

Domestic Violence, Forgiveness and Self-Regulation as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Married Catholic Women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<p><i>Marital satisfaction is essential to promote marital stability; however, many married Catholic women are not satisfied with their marriage. Therefore, this study examined domestic violence, forgiveness, and self-regulation as predictors of marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. A total of 316 married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria, within the age range of 18-65 years, with a mean age of 29.67 and a standard deviation of 8.3, were recruited for the study. The participants were administered the Domestic Violence Scale, Self-Regulation Questionnaire, Heartland Forgiveness Scale, and Marital Satisfaction Scale. The study made use of predictive correlation research design and a hierarchical regression model for data analysis. Four hypotheses were stated and tested. The first hypothesis, which stated that domestic violence predicts marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria, was accepted, indicating that domestic violence does not predict marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($B = -.709$, $t = -7.803$, 13.698, $R^2 = .668$, $Sig = .061$). The second hypothesis which stated that forgiveness predicts marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria was rejected indicating that forgiveness predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($B = .974$, $t = 82.045$, 53.882, $R^2 = .948$, $Sig = .000$ $P < .05$). The third hypothesis which stated that self-regulation predicts marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria was rejected indicating that self-regulation predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($B = .814$, $t = 1.336$, 17.637, $R^2 = .663$, $Sig = .000$ $P < .05$). The fourth hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant age difference in marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria was accepted indicating that age differences predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($B = -.117$, $t = 17.826$, 12.883, $Sig = .000$ $P < .05$). It is therefore recommended that marriage programs for married women should introduce teachings and practical exercises on forgiveness and self-regulations and also, Clinical Psychologists should help Catholic married women develop forgiveness skills as a core coping strategy for marital conflicts and also psycho-educate them on strategies for monitoring thoughts, emotions, and behaviors during marital disagreements.</i></p> <p>Keywords: Domestic Violence, Forgiveness, Self-Regulation, Marital Satisfaction, Married Catholic Women.</p>
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<p>Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p> <p>Citation: Ishienyi, Ginikachukwu Jane; Dr. Abubakar M. Tafida; Dr. Bukola Williams. (2026). Domestic Violence, Forgiveness and Self-Regulation as Predictors of Marital Satisfaction among Married Catholic Women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. UKR Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (UKRJMS), Volume 2(1), 55-64.</p>	

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of divorce and divorce petitions has been largely attributed to a range of marital challenges, including domestic violence, lack of forgiveness, and inadequate self-regulation among spouses, all of which contribute significantly to marital dissatisfaction (Bashiri et al., 2021). Marital satisfaction represents a psychological state that does not occur spontaneously; rather, it is

achieved through sustained effort and mutual commitment by both partners. This is particularly critical during the early years of marriage, a period characterized by instability in marital satisfaction and heightened vulnerability in marital relationships (Gorbanzadeh et al., 2023). Couples are generally considered to experience marital satisfaction when their lived marital experiences align with their initial

expectations of marriage (Janati et al., 2020). Numerous factors have been identified as influential determinants of marital satisfaction, including socioeconomic status, educational attainment, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs, physical attractiveness, self-regulatory capacity, intelligence quotient, and individual values and attitudes such as forgiveness. Collectively, these factors have been shown to significantly influence and predict higher levels of marital satisfaction, particularly among married women (Janati et al., 2020).

Married women who are able to understand themselves and positively cope with their uniqueness as well as their similar qualities are said to have marital satisfaction. Every married person and couple anticipate satisfaction with spouse in the marriage as well as feelings of happiness in the marriage as it progresses. Marriage is a basic aspect of life that could aid the maintenance of an individual's marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction among married women serves as a vital indicator of the overall quality of marital life (Hawkins et al., 2020). These feelings of happiness, satisfaction with marriage and spouse are the components of a marital satisfaction in married life.

