

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AT TIME OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL
SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED COUPLES IN MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This Thesis report is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my dotting daughters Barbara Muthoni and Celine Wanjiru for their undying patience when I didn't give them my full attention and also to my late dad Mr. Robert Kariuki from whom I learnt to be persistent, consistent, and selfless.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between age at time of marriage (ATM) and marital satisfaction (MS) among married couples in Murang'a County, Kenya. Owing to changes in established social set up, individuals have been separated from their extended family and community that provided the necessary support system, thus an increase in the number of people experiencing challenges in marriage. Individuals who are married experience emotional and psychological challenges that require counselling. The objectives of this study were: to investigate the relationship between age at time of marriage and subjective evaluation, examine the relationship between age at time of marriage and emotion regulation, determine the relationship between age at time of marriage and couple's patterns of interaction. The study adopted cross-sectional survey and applied correlation design. The target population was the married individuals within the selected households in Murang'a County, Kenya. Stratified sampling was used and then proportionate sampling to select 399 householders from the total of 237,493 householders in Murang'a County, Kenya. Data was collected using two data collection instruments and analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) and content analysis strategy. Descriptive statistics (frequency tables, percentages and cross tabulation) and inferential statistics (Pearson's Correlation, t-test, and ANOVA) were used in data analysis. The study findings show that the relationships between age at time of marriage and subjective evaluation ($r = .159, p < .05$), and patterns of interaction ($r = .118, p < .05$) were positive and statistically significant. However, the relationship between age at time of marriage and emotion regulation ($r = .070, p > .05$) was not statistically significant. Based on the study findings the conclusion is that there is a relationship between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County, Kenya.

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Marriage is an important stage of human development (McGoldrick & Carter, 1982). Love, economic status, religious beliefs, and social acceptance are some of the reasons folks marry across differing cultures (Cadigan, 1998). Marriage is thus viewed from numerous aspects for example, as an institution, as a role, a lifecycle phase and also as partnership (Therborn, 2006). As an institution, marriage is facing challenges due to modernization process which naturally helps to shape new marriage relationship (Therborn, 2006). Marriage is perceived as universal in sub Saharan Africa as well as female marriage which also happens early (Caldwell & Caldwell, 1987). In most of African traditional civilization marriage is highly valued. This is manifested by early marriage practices and childbearing which continues until the end of productivity age (Lauras-Lecoh, 1990).

Numerous researches have shown that marrying too young or waiting for too long before marrying is relative. That is, teen mothers are double prone to divorce as women who are in their thirties (Komblum, 2001). However, half of those marrying in their thirties also are likely to divorce compared to those married in their twenties (Komblum, 2001). ATM has frequently been established to encompass a significant positive outcome on marital union, both in the Western and African context (Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Lecoh & Thiriati, 1995; Reiners, 2003). Divorce rates have notably increased mainly in the late twentieth and early twenty first century internationally as well as in Africa (Haffeman, Shuttlesworth & Ambrosine, 1992).

According to the U.S Census Bureau (2016), half of Americans aged 18 and above were married in 2015, compared with 72% in 1960. Particularly, one factor found to compel this change is that American men are staying single longer. For example, in 2012, 78% of 25-year-old men had never married compared with 67% of their female counterparts, and by 2016, the median age at time of first marriage reached its maximum peak on record of 29.5 for men and 27.4 for women (U.S Census Bureau, 2016). Several factors may be influencing marriage delays, as well as increased college attendance of young adults and cohabitation. Moreover, 34% of never-married people ages 25 to 34 say not feeling financially prepared for the commitment is the primary reason they

are not married. The study found that in 2013, of all married people 23% had been married before compared with just 13% in 1960 (U.S Census Bureau, 2016). Still in 2013, 40% of new marriages included a partner who was marrying for the second time, and in 20% of new marriages both spouses had said “I do” before. There was an increase of divorces in 2015, whereby 21 adults aged 40 to 49 divorced per 1,000 married persons in that age range rose up slightly from 18 in 1990 (U.S Census Bureau, 2016). Comparatively, divorce rate fell for adults aged 25 to 39 from 30 persons per 1,000 married persons in 1990 to 24 in 2015. This reality has been attributed at least in part to younger cohorts putting off marriage until later ages. In 2016, the median age at time of first marriage had increased for men at 29.5 and 27.4 for women from 26.1 and 23.9, respectively, in 1990. Additionally, those who did end up marrying more likely are college-educated, and research indicates that college educated individuals have a lower rate of divorce (U.S Census Bureau, 2016).

In Africa, ATM has moderately increased, though it is still low in rural areas compared to high increase in urban areas (Lauras-Lecoh, 1990). During marriage women are likely to be of lower status than the husband’s family (Makinwa-adebusoye, 2001). The ATM ranges between ages 17 to 22 for women varying across settings depending on ethnic practices in the area (Boogaarts, Odile, & Ron, 1984). However, age at marriage has increased in most countries (Therborn, 2006). For example, age at time of marriage has risen from 16 to 19 years in Guinea since the 1950s to 1990s and from ages 15 to 18 in Niger. Similarly, there has been an increase from ages 19 to 20 in Nigeria, ages 19 to 21 in Ivory Coast and from ages 19 to 21 in Zimbabwe in 1980s and in early 1990s. There have been much later ages at marriage in South Africa and Botswana rising from ages 26 to 27. In Mali 82% of women are married by age 20 compared 90% in Niger (Makinwa-adebusoye, 2001). The average age at time of marriage in sub Sahara Africa ranges between age 15 and above (Boogaarts et al., 1984). However, the continent is gradually experiencing changes in ATM at which both gender are getting married. Marriage in Africa is being subjected to adapt in the midst of random changes coming from the developing civilization (Kalu, 1981). This has set the pace for redefinition of its function and distinctiveness (Kalu, 1981).

Findings of a demographic survey by infotrak Kenya show that, 3 out of 10 individuals would not marry their current spouse again (Muchiri, 2010). From the survey, about 29% of married Kenyans admit their marriages are headed for the rocks, while 31% say they are not sure whether they are in a happy or unhappy marriage. More than half of the respondents pointed serious disagreements in their marriage (Muchiri, 2010). Among those who are currently married, Kenyans couple consistently report less marital satisfaction (Muchiri, 2010). Divorce rates are increasing and may still be higher were it not for the high legal costs (Makeni, 2010). For example, the noted figures of divorces cases filed in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005 were 101, 115, 206, 296 and 295. The figures rose tremendously in 2007 and 2008 to 357 and 369. However, most couples frequently opt to seek legal advice and personally settle their divorce outside the court (Makeni, 2010). Also, irreconcilable couples are put off from the divorce process due to personal grounds, feeling duty bound in marriage, family influence or conformity (Makeni, 2010). However, statistics demonstrate a constant increase in the number of filed divorces (Makeni, 2010).

All Counties in Kenya have high incidences of divorce with Nairobi and Muranga on the lead. Report from the Sub County officers in Murang'a County indicate that some of the individuals and families member's who have suffered a divorce/separation spend time in the local chief's offices and churches trying to seek for solution to their marital problems. Few studies have been carried out to find out the depth of marital issues/problems in the county. The future of the Kenyan civilization in terms of innovation, provision employment, socio-economic status and political development depends on those who have good mental/family health. The way families view marital problem is important even during counseling and when an individual is dealing with matters of life in general.

Marital satisfaction (MS) is considered to be key in preserving a marriage as well as increased personal well-being (Mathews, 2010). Marital satisfaction is a stable attitude reflecting an individual's general relationship evaluation as to the degree to which his/her needs, expectations, and desires are being satisfied in the relationship (Mathews, 2010). Marital satisfaction also reflects the perceived rewards and costs of the relationship to an individual. The more costs a partner inflicts on the other, the less satisfied one generally is with the relationship and with the partner (Collins & Allard, 2001). On the other hand, the greater the perceived rewards, the more

satisfaction one is deriving from the marriage and the spouse (Collins & Allard, 2001). Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted process that involves subjective evaluation, emotion regulation and patterns of interaction. Thus this study sought to investigate the relationship between ATM and marital satisfaction.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There is an underlying consensus that incidents and cases of divorce and marital breakdown are increasing at a very alarming rate (Makeni, 2010; Mungai, 2017). Each passing day stories abound in the Kenyan media of couples that break up on a whim, even before the ink on their marriage certificates has dried. In fact, a recent nationwide survey by infortrak from four edition of the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey since 1998 showed the longer-term trends from the data analyzed on marital status over the past 20 years (Mangai, 2017). This data on family relationships in Kenya shows that divorce and separation cases are on the rise. Specifically, the 2014 edition of the survey shows that 6% of the women aged 20 to 24 are already divorced or separated, a proportion almost double from two decades ago (Mangai, 2017). Interestingly, when a single age cohort is tracked to see what has happened to their marriage over the years, the percentage of women reporting they are divorced or separated rises sharply over the years, almost as if age is the single factor that predisposes a woman to marital breakdown (Mungai, 2017).

Even though a number of factors such as, psychological factors, socio-demographic factors, parenting, physical health, family background, and psychopathology, and sometimes a combination of these, all linked to some aspect of marriage satisfaction have been attributed to the weakening of the marital institution (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000), it can be argued that their effect will depend on the manner in which a person cognitively processes their reality to give it meaning (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). This is because people of different ages process information about their reality differently (Piaget, 1952). Therefore, ATM has been considered to be a key factor in understanding, predicting and probably control this problem (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972).

Even though research on the impact of ATM on marital satisfaction has been previously conducted (Bruchinal, 1965; Glick & Norton, 1971; Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Weed, 1974; Schoen, 1975; Lee, 1977; Glick & Norton, 1977), these studies have not gone further to understand how ATM

affects the various aspects of MS such subjective evaluation, emotion regulation and patterns of interaction.

The impact of ATM on marital satisfaction has been extensively researched (Bruchinal, 1965; Glick & Norton, 1971; Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Weed, 1974; Schoen, 1975; Lee, 1977; Glick & Norton, 1977). It has been reported that MS is affected by ATM due to interrelated individual-level determinants such as labour market experiences, education, urban residence and others (Salem, 2016).

Prior research on marital satisfaction has shown that there are a number of factors that influence whether one is going to be satisfied in marriage such as similarity/diversity in educational attainment, religious affiliation, parental marital stability, partner's sexual history among others (Booth & Edwards, 1985). Bumpass & Sweet (1972) found, however, that ATM is the best sole predictor of divorce. This study therefore intends to find out how ATM influences the manner in which people relate to the various attributes of MS.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study examined the relationship between ATM and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County in Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study specific objectives were to:-

- i. Investigate the relationship between age at time of marriage and subjective evaluation in a marriage.
- ii. Examine the relationship between age at time of marriage and emotion regulation in a marriage.
- iii. Determine the relationship between age at time of marriage and couple's patterns of interaction in a marriage.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

H₀₁ There is no statistically significant relationship between age at time of marriage and subjective evaluation in a marriage.

H₀₂ There is no statistically significant relationship between age at time of marriage and emotion regulation in a marriage.

H₀₃ There is no statistically significant relationship between age at time of marriage and patterns of interaction in a marriage.

1.6 Significance of the Study

A survey of literature indicated that very little research had been conducted in the area of marital satisfaction among married couples in Kenya. The findings of this study are expected to highlight the extent of marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County, Kenya. The study was expected to bring to light the various challenges and problems affecting marital satisfaction among married couples with a view to improving psychological intervention and providing counseling services.

The policy makers are expected to utilize the findings of this study to structure/restructure the policies on psychological interventions for those wanting to get married, are married or want to leave the marriage institution. The Universities that offer psychology/counseling programmes can use the findings of this study to structure/restructure psychologists/counselors training programmes to include adequate skills and content in relationships psychology and counseling. The study findings are also expected to create awareness among stakeholders in all corporate institutions as well as prospective married couples, dating and engaged couples on the need for accessing and provision of psycho-education and counseling services with emphasis on successful relationships.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Murang'a County in Central Kenya. The area was selected due to the high population and its demographic diversities. The study area was expected to provide valid comparisons in terms of the demographics and male-female dimensions. The study targeted all married couples in the County. This is because married couples are expected to be relatively

experienced in terms of a relationship. Further, the married couples make individual choices just before getting married and that forms the basis for their expectations in a marriage.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study involved all seven sub-Counties in Murang'a County. Proportionate sampling technique was used to determine the number of subjects from each region meaning this may alter variables in other parts of the County. The results of the study were limited to study areas and generalization should therefore, be done with caution.

A major limitation of the study is that only one of the couple participated in the study mostly in the absence of the other because of ethical issues such as confidentiality. However, this was improved after having focus group discussions with men and women who have been involved in practical counseling of some of the marital issues raised in the region.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that all the respondents were married and were of different ages, that other factors apart from age affect individual's experience in their marriage, that the respondents rated their situations truthfully and that the data collected was honest.

1.10 Definition of Terms

The following terms assumed the following operational meanings in this study:

Age at time of marriage – a phase at entry into marriage.

Marital timing – is a facet to an individual's reason to marry. It is used interchangeably with age at time of marriage in this study.

Satisfaction – is a reflection of how a person's needs, desires and expectations have been met in the marriage.

Marriage – is a long term intimate union between two consenting adults of the opposite sex.

Types of marriage – perceptions of a marriage.

Marital satisfaction – is a perception of a relationship after assessing the overall satisfaction level in a marriage.

Subjective evaluation – is the intellectual knowledge/assessment of one's satisfaction in a marriage

Emotion regulation – is the modification of thoughts from how one feels about the level of satisfaction in a marriage. This is done by assessing the reaction of various feelings state(s) about the relationship.

Patterns of interaction – is the overt expression of the experiential knowledge from how an individual translates the events and emotions in the marriage.

