

Factors Affecting Marital Satisfaction among Primigravida Women in Tanta City, Egypt

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Abstract

Background: Transition to parenthood is often associated with a reduction in marital satisfaction between the married couples.

The aim of this study was to investigate factors affecting marital satisfaction among primigravida women in Tanta City. The study was **carried out** at **two health centers** and **two Mother and Child Health Care centers (MCH)** : Seger health center and EL-Awal MCH center at Tanta first sector and Botrous health center and EL-Embaby MCH center at Tanta second sector.

The subjects of the study consisted of 150 women attending the previous settings. **Two tools** were used to collect data of the study: **The first tool**, structured interview sheet concerning socio-demographic characteristics, and social assessment. **The second tool**, **ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale** used to measure the marital satisfaction. **The main results** of this study revealed that an equal percent of primigravida women 46.7% were either partially or highly satisfied in their marriage, and 6.6% of them were low satisfied. It also revealed that there was a statistical significant negative correlation between marital satisfaction and the following variables; women and husbands' age, birth order and duration of marriage. On the other hand, there was positive correlation with the rank of wife. Also, there was a significant relation between marital satisfactions and the following variables; women and husband's job, relation with mother in-law and female circumcision. While, there was no significant relation between marital satisfaction and the following variables; family type, residence and income. The study concluded that, there are many predictive factors which affect marital satisfaction such as, couples' job, female circumcision and relationship with mother in-law opposed to the time and duration of marriage. The study calls for the need for public, services providers and psychologists' awareness creation on the influence of these factors in marriage, and the replication of this study to explore the effect of other variables such as gender on marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Marital satisfaction, Primigravida

I. Introduction

Family is considered as essential part of our life. Human personality is generally affected by the natural process of life specially the events being occurred inside the family⁽¹⁾. Marital satisfaction means that the couples have the feelings of comfort, enjoyment and acceptance at every day of their marriage⁽²⁾. It is considered an important element in the continuity of their marriage. Although, it is a difficult process but it affects the couple's quality of life^(3,4). Woman and her husband's life are severely affected by pregnancy as a result of the physical, emotional, and social changes associated with it^(5,6). During pregnancy and the transition to parenthood, there is a decrease in emotional intimacy and marital satisfaction between married couples^(7,8).

The satisfaction of marital life is affected by many factors which can't be ignored such as; physical, emotional, sexual aspects, financial status and social beliefs of the married couples^(9,10). Moreover, marital satisfaction is associated with various other factors such as individual and family-related factors, friendship, companionship, affection, personal characteristics, parenting styles, and sexual relationship^(2,11).

In Egypt, according to The Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) the divorce cases increased from 155,621 cases in 2012 to 163,593 cases in 2013, an increase of 4.7 percent, while marriages declined from 922,425 cases in 2012 to 909,350 cases in 2013, a decline of 1.4 percent. Divorce rate, is one of the most important indicators of marital dissatisfaction, which lead to many negative consequences and problems at social and personal levels. These consequences affect husbands, wives and even children⁽¹²⁾.

Marital satisfaction among couples is the strongest predictor for happiness in many areas of life which lead to general adjustment and fewer health problems especially among primigravida women. The finding of different reports with regard to the contributing factors of marital satisfaction are numerous and sometimes inconsistent^(13,14). Therefore this study was performed to determine the factors associated with marital satisfaction among primigravida women in Tanta City.

Aim of the study

The aim of this study was to determine the factors that affects marital satisfaction among primigravida women in Tanta City

Research Question:

What are the factors affecting marital satisfaction among primigravida women in Tanta City?

Subjects and method:-

Study design: A descriptive design was used in carrying out this study.

Setting: The study was **carried out at two health centers and two Maternal and Child Health Centers** (MCH centers): Seger health center and EL-Awal MCH center at Tanta first sector. Botrous health center and El-Embaby MCH center at Tanta second sector.

