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INFLUENCE OF LANGUAGE ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG COUPLES IN INTERCULTURAL MARRIAGES, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract:

Language is essential for marital functioning and contentment. Conversely, couples in heterosexual monogamous intercultural marriages may experience exceptional challenges emanating from conveying or interpreting messages based on divergent cultures that influence their marital satisfaction. The objective of this study was to assess the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya. Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) and Cognitive Behavioral Theory guided this study. Convergent mixed methods research design was applied in the study. The target population was 11,028 individuals in intercultural marriages with a sample size of 99 participants. Snowball sampling was helpful to recruit participants for the study. Data was collected using questionnaire that adapted relevant items from The Five Love Languages Test (FLL). Quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics of means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics applied linear and multiple regression computed through SPSS version 25.0. Qualitative data was thematically analysed. Findings were presented in tables and respondents' descriptions. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from accredited Institutional Review Board, National Council for Science and Technology and Kiambu County Government, Kenya. Findings of the study revealed that language has a positive, significant influence on marital satisfaction ($\beta=0.872$, $p=0.000$). This implies that an increase in marital language positively increases marital satisfaction by 0.872. Participants descriptions equally supported language influence on marital satisfaction. The study recommends that policy makers develop strategies that increase awareness of the importance of mental health services. The study also recommends further research by mental health

professionals on the influence of language on couples' marital satisfaction to attain comprehensive understanding which is crucial for couples' marital management that boosts satisfaction.

Keywords:

Language, Marital Satisfaction, Intercultural Marriages

Introduction

Marriage is considered vital by different cultures and has a fundamental role of linkage to the family (Stinson et al., 2017). Dobrowolska et al. (2020) indicate that marital satisfaction is generally considered to be a key predictor of marital well-being. Kalai (2016) asserts that intercultural couples are more vulnerable to encounter challenges because they enter into marriage with great cultural differences and higher potential for misunderstandings, which may influence their marital satisfaction. Lee (2021) observes that couples' divergent affection language may affect their level of marital satisfaction. Consequently, when a spouse uses unfamiliar language in their marital relationship, it may cause miscommunication through injecting wrong meanings with influence on marital contentment. According to Tavakol et al. (2017), there are diverse factors that influence couples' MS. For instance, couples' miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression, and affirmation language among many others. This pointed to a need to comprehensively comprehend language influence on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Communication using familiar verbal or non-verbal language to express and converse emotions and intimacy is significant and boosts marital satisfaction. Similarly, ineffective couples' conversations cause frustrations and may lead to conflicts which hinder happiness, joy and marital satisfaction (Yedirir & Hamarta, 2015). The overarching question this study sought to answer was "What is the influence of language on marital satisfaction among intercultural couples in Kiambu County, Kenya". The study is significant to researchers with enriched information for further studies on influence of language on MS among couples in intercultural marriages. Mental health practitioners' augmented information is beneficial for improved services. Couples and families increased comprehension of influence of language on MS is crucial for marital management that enhances MS. The Five Love Languages Test (FLL) by Chapman (2015) is valuable for future application with diverse cultures in Kiambu County, Kenya. Application of Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) and Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) that guided this study is suitable for future usage with diverse cultures in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Literature Review***Language and Marital Satisfaction***

The term marital satisfaction (MS) as defined by Yoruk (2016) indicates a subjective feeling of contentment and pleasure experienced by individuals in all aspects of their marital relationship. Salija et al. (2018) assert that language is substantial in a marital relationship as a tool of communication and expression. According to Bystydzienski (2011), language and meanings may cause miscommunications as each particular cultural group has its own way of communicating and assigning meanings to words. Dissimilarities in couples' mother tongue influence each partner's thought process and the language couples use in communication with each other and family members (Tien, 2013). Inter-cultural marriages are unions among people

who originate from dissimilar cultural backgrounds (Zaheri et al., 2016). According to Dulani et al. (2018), marriage rates for Kenya display that 13% are in inter-marriages. Aseka et al. (2021) add that there exists low level of MS among couples in Kenya and Kiambu is within Kenya. This indicated a need to undertake this study with the intention of enhancing information and understanding of the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

Dillon and Beechler (2010) observe that conditions of MS may differ greatly based on each spouse's cultural background. According to Tili and Barker (2015), partners in a marital relationship from dissimilar cultural backgrounds face constraints from ineffective language usage that may influence marital satisfaction, and intercultural couples in Kiambu County are no exceptions. Sharaievska et al. (2013) assert that normal attribute of communication between couples from the same cultural group may be a constraint among intercultural couples. For instance, a slight difference in tone and word usage may be a challenge to couples causing miscommunication with influence on MS. This concurs with Bowen Family System Theory (BFST) developed by Murry Bowen, which posits that people are inclined to repeat behaviors handed down through generations (Bowen, 1978). BFST provides potential to understand marital functioning beyond the focus of the individual and influence of family of origin in three generations (Papero et al., 2018).