Marital satisfaction represents an individual's level of happiness and fulfillment within the family unit and constitutes a fundamental factor underlying both the physical and psychological development of the family as well as the broader society (Edalati & Redzuan, 2020). It is commonly defined as an individual's positive evaluation of his or her marital relationship (Ofovwé et al., 2023). More broadly, marital satisfaction reflects one's perception and overall assessment of the quality of marriage, including the degree to which the relationship is experienced as rewarding and beneficial. In this context, marital satisfaction denotes a state in which married women experience mutual contentment, emotional fulfillment, and happiness derived from their marital union (Hawkins et al., 2020). Such satisfaction is achieved when spouses are able to adequately meet each other's needs and expectations within the marital relationship. Among the critical issues that have consistently attracted scholarly attention in the study of marital satisfaction is domestic violence, which typically occurs within the private sphere of the family and disproportionately affects women and children. Given the central role of women within the family as spouses and primary caregivers, violence directed against them poses a serious threat to marital satisfaction and the overall stability of the marital relationship.

Domestic violence, also referred to as domestic abuse or family violence, encompasses acts of violence or abuse perpetrated by one individual against another within a domestic context, including marriage or cohabiting relationships (Abbasi et al., 2021). When such acts occur

between spouses or intimate partners, the phenomenon is commonly described as intimate partner violence and may arise in heterosexual or same-sex relationships, as well as between current or former partners (Gorbanzadeh et al., 2023). Domestic violence may further extend beyond intimate partners to include abuse directed toward children, parents, or elderly family members. It manifests in multiple forms, such as physical, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive, and sexual abuse, ranging from subtle coercive behaviors to severe acts including marital rape and extreme physical violence. In its most severe expressions, domestic violence may involve practices such as choking, beating, female genital mutilation, and acid attacks, which can result in serious injury or death (Claxton et al., 2022).

Globally, women constitute the vast majority of victims of domestic violence and are more likely than men to experience its most severe and harmful forms (Abbasi et al., 2021). Women are also more inclined to engage in acts of intimate partner violence as a means of self-defense. In certain sociocultural contexts, domestic violence is frequently perceived as justifiable, particularly in situations involving actual or suspected female infidelity, and in some jurisdictions such practices remain legally sanctioned. Empirical evidence has demonstrated a direct and statistically significant relationship between levels of gender equality and the prevalence of domestic violence, with countries characterized by lower gender equality exhibiting higher rates of domestic violence (Yaseminejad et al., 2021).

Forgiveness is commonly defined as an individual's deliberate decision to relinquish feelings of resentment, negative judgment, and emotional withdrawal toward an offender, while fostering compassion, benevolence, and goodwill toward that person (Enright et al., 2020). Within marital relationships, forgiveness has been shown to play a significant role in promoting and strengthening marital satisfaction (Agu & Nwankwo, 2020). It is widely regarded as a voluntary and intentional process initiated by the offended partner toward the transgressor (Park et al., 2023), through which hostility and negative emotions may be replaced with positive feelings and constructive emotional responses (Macaskill, 2020). Marital instability arising from relational transgressions—such as infidelity, physical violence, or verbal abuse—often generates negative emotional reactions and may ultimately lead to marital dissolution (Fincham et al., 2020). In this regard, forgiveness has been conceptualized as a protective mechanism against marital breakdown, as it exerts a direct and positive influence on conjugal satisfaction (Chung, 2018). Despite the expanding body of literature on marital forgiveness, substantial levels of dissatisfaction persist among married couples, indicating unresolved gaps in

understanding the dynamics of marital satisfaction (Calo-Blanca, 2020). Consequently, further empirical investigation remains necessary. This underscores the relevance of the present study, which seeks to examine the predictive roles of domestic violence, forgiveness, and self-regulation in marital satisfaction among Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.

Self-regulation, by contrast, refers to the set of internal and interactive processes that enable individuals to direct and sustain goal-oriented behavior over time and across varying circumstances (Fincham & Beach, 2020). Within the context of marriage, self-regulation provides a valuable framework for understanding how partners actively manage and invest effort in maintaining and improving their marital relationship. The concept of self-regulation has a well-established foundation in psychological theory, originating from early formulations of self-control and the recognition of self-generated cognitive and behavioral processes in the regulation of human behavior (Calo-Blanca, 2020).