Subjects: The study included a convenient sample of women who attended the previously mentioned settings at the period from 1/2/2016 to 30/6/2016 two days/week, the total number of women interviewed by the researchers were 200 women, 20 women of them represented the sample of the pilot study and 30 women refused to participate in this study. So the actual number participated in this study was 150 selected according to the following criteria:

- Primigravida.
- Normal pregnancy course.
- Willing to participate in this study.
- Free from physical and psychological problems.

Tools of data collection:-

Tool I. Structured interview questionnaire sheet: This tool was developed by the researchers and composed of two parts.

Part 1: It comprised questions about **socio-demographic characteristics of the studied subjects** such as, woman and husband's age, woman and husband's birth position in her/his family, woman and husband's education, woman and husband's occupation, type of the family, age at marriage, responsible person about the decision of marriage, duration of marriage, family income, residency and the current living arrangement.

Part 2: It comprised questions about woman's social relations such as: social relation of woman with husband's family, mother in- law and relation of husband with Woman's family.

Tool II- ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale: (Evaluating and Nurturing Relationship Issues Communication, and Happiness). This tool was developed by Fowers and Olson (1989)⁽¹⁵⁾, as a multidimensional self-report measurement of marital satisfaction. It comprises of 35 items to be answered on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree .Each item is preceded by "+" or "-" sign. For the items preceded by a "+", the responses are not changed ,i.e., a 1 remains a 1. For the items preceded by a "-", the responses should be reversed. A 1 becomes a 5, a 2 becomes a 4, a 4 becomes a 2 and a 5 becomes a 1. A response of 3 is left unchanged. According to the obtained scores each participant is assigned to one of three groups of highly satisfied (over 75%), partial satisfaction (between 50-75%) and low satisfaction (less than 50%).

II. Method

- An official letter was directed from the Faculty of Nursing, Tanta University to the Ministry of Health administrative authorities to obtain their acceptance to collect necessary data from the previous selected settings. Then, the permission was obtained from the center's administrative authorities. The study tool one developed by the researchers after reviewing the related literature. Tool two (ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale) was adopted, translated and tested for its content validity and reliability by presenting it to five experts in obstetrics and gynecological nursing from the Faculty of Nursing. The validity of this tool was calculated by content validity method and its reliability was calculated by retest method (0.82) that was significant
- Before beginning on actual study, a pilot study was carried out on twenty women attending the two health centers and two Maternal and Child Health centers (MCH) (5 women from each one) to evaluate the clarity and applicability of the tools. Those women were excluded from the study sample.
- Subjects of this study were interviewed during their attendance at the previously mentioned settings. Ethical considerations of the study included approval to collect the data from the previous mentioned settings, as well as getting the subjects' consent to participate in the study after explaining the purpose of the study.
- Data were collected by the researchers during the period from 1/2/2016 to 30/6/2016.

Statistical analysis:-

The collected data were organized, tabulated and statistically analyzed using SPSS version 19 (Statistical Package for Social Studies) created by IBM, Illinois, Chicago, USA. For numerical values the range mean and standard deviations were calculated. The differences between two mean values were used using student's t test. Differences of mean values between more than two groups were tested by analysis of variance (F) and when found significant Scheffe test was used to compare between each two groups. For categorical variable the number and percentage were calculated. The correlation between two variables was calculated using Pearson's correlation coefficient for numerical variables and Spearman's rank correlation for ordinal variables. The level of significant was adopted at $p < 0.05$.

III. Results

Table (1): Socio-demographic characteristics of the studied participants

Variables	Number (n=150)	%
Age in years:		
<25	106	70.7
25-	33	22.0
30-	5	3.3
35-	4	2.7
40-	2	1.3
Birth order:		
1	38	25.3
2	55	36.7
3	33	22.0
4	11	7.3
5	13	8.7
Educational level:		
Elementary	15	10.0
Preparatory	14	9.3
Secondary	55	36.7
University	66	44.0
Job:		
Housewife	77	51.3
Working	73	48.7
Age at marriage:		
15-20	40	26.7
21-25	84	56.0
26-30	22	14.7
>30	4	2.6
Rank of wife:		
1	128	85.3
2	17	11.3
3	5	3.4
Family type:		
Extended	101	67.3
Nuclear	49	32.7
Duration of engagement in years :		
<1	38	25.3
1-2	91	60.7
3-4	17	11.3
5+	4	2.7
Duration of marriage in years:		
1-5	127	84.7
6-10	16	10.7
11-15	2	1.3
>15	5	3.3
Decision of marriage:		
Parents	28	18.7
My own	28	18.7
Both	94	62.6