Holman and Busby (2011) carried out a research assuming that a complex relationship exists between family of origin variables as they influence adult marital relationship. Results supported the assumptions and suggested the usefulness of Bowen's theory for understanding family of origin processes in couples, carried forward through differentiation of self, into quality of couples' marital relationship.

Buarqoub (2019) conducted a study with an aim to explore the factors that cause language barriers, their categories, their influence on effective communication and methods to make people cognizant of the importance of overcoming them. The study established that the accent emanating from words or phrases of people belonging to diverse places or regions may differ in meanings and interpretations, even if their language is the same, which may lead to miscommunication and conflict that may influence couples' marital satisfaction.

According to Esere et al. (2014), discussions using language as a tool of communication between spouses promotes harmonious marital relationship. Sue (2013) indicates that couples convey their emotions through facial expressions and tone of voice. Therefore, miscommunication in language may be caused by misunderstandings from misinterpreting and injecting unintended meaning into a message from spouse (Ajaegbu et al., 2015). Buarqoub (2019) asserts that language is the most significant shared tool of communication. It supports people to build bridges of relationships, such as, couple's relationship. At the same time, language may act as a destroyer of bridges of relationships, as it can separate people, for instance, couples, from each other through miscommunication. Language is therefore, substantial in effective communication within an intimate relationship (Renalds, 2011).

According to Ubando (2016), relationship contentment is entrenched in intimacy. It consists of different meanings based on age, gender, education and culture. Intimacy may be defined as an individual romantic or emotional communication that demands knowledge and understanding of a partner to express thoughts and feelings (Kardan-Souraki et al., 2016). Okonkwo et al. (2019) add that intimacy develops through couples' interaction and communication using

verbal and non-verbal language. In situations where partners do not understand each other or what each of them believes in due to verbal and non-verbal language challenges, then their relationship may be faced with serious constraints with influence on MS. Tavakol et al. (2017) indicate that relationships between spouses are formed on the basis of four basic types of relationships, emotional relationship, cognitive or intellectual relationship, economic relationship and sexual relationship. Consequently, couples who use familiar languages are able to communicate their thoughts, feelings and needs with each other and can accept and comprehend each other's emotional state to experience greater understanding that is essential for intimacy in marital satisfaction.

Language contributes to developing a meaningful relationship. It increases chances of engaging in daily activities as a couple which plays a major part to enhance couples' marital satisfaction (Yoruk, 2016). Couples who spend more leisure time together and have shared hobbies and engage in emotional communication experience intensified marital satisfaction. Stolarski et al. (2016) indicate that individual differences between spouses as regards to time spent together may influence marital satisfaction. Couples may have different perception of what quality time means. This may become an issue when one partner believes they are spending quality time together, while the other has a totally different meaning of spending quality time together. A probable premise could be that one partner's primary love language is spending quality time together, while the other partner does not comprehend the necessity for spending quality time, which may conflict and influence MS.

Johnson and Anderson (2013) carried out a study on relationship between marital confidence, time spent together and marital satisfaction. Findings showed that couples who spend more time together report higher levels of marital satisfaction than those who do not spend as much time together. This study was carried out outside Kenya and created a need to replicate the study in Kiambu County, Kenya.

According to DeVito (2013), interaction between two cultures may follow different rules of communication, which results in misunderstandings, unintentional insult, inaccurate judgments and a multitude of other miscommunications. Communication between couples from dissimilar cultures may miss about 50% of information. Therefore, a couple from divergent cultural backgrounds in an intimate relationship may experience struggles in their daily marital life. Beins and McCarthy (2012) assert that language involves more than different words of communication, as culture may influence the way people think or express their ideas. Consequently, when partners think differently and expresses their wishes and emotions differently, because of language dissimilarities, then, understanding each other gets complicated and poses a challenge to couple's marital satisfaction. According to Markus and Conner (2014), culture has patterns of ideas and interaction that reflect people's thoughts, feelings and behavior. This concurs with Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) that identifies the interaction between cognitions, behaviours and emotional responses (Epstein & Zheng, 2017).

Sayer (2013) indicates that language comprehension is not a straight forward process, there is a close relationship between language comprehension and misunderstandings. In this study concerning the influence of language on couples' MS, partners not only communicate in different languages, but they also communicate in different cultural contexts to express their emotions. This may involve symbols, gestures, dialects and group's shared meanings and everything they apply to exchange meanings with each other in verbal and non-verbal language

(Tien, 2013). According to Segami and Eeden (2020), symbols in conversing could be conceptualised as anything that could be indicated in form of language and may differ from culture to culture. Symbols are frequently used as a form of communication, interpretation of meanings, and is promoted through collective interactions. Similarly, symbols depict meanings of phenomena that are represented and based on culture and may conflict among couples from different cultures and influence their marital satisfaction. Goldstein (2015) asserts that experiences in the family of origin are significant for later marital well-being because of the interpersonal practices they form in individuals as children. This concurs with Bowen (1978), that individuals are likely to repeat behaviours handed down through generations unless examined and rectified. This BFST concept of intergenerational transmissions helped to comprehend impact of dissimilar languages on MS among intercultural couples.