Vibrational frequency – is high/low level judgement.

Frequency – is the number of occurrence of level of thoughts/feelings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of various scholarly works, which were reviewed for the purpose of this study. It focused on the meaning of marriage, ATM and determinants of ATM. Included are the empirical perspectives, theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

2.2 Concept of Marriage

All acknowledged human civilization has a form of marriage (Nukunya). And in all multifaceted culture ruled by regulation, marriage is a public legal act and not simply a personal romantic statement or religious practice (Amin, 1995; Jensen & Thornton, 2003). There is no accepted definition of marriage. Numerous scholars have tried to define marriage from different perspectives.

From an anthropological perspective marriage is depicted as a standard embodied everywhere it is practiced, that is, the particulars of getting married, who selects the mates, what are the rituals and substitutes (Davis, 1985). Marriage being almost a universal concept is concerned with varying the formation of families, civilization and reproduction of children (Davis, 1985). And although marriage arrangements vary, in all cultures it is a sexual relationship between opposite sex that builds relationship responsibilities and sharing of possessions between the couples and the children produced from their sexual union.

Marriage as described from a biological perspective is a union between two unrelated male and female adults who bond together and seek to find rewards from such a relationship (such as sexual gratification, love and companionship) while also using it as a legitimate means to procreate (Abra, 2001).

From social perspective marriage is defined as a union and co-residence of two individuals of the opposite sex with a long term agreement to each other and their children once they are born as long as they depend on them (Akinade, 1997). Marriage is also defined by Peil (1977) as a

conjugal unit that is publicly accepted and is more or less a long-term relationship between a female and male.

The complexity in finding the middle ground for defining marriage arise from the fact that contemporary cultures have brought in other varied forms of marriages such that trying to encompass all of them in a single definition is not only difficult but also burdensome and futile. Nevertheless, efforts made by the above scholars contain relevant description that is helpful in this study and discussions.

2.2.1 Types of Marriage

Nearly all discussions of passionate love and changes in emotional patterns centre on the difference between ‘tradition’ marriage type and ‘modern’, romantic and companionate one (Wardlow & Hirsch, 2006). Companionate marriage is a union in which emotional relationship is the foundation of the union, it is the basis of operation, and determines the success of the marriage (Wardlow & Hirsch, 2006). The relationship is honored more than other family ties, and individual satisfaction is more prioritized than social reproduction. The generalization of companionate marriage differs from the limited forms of traditional marriage that tends to involve close relatives and the performance by partners of opposite sex to ensure there is social reproduction. Emotional closeness may likely occur out of a successful traditional marital union, but it is not a condition (Wardlow & Hirsch, 2006).

In traditional type of marriage, emerging adults start a relationship when a man officially “proposes love” to a woman. The woman is free to accept instantly, request for time to decide, or flatly refuse (Pattman, 2005). Interactions are undisclosed until the two people are ready to marry, due to pregnancy or by choice, at which point families now get involved in marriage negotiations. As key part of the marriage process, senior kin are in charge of negotiating and officiating the marriage and later act as intermediaries in case of marital disagreement (Chimango, 1977). In patrilineal areas the kin also agree on the payment of dowry, a reward of goats or an equivalent in cash, paid by the man to the woman’s family (Wanda, 1988). Once the payment is made, the children born by the couple are affiliated with the man’s family (Mwambene, 2012). Young people can also abscond

without the families blessings, during which co-residence is enough for them to be considered a family unit. The two may later involve kin to make the marriage official (Mwambene, 2012).

Traditionally, couples relate with each other mostly through customary laid down gender roles. Men provide money for family's requirements. Women bear and raise children as well cook food. Both partners are obliged to be sexually accessible to each other. If one of the partners fails to carry out his/her duties, the other one considers having cause for divorce (Mair, 1951; Swidler & Watkins, 2007). Young women aged between 16 and 20 are likely to marry during a short period of time at the last part of their teenage year. Couples married for a long period of time normally have deep liking for one another, although this great liking is likely to grow from taking good care of one another and gender roles, instead of being the origin of the marriage formation (Freeman & Coast, 2014). The conditions of what makes a good partner are collective and can be observed even by those who are not close. For example, people identify a good husband when he has all important signs such as hardworking, alcohol abstinence, and sharing his wealth with poorer kin. This information flows in gossip form, which is also a key source of information in the Kenyan social life, including evaluating a potential partner (Watkins & Swidler, 2007; Watkins, 2004). Senior kin are especially quick to learn of a potential partner's material wealth and to consider it when encouraging/discouraging certain relationships. Thus social mobility (hypergamy) is likely through marriage and can occur through family unions (Watkins & Swidler, 2007; Watkins, 2004).

Contemporary or companionate bonds as opposed to traditional ones have some key aspects. Timeframe is the first aspect. Whilst the union process development follows comparable steps for both modern and traditional relationships, the development of a modern marriage extends over a much longer time (Wardlow & Hirsch, 2006). This is, in part because companionate relationships are more common with the educated, town elites who go for secondary and normally tertiary education and whose entry into marriage is delayed. The extended timeframe is also related to the second key aspect which is the importance of emotional intimacy before union (Wardlow & Hirsch, 2006). The third aspect is gender role fulfillment, whilst it is not enough for a modern marital success. Romantic books and movies, as well as evangelical pastors in towns and cities who propose Christian form of companionate marriage all strongly stress on marital union to be of two individuals and not two families (Wardlow & Hirsch, 2006). The last aspect in modern

marriages is that information about the other's personality and material wealth is attained through direct verbal exchange. This can take place directly via phone call, or in writing via text messages or mail. Also, there is a likelihood of companionate unions forming an upward social mobility through love between couples, hence family alliances are not necessarily required (Watkins & Swidler, 2007; Watkins, 2004).

Each type of relationship reveals the differences in social, educational and material status. Traditional marriage is on the shared facts of a culture, while companionate marriage is based on a more personal facts achieved though time by the individual. Both types of courtship and spousal choice coexist in Kenya, and each has uniqueness to facilitate high rates of early divorce. However, traditional unions are known to be fragile in Kenya, since not many formalities stand between an individual's desire to divorce and the end of a marriage. As scores of skilled youth wish for romantic unions, traditional relationships could become less satisfying. However, kin do not participate in companionate unions, who can be fanatical onlookers of personal failings and act as influential deterrents to divorce by assisting unhappy spouses resolve their differences, and by restricting the extramarital relationships of an unfaithful partner. Although emotional and verbal closeness together with an extended courtship can create a strong attachment between couples, relationships founded only on feelings may possibly easily break than those that rely on cultural and economic interaction set-ups and family unions.

2.2.2 Indicators of Marriage in the African Settings

In African marriage systems marriage is multifaceted as reflected in the diversity of its definitions(Hendrix, 1996). Scores of normative behavior patterns are parts of its facet in most cultures, while rituals mark its beginning (Hendrix, 1996). Majority of societies expect a relative permanence, co-residence, division of labor, sharing of resources, sexual relationship, child bearing and support in raising and training of the children (Hendrix, 1996; 173). Marriage is the means by which individuals of opposite sex unite to create a close bond for the purpose of reproduction, as collaborated by Ayisi (1997). Further, African marital unions are effected just for this reason and consequently a childless marriage does not have meaning. Certain traditional observances herald certain requirements that have to be fulfilled for every marriage to be legal (Ayisi, 1997; 7).

Africans posit that through their marriage, their families as well as clans become united such that what is done to one of their members is done to all (Magesa, 1998). “The communities involved share their existence in that reality and become one people, one thing” (Magesa, 1998; 110). This signifies that couples responsibilities are not bound to themselves alone rather it is wider in its application. Thus they are equally extensively recognized as a family unit (Magesa, 1998; 110).

Africans marriage has three defining aspects (Hendrix, 1998; 734). First, the woman’s legal rights are transferred from her family to her husband. Thus the husband acquires privileges to the wife’s toil, sexuality and children as well as privileges to collect payment for the damage made to her by others (Hendrix, 1998). The husband also is conferred privileges to offspring once he pays full dowry but can have limited privileges if his payment is little (Hendrix, 1998). Secondly, marriage changes and to some extent breaks the interactions between the woman and her kin. In majority of the cultures, the woman leaves her parent’s home and there is loss of a family member. In other cultures the husband joins the woman’s parental home and there is less disruption (Hendrix, 1998; 734). Lastly, marriage is not only seen as a relationship between two individuals but also as a structural link between groups. Therefore, marriage is a commitment, a union or an agreement between two families or groups of kin (Hendrix, 1998; 734). The study presumed all co-resident couples in Murang’a County as married.

2.3 Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted and a multi-dimensional experience (Mosmann, Wagner, & Feres-Carneiro, 2007), and is widely researched by different scholars (Berger & Keller, 1970; Gottman, 1993; Feeney & Noller, 1990, 1992; Singly, 1993; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Feeney, 1999; Feres-Carneiro, 1999; Perlin, 2006; Jablonski, 2010; Selcuk, Zayas, Hazna, 2010; Mosmann & Falcke, 2007, 2011; Avededo, Aron, Fisher, & Brown, 2012). Marital satisfaction is a psychological state that involves the process of assessing the extent to which one’s needs, expectations and desires are met in a marriage (Bahr, Chappell, & Leigh; Li & Fung, 2011). Dynamics of culture, religion, law and education origins among others help shape the standards of what is viewed as necessary to form an emotional intimacy, and especially in a marriage (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004; Lucas, Parkhill, Wendorf, Imamoglu, Weisfeld, & Shen, 2008;

Wendorf, Lucas, Imamoglu, Weisfeld, & Weisfeld, 2011). Consequently, marital satisfaction depends to some extent on how a marriage responds to the expectations and roles imposed by the society and in the social sphere (Mosmann, Wagner, & Feres-Carneiro, 2007).

In the developed countries civilization, the satisfaction standards are connected to personal ambitions or to the satisfaction standards established in relationships (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, Tatla, 2004). On the other hand, cultures with a more communal background, for example Eastern countries, the satisfaction standards are connected to the manner in which the kin members of the couples are treated (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, Tatla, 2004). This is one aspect of the marriage that this study assessed.

2.3.1 Determinants of Marital Satisfaction

There are aspects that have been observed to contribute to MS influenced by socio-political and the civilization of the country one is in (Lucas et al., 2008). These aspects come about by change over time and interact with the individuals through culture and environmental conditions (Lucas et al., 2008). This means socio-cultural conditions are of great value in interpersonal relationships because an individual is made to adjust to that cultural background, especially in the case of a more intimate relationship. Couples estimate their marital satisfaction by observing rewards and costs, based on their life's narration (Lucas et al., 2008).

The choice of our behaviors involve the development of psychological methods that assist in interaction endurance and reproduction, whilst countering the problems that arise in the environment as one adjusts to change over time (Tooby & Cosmides, 1992). For example, love, jealousy, attachment and examining marital satisfaction itself, are aspects considered necessary for marital continuity. Love is the answer to a long lasting union and its existence is the top most way of guaranteeing the partner of a long lasting marriage (Buss, 2000, 2007). With such a background, love is thought to offer sexual privileges to the spouse, whilst also guaranteeing the other of sexual reliability and exclusivity in the union through mate-guarding behavior. Mate-guarding happens when the partner monopolizes the other's time and employing sexual jealousy. Additionally, love signifies an important resource for procreation, indicating signs of parental investment as well as sexual and emotional satisfaction (Buss, 2000, 2007).

Love is a multifaceted set of adjustments mostly found in the brain circuitry system (Fisher, 1998, 2000, 2004). This perspective is supported by other neuroscience researches done by (Carter, 1998; Bartels & Zecki, 2000; Diamond, 2003). The brain circuitry is understandably composed of three neural systems comprised of lust, romantic love and attachment, all related to human reproduction. The first neural system which is lust can trigger a spouse to satisfy his/her sexual needs by engaging in sexual intercourse with any person if he/she is dissatisfied in the union (Fisher, Aron, Mashek, Li, Strong, & Brown, 2002; Fisher, 1998, 2000, 2004).

The next neural system is commonly referred to as romantic love or passion and is characterized by compulsive and intrusive thoughts and emotional intimacy of the intimate partner (Tennov, 1979). These behaviors are related to increased dopamine and norepinephrine levels in the brain circuitry while reducing serotonin levels (Bartels & Zecki, 2000; Fisher, 1998; Tennov, 1979; Marazziti, Rossi & Cassano, 1999; Fisher, 1998, 2004). This neural system allows spouses to focus their energy, time and resources on one partner at a time thus helping to safeguard against wasting on investing in a non-viable relationship (Fisher, 1998, 2000, 2004).

The third neural system referred to as attachment is characterized by defending the territory, sharing food, physical closeness to the spouse, dreading getting detached from the loved one, kin members and other associated behavior (Fisher, 2000, 2004; Fisher et al., 2002). The attachment system in both sexes assists in developing long lasting intimate relationship, which helps in creating family ties, keep spouses together as long as possible to help in bearing and raising of their offspring resulting to marital satisfaction. Attachment is thought to be related to peaceful, secure and stable sensations, related with neuropeptides such as oxytocin and vasopressin, both found in long lasting unions (Fisher, 2000, 2004; Fisher et al., 2002).

Lucas et al., (2008) conducted a study on 1,935 couples who had been married for an average 13.54 years. The sample consisted of couples from United States (n = 322), Great Britain (n = 1,031), Turkey (n = 350) and China (n = 232) who were recruited through snowball technique and interviewed. MARQ scale was used to approximate satisfaction in their marriage. The study

findings showed that the couples indicated the marital satisfaction key point to be love and partnership, although these countries have quite different cultural backgrounds.