Table (1): Presents to distribution of the primigravida women according to their socio-demographic characteristics. It was found that 70.7% of the primigravida women were less than 25 years old, 44% of them had university education, 51.3% of them were housewives, 56% of them were 21 to 25years old at time of marriage, and 85.3% of them were the first wife .Also, 67.3% of the primigravida women were living with extended family, 60.7% of them were engaged for 1 to 2 years before marriage, and 84.7% of them were married for one to five years.

Table (2): Characteristics of the studied participants' families

Variables	Number (n=150)	%
Husband's age in years:		
<25	20	13.3
25-	113	75.3
30-	6	4.0
35-	5	3.3
40-	4	2.7
45±	2	1.4
Husband's birth order:		
1	41	27.3
2	46	30.7
3	40	26.7
4	16	10.7
5	7	4.6
Husband's educational level:		
Elementary	12	8.0
Preparatory	8	5.3
Secondary	33	22.0
University	97	64.7
Husband's job:		
Non professional	57	38.0
Professional	93	62.0
Family income:		
Enough	129	86.0
Not enough	21	14.0
Residence:		
Rural	112	74.7
Urban	38	25.3
Current type of residence:		
Wife's house	18	12.0
Husband's house	59	39.3
Rented	17	11.3
Husband's family house	53	35.3
Wife's family house	3	2.1
Current living conditions:		
With husband	136	90.7
With parents	14	9.3

Table (2): Shows the distribution of the primigravida women according to the characteristics of their families. It was noticed that the majority (75.3%) of the husband's age were from 25 to less than 30 years old, 64.7% of the husbands had university education, 62% of them work in professional jobs, 74.7% of them lives in rural areas, and most of the primigravida women (90.7%) lives with their husbands.

Table (3): Total score of marital satisfaction among the studied participants

Variables	Marital Satisfaction	
	n	%
Low satisfaction	10	6.6
Partial satisfaction	70	46.7
High satisfaction	70	46.7
Total	150	100

Table(3): Presents the distribution of the primigravida women according to their total score of marital satisfaction. It was noticed that an equal percent of primigravida women 46.7% were either partially satisfied or highly satisfied, and 6.6% of them were low satisfaction.

Table (4): Correlation between total score of marital satisfaction and socio-demographic variables

Variables	Marital satisfaction	
	r	p
Women's age	-0.382	0.001*
Husband's age	-0.252	0.002*
Age at marriage	-0.133	0.105
Duration of engagement	-0.005	0.950
Women's birth order	-0.359	0.001*
Husbands' birth order	-0.204	0.012*
Women's education	0.035	0.669
Husband's education	-0.058	0.479
Rank of wife	0.406	0.001*
Duration of marriage	-0.275	0.001*
BMI	-0.477	0.001*

*Significant p<0.05.

Table (4): Shows the correlation between total score of marital satisfaction and socio-demographic variables. The table revealed that there was a statistical significant negative correlation between marital satisfaction and the following items; women's age(P= 0.001) husband's age (P= 0.002), women's birth order (p=0.001), husband's birth order (P=0.012),duration of marriage(P= 0.001), and body mass index (P=0.001). While, there was a statistical significant positive correlation between marital satisfaction and rank of the wife (P = 0.001).

Table (5): Relation between mean value of total score of marital satisfaction and some socio-demographic characteristics.