According to Yedirir and Hamarta (2015), emotional expression is part of language of communication this shows that emotion is a great communicator. Ajaegbu et al. (2015) observe that communication can either use verbal language through speech or non-verbal through facial expressions, body language or gestures, which may carry different meanings between couples from dissimilar cultures and may cause misinterpretation and miscommunication with influence on marital contentment. Ajaegbu et al. continue and indicate that communication can determine the realisation or disappointment of a marriage because it is the creation, exchange and interpretation of meaningful messages using language as a means of communication. Meaningful conversation involves exchanging information effectively between spouses, for instance, indicating where one is, intellectually, emotionally and physically. Therefore, effective language usage connects couples through shared thoughts, feelings, experiences, dreams and challenges and partners would know where one is physically, emotionally and intellectually, which is essential for marital satisfaction. This concurs with Epstein and Zheng (2017) that CBT recognizes the interplay between cognitions, behaviours and emotional responses, for instance, couples' negative thoughts about differing conflicting languages, feelings that negative thoughts may elicit and behaviours that follow may influence MS.

According to Plooy and Beer (2018), affection in marital relationships can be defined and expressed differently through verbal and non-verbal languages. For instance, the concept of an intimate relationship differs from one partner concerned with financial, a partner raising a family, one founded on emotional support, another concerned with forming a deep relationship and the one sharing intimate time together. Consequently, appropriate language is substantial to communicate personal needs and feelings and experience appropriate response, attention and affection, which is crucial in couples' marital contentment. Therefore, it is important to fully understand the influence of language on intercultural couples' MS.

Chapman (2015) proposed basic reasons for couples' relationship constraints that emerge from speaking dissimilar love languages. Each person has a main love language, which is their desired way of being valued. According to Chapman, the five love languages include words of affirmation, quality time, physical touch, acts of service and giving gifts.

Hughes and Camden (2020) study applied Chapman's suggested five love languages. The study findings support hypothesis that a partner's perception of using preferred love language would enhance love which indicates increased intimacy and marital satisfaction. Chapman's study was carried out in USA, and there was a need to carry out a similar study on language and couple's marital satisfaction to attain factual information in Kiambu County, Kenya.

According to Emanuel et al. (2016), spontaneity in affirmation is associated with heightened levels of happiness, hopefulness, subjective health including less anger and sadness. Cohen and Sherman (2014) indicate that people have a basic need to maintain self-integrity and sense of personal adequacy. However, language of communication that is viewed by one partner as criticism due to cultural differences, may lead to integrity threat which may provoke self-protective defenses with influence on MS. Conversely, self-affirmation increases well-being and makes people more open to behavior change, which may enhance couples' MS. Sherman, (2013) indicates that self-affirmation is a successful attribute for a person's ability to broaden personal global perspective that reduces the effect of negative emotions that may emanate from partners' miscommunication. According to Creswell et al. (2013), self-affirmation improves problem-solving abilities. However, lack of awareness may make it challenging for couples to introspect on their dissimilar life experiences. This may complicate the process necessary for self-affirmation experiences, which is favourable for couples' MS. Odhiambo et al. (2021) observe that marital counseling is vital as it helps couples to acquire self-awareness and improve communication issues within an intimate relationship.

Fager (2018) contends that couples who speak the same language face challenges getting to understand what the other partner is expressing even after many years of marriage showing a divergent view that not only couples from dissimilar languages miscommunicate. Ubando (2016) observes that communication differs between genders. Sue et al. (2019) add that there exist dissimilarities of genders in their perceptions, which infers that being male or female is a factor that influences couples' MS. On the other hand, Lavner et al. (2016) indicate that contented couples engage in effective communication while distressed couples display more negative communication behaviors, which is contrary to the view that language differences cause miscommunication. This is similar to Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) which hypothesizes that clients' feelings and behaviors are influenced by the way they perceive issues and not the situation they are in (Corey, 2016).

Renalds (2011) carried out a study to examine the phenomenon of intercultural marriages and features that influence communication and conflict within marriages. Results established the significance of effective communication for marital satisfaction in couples' relationships. However, further findings indicated that although intercultural marriages can have particular constraints to overcome, they can also experience benefits than other marriages, for instance, expanding learning from different cultures. Renalds study was carried out with a population dissimilar to African couples, indicating a need to do more research in Kenya including Kiambu County.

Choudhuri et al. (2012) argue that, language and culture do not reflect each other as there are many English speaking individuals with a combination of different cultures although they are monolingual. According to Bridge (2019) marital conflict originates from lack of differentiation of self (DoS) from family of origin which is transmitted to couples' relationship and produces powerful tension that influence couples MS. Brown (2010) asserts that DoS is the capacity of an individual to function autonomously and make self-directed choices, for instance, the language to use in a marital relationship. Tien (2013) contends that not much literature has examined and provided adequate comprehension of the role of language differences in couples' relationships. In view of the differing arguments on influence of language on couples' marital satisfaction, showed a need for continuous research to attain a broader understanding and conclusive findings.