Statement of the Problem

Marital satisfaction is a critical indicator of the stability and quality of marital relationships, particularly within religious contexts where marriage is regarded as a sacred, lifelong covenant. (Altmann et al., 2022). Among Catholic women, marital expectations are often shaped by strong religious teachings that emphasize commitment, endurance, mutual respect, and forgiveness (Mohammadi et al., 2019). There are some other negative consequences of lack of marital satisfaction which have been threatening the institution of marriage, degenerating to several marital problems such as domestic violence, nagging, infidelity, separation and consequential divorce, and this may be attributed to lack of forgiveness and poor self-regulation (Ghobari, 2021). Three factors that appear especially salient are domestic violence, forgiveness and self-regulation.

Domestic violence, whether physical, emotional, psychological, or economic, remains a pressing issue affecting many marriages despite religious prohibitions against abuse. Catholic women may be particularly vulnerable to staying in abusive marriages due to religious, social, or cultural expectations regarding marital permanence (Siemieniuk et al., 2019). The presence of domestic violence not only undermines marital satisfaction but also threatens the physical and emotional well-being of women, making it vital to understand its predictive role.

Self-regulation, the ability to manage emotions, thoughts, and behaviors plays a central role in how spouses respond to marital stressors and resolve conflicts. Poor levels of self-regulation may contribute to persistent interpersonal tension and poor communication, thereby reducing marital satisfaction (Vohs et al., 2019). Conversely, good or strong

self-regulatory capacities may enhance emotional stability and promote healthier marital interactions.

Forgiveness, a central value in Catholic teaching, is often encouraged as a pathway to healing interpersonal wounds. Within marriage, the ability to forgive can foster reconciliation and emotional closeness (Malcolm, 2021).

Accordingly, these identified shortcomings underscore existing gaps in the literature that the present study seeks to address. This study therefore aims to examine the extent to which domestic violence, forgiveness, and self-regulation jointly predict marital satisfaction among married Catholic women. Furthermore, it seeks to provide deeper insight into the interaction of psychological, behavioral, and relational factors influencing marital well-being within a religious context, thereby contributing to the development of more effective support systems for Catholic families.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine domestic violence, forgiveness, and self-regulation as predictors of marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To examine the extent to which domestic violence predicts marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.
2. To determine the extent to which forgiveness predicts marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.
3. To assess the extent to which self-regulation predicts marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.
4. To investigate age-related differences in marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated for the study:

1. Domestic violence will not significantly predict marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria
2. Forgiveness will not significantly predict marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.
3. Self-regulation will not significantly predict marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.
4. There will be a significant age difference in marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria.

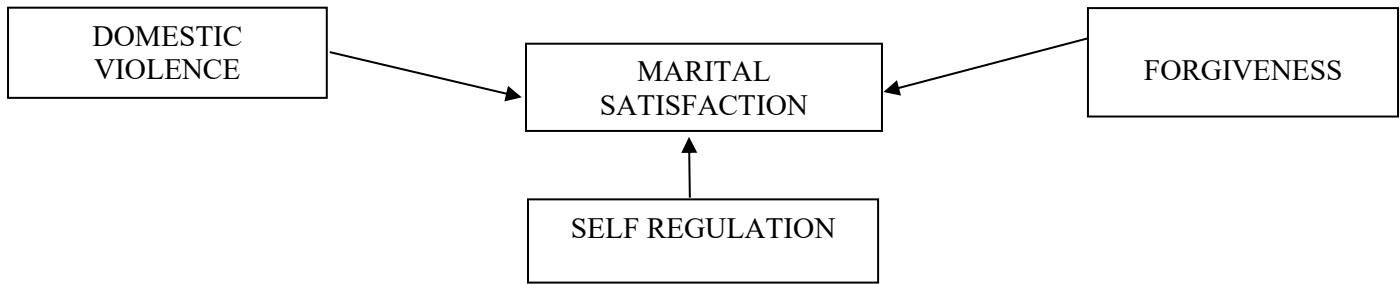
Literature Review

This section presents a review of relevant literature, which is systematically organized under the following subheadings.