Socio-demographic characteristics	Marital satisfaction	t/F	p
Family type:			
Extended	71.16+13.02	0.216	0.829
Nuclear	70.69+10.62		
Women's job:			
Housewives	73.97+10.45	3.136	0.001*
Employed	67.87+13.27		
Husband's job:			
Non professional	68.20+13.35	2.224	0.028*
professionals	72.73+11.26		
Decision of marriage:			
Parents	71.04+11.81		
My own	63.88+13.54	6.596	0.001*
Both	73.12+11.27		
Residence:			
Rural	70.95+13.09	0.097	0.923
Urban	71.17+9.52		
Income:			
Not enough	67.62+11.55	1.370	0.173
Enough	71.56+12.32		

*Significant p<0.05

**Scheffe test: my own significantly different from both

Table (5): Presents the relation between means value of total score of marital satisfaction and some socio-demographic characteristics. This table showed that there was a significant relation between marital satisfaction, women's job (P=0.001), and husband's job (P = 0.028) . While, there was no significant relation between marital satisfaction and the following variables; family type, residence and income. In the case of primigravida women her own decision of marriage was significantly different from her parent's decision, and both (the decision of her parents and her decision).

Table (6): Relation between mean value of total score of marital satisfaction and social relations

Social relations	Marital satisfaction	t	p
Relation with husband's family			
Bad	65.84±18.28	1.959	0.058
Good	72.41±9.66		
Relation with mother in- law			
Bad	67.38±16.01		
Good	72.56±9.92	2.412	0.049*
Relation of husband with wife's family			
Bad	65.13±16.98	2.545	0.015*
Good	72.79±9.82		
Female circumcision			
No	56.84±18.49	3.852	0.001*
Yes	73.17±9.37		

*Significant p<0.05

Table (6): Presents the relation between mean value of total score of marital satisfaction and social relations. The table showed that there was a statistical significant relation between marital satisfaction and the following variables; relation with mother in-law (p=0.049), relation of husband with wife's family (P=0.015), and female circumcision (P=0.001). While, there was no significant relation between marital satisfaction and relation with husband's family.

IV. Discussion

Pregnancy and childbirth is one of the most important stages of women's life. Marital satisfaction may change during pregnancy. These changes could lead to negative long effects on mother's health and quality of life^(16, 17). Furthermore, marital satisfaction is a global evaluation of the state of one's marriage and a reflection of marital happiness and functioning⁽¹⁸⁾. Thus, considering factors contributing to it is a good starting point to achieve marital success. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine the factors associated with marital satisfaction among primigravida women in Tanta City. The results of the present study revealed that nearly three-quarters of the women were less than 25 years old, less than half of them had university education, and half of them were housewives. Also, three quarters of the women their husband's age were from 25 to less than 30 years old, had university education and living in rural areas.

In this study, there was a significant inverse correlation between women's age, husband's age and marital satisfaction. This means that as the age of the couples increases marital satisfaction decreases. This result is constant with Rostami et al.(2014) and Zare et al. (2014);though, the result is inconsistent with Cox(2006) and Tawiah (2014)⁽¹⁹⁻²²⁾. It seems that the variation in the results may be due to cultural , attitudinal and life style differences in the studied couples.

The results from the present study didn't show any significant correlation between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction. This may be related to this particular sample, as the majority of respondents were married in their twenties. The obtained results are consistent with Alder (2010) and Allendorf and Ghimire (2012)^(23,24). While, the results were inconsistent with several prior researches which found a strong correlation between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction^(25- 27).

According to the result of the present study there were significant inverse correlation between couples' birth order and marital satisfaction. This means that couples later borns have increased marital satisfaction. One reason why couples' birth orders may influence marital satisfaction is that previous sibling marriage gives them more experience about the marital life and marital relationship. This result disagree with several studies which reject the notion that birth order has any universal effects on divorce risk⁽²⁸⁻³⁰⁾. This variation in the result could be due to the differences in the type of sampling and the target population. The present study found that there is no statistically significant correlation between level of education of the couples and marital satisfaction. These findings agree with Zare et al. (2014). Barongo et al. (2015), Rahmani et al. (2009), and Afkhami et al. (2012)^(20, 31-33). However, some studies were contrary to the current study including; Mirfardi et al. (2010), Mirghaforvand et al. (2013) and Maghsoudi et al. (2010)^(34,13,14). This lack of association between level of education of the couples and marital satisfaction in the present study could be due to the high educational level of most participants as nearly half of wives and two-thirds of husbands had university education. These lacks of educational disparity led to similarity in the educational level of the participants. Therefore, the higher level of education caused no change in the score of marital satisfaction.