Research Methodology

The study applied convergent mixed methods design. Creswell and Creswell (2018) indicate that convergent design in mixed methods research is essential. This is because neither quantitative nor qualitative data, each by itself can be sufficient to address influence of language on marital satisfaction. Quantitative approach was useful to generalize findings of the study to the target population in Kiambu County. Mohajan (2018) observes that qualitative approach is essential to collect descriptions of participants' experiences. For instance, in this study participants described experiences of the influence of language on their marital satisfaction.

Study's Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2019) define population to a complete set of individuals or objects with some common observable characteristics. Thus, a particular population has characteristics, that differentiates it from other populations. In this study target population involved any individual male or female who had been or still was in an intercultural marriage between 5 to 22 years and had age range of 25 to 51 years old. This population had adequate expertise in marital life to yield desired information for the study.

Kiambu County is 40% rural and 60% urban (National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), 2013). This provided the basis to select the location of the study in urban centres where most of the desired population for the study lives. Two neighbouring urban centres Kikuyu and Limuru were purposively selected for the study.

The target population for the study was 11,028 individuals in intercultural marriages. The study adopted Nassiuma (2000) formula to attain an analytical representation of the population. The formula provided basis to achieve a sample size of 99 participants. However, each of the selected urban centre had its own rate of intercultural marriages. This prompted ratio calculation that yielded 67 participants from Kikuyu urban centre and 32 participants in Limuru urban centre.

Snowball sampling technique was applied to recruit study's participants. Govindan (2014) asserts that early identified sample refer other people who meet the eligibility criteria. In this study early identified participant referred the researchers to other known individuals in intercultural marriages, who in-turn referred other known individuals. This trend of referrals continued until the sample size of 99 participants was realized. According to Naderifar et al. (2017), Snowball sampling is applied when samples with the desired characteristics are not easily recognizable, which was the situation with target population in this study. The sampling was carried out in a normal living population in intercultural marriages. The interviewees were uninfluenced and voluntarily gave information at will which produced factual normal data in this study.

Data Collection

Data collection tools in research refer to instruments designed to obtain data from participants by a researcher (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). According to Paradis et al. (2016), questionnaires are useful to obtain data. Consequently, the questionnaires in this study contained open and closed-ended questions, specific enough to yield coherent responses from respondents. Closed-ended questions helped to collect quantitative data while open-ended questions were useful in qualitative data.

According to Samani et al. (2018), a variety of tools have been developed and are suitable to assess many aspects, such as, language and couples' marital satisfaction. Consequently, adaption of some items from The Five Love Languages Test (FLL) were applied in this study. The FLL was developed by Chapman in 2015. According to Chapman (1995), every spouse has an emotional love chamber that fills when partners learn how to speak each other's affection language. Intercultural couples in this study originated from divergent backgrounds with divergent languages that may conflict and influence their MS. According to Bunt and Hazelwood (2017) an individual could have greater marital satisfaction when they practice a language that makes each partner feel more appreciated.

Surijah and Septiarly (2016); Hughes and Camden (2020) supported Chapman's scale. Lee (2021) examined how acknowledging a partner's love language by Chapman can affect couples' level of MS. Findings showed that acknowledgement of spouse's language of intimacy is positively related with higher levels of MS. FLL is a straightforward tool and can be completed easily within a short time, therefore, was found suitable in this study.

The researchers were the key persons in the study, however collection of the necessary data could not have been successful without support and training of 4 research assistants. The recruited research assistants had proficiency and fluency in both English and Kiswahili languages for effective communication with participants to collect desired data. They were equally sensitized on the importance of providing informed consent to participants to willingly participate in the study. Further deliberations were held between researchers and research assistants on all the items in the instrument. Plans were put in place on data collection process, such as, convenient dates, timings and duration of data collection which took 4 weeks.

Validity and Reliability of The Instrument

Mohajan (2018) indicates that evaluative measures for qualitative studies are necessary to judge vigour and truthfulness of the study findings. Pilot test before the real study was carried out with 10% of sample size of 99 participants. Pilot test helped improve validity and reliability by adjusting items of the instrument accordingly. Content validity refers to the extent in which an instrument "covers" all relevant parts of the construct of interest (Price et al., 2015). When an instrument lacks content validity, then it is impossible to establish reliability of a tool (Zamanzadeh et al., 2015). The researcher reviewed and compared literature of previous similar studies. For instance, language variable and its indicators of miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression and language of affirmation as essential for content validity of the tool. Further, vigorous continuous consultations with professional senior Psychologist supervisors were done.