Conceptual Framework

This section explained the concept of domestic violence, forgiveness, self-regulation and the concept of marital

satisfaction. There are various independent variables that are predictors to marital satisfaction and such variables are domestic violence, forgiveness and self-regulation as illustrated below:



Source: Researcher (2026)

Domestic violence

Domestic violence is widely referenced in the literature under various terms, including domestic abuse, spousal abuse, battering, family violence, and intimate partner violence (IPV). It refers to a persistent pattern of abusive behaviors occurring within intimate relationships, particularly marriage or cohabitation. Such behaviors manifest in diverse forms, including physical violence or threats (such as hitting, kicking, slapping, restraining, or throwing objects), sexual abuse, emotional and verbal abuse, controlling or domineering conduct, intimidation, stalking, passive or covert neglect, and economic deprivation. These actions are often employed to exert power and control over a partner and may occur either overtly or subtly within the relationship (Siemieniuk et al., 2019).

More broadly, domestic violence encompasses any form of violence or abuse perpetrated by one individual against another within a domestic context, including marital or cohabiting relationships (Abbasi et al., 2021). When such acts occur between spouses or intimate partners, they are commonly described as intimate partner violence and may be present in heterosexual or same-sex relationships, as well as between current or former partners (Gorbanzadeh et al., 2023). Domestic violence may also extend to abuse against children, parents, or elderly family members. It takes multiple forms—physical, emotional, economic, religious, reproductive, and sexual abuse—ranging from subtle coercive behaviors to severe acts such as marital rape and extreme physical violence, including choking, beating, female genital mutilation, and acid attacks, which may result in serious injury or death (Claxton et al., 2022).

Types of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence encompasses various forms of abuse to which women may be subjected within the home environment. These forms of abuse differ in expression but are united by their intent to cause harm, exert control, or undermine the victim's well-being.

Physical abuse involves the deliberate use of physical force that results in, or poses a risk of, injury to the victim. Such acts include beating, kicking, punching, slapping, choking, confinement, and other forms of physical assault. Practices such as female genital mutilation also constitute physical abuse. Empirical evidence suggests that physical abuse is among the most prevalent forms of domestic violence, with previous studies reporting a high incidence of physical victimization among women.

Sexual abuse refers to any form of sexual assault, harassment, or exploitation. It includes coercing an individual into unwanted sexual activity, marital rape, and the sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution and pornography. Sexual abuse violates personal autonomy and dignity and often coexists with other forms of domestic violence.

Neglect is characterized by the failure to provide basic necessities and emotional support to dependents, whether children or adults. This form of abuse includes withholding food, clothing, shelter, medical care, protection from harm, and affection, thereby depriving victims of both physical security and emotional well-being.

Economic abuse involves the manipulation or control of financial resources to maintain power over a partner or family member. It includes stealing or defrauding a loved one, withholding money needed for essential needs such as food and healthcare, exploiting family members for financial gain, preventing a partner from working, or controlling their choice of occupation.

Spiritual abuse occurs when an individual is prevented from practicing their religious or spiritual beliefs or when religious doctrines are misused to manipulate, dominate, or control another person. This form of abuse undermines personal freedom and identity within a spiritual or faith-based context.

Emotional abuse entails behaviors that damage an individual's sense of self-worth or psychological well-being. These behaviors include threats against the person or

their possessions, persistent criticism, name-calling, social isolation, intimidation, unreasonable demands, verbal aggression, and exposure of children to violence. Emotional abuse may lead to serious cognitive, emotional, or mental health consequences and is often one of the most pervasive forms of domestic violence.

Causes of Domestic Violence, Separation and Marriage Divorce

Domestic violence, marital separation, and divorce are influenced by a wide range of interrelated factors across Africa and globally. A review of existing literature highlights several key determinants that contribute to these challenges within marital relationships.

