self-esteem. The finding supports the study of Orth et al. (2018) who found that married individuals generally report higher self-esteem compared to their unmarried counterparts. Similarly, Salami (2016) found that married teachers exhibited higher



levels of psychological well-being, including self-esteem, than their single counterparts.

The finding of the study showed that married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis engaged in more of anxious/preoccupied and secure attachment styles than avoidant attachment style. The finding of this study supports the study of Allen and Miga (2020) found that married adults commonly display secure attachment with partners, parents and friends, seeking emotional supports. Laible and Carlo (2018) found that insecure attachment styles, such as avoidant or anxious/preoccupied among adults which were associated to various challenges, including difficulties in interpersonal relationships and emotional regulation. This could be many of the students might adopt different attachment styles as coping mechanisms in response to stress or challenges.

The finding of the study showed that married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis experienced high level of marital satisfaction. This could be that teachers generally possess good communication skills, which are crucial for resolving conflicts and maintaining a healthy relationship. This finding aligns with a study of Fletcher et al. (2016) who asserted that individuals in teaching professions often report high marital satisfaction due to the supportive nature of their professional environment, which encourages work-life balance and provides emotional stability. This finding is supported by research from Wang and Teng (2017) who found that secondary school teachers reported higher marital satisfaction compared to the general population.

Another finding revealed that self-esteem and attachment styles significantly predicted marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. This demonstrates the predictive power of self-esteem and attachment styles on marital satisfaction among various populations, including secondary school teachers. This could be that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to have more positive perceptions of themselves and their relationships. They are likely to engage in healthier communication patterns, exhibit less dependency and jealousy, and are more capable of resolving conflicts constructively, all of which contribute to higher marital satisfaction. The finding is in line with the submission of Khosravi et al. (2017) confirmed that attachment styles significantly predict marital satisfaction. The finding supports the study of Maroof and Ahmad (2017) who found that both self-esteem and attachment styles were significant predictors of marital satisfaction,

Finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender. This result suggests that male and female teachers were not different in their level of marital satisfaction. The reason for this finding can be attributed to the fact that both men and women may experience similar marital roles and expectations which can lead to similar levels of marital satisfaction. The finding relates to the study of Li and Johnson (2018) who found no significant gender differences in marital satisfaction levels.

Finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on age. This implies that respondents across ages were not different in their level of marital satisfaction. This could be that both younger and older teachers might have

developed similar coping strategies to handle marital issues, leading to comparable levels of satisfaction. The finding is in line with a study conducted by Wilson and Oswald (2017) investigated marital satisfaction across different age groups among teachers and found no significant variance.

Finding also revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on the length of years in marriage. This implies that respondents across the length of years in marriage were not different in their level of marital satisfaction. This could be because couples often develop coping mechanisms and adapt to each other's behaviours over time. This adaptation can lead to a stable level of marital satisfaction regardless of how long they have been married. The finding supports the study of Whitton and Kuryluk (2015) who found no significant correlation between the length of the marriage and satisfaction levels, suggesting that other variables play a more crucial role in determining marital happiness.

### **Conclusion**

It was concluded that married secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis have a high level of self-esteem; engaged in more anxious/preoccupied and secure attachment styles than avoidant attachment styles; and experienced a high level of marital satisfaction. The study further revealed that self-esteem and attachment styles significantly predicted of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis. It was also revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction among secondary school teachers in Ilorin metropolis based on gender, age and length of years in marriage.

### **Implication for Counselling**

The findings of this study have implications for counselling practice. Given that the study found high levels of self-esteem among married secondary school teachers, counsellors can focus on maintaining and further enhancing this positive self-regard. Techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and positive psychology interventions could be employed to reinforce healthy self-esteem. This approach may contribute to sustained marital satisfaction, as the study indicates a significant relationship between self-esteem and marital satisfaction.

The anxious/preoccupied and secure attachment styles among the teachers suggest that counsellors can work with these attachment patterns. For those with anxious/preoccupied attachment, interventions focused on building security and reducing anxiety in relationships could be beneficial. For securely attached individuals, counsellors can reinforce and leverage these healthy patterns to further strengthen marital relationships.

The finding that there were no significant differences in marital satisfaction based on gender, age, or length of marriage implies that counsellors can avoid making assumptions based on these factors. Instead, they can focus on individual and couple dynamics, tailoring interventions to the specific needs and circumstances of each client or couple.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that:

- Given that high self-esteem is associated with higher marital satisfaction, school administrators and educational policymakers should consider implementing workshops or programmes aimed at boosting self-esteem among secondary school teachers. These could include professional development sessions focusing on personal growth, mindfulness practices, and positive psychology techniques.
- Counsellors should focus on maintaining and further enhancing this positive self-regard with techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and positive psychology interventions could be employed to reinforce healthy self-esteem.
- Since secure attachment styles are linked to higher marital satisfaction, counselling services should be offered to teachers on healthy communication skills, emotional regulation, and trust-building exercises that promote secure attachment in relationships.
- As length of marriage did not significantly affect marital satisfaction, provide consistent support and resources for teachers throughout their careers and marriages irrespective of age and gender.

**Ethical Approval Declaration**

"All procedures involving human participants in this study were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards set by applicable research guidelines and the principles of the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki and its subsequent amendments. Ethical approval was secured before the commencement of data collection".

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**Data availability:-**

The datasets generated and analysed during the current study will be available from the author upon reasonable request.

**Consent for publication:-**

I hereby provide consent for the publication of the manuscript detailed above.

**Competing interests:-**

The authors declare no competing interests.

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