Reliability refers to the consistency or repeatability of an instrument (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was applied to determine the internal consistency of the items in the instrument. Creswell and Creswell (2018); Taber (2018) indicate that threshold of 0.7 is regarded acceptable in most Social Sciences research. Consequently, the researcher considered instrument's reliability acceptable with 0.835.

Data Analysis Plan

One major issue to consider in mixed methods research is the type of design applied (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). This study applied convergent mixed methods design. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017) observe that both quantitative and qualitative data in convergent mixed methods design is collected concurrently which was the case in this study.

Quantitative Data

All quantitative data was systematically organized and coded to facilitate analysis. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), descriptive statistics is essential in summarizing research data. Consequently, analysis applied descriptive statistics computed from respondents' data that included means and standard deviation. Inferential statistics involved linear and multiple regression analysis to identify and evaluate relationship between language and marital satisfaction. Cronk (2020); Rahman and Muktadir (2021) Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software is fast and efficient in data analysis. SPSS Version 25.0 was considered in this study for data analysis.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was organized and sorted as it was collected from participants' responses from the open ended questions. Codes were then generated according to shared themes to form categories that corresponded with the objectives of the study. SPSS Version 25.0 was found supportive for organizing data according to respondents' themes, however researchers did the interpretations. Creswell and Creswell (2018) observe that qualitative data is interpreted thematically according to participants' responses and study's objectives. Hence, themes and categories were generated in this study according to participants' descriptions of their lived marital experiences for interpretation purposes.

Ethical Considerations

Cresswell and Creswell (2018) assert that researchers need to have their research plans reviewed by an institutional review board (IRB). Permission to undertake the study was sought from an accredited Institutional Review Board, National Council for Science and Technology and Kiambu County Government in Kenya. According to American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) Code of Ethics (2015), ethical standards are the rules of practice that a family therapist is obliged to and judged, for instance, observing informed consent and confidentiality. Participants were provided with necessary information pertaining to the study. Permission from respondents to participate was sought without coercion. Participants' confidentiality was maintained by substituting their identities with specific code names.

Findings

Language and Marital Satisfaction

Table 1: Distribution of Language and Marital Satisfaction

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low Level	13	13.1	12	60	46.28	11.931
Moderate Level	17	17.2				
High Level	69	69.7				
Total	99	100.0				

From Table 1, majority of the participants (69.7%) had a high level of satisfaction with their marital language. The minimum score attained was 12, while the maximum score attained was 60. The marital language mean score was 46.28 (SD = 11.931). This indicated that on average, participants had a high level of satisfaction in language of communication in their marriages.

*Levels of Satisfaction with Language by Components***Table 2: Distribution of Level of Language and Marital Satisfaction by Components**

Level of Miscommunication	Frequency	Percentage	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low Level	64	64.6	3	15	6.81	3.306
Moderate Level	23	23.2				
High Level	12	12.2				
Total	99	100.0				
Level of Intimacy	Frequency	Percentage	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low Level	12	12.1	3	15	11.44	3.111
Moderate Level	15	15.2				
High Level	72	72.7				
Total	99	100.0				
Level of Emotional expression	Frequency	Percentage	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low Level	26	26.2	3	15	10.47	4.006
Moderate Level	17	17.2				
High Level	56	56.6				
Total	99	100.0				
Level of Affirmation language	Frequency	Percentage	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Low Level	9	9.1	3	15	12.28	3.308
Moderate Level	13	13.1				
High Level	77	77.8				
Total	99	100.0				

As shown on Table 2, majority of the participants (77.8%) had a high level of affirmation language, 72.7% had a high level of language intimacy, 64.6% had a low level of miscommunication, while 56.6% had a high level of emotional expression. The minimum score attained for miscommunication was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The miscommunication mean score was 6.81 (SD = 3.306), indicating that on average, the participants had a low level of miscommunication. The minimum score attained for intimacy language was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The intimacy language mean score was 11.44 (SD = 3.111), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of intimacy language. The minimum score attained for emotional expression language was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The emotional expression language mean score was 10.47 (SD = 4.006), indicating that on average, the participants had a moderate level of emotional expression. The minimum score attained for affirmation language was 3, while the maximum score attained was 15. The affirmation language mean score was 12.28 (SD = 3.308), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of affirmation language.

Hypothesis Testing

The study sought to test the following null hypothesis.

H₀₁: Language has no statistically significant influence on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages in Kiambu County, Kenya.

A linear regression was computed to determine the influence of language on marital satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented in the subsequent tables.

Table 3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.832 ^a	.693	.690	6.966	1.667

a. Predictors: (Constant), Language

b. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

From Table 3, language accounted for 69% of the variation in marital satisfaction as shown by the adjusted R square value.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10615.601	1	10615.601	218.775	.000 ^b
	Residual	4706.722	97	48.523		
	Total	15322.323	98			

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Language

As shown in Table 4, the regression model was a good predictor for marital satisfaction from language, $F(1, 97) = 218.775$, $p < 0.05$.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	7.064	2.761		2.559	.012	1.584	12.543
Language	.872	.059	.832	14.791	.000	.755	.989

a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

The findings in Table 5 indicate that language had a positive, significant influence on marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.872$, $p = 0.000$). The influence was considered significant since the p-value was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings imply that an increase in marital language will positively influence marital satisfaction by 0.872. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate hypothesis accepted.