Childlessness: remains a significant factor, particularly within African societies such as Nigeria, where cultural norms place a high value on procreation within marriage. In many African contexts, a marriage that has not resulted in children is often perceived as incomplete or unsuccessful (Oforchukwu, 2012). Consequently, individuals who are unable to have children may be socially stigmatized and viewed as unfulfilled spouses. This societal pressure can generate marital tension, emotional distress, and conflict, which may escalate into domestic violence, separation, or divorce.

Forgiveness

Forgiveness has been conceptualized as a motivational shift that occurs within interpersonal relationships, particularly in response to relational transgressions (Fincham et al., 2022). It is commonly described as a transformative process through which negative, hostile, or vengeful reactions are replaced with more positive and constructive responses (McCullough et al., 2022). Within marital contexts, forgiveness plays a significant role in fostering and strengthening marital satisfaction (Agu & Nwankwo, 2020). Scholars have emphasized that forgiveness is a voluntary and intentional act initiated by the offended individual toward the transgressor (Braithwaite et al., 2021), enabling the reduction of hostility and the cultivation of positive emotions such as empathy and goodwill (Macaskill, 2020). Empirical studies further suggest that forgiveness comprises three key dimensions—benevolence, avoidance, and retaliation—which collectively influence relational outcomes (Bell et al., 2020). As such, forgiveness has been identified as a critical determinant of relationship success and stability (Finkel & Campbell, 2021; Tangney et al., 2020). However, forgiving a partner is often challenging and requires considerable self-control, highlighting the importance of examining strategies that enhance individuals' capacity to forgive for effective marital satisfaction interventions. Prior research indicates that strong beliefs in self-control can improve an

individual's ability to resist relational temptations and maintain commitment within intimate partnerships (Hamburg & Pronk, 2020).

Forgiveness has also been recognized as a fundamental process in marital reconciliation. Miller and Worthington (2020) argue that the willingness to forgive one's spouse represents a crucial step toward restoring relational harmony. Furthermore, forgiveness has been shown to exert substantial therapeutic effects in addressing and resolving both short-term and long-term family conflicts, thereby promoting emotional healing and relational stability (Breines & Chen, 2022).

Self-regulation

Recent empirical evidence has increasingly demonstrated that individuals' capacity for self-regulation is significantly shaped by their social environment, with interpersonal relationships exerting both facilitative and inhibitory influences (Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2020). Self-regulatory processes are often compromised during socially demanding or effortful interactions, such as those characterized by poor interpersonal coordination or the pursuit of challenging self-presentational goals (Vohs et al., 2019; Fitzsimons & Finkel, 2020). Conversely, close social relationships can enhance self-regulatory capacity. For instance, exposure to cues associated with significant others—such as a parent linked to achievement-related goals—can automatically activate relevant goals and promote behaviors aligned with those objectives (Fitzsimons & Bargh, 2019). Furthermore, partners may facilitate personal goal attainment by responding to individuals as though they already possess desired traits, such as discipline or humor, a relational dynamic described as the “Michelangelo phenomenon” (Toussaint et al., 2021). While self-control is influenced by situational factors including time pressure and cognitive load, it can also be examined as a stable individual difference, reflecting enduring variations in self-regulatory capacity across individuals (Tangney, 2020).

Marital Satisfaction

Relationship satisfaction is commonly conceptualized as an individual's subjective evaluation of various aspects of a romantic partnership, including cohesion, consensus, and feelings of happiness and affection (Altmann et al., 2022). Marital satisfaction, more specifically, has been described as the sense of pleasure and fulfillment derived from perceiving one's marital relationship as comfortable, meaningful, and emotionally rewarding (Mohammadi et al., 2019). A satisfying marriage has been associated with greater marital stability and longevity, as well as enhanced physical and psychological well-being for spouses and their children (Gur-Aryeh, 2019). Marital relationships are also

recognized as a major source of overall life satisfaction and have been shown to strongly predict quality of life, happiness, psychological health, and physical health outcomes (Veroff et al., 2021; Zimmerman & Easterlin, 2019; Beach et al., 2019; Schoenborn, 2019, as cited in Altmann et al., 2022). Numerous empirical studies have further established a strong association between marital satisfaction, happiness, and health, underscoring the broad benefits of fulfilling marital relationships (Rosen-Grandon et al., 2020). Given these positive outcomes, scholarly attention has increasingly focused on identifying the factors and mechanisms that contribute to the development and maintenance of healthy and enduring marriages.