Schimit & Sarzedas (2008) did a study in Parana state, South of Brazil with 16 couples. The couples had lived together for at least 5 years, had secondary education and were staying in Parana North. The interview involved self-administered questionnaire of 13 open-ended questions. They had to be specific about what they judged to be relevant for their relationship to have stability. The couples indicated aspects like love, respect, intimacy and sharing similar objectives in life to be the most essential factors for maintaining a stable marriage, whilst unfaithfulness and lack of love were indicated to be the main cause of marital termination.

Acevedo, Aron, Fisher, & Brown (2012) also conducted a study to find out whether there is a link between relationship quality and the physical and psychological well-being of the person. They recruited and interviewed 17 middle-aged heterosexual individuals (N=10) being men and (N=7) being women with an average age of (M=52.85 years), with most being in their first marriage and married on average (M=21.4 years). They were all Caucasians living in New York town, and had attained college education. Brain scan was done first by means of functional magnetic resonance, as they visualized the facial images of their partners, kin and close friends. As they visualized the facial image of their partners, positive correlation was done between identified cerebral activities with major marital satisfaction. They also completed Relationship Evaluation Questionnaire (REQ) by Hendrick (1988) to assess the quality of their marriage. The brain activities identified were in the ventra tegmental area which is associated satisfaction and motivation system, ventral orbit cortex also linked with motivation system, front insula which is associated with empathy, nucleus striatum terminals which are linked to stress control. Those who were happy with their marriage exhibited good physical and mental well-being. The study findings show that the link between behavior and bodily processes supports the evolutionary proposal that emotional responses presents consistent pointers of our ability to adjust amid changes over time, with regard to psychological mechanisms still guiding our actions.

Daly & Wilson (1996) and Buss (2007) concluded from their study findings that jealousy as a mechanism involved in maintenance of intimate relationships aims to keep the sexual and

emotional commitment of the spouse and to put off challengers, thus preventing or trying to avoid ending the relationship. Almeida, Rodrigues & Silva (2008) added to these findings that mate guarding behavior shows jealousy at work, and is an indication that one is interested in the spouse and cares about him/her. Further, Shackelford & Buss (2000) and Shackelford, Goetz & Buss (2005) study findings showed that extreme mate guarding behavior signifies marital satisfaction. For example, when a partner tries to control or dominate the other's time, manipulates the other emotionally is seen to usually be motivated by excessive jealousy.

Lucas et al., (2008) still from another study findings concluded that romantic love as a mechanism involve behaviors from the spouses directly affecting the degree of happiness in the marriage. For example, homogamy is considered very essential in building a happy marriage. In other studies by Russell & Wells (1991), Epstein & Guttman (1985), Lichter & Carmall (2009), Scharamm, Marshall, Harris & Lee (2011) they concluded that people tend to be homogamous, like age groups, social class, intelligence, religion, education, physical looks, personality among others. Marital happiness is thought to be essential for a long lasting relationship to enable procreation and raising well taken care of offspring. Also, it allows improved adjustments of the offspring, by inheriting psychological mechanisms of examining marital satisfaction (Lucas et al., 2008).

Thus, examination of happiness allows partners to constantly assess the costs and benefits of the union and be able to choose whether it makes sense to hold on or get into another relationship (Buss & Shackelford, 1997; Buss, 2007). Having clarity of the underlying factors of our attitudes so as to trust our intimate relationships, adds to the overall well-being of the couples and usually aids them and their family to stay both physically and mentally healthy. The goal of the present study was to assess marital satisfaction level of Married couples in Murang'a County.

2.4 Determinants of Age at Time of Marriage

Consistent research findings have show that the determinants of ATM vary by sex and ethnicity (Keeley, 1977; Marini, 1978; White, 1981). White (1981) conducted a study that assessed factors associated with hastening or postponing marriage, including a variety of background and prior progression standards considering other life-course events from the participants. This study finding indicated that these life-course happenings determine whether marriage occurs. Interestingly, the

study found that there is no need to rely on normative reasons to explain why certain factors may change in value as people age. The social setting is organized in such a way that different roles are taken up as people age. As people go through the life-course, they become exposed to varying limitations on their behavior. By extension these limitations can help the person adjust in life. However, minimal evidence supports that people hold strong general beliefs about the suitable age to marry that are different from the general marriage ages (Marini, 1984). Preference regarding when to marry is purely a sign of the marital timing an individual decides on based on other factors.

Back-ground factors have been found to be relatively not important in directly influencing when marriage will occur (Teachman, Polonko & Leigh, 1987). Instead, occurrences and incidences that recently happened are the determining factors as to when marriage will occur. Furthermore, factors that are important in determining age at marriage often vary according to gender and ethnicity (teachman, Polonko & Leigh, 1987). Key independent factors may vary according to the gender and ethnicity of the people being considered. Demographic variations are highly considered because females marry younger than males (Goldscheider & Waite, 1986; Johnson & Dye, 2005). Previous studies has found that early ATM is related to increased fertility, increased risk of dissolving the marriage, limited access to the labor force among women and other negative consequences to socioeconomic success (Bartz & Nye, 1975; Otto, 1979; Teachman, Polonko & Scanzoni, 1986).

There is a likelihood of several factors influencing ATM as individual's age. When more individuals marry, the ones remaining single may be so out of choice such that it is difficult to tell the difference between those who will marry and those who will remain single (Teachman, Polonko & Scanzoni, 1986). Limited ability to predict age at time of marriage may also be linked to marriage market characteristics (Teachman, Polonko & Scanzoni, 1986).

Pursuit of higher education has been found to be a significant factor in the trend to delay marriage (Dobson & Houseknecht, 1998; Goldscheider & Waite, 1986; Goldstein & Kenney, 2001; Schimidt, 2008; Spanier, Roos & Shockey, 1985; Thornton, Axinn & Teachman, 1995). Furthermore, acquiring a college degree has an increased effect on an individual's earnings potential as well as a link in the relationship between marital status and economic benefits

(Alexander & Reilly, 1981; Astone & Upchurch, 1994; Burchinal, 1965; Carlson, 1979; Cooney & Hogan, 1991; Kerckhoff & Parrow, 1979; Lowe & Witt, 1984; Teti, Lamb & Elster, 1987; Waite & Moore, 1978). Numerous studies have consistently found that people who do not attain secondary education are less prone to early marriage than people who do (Barber & Axinn, 1998; Goldscheider & Waite, 1986; Hogan, 1978; Thornton et al., 1995; Waite & Spitze, 1981). Goldscheider & Waite (1986) found that attaining education has positive effect on the probability of getting married on-time, but not on the probability of having a later marriage (ages 26-29). Waite & Spitze (1981) however, found the number of years of schooling completed notably raises the possibility of experiencing an on-time or late marriage. Normally, increased education attainment leads to a higher marriage prospect. In particular, those who have received a bachelor's degree are highly likely to marry compared with those who only have high school diploma (Clarkberg, 1999; Lloyd, 2006; Ono, 2003; Oppenheimer, 2003; Oppenheimer et al., 1997; Sweeney, 2002).

The value one gives to marriage and various other alternatives to marriage may affect age at time of marriage. One such course related to age at time of marriage for women is having a plan to build a career or be in the labor force at a certain time in future (by ages 30-35). Women with such a plan have a likelihood of delaying marriage than are women who have no plan of building a career in the future (Cherlin, 1981; Waite & Spitze, 1981). Dobson & Houseknecht (1998), found that there is a consistent idea that educational attainment may encourage men and women to delay marriage but with few exceptions, those with higher levels of education beyond an associate degree magnetize potential partners more and generally have a high likelihood of marrying than their less educated counterparts (Clarkberg, 1999; Lloyd, 2006; Ono, 2003; Oppenheimer, 2003; Oppenheimer et al., 1997; Sweeney, 2002). Employed men have more advantages as their employment lets them to support a partner who becomes his complimentary by helping him perform overwhelming household chores (Becker, 1974; Hogan, 1978). Schooling men or unemployed ones are less likely to marry early compared to those employed. Men employed in a full time basis will be more probable to marry early compared to those employed part-time, as part-time employment suggests improbability for supporting a family (Becker, 1974; Hogan, 1978).

High socioeconomic index jobs are likely to involve a lot of time demands and so may provide greater satisfaction than one can get from his/her partner (Mueller & Campbell, 1977). Besides, holding a high socioeconomic index job is an indication that the job is a career, thus limiting flexibility to demands on time and resources expected in a relationship. Mueller & Campbell (1977) further found that females with high socioeconomic index jobs are expected to be married early compared with females with lower socioeconomic jobs. Also, menfolk with high socioeconomic index jobs are expected to postpone marriage compared with men with socioeconomic index jobs. Oppenheimer (1982) study collaborate that most high socioeconomic index jobs are careers that are demanding. Early unions in a demanding career become costly than if the marriage were postponed. However, those with lesser status jobs where the career is not demanding, advance more rapidly towards their highest pay have no reason for postponing marriage.

Experiencing other life-course events may influence a person's position in the marital market thus affecting the costs, rewards and alternatives related with marriage (Waite & Spitze, 1981). The most common other life-course event is childbearing. Waite & Spitze (1981) found that a woman having a child living with her increases the probability of teen marriage and also for those in the ages of 22-23. Further, the study found no other age groups does the presence of a child notably impact the probability of marriage. Similarly, Kobrin & Waite (1984) and Bumpass & Lu (2000) found that the presence of one's own children increased the probability of marriage but only at the oldest ages indicating, non-marital childbearing appears to delay marriage. The delaying effect is more evident for black mothers than white mothers with only 40% of black mothers marrying within ten years of a non marital birth compared to 80% of white mothers (Bumpass & Lu, 2000). Also critical to the relationship between the presence of children and age at marriage is the availability of substitute partners in the geographical areas in which unwed mothers are likely to live (Harknett & McLanahan, 2004). The number of African American women notably outnumber those of men explaining a great deal of the discrepancy in marriage rates between African American mothers and white mother, whilst among Hispanic American men outnumber women leading to higher incidence of marriage than whites (Harknett & McLanahan, 2004).

Geographical location also has been established to be linked with rash marriage (Carter & Gick, 1976; Keeley, 1977). People from the rural areas marry earlier than those from the urban areas (Carter & Gick, 1976; Keeley, 1977). Keeley (1977) opined that this happens because of the greater number of choices to marriage in urban areas. Rubin (1970) and South & Crowder (2000) found significant differences in the effect of community disadvantage on ATM by ethnicity. Despite the fact that empirical evidence supports the hypotheses that living in a disadvantage community delays entry into marriage among blacks, findings suggest it hastens entry among white (South & Crwoder, 2000). The explanation for the rushed entry into marriage among whites rests in the idea that social norms to marry early develop out of a lack of opportunity to participate in the activities that normally delay marriage, like being in college. Besides, posited is the effect of intensive parental monitoring among white parents living in disadvantaged communities in that marriage becomes a way out of the strict parental home and a path “to an independent adult status” (Rubin, 1976; Hagan & Wheaton, 1993).

With respect to population density, research has found that size of place of residence is negatively related to marrying (Goldscheider & Waite, 1986; Lloyd, 2006; Sweeney, 2002) and marrying early (Bayer, 1978; Clarkberg, 1999; Forthofer et al., 1996; Hammond et al., 1993; Lowe & Witt, 1984; Michael & Tuma, 1985; Schmidt, 2008). In particular, it appears that urbinities are more likely to marry later or not at all compared to residents of rural areas or small towns (Snyder, Brown & Condo, 2004).

Sex ration can also influence age at time of marriage. A sex ration revealing a deficit in the number of potential husbands results in women also delaying their marriage and a reduced probability of ever marrying (Lichter, LeClere & McLaughlin, 1991; Lichter et al., 1992; South & Lloyd, 1992). Contrary, men are likely to get married when faced with a deficit in the number of prospective partners, compared to women (Guttentag & Secord, 1983) and to marry at younger ages (Fossett & Kiecolt, 1990, 1993; Guttentag & Secord, 1983) than men who live in an area with a sex ration that is either more balanced or a sex ratio with more available women.

There is evidence whilst not conclusive, suggesting that family composition plays a crucial part in marital timing. Several researches imply single parenting to have little influence on rushed

marriage (Aquilino, 1990; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1998; Lloyd & South, 1996; Micheal & Tuma, 1985). However, other studies have found children with a single parent are less likely to marry young (Glick et al., 2006; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993). Additionally, children brought up by step parents appear more likely to marry hastily (Glick et al., 2006; Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Micheal & Tuma, 1985). These individuals are less likely to be given economic maintenance by their parents, to enable them to perceive positive options apart from marriage, or an unwanted marriage market (McLaughlin et al., 200). Socioeconomic status of the parents has been found to be directly linked with delaying marriage for women in their teenage (Waite & Spitze, 1981). Parents may use their resources to prevent their offspring from early marriage. Whilst, socioeconomic possessions are key ways family of origin can manipulate age at time of marriage, there are other ways. The different findings can be attributed to the declining family composition influence over time (Wolfinger, 2003). Also, parents' age at time of marriage is another important factor that predicts age at time of marriage among young individuals. Research shows offspring of parents who married young are prone to early marriage and to cohabit while still young (Thornton, 1991).

Age at time of marriage also is influenced by religious traditions. For example, Catholics, Pentecostals and those unaffiliated to any religion, are prone to delay marriage. Earlier research suggests that religion hastens marital union (Thornton, Axinn & Hill, 1992). However, findings from National Survey of Family Growth (1995) demonstrate that the frequency of attending the church does not influence age at time of marriage (Lehrer, 2004).