A multiple regression was further computed to determine the influence of language components on marital satisfaction. The summary of findings is presented in the subsequent tables

Table 6: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.856 ^a	.733	.722	6.598	1.816

a. Predictors: (Constant), Miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression, affirmation language

b. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

As shown in Table 6, miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression and affirmation language explained 72.2% of the variation in marital satisfaction as indicated by the adjusted R square value.

Table 7: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11230.204	4	2807.551	64.492	.000 ^b
	Residual	4092.119	94	43.533		
	Total	15322.323	98			

a. Dependent Variable: marital satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), affirmation language, miscommunication, emotional expression, intimacy

From Table 7, the regression model was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction from the components of language, $F(4, 94) = 64.492, p < 0.05$.

Table 8: Multiple Regression Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	9.748	5.185		1.880	.063	-.547	20.044
Miscommunication	-.284	.289	-.075	-.982	.328	-.858	.290
Intimacy	1.098	.373	.273	2.947	.004	.358	1.838
Emotional Expression	.265	.253	.085	1.048	.297	-.237	.768
Affirmation language	1.906	.360	.504	5.290	.000	1.190	2.621

^a. Dependent Variable: Marital satisfaction

Findings from Table 8, the multiple regression established that intimacy statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ($\beta = 1.098$, $p = 0.004$). This implies that intimacy had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in intimacy resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.098.

Affirmation language statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ($\beta = 1.906$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that affirmation language had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in affirmation language resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.906. Consequently, the findings supported the study on the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages.

Analysing qualitative data in a manner that assisted to capture and compare data was found essential in this study. Thus, Tables 9 and 10 captured the extent of participants' responses which was classified into categories of high, moderate and low language satisfaction in marriage.

Table 9: Participants Responses on Language Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction categories	Language satisfaction	%
High	70	70.7
Moderate	15	15.2
Low	14	14.1
Total	99	100

From Table 9 majority of participants (70.7%) had high level of MS. Participants' descriptions of their marital experiences supported the influence of language on their marital satisfaction.

Table 10: Participants Responses by Language Components

Satisfaction Categories	Miscommunication	%	Intimacy	%	Emotional Expression	%	Affirmation language	%
High	12	12.1	72	72.7	56	56.5	77	77.8
Moderate	23	23.2	15	15.2	17	17.2	13	13.1
Low	64	64.7	12	12.1	26	26.3	9	9.1
Total Participants	99	100	99	100	99	100	99	100

From Table 10 majority of participants (64.7%) had low miscommunication in their marriages. Majority of respondents (72.7%) had high satisfaction with their intimacy language. Majority of participants (56.5%) had moderate satisfaction with their language of emotional expression and majority of respondents (77.8%) had high satisfaction with their affirmation language. Participants' responses portrayed vital role language components play in their marriages.

Discussions

Language and Marital Satisfaction

The findings of the study from quantitative data in Table 1 on the influence of language on marital satisfaction (MS), showed that majority of participants (69.7%) had high levels of satisfaction with their language of communication. The marital language mean score was 46.28 ($SD = 11.931$), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of satisfaction with their marital language.

The findings from Table 3 Model Summary R value of .832 showed correlation between MS and marital language.

Findings from linear regression in Table 4 ANOVA revealed that the regression model was a good predictor for marital satisfaction from language, $F(1, 97) = 218.775$, $p < 0.05$.

Findings from Regression Coefficients in Table 5 revealed that language had a positive, significant influence on marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.872$, $p = 0.000$). The influence was considered significant since the p-value was less than the selected level of significance (0.05). The findings implied that an increase in marital language positively influences marital satisfaction by 0.872.

Findings in Table 9 on qualitative analysis revealed that majority of participants (70.7%) had a high level of satisfaction with their marital language. These findings confirmed quantitative findings of high level of marital satisfaction. For instance, Participant (MLM25) indicated that "As a husband I know that my wife likes going out and that is mostly our language of affection. I enjoy it because it makes her happy and this keeps our marriage strong". The high findings on MS may have been occasioned by Snowball sampling. The first known participant referred the researchers to another known individual with similar characteristics in an intercultural marriage and the trend of referrals continued. This is supported by Govindan (2014) that early identified sample in Snowball sampling refer other people who meet the eligibility criteria.

Further findings revealed that participants' differing languages had brought them closer to each other. Participant (FLM30) revealed that "my partner's love language is different from mine but this has brought us closer to each other and we value our time together and we enjoy physical touch. We have learnt to appreciate each other in our own way". The participant's spouse was from a different cultural background with language that differed from hers. However, the couple formed their own effective language of communication. Consequently, their divergent marital language played a part in strengthening their marital relationship. Probably this happened in a counselling session which concurs with Odhiambo et al. (2021) that marital counseling is vital as it helps couples to acquire self-awareness. It could also have been occasioned by the couples' self-differentiation. This resonates with Brown (2010) that DoS is the capacity of a person to function autonomously and make self-directed choices, for instance, the choice of language to use in a marital relationship.