Marital satisfaction has been assessed using diverse approaches, with early research highlighting the influence of factors such as financial stability, educational attainment, age, religious affiliation, cultural background, number of children, and personality traits (Altmann et al., 2022). Knabb and Vogt (2019) conceptualized marital satisfaction through actor, partner, and dyadic effects, emphasizing the role of individual personality characteristics, partner influences, and personality similarity or dissimilarity between spouses in shaping marital adjustment. Similarly, Rosen-Grandon et al. (2020) identified three primary pathways to marital satisfaction: loving relationships, loyal relationships, and relationships grounded in shared values. Loving relationships are characterized by mutual respect, forgiveness, emotional support, sensitivity, and romance, while loyal relationships emphasize commitment and devotion to one's spouse. Relationships based on shared values reflect similarities in conflict resolution styles, traditional gender roles, religiosity, and parenting beliefs. Overall, marital satisfaction implies the ability of spouses to maintain relational stability and effectively manage conflicts and disagreements. In examining long-term marriages, Altmann et al. (2022) identified key attributes of marital satisfaction, including lifelong commitment, loyalty, strong moral values, mutual respect and friendship, sexual fidelity, effective parenting intentions, spiritual commitment, emotional support, companionship, and a willingness to forgive and seek forgiveness.

Review of Empirical Literature

The empirical review examines the relationships between domestic violence, forgiveness, self-regulation, age differences, and marital satisfaction. Studies show that intimate partner violence (IPV) is associated with lower marital satisfaction, with aggression predicting satisfaction more consistently than vice versa (Hammett et al., 2021; Shortt et al., 2020; Yucel & Deniz, 2020). Forgiveness is linked to higher marital satisfaction, with studies indicating that forgiveness mediates the relationship between personality traits and marital satisfaction (Brudek & Kaleta,

2021; Ahu, 2016; Sahar et al., 2020). Self-regulation is also associated with higher marital satisfaction, with better self-regulation predicting greater satisfaction (Constant et al., 2020; Silvia & Stephano, 2018; Omid & Talighi, 2017).

Age-related differences and socio-demographic characteristics have been shown to significantly influence marital satisfaction. Evidence suggests that marital satisfaction tends to decline over time as marital duration increases, particularly among couples of varying age groups (Wang-Sheng & Terra, 2018). Additionally, the nature of the marital relationship has been identified as a strong predictor of marital satisfaction, alongside demographic factors such as age, gender, and length of marriage, all of which contribute meaningfully to variations in marital satisfaction (Tunde, 2023).

The review highlights the complexity of marital satisfaction and the need for tailored interventions to promote healthy relationships. Factors such as sexual self-efficacy, dyspareunia, and socioeconomic status also play a role in marital satisfaction (Raziyeh et al., 2019; Ezeokana et al., 2017). Overall, the studies suggest that addressing IPV, promoting forgiveness and self-regulation, and considering socio-demographic factors can contribute to improved marital satisfaction.

Theoretical Framework

The following theories are related and suitable for the study: Domestic Violence, Theories Forgiveness, Theories of Self-Regulation, And Theories Marital Satisfaction.

Theories of domestic violence include Social Learning Theory, which suggests that people learn behaviors by observing others, Psychodynamic Theory, which attributes violence to unconscious conflicts and childhood experiences, Cognitive Behavioral Theory, which emphasizes distorted thinking patterns, and Conflict Perspective, which views violence as a result of power imbalances and social inequality.