2.5 Age at Time of Marriage and Marital Satisfaction

Decision to marry indicates that present and future advantages of being married are believed to be higher than disadvantages. Married people are often found to be better off in many aspects of their marriage than all categories of unmarried people, including particularly the never married (Loh, 1996; Stratton, 2000; Waite, 1995; Waite & Gallagher, 2000) and the divorced (Bianchi, Subaiya & Kahn, 1999; Burkhauser, Duncan, Hauser & Berntsen, 1991; Duncan & Hoffman, 1985; Loh, 1996; Smock, Manning & Gupta, 1999). Generally, married people have more earnings, have acquired higher levels of education, and accumulate greater assets and wealth throughout the life-

course (CDC, 2002; Ginther & Zavodny, 2001; Korenman & Neumark, 1991; Lupton & Smith, 2003; Schmidt & Sevak, 2006; Schoeni, 1995; Waite & Gallagher, 2000; Yamokoski & Keister, 2006). However, previous studies indicates those who have experienced an early age at marriage jeopardize attaining high education, high average income, having high-status jobs, and a low likelihood of marital satisfaction (Alexander & Reilly, 1981; Amato & Roger, 1997; Amato & Hohmann-Marriot, 2007; Astone & Upchurch, 1994; Booth & Edwards, 1985; Lee, 1977; Schoen, 1975; Teti, Lamb & Elster, 1987). This study investigated whether ATM affects the MS in Murang'a County.

Early marriage is common in most African and Asian traditional societies, and was also the dominant pattern prior to 1950 in many countries of these two continents (Gerrene, 2002). However, later marriage (above 25 years) appears to have become an accepted characteristic of western civilization and Japan by the end of 20th century, including some uncommon South of Africa countries like South Africa, Namibia, and Botswana (Gerrene, 2002). Other developing countries and midway civilizations seem to have a dominant pattern of 20-24 age range, with large variations at the individual level (UN yearbook; Singh & Samara, 1996; Westoff, Blanc & Nyblade, 1994; Althaus, 1991). Polygyny being prevalent throughout African traditional societies is thought to reduce female age at time of marriage, mostly by opening more chances for marriage to women and therefore, standards of entry into marriage may also be different in rural and urban areas (Gerrene, 2002). Christianity and Islam are both other demographic factors that both highly rate marriage and women's chastity before marriage, and can therefore affect age at time of marriage (Gerrene, 2002).

Numerous studies show that ATM affect the quality of marriage itself (Lee, 1977). Almost all studies agree that there is a contrary relationship between ATM and the likelihood of separation, implying that the early in age one gets into marriage, chances become higher for divorce (Lee, 1977). Those who marry young highly jeopardize the stability of their relationship compared to those who delay entry into marriage. Age is one of the key factors which are harmful to marital satisfaction, that is, whether an individual divorces or stays married include many other factors which are linked to ATM, like low education attainment, premarital birth, less social contact

interaction period, delayed behavior adjustment, as well as poor socioeconomic conditions (Burchinal, 1965).

Bumpass & Sweet (1972) conducted a study to establish whether the relationship between ATM and uncertainty in marriage could be attributed to the individual's education, premarital birth, being affiliated to a certain religion, family composition of the couple. Multivariate analysis was done from a big sample of white females under 45 years who were all married. The study revealed that uncertainty in marriage was not as a result of aforementioned dynamics but as a result of ATM being the strongest sole predictor of marriage stability.

Lee (1977) also did a research to examine the relationship between marital satisfaction, ATM, and role performance in the marriage. The study utilized data collected from 394 married couples from a non random sample which included evaluating partners' role performance so as to get a more accurate response. The participants were aged 35 years, had been in the marriage for 6 years and below and were all in their first marriage. Using multivariate analysis the study found a positive correlation between ATM and MS having controlled antecedent variables like marriage length, education, socioeconomic conditions and religious affiliation. The study implication is that when age at time of marriage increased, happiness in marriage increased as well.

Booth & Edwards (1985) extended Bumpass & Sweet (1972) and Lee (1977) study by testing the hypotheses that rushed marriage was related to instability in marriage and poor role performance. The study applied random digit dialing method to find 1,715 respondents all in their first marriage who were qualified participants. Marital Instability Index was used to control for the confounding variable of external pressure in favor of the marriage. Multiple items were also used to test role performance, alternative to the current marriage, and external pressure favoring the marriage. The study revealed that instability in marriage is highest for those who married young at age 20. Individuals marrying in their 20s scored lowest on marital instability. Those who delayed entry into marriage later than their 20s had similar scores with those who married earlier. This implies that stability in marriage could have a curve linear link with age. The study too revealed age at time of marriage to be positively correlated with marital happiness owing to poor preparation. The study implication is that this state likely arose from poor role modeling from significant others or

limited duration of exposure to the role models due to early termination of social learning because of early marriage. Further, the implication of the study finding is that those who marry young are more probable to be insufficient in their role performance in the marriage, consequently leading to dissatisfaction in marriage.

Bradbury, Fincham & Beach (2000) conducted a similar study to establish the relationship of MS and age. The finding of the study revealed the benefits to both individual and society in that when spouses formed solid marital unions, such unions normally limited one to be involved in criminal and negative activities. The implication of the study finding is that the continued decline in divorce rates could be linked to a radical increase in the average ATM. Also, overall marital happiness fell notably in the late 20th Century, and has been maintained by almost all married partners during the first 10 years of their marriage. Besides, positive and negative marital factors leading to either increased marital happiness or dissatisfaction, may not be mutually exclusive, meaning that MS is a state based on conditions that change both with age of each spouse and that of marriage.

Jose & Alfons (2007) wanted to find out the effects of age, number of children, employment status, and marriage duration on MS. The study revealed that delaying those who delayed marriage were more likely to stay married, while those who entered into marriage early and divorced were exposed to remarrying. The study also found that age notably negatively affected sexual and marital behavior changes of first-time married couples. The implication of this study finding is that, the older an individual was at the time of marriage, the less behavior change the person towards the marriage hence the less happy one would be. Middle-aged individuals showed greater difficulties with behavior change compared to both old and young participants in the study.

2.6 Age at Time of Marriage and Subjective Evaluation

Positive or negative subjective evaluation is a topic in various social factors, cultural settings, close kin members, intimidation by others' evaluations and main goals obtained from the social sphere (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Baldwin, 1992; Bosson & Swann, 1999; James, 1890; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008; Shah, 2003). Having positive self-evaluations as a condition for one to have a good and satisfying close interrelationships is an idea that has been discussed for centuries (Fromm, 1939; Jung, 1925; Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1951). This idea comprises of Buddha's powerful

philosophy, besides it is echoed in the opening quote of writers like Kant, Calvin and Nietzsche all who tried to explain on the link between self-love and love for others. The idea is also clear in several typical theories of psychology. The idea still is a principle of various psychoanalytic and humanistic views, for example, lack of unconditional self-acceptance is the origin of many psychological and interrelationship difficulties (Fromm, 1939; Jung, 1925; Maslow, 1970; Rogers, 1951).

Evidence of positive self-evaluations being directly associated later with positive relationship evaluations is weak. However, several studies retain the particular processes described in these models (Aron & Aron, 1996; Murray, Holmes & Griffin, 2000; Murray, Rose, Bellavia, Holmes, Kusche, 2000). Several studies have found a positive cross-sectional link between self-esteem and marital happiness (Murray, Holmes, & Griffin, 1996; Murray et al., 2000; Schackelford, 2001), although the underlying trend of the population sample's self-esteem is not clear (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003). In addition, one study of dating couples, self-esteem was found to be negatively linked with union dissolution (Hendrick, Hendrick & Adler, 1988) while in another study it was found to have a positive relationship with changes in relationship happiness (Murray et al., 2000). Other studies raise the subject about the effect of long-term interrelationships on self-esteem. Fincham & Bradbury (1993) found that, positive relationship between subjective self-esteem and consequently marital satisfaction was decreased to insignificance once depression was controlled. Also, a meta-analysis of a number of longitudinal studies of marriage found a reasonable small relationship between self-esteem and changes in happiness in marriage.

Self-evaluation plays a key role in numerous modern theories of intimate relationships (Aron & Aron, 1996; Murray, Holmes & Collins, 2006). According to Murray et al., (2006) risk- regulation model, individuals project their self-evaluations onto their significant others, which shape important downstream close relationship processes. Individuals with more positive self-evaluations believe that their significant other also evaluate them positively and thus feel safe and eventually behave usefully in their interactions. On the other hand, individuals with little positive self-evaluations are suspicious of their spouse's view and end up feeling less safe and behave negatively in their interactions (Murray et al., 2006).

2.7 Age at Time of Marriage and Emotion Regulation (ER)

Marriage is normally the most cherished mature bond, and, consequently, it is important for emotion and emotion regulation (Shaver, 1984; Levenson et al., in press). Emotion regulation is one determinant of a good marriage, which is vital in socialization (Eisenberg, Hofer, & Vaughan, 2007; English, John & Gross, 2013; Levenson, Haase, Bloch, Holley & Seider, in press; Thompson, 1991) and is also constantly associated with happiness in intimate interactions (Gross, 2002; Gross & John, 2003; Gross & John, 2004; Lopes et al., 2005).

Few researches have been conducted to investigate emotion regulation in view of close relationships such as marital union (Levenson et al., in press). Researches investigating the link between interpersonal ER process and MS are also scarce although obtainable research implies that the relationship is strong (Gottman & Levenson, 1992). For example, in marital interaction laboratory studies, decreased negative emotion during disagreement between partners was established to predict stability in marriage (Gottman, Coan, Carrere & Swanson, 1998). Another study found that partners with high level of positive to negative attitude when in disagreement indicated higher marital happiness (Gottman & Levenson, 1992). Likewise, preferring to stay in a destructive emotional state (apathy) has been associated with dissatisfaction in marriage (Greene & Anderson, 1999). Being emotionally negative to one's partner has consistently appeared to be one of the most reliable relationships of marital distress in almost all laboratories studies (Gottman, 1994).

When spouses face difficult negative emotional experiences such as anger occurring from conflicts, dissatisfaction and perceived infidelity they normally fall into a primal, adjustment so as to interact. During such exchanges, partners consistently try to rationalize their own behavior while criticizing the other partner in insensitive, scornful ways, extensively portraying a negative quality of the partner and engaging in unhelpful phases of demand-withdraw behaviors (Gottman, 1994; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990; Christensen, 1988). In fact, emotion regulation lets partners break off from these negative phases. Hence co-regulation can help each partner's emotion regulation to lessen their own emotional provocation and that of their spouse (Coan, 2008; Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003; Kappas, 2011; Levenson et al., in press). If trying to regulate emotion succeeds, partners are in a position to have low emotional provocation that can encourage

successful behavior exchanges, mend their differences and likely finally resolve their disagreements (Isen, 1999; Wile, 2002). Besides, these constant emotion regulation processes in a relationship, few researches have investigated emotion regulation among intimate partners in a natural setting.

Several laboratories study findings show emotion regulation to be related with progression in age and emotional mastery (Lawton, Kleban, Rajagopal & Dean, 1992; Labouvie-vief & DeVoe, 1991; Labouvie-Vief, Hakim-Larson, DeVoe, & Schoeberlein, 1989). There is evidence from self-reports that the level of emotion in old people is comparable with young people and some studies results imply that emotion happen to be very important age wise (Levenson, Carstensen, Friesen & Ekman, 1991; Malatesta & Kalnok, 1984; Carstensen, 1992; Carstensen & Turk-Charles, 1994; Fredrickson & Cartstensen, 1990; Hashtroudi, Johnson & Chrosniak, 1990). This finding, collaborate with other results that elderly individuals have moderate to low rates occurrences of psychological difficulties (George, Blazer, Winfield-Laird, Leaf & Fischback, 1988). The finding also implies that emotion may signify an element of life where relationship is well maintained and/or also get better with age.

Marital studies so far conducted reveal numerous effects on each specific gender (Baucom, Notorius, Burnett & Haefner, 1990). With the aspect of ER, women are frequently seen and act as the “capable regulators” in marital unions as well as more dependable in being able to adjust successfully the marriage stability (Ball, Cowan & Cowan, 1995; Gottman & Levenson, 1988; 1992; Nolen-Hoeksema & Jackson, 2001; Ginsberg & Gottmann, 1986). From these result findings, women’s’ ER may be very significant for marital happiness. However, there is conflicting evidence that men’s ER is very significant for marital happiness. Husbands have been considered to be very susceptible to stress in marital union because of their limited patience from lengthy negative emotional status (Gottman & Levenson, 1988; Levenson, Carstensen & Gottman, 1994). Further, men’s pessimism appear to affect women more than women’s pessimism affects men (Ferrer & Nesselroade, 2003; Gilbert, Fiske & Lindzey, 1998; Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1988). Husband’s negativity during marital interaction towards the wife is normally reacted to by the wife and this indicates decreased marriage happiness for the wife (Notarius & Johnson, 1982; Huston & Vangelisti, 1991; Huston & Chorost, 1994).

During disagreement, mutual and helpful ways of interacting are more probable to appear in the low emotional arousal situation, or when spouses break off from undesirable emotional phases and emotional balance is re-established (Wile, 2002; Isen, 1999). This beneficial interaction refers to using exchange behaviors that entail compromising shared dialogue and states (Heavey et al., 1996). This constructive communication is also associated with marriage happiness (Noller & Feeney, 2002; Weiss & Heyman, 1997).