Findings showed that progression of language of communication in marriage is not linear and is likely to oscillate, from being high at times and low in other times. For instance, Participant (MKK15) responded that "I can say that our marital language of affection used to be so high in our early years of marriage, then now where we are, is over 20 years. We seem to be so used to each other sometimes we are high and sometimes we are just fine with each other". This is in line with Tavakol et al. (2017) that age of marriage is a significant factor in couples' MS as most people have a high level of MS at the time of marriage then after a while MS diminishes. Further, different factors, for instance, finances may have affected the couples' marital language and prompted fluctuations that influenced their MS. This concurs with Zaheri et al. (2016) observation that diverse factors, such as, financial challenges in the middle of marital life may prompt MS fluctuations. This was confirmed by Participant (FKK1) that "Our marital language is okay because we both want the best for each other, though when in disagreement on issues to do with finances, the marital language is silent". The response by this participant showed that their main challenges on their MS may have been caused by finances challenges and not language even though they were from divergent cultures. This was in line with Tien (2013) claim that not much literature has examined and provided adequate comprehension of the role of language differences in couples' MS, which shows a need for further studies.

Levels of Satisfaction with Language by Components

As shown in Table 2 analysis from quantitative data revealed majority of participants (77.8%) had a high level of affirmation language. The affirmation language mean score was 12.28 (SD = 3.308), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of affirmation language.

Majority of participants (72.7%) had a high level of intimacy language. The intimacy language mean score was 11.44 (SD = 3.111), indicating that on average, the participants had a high level of intimacy language.

Majority of participants (64.6%) had a low level of miscommunication. The mean score was 6.81 (SD = 3.306), indicating that on average, the participants had a low level of miscommunication.

Majority of participants (56.6%) had a high level of emotional expression language. The emotional expression mean score was 10.47 (SD = 4.006), indicating that on average, the participants had a moderate level of emotional expression language.

The findings from Table 6 Model Summary R value of .856 showed correlation between MS and marital language components of miscommunication, intimacy, emotional expression and affirmation language.

Findings from Table 7 ANOVA revealed that regression model was a significant predictor of marital satisfaction from the components of language, $F(4, 94) = 64.492, p < 0.05$.

Findings from Table 8 components of language revealed that intimacy language statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ($\beta = 1.098, p = 0.004$). This indicates that intimacy had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Therefore, an increase in language of intimacy resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.098. Affirmation language statistically significantly influenced marital satisfaction ($\beta = 1.906, p = 0.000$). This implied that affirmation language had a significant positive influence on marital satisfaction. Hence, an increase in affirmation language resulted to an increase in marital satisfaction by 1.906. Consequently, the findings supported the study on the influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages.

Findings from Table 10 qualitative analysis on participants' marital experiences by language components revealed that majority (77.8%) had high affirmation language, (72.7%) high language of intimacy, (64.7%) had low level of miscommunication and (56.5%) moderate emotional expression language. These findings supported similar quantitative findings.

Findings on miscommunication from Participant (MKK73) description that "Our love language is somehow different. My wife appreciates gifts, acts of service, spending time together and words of affirmation. I prefer quality time together, touch, acts of service. These are things we had discussed in our early marriage". This response showed that the intercultural couple had dissimilar marital languages however, they were open to learning from each other their divergent languages. At the same-time they discussed and agreed early in marriage individual's preferred language of communication, which was essential to attain MS. This is supported by Salija et al. (2018) that language is significant in a marital relationship as a tool of communication and expression. It resonates with Esere et al. (2014) that discussions using language as a tool of communication between spouses promotes harmonious marital relationship.

The study also revealed divergent responses that showed languages caused miscommunication in their marriages with influence on MS. For instance, Participant (MKK42) disclosed that "we do not share birthday gifts. I got tired of buying her gifts. Our culture does not allow us to hold hands in public". This revelation showed that the participant got tired of buying his wife gifts indicating that the gesture was not well understood which pointed to miscommunication. This response is supported by Ajaegbu et al. (2015) that miscommunication in marriage may be caused by misunderstandings and injecting unintended meaning into a message from a spouse, for instance, this participant had been buying gifts to the wife, which had never been reciprocated. This may have made the participant conclude that the gesture was not appreciated. On the other hand, the wife may have been unaware of the husband's symbol of affection. This is supported by Bystydzienski (2011) that language and meanings may create miscommunication, as each cultural group has its own way of defining words.