This study also demonstrated an inverse significant correlation between duration of marriage and marital satisfaction. In other words, marital satisfaction decreased with increased marriage duration. This result is consistent with the findings of Zare (2014), Dush et al. (2008) and Al-Attar and El-Gibaly (2014), and inconsistent with the results of Barongo et al. (2015) and Zainah et al. (2012)^(20, 35, 36, 31,37). These disagreements between the previous studies seem to indicate that the duration of marriage has different effects on marital satisfaction.

The result of the present study indicated that the wife's job had mostly negative effects on marital satisfaction (i.e. the mean score of marital satisfaction was higher among the housewives more than the employed women). This result was incongruent with Al-Attar and El-Gibaly (2014), and Carroll (2012)^(36, 38). On the other hand, this result contradicts the results of Adigeb and Mbua (2015), and Yamaguchi (2006)^(39, 40). Furthermore, the result of the present study revealed that the husband's job had a significant effect on marital satisfaction (i.e. husband who works in a professional job are more satisfied than husband who works in nonprofessional job). This may be because husband, who works in professional job may have reached his personal expectations that play an essential role in marital success and vice versa. Kachooei and Fathi-Ashtiani (2013), indicated that job satisfaction and ego strengths were observed to have a positive and significant relationship with marital satisfaction⁽⁴¹⁾.

The present study revealed that marital satisfaction was associated with decision of marriage by parents or by both the parents and the woman. While it wasn't associated with autonomous marriage. This may be related to the sense of emotional stability and security felt by the woman after marriage that her parents supported her. On the other hand, Ali et al. (2009), reported in their study that depression among married women was associated with lack of autonomy in marriage decision⁽⁴²⁾. While, Hamid et al. (2011), concluded from their study that women who had decision –making freedom in their parental home carried this ability with them into marriage in their new home and were better able to negotiate about their fertility⁽⁴³⁾.

Regarding in –law relationship the present study found that there was a significant relation between in-law relationship and marital satisfaction. Taking into consideration the Egyptian culture, this result was expected and agrees with Al-Attar and Gibaly (2014) and Ayub and Iqbal (2012)^(36,44). According to Ayub and Iqbal, factors that predict marital satisfaction were the relationships developed after marriage with the blood relative of spouse⁽⁴⁴⁾. On the other hand, family pressure over wife who has no children especially husbands' family may cause marital dissatisfaction (WHO,2010)⁽⁴⁵⁾.

The finding of the present study indicated that there was a significant difference between genital mutilated females and non-genital mutilated females. In other words, marital satisfaction increased among the genital mutilated females. Several other results mentioned that there is a significant difference between marital satisfaction of circumcised and non-circumcised women but indicated that genital mutilation was one of the basic factors in marital dissatisfaction⁽⁴⁶⁻⁴⁸⁾. On the other hand, Nyairo (2013), in her study reported that there is no major difference in the level of marital satisfaction among the circumcised and non-circumcised women either in the USA or Kenya⁽⁴⁹⁾.

V. Conclusion

The finding of the study indicated that women's age ,husband's age , couples' birth order, duration of marriage ,wife's job, husband's job, relationship with mother in-law and female circumcision were significant predictors of marital satisfaction opposed to age at time of marriage ,duration of engagement, education of the couples, family type, residence and family income.

VI. Recommendation

The study recommended that marital satisfaction can only be possible when the predictors of marital satisfaction are adherently mentioned. Therefore, there is a need for public, services providers and psychologists' awareness creation on the effect of these factors on marriage, and the replication of this study to explore the effect of other variables, such as gender, fertility and social support on marital satisfaction.

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