Ability to regulate emotion has also been associated with numerous other signs of positive social interaction as well as adjusting attachment style, friendly peers and being compassionate (Gross, 2002; Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004), social support, intimacy and social fulfillment (Salvatore, Kuo, Steele, Simpson & Collins, 2011; Srivastava, Tamir, McGonigal, John & Gross, 2009) sympathy, prosocial leaning and kindness (Lopes, Salovey, Coke & Beers. 2005), dependability and empathy (Butler, Egloff, Wilhelm, Smith, Erickson & Gross, 2003)

2.8 Age at Time of Marriage and Patterns of Interaction

Interactions in a relationship for most people, involves the utmost emotional levels and the lowest emotional levels happening in adult years (Gottman, 1993). Partners share much cherished moments, manifesting as joy, hope, pride, feelings of success, and empathy over the years. However, the relationship between two individuals also sets the beginning to feel profound resentment, feel sad, jealousy, and angry. Indeed, partners disagree along quantitative and qualitative factors to the extent in which negative and positive emotions happen in their relationships and the approach they apply to cope with interaction disagreements (Gottman, 1993). Most partners develop distinctive style of dealing with the quarrels, from unspoken agreement to avoid talking about the disagreements to the constant and open display of aggression (Gottman, 1993). An approach of resolving the disagreements must evolve that lets the couple to resolve their disagreements reasonably since spouses' emotional happiness is evidently linked to each other, in order to maintain marital happiness (Markman, 1992). Indeed, partners' who have successful solutions to their disagreements predicts better relationship outcomes compared to the occurrence of shared positive emotional frequency (Markman, 1992). Approaches that enhance

spouses' successful solutions to their disagreement have been found to strengthen difficult marital unions (Jacobson & Addis, 1993).

Ability to handle concurrently one's own emotional distress and that expressed by a spouse relies on one's ability to handle emotional conflict in relationship (Markman, 1991). Quarrels that invoke high feelings among the spouses become hard to work out when partners apply different approaches to cope. For instance, a particularly incongruent pattern happens when one spouse attempts to work on a conflict while the other spouse's response is withdrawal to the exhibited negative emotions by the other (Christensen & Heavey, 1990). Several studies on marital emotion state and experience indicate that how partners view their emotional relationships is related to marriage happiness or divorce (Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Levenson & Gottman, 1985; Storaasli & Markman, 1990).

Levenson & Gottman (1983) observed that attempts to resolve relationship disagreements between couples evidently distinguished satisfied and dissatisfied ones. The study observed that dissatisfied couples are often in negative emotion states, are more likely to react to the negative emotion state exchange from their partner and also become physically aggressive during conflict resolution compared with satisfied couples. In addition, dissatisfied couples are likely to exhibit a pattern whereby one spouse makes demands as the other one withdraws (Christensen & Heavey, 1990; Levenson & Gottman, 1983).

Gottman & Levenson (1992) did a comparative study and observed that approaches applied in resolving disagreements are associated with gender. Men typically will try withdrawal or conciliation to avoid talking about the disagreement compared to women who will push the partner into talking about the disagreement. The study finding attributed the male withdrawal tendencies and physical aggressive behaviors accompanied by negative affects, was referred to as 'stonewalling'.

Christensen & Heavey (1990) extended on the study. In the laboratory two conflicting issues were argued, one in which the wife asked for change and the other where the husband wanted change. The study observed a more general unchanged "demand/withdraw" dynamic of relationship

patterns of interaction. The study implications is that, gender notwithstanding, demands will be made by the one desiring change and withdrawals will be made by the one who is requested to change. Thus, the interaction pattern becomes a gender issue since the social setting dynamics that makes wives to become passive to their husbands lead wives to want change more than their husbands. The women exhibited withdrawal behavior when asked by their partners for change and vice versa. However, the men maintained their withdraw tendencies and women their demanding tendencies.

Heavey, Layne, & Christensen (1993) interestingly, found that when a man make demands and his partner withdraw, marriage happiness increases over time. The study finding implied that women interpret their partner's demands as confirmation of the value the partner gives the relationship and how prepared he is to escape the rigid gender roles in order to improve the marriage (Heavey et al., 1993). The study also found that it is likely that reversed gender roles provide couples a way to sooth each other. That is, when women withdraw from talking about the disagreement, men are released from unpleasant feelings from the strongly charged emotional exchanges. When men push to talk about the disagreement, their partner sees it as an interest in the relationship. Levenson & Gottman (1985) found comparable pattern that could foretell the state of marriage in future. The most progress in marriage satisfaction observed over a period of 3 years was found when the men's negative emotion exchanges were not reacted to by their partner, and when women's negative emotion exchanges were reacted to by their partners.

Based on the foregoing most of this studies have been done in the western countries. In addition the focus of the study has been on the link between age and aspects of marital satisfaction. There is hardly any that examines age at marriage and subjective evaluation, emotion regulation and patterns of interaction. This study examined these relationships.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by social exchange theory

2.9.1 Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange model borrows its view from behavioral psychology, sociology, and classical economic. Social exchange theory tries to detail the progress, preservation (for example, unity, control), and fragmentation of relationship interactions in terms of the stability between the benefits that couples gain and the costs that they incur by their choice into intimate relationships. Costs are factors that discourage a presentation of a progression of behaviours within a marriage, whereas rewards/benefits are the enjoyments, fulfillment, and indulgence that a person benefits within an intimate relationship (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). Individuals try to make the best use of their rewards in their exchanges with others while lessening their costs. Furthermore, there is a rule of reciprocity which posits that individuals should reciprocate what is acknowledged from others (Nye, 1979). Any deliberate behavior that is prompted by a likely response from another is social exchange (Heath, 1976). Blau (1964), emphasized that social exchange can be experienced everywhere but that influence and dread also influence behavior. The totality of an individual determines how one will be valued in a social exchange. Those who have much influence will likely get more than they give in a social exchange. Those with less influence must be contented with less.

Nye (1979) termed the theory as “choice and exchange theory” so as to clarify that while exchanges are not always made, choices are. A person can decide not to make a response, but this choice is still a social exchange behavior (that is, the exchange was not considered useful). In this way, Nye suggested exchange always involves choice, but not all choices involve direct exchange. Emerson (1987) also suggested that an individual may not consciously make rational calculations to maximize profit. Actually, an individual cannot possibly know all the likely moves and outcomes of a social exchange (Emerson, 1987).

The central view of exchange model as proposed by (Nye, 1979, Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959) posits that individuals’ decide to get involved in a specific exchange because of the bond’s ability to provide a reasonable level of outcomes. Benefits are defined as the rewards resulting from the relationship minus the costs of engaging in the union and these rewards are better than those offered in other contending relationships (Nye, 1979, Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). The standard of rewards perceived to be available from a relationship is based mainly from

how a person interprets his/her partner's attribute (that is, physical attractiveness, sense of humor etc.). Others base their standards of rewards on the perception of the quality of the exchanges between them (for example, the levels of love and equity experienced, etc). These attributional and/or relational rewards are evaluated with reference to a person's choice to respond (expectations) or standard for judging their relationship (Comparison Level) (Nye, 1979, Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). This standard for judging the relationship (CL) is based on "normative" cultural behavior patterns and "cognitive" (psychological processes) approaches (McDonald, 1981) and signifies the expectations for rewards that an individual feels are realistically obtainable from a relationship (Nye, 1979, Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). This study adopts a similar stance to assess how expectations and CL's are relative to age at marriage.

The importance of the CL proposal is its role in the valuation of relationship satisfaction and thus, in deciding the level of happiness resulting from a relationship (Nye, 1979, Sabatelli, 1984; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). For example, Nye (1979) and Sabatelli (1984), suggested that the satisfaction resulting from a marriage is derived from the rewards minus the costs in the relationship compared with what a person feel is realistically obtainable within a relationship. Particularly, when rewards are consistently above expectations, individuals are apt to be satisfied with exchanges. Equally, when outcomes are consistently below expectations, individuals are apt to be dissatisfied with the exchanges (Sabatelli, 1984). Some rewards from a relationship will be more outstanding than others, that is, not all aspects of relationships are equal in importance to all couples (Nye, 1979). Consequently, an individual may complain about some aspect of their relationship (for example, how sexual relations occur) only when the frequency of intercourse consistently falls below some subjective standard held by these individuals and when they regard this aspect of the relationship to be important (Sabatelli, 1984). It is when individuals feel that their relationship fails to meet their expectations in enough of those aspects that they consider it important to acknowledge that the global assessments of the relationship will be low (Sabatelli, 1988).

SET is applicable in the field of marital relationships, and in this study. SET shows how individuals, base the value of their unions by comparing the level of satisfaction that they have for

what is reasonably available from the relationship. The expectation levels vary significantly from person to person. This is because people of different ages process information about their reality differently (Piaget, 1952). It is the variations in CL's that may help to clarify why some people are satisfied with what others are dissatisfied with what appears to others like a good relationship. Therefore, satisfaction needs to be viewed as an outcome of an interaction between a person's expectations and his/her partner's behavior (Sabatelli, 1988).

The intensity of outcomes acknowledged is compared with the CL in relation to the individuals' choice to stay in the marital bond. Social exchange theory's view, assumes that each partner's choice to stay in the relationship is different from the perceived rewards of the marital relationship and contrary with the perceived costs (Thibaut, 1959). Consequently, couples value the choice of their union using subjective evaluation from how they interpret and compare the rewards and costs experienced in the relationship and then combined to decide the outcomes acknowledged by sharing in the marriage (Thibaut, 1959). Therefore, the individual's choice to stay in the marriage depends on the outcomes compared to the spouse's CL. There is a possibility of the marriage to symbolize a greater degree of harmony if the couple's outcomes are more than their CL. Consequently, the higher the choice to stay in the marriage, the stronger the marriage is (Adams, 1968). A critical suggestion is that the process of divorce is methodical and is opposed to the progression of the marriage (Altman & Taylor, 1973). This means difficulties to end the marriage, which serve to lessen the effect on instability in marriage and which serve to preserve the marriage, decay. Consequently, the marital relationship has less mutual dependence, less mutual involvement, less mutual identification, less liking, less shared level of compatibility, less solidarity, progressive withdrawal of love and affection, and the centering of affect on the self and increased ego-centrism (Sabatelli, 1988).

2.10 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework below shows the relationship of various variables in the study.

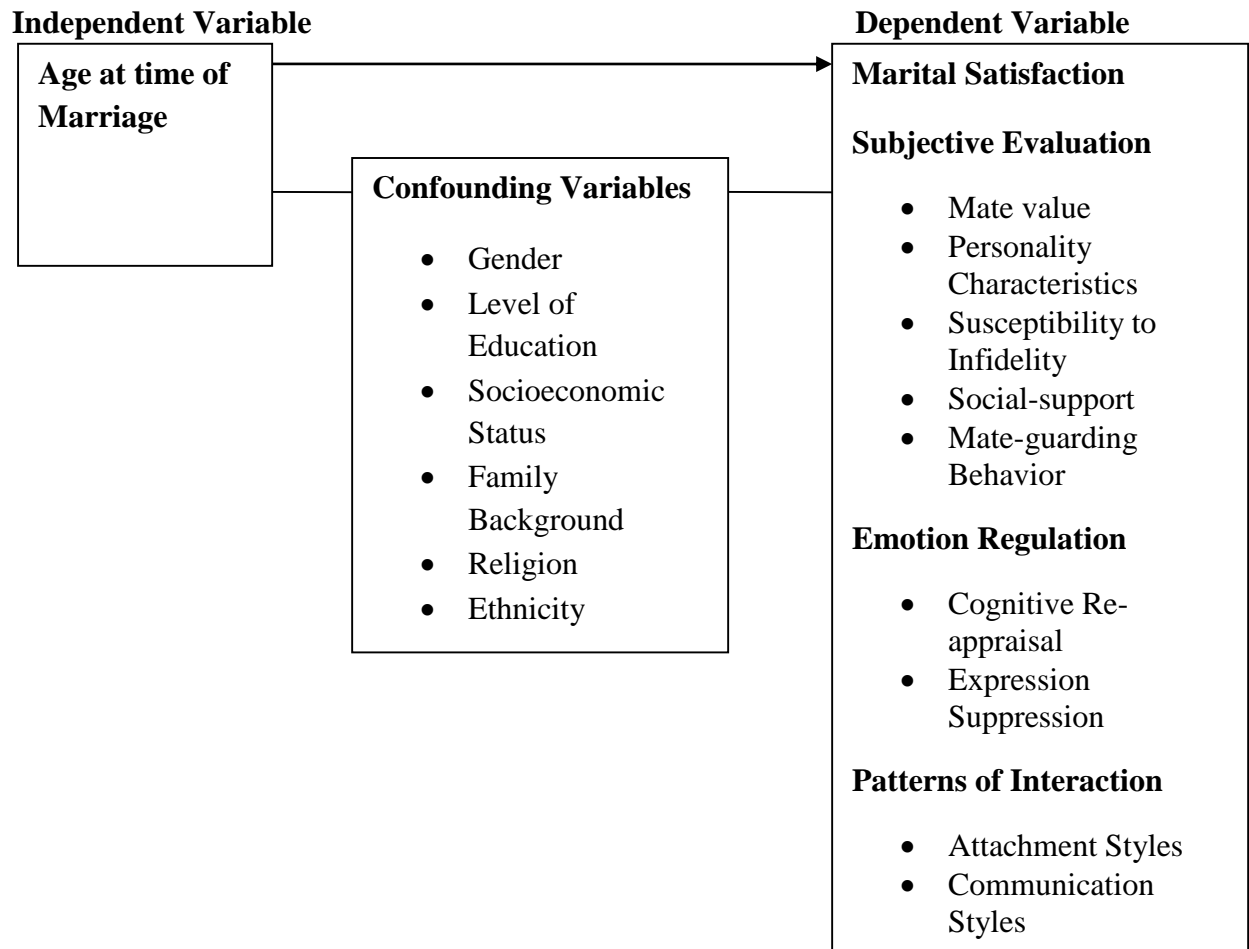


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter dealt with the procedures that were followed in carrying out this study. It detailed and systematized the various steps that were followed in the entire research. It includes the research design, study area, target population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, validity and reliability, methods of data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

The study was a cross-sectional survey that applied correlation design. The design is the most appropriate in a study where variables are not manipulated but, are only identified and studied as they occur in a natural setting. Further, this design is appropriate since it recognizes data relationships and distribution of variables. However, it does not go as far in its analysis to prove causes for the observed patterns.