Findings from language of intimacy from Participant (FKK35) discussion that "We value spending quality time together, taking walks and talking of our journeys, our achievements and

our pitfalls. It was never like this in the beginning. It has grown with time and it becomes better and better. We love touching each other”. This respondent showed that intimacy is not constant but a process that increases with time. The findings are in line with Okonkwo et al. (2019) that intimacy develops through couples’ interaction and communication using verbal and non-verbal language. This is equally supported by Johnson and Anderson (2013) study on relationship between time spent together and MS. Findings showed that couples who spend more time together report higher levels of MS.

The study revealed irregular manifestation on couples’ intimacy language on MS. For instance, Participant (FKK33) described that “we are at a place of re-learning one another from a place of very high dissatisfaction. So far our satisfaction is better than where it has been for years”. This participant’s language of intimacy had been low. The couple may have attained awareness of its significance, probably in a counselling session and agreed to put their concerted efforts together for their intimacy amelioration. This is in line with Odhiambo et al. (2021) observation that marital counselling is essential to improve communication issues within an intimate relationship. This is further supported by Tavakol et al. (2017) that relationships between spouses are formed on the basis of four basic types of relationships, emotional relationship, cognitive or intellectual relationship, economic relationship and sexual relationship. The moment couples get awareness of the need in their personal marital relationship then MS enhancement occurs.

Findings from Participant (MLM17) shared that “My marital language of affection with my partner is very satisfying and we adore it”. The findings showed that the participant was satisfied with his marital language, which enhanced their MS. This is in line with Chapman (2015) that the basic reasons for couples’ relationship constraints emerge from speaking dissimilar love languages. This is also supported by Hughes and Camden (2020) study that a partner’s perception using preferred intimate language enhances couples’ relationship.

Other findings from participants’ experiences revealed gender differences in affection language. Participant (FLM21) specified that “Our language is fine but sometimes I feel that my culture restricts us because men are not taught to be affectionate”. This revelation showed that the respondent was not fully satisfied with partner’s affection language and blamed it on divergent cultural practices. This is in line with Ubando (2016) that communication differs between genders which may influence MS. This concurs with Sue et al. (2019) that there are dissimilarities of genders in their perceptions.

Findings on emotional expression language from divergent responses revealed that emotional expression resulted in challenges in participants’ marriages. For instance, response from participant (MKK45) that “we rarely give each other gifts. We don’t go for trips. We also have a problem of expressing our feelings because of our cultural differences. I fear annoying her”. The findings showed that this participant was not familiar with spouses’ language of emotional expression. He was also unable to express his feelings towards his spouse occasioned by cultural differences and feared disclosing, as it could create marital disharmony. This is in line with Yedirir and Hamarta (2015) that emotional expression is part of language of communication. Consequently, absence of emotional expression as a result of cultural differences is likely to cause disharmony in a marital relationship.

Findings on affirmation language from Participant (FLM1) disclosed that “I value words of affirmation, so does my partner, which helps us. In the long run we are able to grow as one and

it contributes to our marital satisfaction”. The findings showed that the respondent and partner were familiar with their affirmation language. This is line with Emanuel et al. (2016) who indicated that spontaneity in affirmation is associated with increased levels of happiness.

Findings from other divergent participants’ responses, such as, Participant (FKK65) disclosed that “words of affirmation and touch are important to me, but for my spouse it’s acts of service and quality time, so we try”. This response showed that the participant preferred words of affirmation while the spouse differed as a result of divergent cultures. This is in line with Dillon and Beechler (2010) that the conditions of marital satisfaction may differ based on cultural background. Consequently, awareness is key to identifying divergent languages of communication and applying what works in a personal marriage. Further, self-affirmation was equally significant in consideration with couples’ words of affirmation. This is supported by Sherman (2013) that self-affirmation is a successful attribute for a person’s ability to broaden personal global perspective to reduce negative emotions. Lack of self-affirmation may make it challenging for couples to introspect on dissimilar cultures and form their own, which works for them. This is further supported by a study by Creswell et al. (2013) on self-affirmation, which results showed that self-affirmation improves problem-solving.

Conclusions

The study revealed that majority of participants had a high level of satisfaction with their marital language. The findings that language had a positive significance influence on marital satisfaction implied that an increase in marital language would positively influence marital satisfaction. Therefore, the findings answered the overarching question, that there is influence of language on marital satisfaction among couples in intercultural marriages. Thus, language among intercultural couples has a positive role and it is critical to be addressed to enhance and maintain marital satisfaction in marriages.

Recommendations

The study recommends that policy makers develop a strategy that increases visibility of mental health services availability in Kenya and Kiambu County, vital for marriage and family counseling services.

Ministry of Health be in the front line in campaigns that would increase awareness of significance of counseling services in Kenya. This should cascade down, to disseminate information to Kiambu County about the importance of professional counseling. Increased counseling awareness would enhance intercultural couples’ marital management and boost couples’ MS and mental health.

The study also recommends further research by mental health professionals on the influence of language on marriages to attain expanded, factual, local information. The acquired information would be significant for improved marital management, understanding, endurance and satisfaction.

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