Theories of forgiveness include Allport's Trait Theory, which emphasizes personality traits, and Tripartite Theory, which views forgiveness as a process involving the id, ego, and superego.

Self-regulation theories include Social Exchange Theory, Expectancy Violation Theory, Behavioral Theory, and Social Cognitive Theory, which all emphasize the importance of self-control and regulation in achieving marital satisfaction.

Theoretical perspectives on marital satisfaction, including Social Exchange Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Dynamic Goal Theory, propose that marital satisfaction is shaped by factors such as perceived rewards and costs, goal attainment, and self-regulatory processes.

Methodology

The study adopted a predictive correlation design. The population of this study comprised married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria between 18 to 65 years old. The entire population is (1500) married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. The sample was determined using the Taro Yamane's formula with the sample size of $n = 316$. Simple random sampling technique specifically (balloting without replacement) were used to select two catholic churches in Gwagwalada, Sacred Heart Catholic Church and St. Paul's Catholic Church. The instruments used for the study are: the Domestic Violence Scale (DVS), Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ), Heartland Forgiveness Scale (HFS) and Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS).

In analyzing the questionnaire for the study, a hierarchical regression model (HRM) was employed using SPSS version 26. According to Coolican (2011), Hierarchical

regression model (HRM) is the appropriate statistics for testing predictions, influences and impacts in variables or constructs that are in dimensions or domains. The hierarchical regression model was used to test whether the relationship between domestic violence, forgiveness, self-regulation and marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja is significant.

Data Analysis and Results

Test of Hypothesis 1: The hypothesis stated that domestic violence will significantly predict marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested with hierarchical regression model at .05 level of significance as presented in table 1.

Table 1: Over all summary of the Mean, Standard Error, Beta, df, R, and R Square test scores of the participants.

Hierarchical Regression Model

Variables	Mean	Std.D	t	Beta	df	R	R Square	Sig	N
MS	1.6875	.46497	-7.803	-.709	1	.737	.668	.000	316
DV	1.5250	2.00377	13.698		1			.061	316

MS = Marital Satisfaction, DV = Domestic Violence Sig = .000

From the result shown above in hypothesis one, the analysis indicated that there was no significant relationship between Marital satisfaction and domestic violence among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($M = 1.6875$, 1.5250 , $Std.D = .46497$, 2.00377 , $R = .737$, $B = -.709$, $t = -7.803$, 13.698 , $Sig = .061$ $P < .05$). This result shows that domestic violence reduces marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. The result equally indicated that 66.8% of the participants indicated that domestic violence does not

predict marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria ($B = -.709$, $t = -7.803$, 13.698 , $R^2 = .668$, $Sig = .061$) respectively. This result implies that domestic violence does not predict marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 2: Over all summary of the Mean, Standard Error, Beta, df, R, and R Square test scores of the participants.

Hierarchical Regression Model

Variables	Mean	Std.D	t	Beta	df	R	R Square	Sig	N
MS	2.5000	1.94257	82.045	.974	1	.974	.948	.000	316
FR	3.4500	1.95484	53.882		1			.000	316

Dependent variable: MS = Marital Satisfaction, Predictor: FR = Forgiveness, Sig = .000

From the result shown above in hypothesis two, the result revealed that there is a significant relationship between Marital satisfaction and forgiveness among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($M = 2.5000$, 3.4500 , $Std.D = 1.94257$, 1.95484 , $R = .974$, $B = .974$, $t = 82.045$, 53.882 , $Sig = .000$ $P < .05$). This result shows that forgiveness predicted marital

satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. The result equally indicated the rate at which forgiveness predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at ($B = .974$, $t = 82.045$, 53.882 , $R^2 = .948$, $Sig = .000$ $P < .05$). This result implies that forgiveness increases marital satisfaction by 97.4%

among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3: Over all summary of the Mean, Standard Error, Beta, df, R, and R Square test scores of the participants.