3.3 Study Setting

Murang' County in Kenya was purposefully selected due to various reasons. Murang'a County is considered by many to be the cradle of the Gikuyu people and as such, people from the Murang'a area are considered to be of a purer breed. It is bordered to the north by Nyeri County, to the west by Nyandarua County. Kiambu County borders it to the south, Machakos County to the south east, Embu County to the east and the County of Kirinyaga to the north east. Murang'a County has a total population of 942,581 (2009, Census). The larger majorities were born in the County and are from the Kikuyu ancestral community, and speaks the Gikuyu language as well as the national languages of Kiswahili and English. It is a place where the Gikuyu people retain much of the original Gikuyu heritage, especially marriage process which was considered a permanent union between a man and one or several women. However, the imposition of foreign rule on the Gikuyu drastically altered their social and political structure and disrupted their traditional ways of life. Consequently, this facilitated them to adjust to new realities resulting in the Gikuyu, including the people who live in the rural areas, accepting many aspects of modern way of life.

The County was identified because of NACADA (2010) report and the frequent media reports on spousal abuse, homicide and also suicide.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of the study constituted married individuals (male and female) living and/or co-residing in Murang'a County. The married individuals in this study were defined as male and female with a marriage institution without any age limit. According to the information that was accessed from the 2009 census, there were 237,493 householders in Murang'a County at the time of study. The study considered that these households have a couple each. This translates into 237,493 couples. The distribution of the householders in the whole County as per constituencies is as indicated in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Distribution of Householders/Couples in Murang'a County

Constituency	Total Householders/Couples
Gatanga	25,212
Kandara	41,234
Kangema	21,814
Kigumo	33,150
Kiharu	51,132
Maragwa	40,194
Mathioya	24,755
Total	237,493

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The sample was determined by use of the formula indicated by Yamane (1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{237,493}{1 + 237,493^2}$$

$$n = 399$$

Where

n = the Sample Size

N = the Size of the Population

e = the error of 5 percentage points

By using Yamane's formula of sample size with an error 5% and with a confidence coefficient of 95%, the calculation from total householders as from the Kenya census (2009) came up with 399 couples/householders for the seven sub-Counties of the larger Murang'a County.

3.6 Sampling Method

Stratified sampling and random sampling were used to recruit the married individuals from the selected households. A total population of 237,493 households was counted during the 2009 census and using this householders' population a minimum sample size of 399 was calculated. This sample size was determined using the formula suggested by Yamane (1967). Questionnaires were equally distributed in the seven sub-Counties, so that the number of individuals selected from each sub-County was proportionate to the distribution of households in the targeted population in the County. The sample distribution is illustrated in Table 3.2 show

Table 3.2 Sample Distribution

Constituency	Total Households/Couples	Number of Questionnaires Distributed
Gatanga	25,212	70
Kandara	41,234	45
Kangema	21,814	80
Kigumo	33,150	55
Kiharu	51,132	35
Maragwa	40,194	45
Mathioya	24,755	70
Total	237,493	400

3.7 Research Instruments

A self-administered semi-structured questionnaire and a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guide were used to collect data in the study. The questionnaire consisted of three sections; the first section (Section A, Appendix 1) had semi-structured questions on demographic details of the participants and personal marital details, and the second section (section B, Appendix 1) contains the Marital Satisfaction Index (MSI). The MSI is divided into three parts; section C (item S1-S8) measured subjective evaluation of the relationship, section D (item E1-E18) measured emotion regulation, and section E measured patterns of interaction. The FGD guide (Appendix II) had 5 questions that guided discussion on the age to at marriage, how partners check the qualities of their mates and whether it is a continuous process, whether the relationship is satisfying, how couples solve their issues, and their views on the satisfactions levels among married couples in Murang'a County. Both questionnaire and FGD guide were in English. The study instruments were developed by the researcher with the questionnaire being adopted from Funk & Rogge (2007). A voice recorder was used to record proceedings of the focus group discussions.

3.8 Piloting of the Study

Piloting of the questionnaire was done on 20 married individuals from a different County. This helped the researcher to review and modify questions that were not clearly understood by the participants on the MSI questionnaire.

3.9 Data Collection

A research permit was obtained by the researcher from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), County Commissioner of Murang'a County, and County Director of Education in Murang'a County. The researcher hired four research assistants to help in administering the questionnaires to the selected enumeration areas, after obtaining permission from the area chiefs. Sampled households from the sub-Counties were visited and the individuals found in the sampled households were explained the reason for the visit and the importance of their giving the data. After consenting to participate, they were offered a self-administered questionnaire to fill in as they understood it. The research assistants would assist those who requested to be helped to fill the questionnaire but mostly the participants were encouraged to fill

it themselves. Data collection was done from 21st July to 25th August, 2016. Individuals in all the selected households completed the questionnaire.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20.0. The instruments were scored on a six point Likert scale, and the responses were assigned rating scores between 0 and 5, which were used to determine the measure of the attributes. Data cleaning was done to detect missed and misplaced data. This was done by checking all questionnaires, for completeness and errors soon after data collection. Data validation and double entry was done to check and correct problems such as missed data, double entered data values or data entered in the wrong field. Content analysis was used to document qualitative data from the FGD.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics are norms or standards that distinguish how an individual can differentiate right from wrong. They help to decide on the difference between suitable and offensive behaviors. The research assistants were taught about these ethics before going to administer the questionnaires. Climate of confidence to the respondents was first restored or cultivated by explaining the goal of the study and how the data collected was going to be used. Respondents were only allowed to participate voluntarily after giving their informed consent. No names were used on the study tools instead serial numbers were used to ensure anonymity. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity in the use of the study results and all information collected was accorded highest confidentiality and used for study purposes only. The questionnaires, notes and recordings of the FGDs were kept in a safe place and only the researcher and statistician had access to them.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. It begins with an introduction and a description of the characteristics of the respondents. The chapter then presents the examined results of the relationship between age at the time of marriage and the three aspects of marital satisfaction; that is, subjective evaluation, emotion regulation and patterns of interaction in a marital union. The last section of this chapter presents the examined results of the correlation among the three aspects of marital satisfaction with age at time of marriage.

4.2 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The study examined the respondents' characteristics as presented below. Describing the characteristics of a sample leads to a better understanding of the respondents and provides evidence that it has attributes of the population (Kothari, 2004). Further, it is important to assess the characteristics of the respondents as they can be used by a researcher to perform additional analysis around each of the study variables (Schoenbach, 2014).

4.2.1 Gender

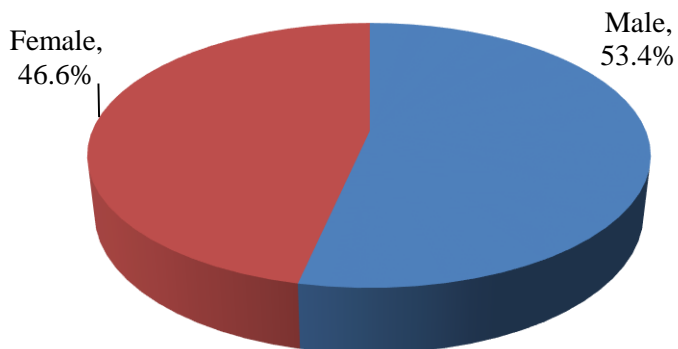


Figure 4.1 Distribution of the Sample by Gender (n = 397)

Figure 1 shows that majority of those who took part in the study were males compared to females (53.2%; 46.6%).

4.2.2 Current Age of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their age at the time of the study. The participants' age ranged between ages 18 to 80. Their mean age was 36.59 (SD = 9.88) years. A summary of the age ranges of the respondents is provided in Figure 4.2.

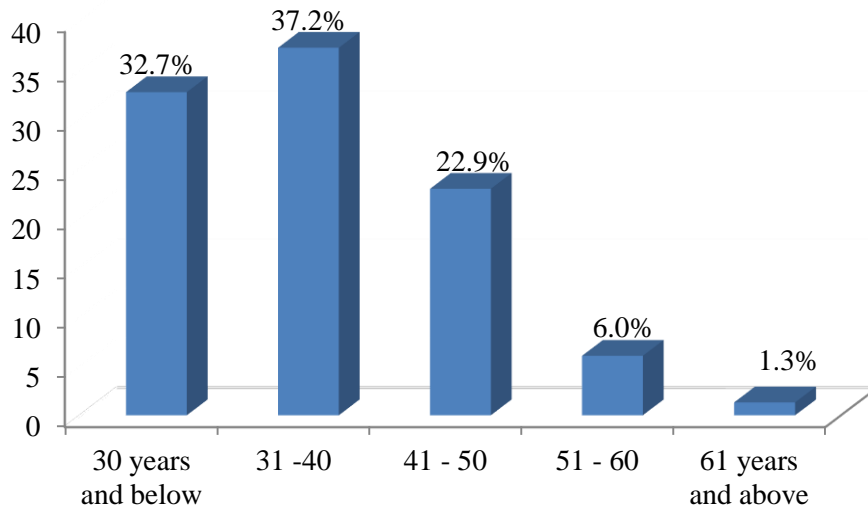


Figure 4.2 Age of Respondents (n = 398)

Figure 2 show that majority of the respondents were aged 31 – 40 (37.2%), followed by a higher number aged 30 and below (32.7%), and relatively high number aged 41 – 50 (22.9%). Those aged 51 – 60 (6.0%) were few while those aged 61 and above (1.3%) were the least in the sample. The results indicate those who participated in the study were relatively young.

4.2.3 Level of Education Attained

The respondents also indicated their highest level of education attained. The education levels are summarized in Figure 4.3.

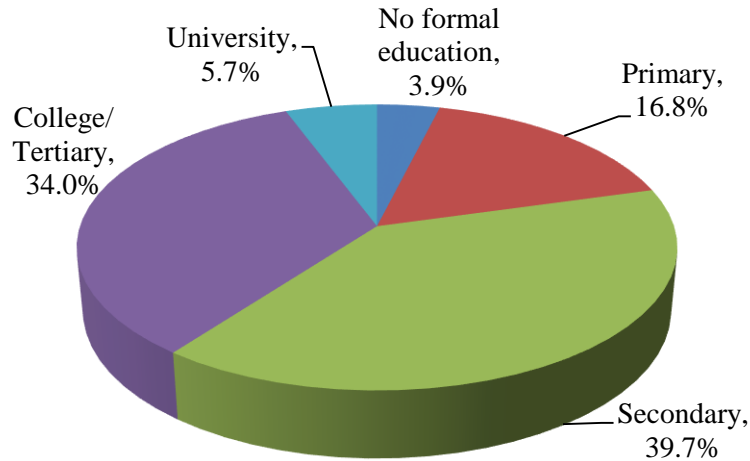


Figure 4.3 Level of Education Attained

The study findings reveal that majority of the respondents had attained higher education with the largest number being secondary education(39.7%), followed by a larger number attaining College/Tertiary education (34.0%) and large number also attaining university education (5.7%). At least more had attained primary education (16.8%) and just a few had no formal education (3.9%). This indicates that the County’s population has a high level of education attainment.

4.2.4 Respondents’ Religion

The respondents also indicated their religion. Religion as distributed among the respondents is illustrated in Figure 4.4

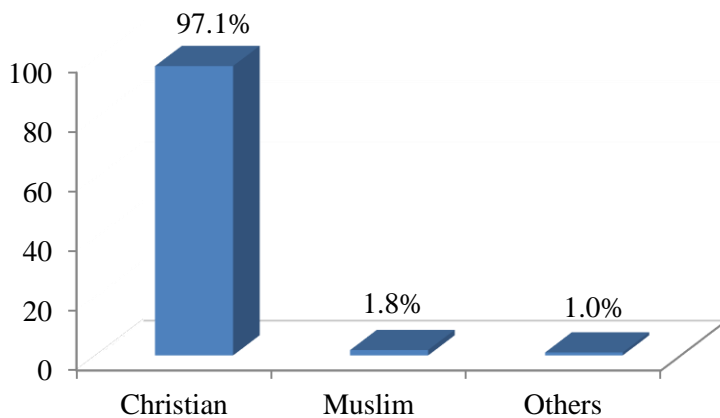


Figure 4.4 Respondents' Religion Distribution (n = 382)

The study finding shows that the respondents were affiliated with a certain belief system with the largest number leaning towards Christianity (97.1%), a few to Muslim faith (1.8%) and very few indicated they belonged to other faith (1%).

4.4.5 Employment Status of the Respondents

The socio-economic status of the respondents was assessed by asking them to indicate what they did for a living. The results are illustrated in Figure 4.5

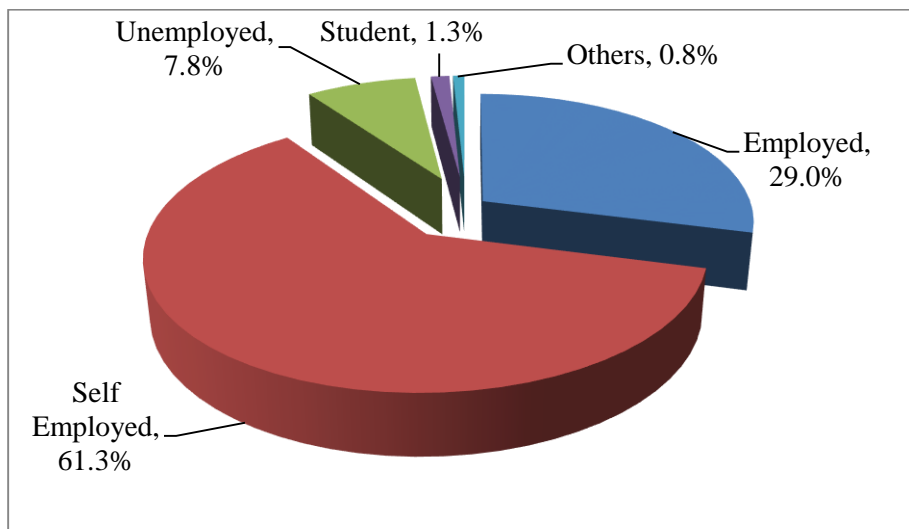


Figure 4.5 What do you do for a Living (n = 400)

The study found that more than half of the respondents were self-employed (61.3%), less than half of the respondents were in formal employment (29%), while only (0.8%) were engaged in other ways of sustaining their marriage, at least a number of the respondents were not in any engagement (7.8%) and just a few were students (1.3%).

4.2.6 Number of Years in Marriage

The duration in years the respondents had been in marriage was examined. The finding is as shown in Figure 4.6.

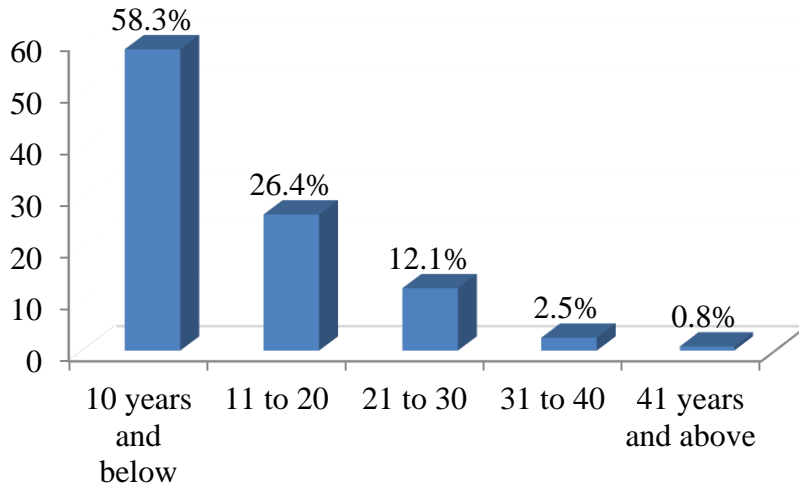


Figure 4.6 Distribution of Duration in Current Marriage (n = 398)

The study revealed that more than half of the respondents were in their marriage for 10 years and below (58.3%), while less than half of the respondents were in their current marriage between 11 and 20 years (26.4%). The longest duration of time in marriage the study found were those who had been married for between 41 years and above (0.8%), the number increased as the length in marriage decreased with those who were longer in their marriage being between 31 and 40 years (2.5%) and the number of those who were relatively long enough in the marriage between 21 and 30 years (12.1%) increased significantly.

4.2.7 Family Background

The composition of the respondents' family of origin was examined and the results are as indicated in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Family Background

Family Background (n = 388)	Frequency	Percentage
Single Parents	63	16.2
Both Parents	318	82.0
Divorced	4	1.0
Others	3	0.8

The study findings show that majority of the respondents were from families with both parents (82%). At least a number of the respondents were from single parent families (16.2%), less had a background of divorced parents (1.0%), and few indicated others (0.8%).

4.2.8 Number of Times Married

The study also examined the number of times the respondents had been married. This was considered because the researcher had specified that all married couples in Murang'a County were eligible for the study. The study findings are shown in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 Number of Times the Respondents had been Married

Number	Male n=208		Female n=28		Overall n=39	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Once	182	87.5	169	92.3	354	89.9
Twice	25	12.0	10	5.5	35	8.9
Thrice	1	0.5	2	1.1	2	0.5
Others	-	-	2	1.1	3	0.8

The study findings indicate that overall majority of the respondents both male and female (89.8%) were in their first marriage, at least a number of them indicated to be in their second marriage (8.9%), while (0.5%) indicated the current marriage to be their third and a few (0.8%) indicated others. More women (92.3%) than men (87.5%) indicated that the current marriage was their first attempt, while more men (12.0%) than women (5.5%) indicated the current marriage was their second attempt. Interestingly, more women (1.1%) than men (0.5%) revealed the current marriage was their third attempt and the slot for other showed more women (1.1%) than men (nil) responded.

4.2.9 Age at Time of Marriage

The study also investigated the age of the respondents at the time of their marriage and those who had been married more than once the age ATM was assessed. The results of the study finding are illustrated in Table 4.3

Table 4.3 Age at the Time of Marriage

Age	Married Once		Married more than Once		The two Groups Combined	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
18 years and below	9	2.6	5	13.5	14	3.6
19 – 24	155	44.4	19	51.4	174	45.1
25 – 30	165	47.3	11	29.7	176	45.6
31 years and above	20	5.7	2	5.4	22	5.7

The study result reveals that overall the highest number (45.6%) of the respondents got married between ages 25-30, and still higher number of the respondents (45.1%) got married between ages 19-24, while few of them (5.7%) got married at age 31 and above and fewer of the respondents (3.6%) got married at 18 and below. Further, the study found that the highest number of those who were married once (47.3%) got married at ages 25-30, the high number decreased at (44.4%) for those married once at ages 19-24. Interestingly, there was a high number of those married once (5.7%) at ages 31 and above and few were married once (2.6%) at ages 18 and below. Surprisingly, the study found that majority of those who had been married more than once were those who got into their first marriage at age 18 and below (13.5%) compared with their counterparts at ages 19-24 (51.4%) who also had the majority of those who were married more than once. The number of the respondents married more than once at ages 25-30 decreases (29.7%), and it is interesting to note that the number decreased significantly for ages 31 (5.4%) and above who were married more than once.

4.2.10 Difference in Age at time of Marriage by Gender

Independent sample t-test was conducted to determine the difference in the mean ATM for the male and that for the female respondents.

Table 4.4 Difference in Age at time of Marriage by Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Male	207	25.20	3.62	.381	3.398	.001
Female	176	23.85	4.19			

The t-test results show that the mean age ($M = 25.20$, $SD = 3.62$) of the males at the time of marriage was higher than that ($M = 23.85$, $SD = 4.19$) of the females. The findings also indicate that the difference between the two means was statistically significant, $t(.381) = 3.398$, $p < .05$.

Additional data on age at time of marriage was generated through the FGD and a summary is shown in the below excerpt. The actual names of those who participated in the discussion have been changed for purposes of confidentiality. This is the response given by the participants when asked by the researcher what was the best age for one to get married.

Paul “So long as one can make a home”

John “Biologically, the correct age for ladies is 22 to 30 years and 25 years for men. One can marry so long as he/she is ready to handle it emotionally. There are also other factors such as peer pressure, culture/traditions, and societal expectations”

Mary “The ideal age for ladies is above 18 years”

The discussion above implies that the FGD participants were of the view that there is no specific age to marry as it is influenced by factors such as emotions, peer pressure, culture/traditions and, societal expectations. This is in agreement Lee (1965) who found that age per se is not an adequate measure for predicting the ability of couples to have a satisfying marriage.

4.3 Relationship between Age at time of Marriage and Subjective Evaluation in a Marriage

The first objective of the study was to establish the relationship between ATM and subjective evaluation in a marriage. Data on subjective evaluation was gathered using the Marital Satisfaction Index questionnaire. The variable was measured using a set of 8 close ended Likert type items. The dimension sought to investigate whether the respondents’ choice of their relationship was reflected by their thoughts. A hypothesis which stated that there is no relationship between ATM and subjective evaluation was derived from the objective and tested at .05 levels using the Pearson’s Correlations test. The respondents’ responses to the items were averaged and then transformed into subjective evaluation index as shown in Table 4.5

Table 4.6 Subjective Evaluation Index

Statement	n	Mean	SD
Degree of happiness with my marriage, all things considered	393	3.46	1.10
My relationship with my spouse is rewarding	393	3.60	1.28
My partner meet my needs	392	3.55	1.36
My marriage has met my original expectations	391	3.25	1.40
I am satisfied with my marriage	395	3.81	2.92
My marriage is good compared to others	390	3.79	1.18
I enjoy my partner's company	396	3.91	1.47
My partner and I always have fun together	394	3.70	1.63
Subjective Evaluation Index	399	3.58	1.14

The study findings indicate that the respondents had an average mean of 3.58 (SD = 1.14) vibrational frequency thoughts about their marriage/partner. This means that the respondents often had positive thoughts about their marriage/partner. Therefore, this implies that their vibrational frequency resonated with positive self-evaluation. The conclusion is that, to the extent that the respondents had instances of doubt about their choice in the relationship, they were satisfied.

4.3.1 Subjective Evaluation Levels of the Respondents

The index was converted into levels and are indicated as Low (0 – 1.66), Moderate (1.67 – 3.32), High (3.33 – 5.00) – given that the responses were scored on a 0 to 5 scale. This is as shown in Table 4.7

Table 4.7 Subjective Evaluation Levels of the Respondents

Level	Married Once n=346		Married more than Once n=43		Overall n=389	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Low	21	6.1	10	23.3	32	8.2
Moderate	90	26.0	9	20.9	100	25.7
High	235	67.9	24	55.8	257	66.1

The study results finding indicate that in general majority of the respondents (66.1%) had high vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship, a large number (25.7%) of the respondents had moderate vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship while few (8.2%) of the respondents had low vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship. Further, the study found that the largest number (67.9%) of those who were in their first marriage had high vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship, although (26.0%) in this category had moderate vibrational frequency thoughts and (6.1%) in this category had low vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship. Additionally, the study found that a lot (55.8%) of the respondents who had been married more than once had high vibrational frequency thoughts about the relationship, while (20.9%) in this category had moderate vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship and surprisingly the study found a higher number (23.3%) in this category had low vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship.

4.3.2 Comparison of Subjective Evaluation Means by Age Ranges

Comparison of subjective evaluation by age at time of marriage was also conducted and the findings are illustrated in Table 4.7

Table 4.8 Comparison of Subjective Evaluation Means by Age Ranges

Age	n	Mean	SD
18 years and Below	14	2.38	2.10
19 - 24	174	3.59	1.00
25 - 30	176	3.64	1.15
31 years and Above	22	4.01	0.63

The study finding reveals that those aged 31 and above had the highest mean (M=4.01, SD=0.63) of subjective evaluation about their relationship while lowest for those married aged 18 and below (M=2.38, SD=2.10). The subjective evaluation means for those married aged 25 – 30 (M=3.64, SD=1.15) and those married aged 19 – 24 (M=3.59, SD=1.00) was comparative. The study findings indicate that subjective evaluation steadily increases with age meaning the older one is the more intense subjective evaluation one applies in the relationship.

4.3.3 ANOVA Test of Subjective Evaluation Means Differences by Age Ranges

Further, ANOVA test was conducted to find out whether the differences in the means were statistically significant. This is illustrated in Table 4.9 below

Table 4.9 ANOVA Test Result of Differences of Subjective Evaluation Means by Age Ranges

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	24.94	3	8.313	6.727	.000
Within Groups	472.098	382	1.236		
Total	497.038	385			

The results reveal that the subjective evaluation mean differences among the age groups were statistically significant at the .05 level, $F(3,382) = 6.727$, $p < .05$. This implies that age at time of marriage influences subjective evaluation.

4.3.4 Hypothesis Testing

The Pearson's Correlations test was used to determine the relationship between ATM and subjective evaluation. The association between the two constructs was established by correlating the mean age at the time of marriage and subjective evaluation index. The results of the bivariate test are shown in Table 4.10

Table 4.10 Relationship between Age at time of Marriage and Subjective Evaluation

Scale	Subjective Evaluation	
Age at time of Marriage	Pearson Correlation (r)	.159
	p-value	.002*
	n	386

*Significant at .05

The results of the bivariate test indicate that the relationship between ATM and subjective evaluation is positive and statistically significant ($r = .159$, $p < .05$). The test result indicates that there is a relationship between ATM and subjective evaluation, thus the null hypothesis was rejected.

4.4 Relationship between Age at time of Marriage and Emotion Regulation in Marriage

The second section of the MSI was used to collect data on emotion regulation. The variable was measured using a set of 17 close ended Likert type items. Further, a hypothesis test was conducted on relationship between ATM and emotion regulation using Pearsons Correlation test. The dimension sought to investigate whether the respondents' thoughts of the relationship was reflected by their emotions/feelings. The respondents' responses to the items were averaged and then transformed into emotion regulation index as shown in Table 4.11

Table 4.11 Emotion Regulation Index

Statement	n	Mean	SD
Amount of time spent together	390	3.65	1.00
Making major decisions	374	3.69	1.11
Demonstrations of affection	374	3.48	1.28
Thinking that things between my partner and I are going well	389	3.58	1.24
Wishing I hadn't gotten into this marriage	380	3.77	3.46
I still feel a strong connection with my partner	392	3.88	1.52
If I had my life to live over, I would marry the same person	384	3.44	1.92
Our relationship is strong	377	3.85	1.55
I sometimes wonder if there is someone else out there for me	368	3.64	1.73
My relationship with my partner makes me happy	386	3.67	1.54
I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	385	3.65	1.54
I can't imagine ending my relationship with my partner	383	3.66	1.70
I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually anything	368	3.45	1.60
I have had second thoughts about this relationship recently	372	3.67	1.61
For me, my partner is the perfect romantic partner	385	3.70	1.53
I really feel like part of a team with my partner	383	3.69	1.51
I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does	387	3.70	1.71
Emotion Regulation Index	394	3.54	1.01

The study findings indicate that the respondents had an average mean of 3.54 (SD=1.01) vibrational frequency thoughts about their relationship. This means that the respondents often had positive emotions/feelings about their relationship. Further, this implies that their vibrational frequency resonated with positive emotion regulation. The conclusion is thus suggested that to the extent the respondents had instances of doubt about their emotions/feelings towards the relationship they were satisfied.