Hierarchical Regression Model

Variables	Mean	Std.D	t	Beta	df	R	R Square	Sig	N
MS	2.5000	1.94257	1.336	.814	1	.814	.663	.000	316
SR	2.9000	2.00377	17.637		1			.000	316

Dependent variable: MS = Marital Satisfaction, Predictor: SR = Self-Regulation, Sig = .000

From the result shown above in hypothesis three, the result revealed that there is a significant relationship between Marital satisfaction and self-regulation among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at (M= 2.5000, 2.9000, Std.D = 1.94257, 2.9000, R =.814, B = .814, t = 1.336, 17.637, Sig = .000 $P<.05$) respectively. This result shows that self-regulation predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. The result equally indicated the rate at which self-regulation predicted marital

satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at (B = .814, t = 1.336, 17.637, $R^2 = .663$, Sig = .000 $P<.05$). This result implies that self-regulation increases marital satisfaction by 60.3% among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4: Over all summary of the Mean, Standard Error, Beta, df, R, and R Square test scores of the participants.

Hierarchical Regression Model

Variables	Mean	Std.D	t	Beta	df	R	R Square	Sig	N
MS	2.8924	.96993	17.826	-.117	1	.117	.014	.000	316
Age	2.7816	1.25475	12.883	-.003	2			.037	316

Dependent variable: MS = Marital Satisfaction, Predictor: Age, Sig = .000

From the result shown above in hypothesis four, the result revealed that there is a significant age differences of marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria at (M= 2.8924, 2.7816, Std.D = .96993, 1.25475, R =.117, B = -.117, t = 17.826, 12.883, Sig = .000 $P<.05$) respectively. This result shows that age differences predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja, Nigeria. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

between self-regulation and marital satisfaction, consistent with earlier studies (Constant et al., 2020; Silvia & Stephano, 2018). Significant age differences in marital satisfaction, with older women potentially experiencing higher satisfaction due to developed coping strategies and emotional maturity (Tunde, 2023; Raziye et al., 2019). The findings suggest that forgiveness and self-regulation are crucial for marital satisfaction, while domestic violence may not be a direct predictor. Age-related experiences and cultural expectations also play a role in shaping marital satisfaction

Discussion of Findings

The study examined domestic violence, forgiveness, and self-regulation as predictors of marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja. The findings revealed that:

No significant relationship was found between domestic violence and marital satisfaction, contradicting some previous studies (Shortt et al., 2020; Hammett et al., 2021). A significant positive relationship was observed between forgiveness and marital satisfaction, aligning with previous research (Brudek & Kaleta, 2021; Ahu, 2016; Sahar et al., 2020). A significant positive relationship was also found

Conclusion

In this study, the researcher investigated domestic violence, forgiveness and self-regulation as predictors of marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja. Using a hierarchical regression model, the study analyzed participants' data and ascertained that domestic violence did not predict marital satisfaction among married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja but revealed that forgiveness and self-regulation predicted marital satisfaction among the married Catholic women in Gwagwalada, Abuja. Based on the

outcome of the research, the researcher concludes that the study will be useful to the government, those in medical and clinical psychology settings even private individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGO) and may contribute in better understanding of marital satisfaction among couples in Nigeria and the world.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Institutional Stress Management Programs such as stress management workshops, mindfulness training, and resilience-building exercises should be introduced especially during marriage counselling in Catholic churches in Gwagwalada, Nigeria.
- ii. The discussion emphasized the importance of assessing and addressing marital satisfaction during marriage counseling by clinicians, as this approach enables the provision of targeted and purposeful therapeutic interventions for married women, thereby facilitating effective management of marital challenges.
- iii. The study recommends that helping professionals—including counseling psychologists, clinical psychologists, religious institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and social service personnel—employ appropriate assessment instruments to identify factors that predict marital satisfaction among couples and provide comprehensive counseling to enhance marital well-being.
- iv. Future researchers should aim at identifying other predictions of marital satisfaction and should take into account in understanding marital satisfaction.
- v. Establish confidential counselling and psychological support for married women in churches to help address marital challenges.

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