4.4.1 Emotion Regulation Levels of the Respondents

The index was converted into levels and are indicated as Low (0 - 1.66), Moderate (1.67 - 3.32), High (3.33 – 5.00) – given that the responses were scored on a 0 to 5 scale. This is illustrated in Table 4. 12 below

Table 4.12 Emotion Regulation Levels of the Respondents

Emotion Regulation	Married Once n=299		Married more than Once n=22		Both Groups Combined n=321	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Low	18	6	3	13.6	21	5.3
Moderate	87	29.1	10	45.5	97	24.6
High	194	64.9	9	40.9	203	51.5

A large number of the participants skipped responding to this particular question and only 321 participants responded. This may imply that it was sensitive for the respondents to reveal their emotions/feelings about their relationship. However, the study results indicate that just slightly more than half (51.5%) of the respondents had high vibrational frequency thoughts modification about the relationship, while less than half (24.6%) of the respondents had moderate vibrational frequency thoughts modification about the relationship and (5.3%) of the respondents had low vibrational frequency thoughts modification about the relationship. Surprisingly, majority (45.5%) of those who had been married more than one had moderate vibrational frequency thoughts modification, while (40.9%) in this category had high vibrational frequency thoughts modification and only (13.6%) who had low vibrational frequency thoughts modification about their relationship. Further, the study results reveal that those who had married only once had a

large number (64.9%) of those who had high vibrational frequency thoughts modification towards their relationship, while (29.1%) in this category had moderate vibrational frequency thoughts modification and only (6%) had low vibrational frequency thoughts modification towards their relationship.

4.4.2 Comparison of Emotion Regulation Means by Age Ranges

The study further sought to find out how often emotion regulation occurred among the different age ranges. Table 4.13 illustrates the results.

Table 4.13 Comparison of Emotion Regulation Means by Age Ranges

Age	n	Mean	SD
18 years and Below	11	3.43	1.19
19 - 24	166	3.52	1.03
25 - 30	176	3.57	1.01
31 years and Above	21	3.72	0.91

The study results show that the means of emotion regulation is highest for those who married aged 31 and above ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 0.91$) while lowest for those who married aged 18 and below ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.19$), while the means of those who married aged 25- 30 ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 1.01$) was higher than those married aged 19 – 24 ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.03$). The study finding indicates that the means of emotion regulation is comparable among the age ranges. This study result implies that age does not significantly affect emotion regulation.

4.4.3 ANOVA Test of Differences in Emotion Regulation Means by Age Ranges

Further, the study conducted ANOVA test and the results showing the differences in emotion regulation by age ranges is shown in Table 4.14

Table 4.14 ANOVA Test Results of Emotion Regulation Means Differences by Age Ranges

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	p-value
Between Groups	1.045	3	.348	.336	.799
Within Groups	383.580	370	1.037		
Total	384.625	373			

The results reveal that the emotion regulation mean differences among the age ranges were not statistically significant at the .05 level, $F(3, 370) = .348, p > .05$. The implication of this study result is that age at the time of marriage does not influence emotion regulation.

The link between ER and MS was one of the themes discussed during the FGD. Emotion regulation is concerned with the way and individual tries to modify the emotions one has, when you have them, how these states are experienced and expressed (John & Gross, 2004; Lopes, Salovey, Cote & Beers, 2005). Several scholars (Cote, Gyurak, & Levenson, 2010; Gross, Richards & John, 2006) have demonstrated that being able to modify emotions is a characteristic of happy marriage. A summary of the discussions on emotion regulation and marital satisfaction is contained in Excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2

Researcher “Does age affect how one controls his/her emotions in a marriage?”

John “It does as it affects one’s reasoning level and perceptions.

The discussion reveals that the FGD participant was of the view that indeed age does affect emotion regulation as age hampers one’s level of reasoning and perceptions.

4.4.4 Hypothesis Testing

The Pearsons Correlations test was used to determine the relationship between ATM age at time of marriage and emotion regulation. The association between the two constructs was established by correlating the mean age at the time of marriage and emotion regulation index. Table 4.15 shows the results of the bivariate test.

Table 4.15 Relationship between Age at Time of Marriage and Emotion Regulation

Scale	Emotion Regulation	
Age at the time of Marriage	Pearsons Correlation (r)	.070
	p-value	.186
	n	386

*Significant .05

The results of the bivariate test indicate that the relationship between ATM and emotion regulation is positive and but not statistically significant ($r = .070$, $p > .05$). The implication of this study result is that there is no relationship between ATM and emotion regulation thus the null hypothesis was accepted.

4.5 Relationship between Age at Time of Marriage and Patterns of Interaction

The last part of the MSI was used to collect data on patterns of interaction. The variable was measured using reverse coded Likert type items. The dimension sought to investigate the respondents' experiences in their relationship was reflected by their emotions/feelings. The responses to the items were averaged and then transformed into patterns of interaction index as shown in Table 4.16

Table 4.16 Patterns of Interaction Index

Item	n	Mean	SD
Interesting	391	3.71	1.20
Good	388	3.58	1.30
Full	386	3.55	1.28
Friendly	385	3.53	1.41
Strong	380	3.58	1.28
Hopeful	392	3.67	1.31
Enjoyable	392	3.76	1.27
Patterns of Interaction Index	394	3.57	1.04

The study findings show that the respondents had an average mean of 3.57 (SD = 1.04) vibrational frequency experiences in their relationship. This suggests that the respondents often had positive interaction patterns in their relationships. The implication of this study result is that their vibrational frequency resonated with positive emotional exchanges thus positive experiences in their relationships. Thus, to the extent that the respondents had instances of polarized experiences in the relationship they were satisfied.

4.5.1 Patterns of Interaction Index Levels of the Respondents

The index was converted into levels and indicated as Low (0 – 1.66), Moderate (1.67 – 3.32), High (3.33 – 5.00) – given that the responses were scored on a 0 to 5 scale. This is indicated below in Table 4.17

Table 4.17 Patterns of Interaction Levels of the Respondents

Patterns of Interaction	Married Once n=268		Married more than Once n=39		Both Groups Combined n=307	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Low	-	-	8	20.5	11	3.1
Moderate	99	36.9	24	61.5	108	30.3
High	169	63.1	7	17.9	138	66.7

A large number of respondents also skipped responding to this part and only 307 participants responded. The implication of these responses is that the respondents found it more sensitive to reveal their experiences in the relationship as it also involved exposing their emotions towards their relationship. However, the study findings show that overall most (66.7%) of those who responded had high vibrational frequency of experiences in the relationship, while less (30.3%) had moderate vibrational frequency experiences and very few (3.1%) had low vibrational frequency of experiences in their relationship. For those married once, majority (63.1%) of the respondents had high vibrational frequency of experiences in the marriage while less (36.9%) had moderate vibrational frequency of experiences and nil had low vibrational frequencies of experiences in the relationship. However, majority of those married more than once (61.5%) had moderate vibrational frequency of experiences in their marriage, while more in this category

(20.5%) had low vibrational frequency of experiences and few (17.9%) had high vibrational frequency of experiences in their marriage.

4.5.2 Comparison of Patterns of Interaction Means by Age Ranges

The interaction patterns were compared among the different age ranges as shown in Table 4.18

Table 4.18 Comparison of Patterns of Interaction by Age Ranges

Age	n	Mean	SD
18 years and Below	14	2.42	1.51
19 - 24	174	3.61	0.95
25 - 30	176	3.65	1.02
31 years and Above	22	3.45	0.89

The findings indicate that patterns of interaction means of those aged 25 – 30 (M = 3.65, SD = 1.02) was the highest, higher also was the means of those aged 19 – 24 (M = 3.61, SD = 0.95) and high also was the means of those aged 31 and above (M = 3.45, SD = 0.89), while the means of those aged 18 and below (M = 2.42, SD = 1.51) was the lowest. The results imply that age at time of marriage affects patterns of interaction.

4.5.3 Differences of Patterns of Interaction means by Age Ranges

Results of the ANOVA test comparing means of patterns of interaction by age ranges are indicated in Table 4.19

Table 4.19 ANOVA Test Results of Patterns of Interaction Means by Age Ranges

Scale	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ration	p-value
Between Groups	20.239	3	6.746	6.711	0.000
Within Groups	384.022	.382	1.005		
Total	404.261	385			

The results show that the mean differences among the age ranges were statistically significant at the .05 level, $F(3, 382) = 6.711, p < .05$. This implies that age at the time of marriage influences patterns of interaction.

Interaction patterns between couples in a marriage play a central role in its success. A well defined patterns of interaction are an indicator of closeness and a sign of attachment, commitment to the relationship and its continuity (Scorsolini-Comin & do Santos, 2012). The interaction patterns provide a rich naturalistic context of studying relationship among couples as the physiological and affective patterns within these dyads reflect the level of MS. This view is collaborated in the FGD that was carried out in this study. Data captured during discussions are summarized in Excerpt 3

Excerpt 3

Researcher “How do you interact with your spouse in your homes?”

John “Often my interaction with my partner is so casual, for instance the way we communicate and act, each is busy with his/her duties most of the times”.

Mary “I concur with John and attribute this casualness to boredom and getting used to each other, especially after staying together for a period of time.

Paul “It is true couples do not interact well, I attribute this to differences in goals and expectations of couples in a marriage”

John “That is what happens when people are attracted to each other physically but without similar needs and goals, after some time the physical attraction fades and the differences lead to withdrawal, avoidance and coming home late”

4.5.4 Hypothesis Testing

The Pearsons Correlations test was used to determine the relationship between ATM and patterns of interaction. The link between the two constructs was established by correlating the mean age at time of marriage and patterns of interaction index. Table 4.20 illustrates the results of the bivariate test.

Table 4.20 Relationship between Age at Time of Marriage and Patterns of Interaction

Scale	Patterns of Interaction	
Age at Time of Marriage	Pearsons Correlations	.118
	p-value	.020*
	n	386

*Significant at .05

The study findings indicate that relationship between ATM and patterns of interaction was positive and significant $r(.118), p < .05$. The implication of this study results is that there is a relationship between ATM and patterns of interaction thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

4.6 Determining of Marital Satisfaction

The general objective of the study was to examine the relationship between ATM and MS. Determination of marriage satisfaction involved averaging the indices of subjective evaluation, emotion regulation and patterns of interaction. Table 4.21 illustrates the results.

Table 4.21 Determination of Marital Satisfaction

Scale	n	Mean	SD
Subjective Evaluation	394	3.58	1.14
Emotion Regulation	376	3.55	1.01
Patterns of Interaction	394	3.57	1.04
Marital Satisfaction	394	3.51	0.73

The results demonstrate that the means of the three components of marital satisfaction that is, subjective evaluation ($M = 3.58, SD = 1.14$), emotion regulation ($M = 3.55, SD = 1.01$), and patterns of interaction ($M = 3.57, SD = 1.04$) were comparable. The marriage satisfaction of the respondents as measured by the mean ($M = 3.51, SD = 0.73$) of subjective evaluation, emotion regulation and patterns of interaction was considered average given that it was measured out of a maximum of 5.

4.6.1 Marital Satisfaction Levels among the Respondents

Further, the study sought to establish the marital satisfaction levels among the respondents. The index levels are indicated as Low (0 – 1.66), Moderate (1.67 – 3.32), and High (3.33 – 5.00). Table 4.23 demonstrates the findings.

Table 4.22 Marital Satisfaction Levels among the Respondents

Marital Satisfaction	Married Once n=268		Married more than Once n=39		Both Groups Combined n= 307	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Low	-	-	8	20.5	8	2.6
Moderate	99	36.9	24	61.5	123	40.1
High	169	63.1	7	17.9	176	57.3

The study result findings indicate that in general large number (57.3%) of the respondents had high vibrational frequency state/perception/attitude about their relationship, a big number (40.1%) still had moderate vibrational frequency state/perception/attitude about their marriage while very few (2.6%) of the respondents had low vibrational frequency state/perception/attitude about their relationship. Interestingly, the study found that the largest number (63.1%) of those married once had high vibrational frequency state/perception/attitude of their relationship, and more (36.9%) in this category had moderate vibrational frequency state/perception/attitude about their relationship while nil were found to have low vibrational frequency state towards their relationship. Further, the study found that those who were married more than once majority (61.5%) constituted those who had moderate vibrational frequency state towards their relationship, while less (20.5%) in this category had low vibrational frequency state towards their relationship and few (17.9%) had high vibrational frequency state towards their marriage.

Marital satisfaction refers to the subjective attitudes that couples have towards their relationships (Rebello, Silva, Junior & Brito, 2014). It is complex and a multidimensional phenomenon that mirrors the perceived benefits and costs of the relationship to a specific individual (Shackelford & Buss, 2000). Despite the availability of a wealth of literature on marital satisfaction, there is lack of consensus among researchers about how to conceptualize and measure MS (Varda, 2015). The

same contradiction is recorded from the views of the FGD carried out in this study. A summary of the recording is given in Excerpt 4 below

Excerpt 4

Researcher “*Is age one of the factors that affect marital satisfaction?*”

John “*I think so as young people are more dissatisfied with their marriages. However, there are other factors such as lack of common interest, financial issues and peer pressure.*”

Mary “*Not necessarily, there are so many factors that influence satisfaction in a marriage. It depends on how well a marriage responds to the expectations and duties imposed by the cultural and social spheres*”

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presented a summary of the study, the major findings and major conclusions that were realized. It provided a brief of the study findings, recommendations as well as areas of further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study made an assessment of the aspects of MS among married couples in Murang'a County. The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between ATM and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County. This was broken down into four objectives.

5.2.1 Relationship between Age at Time of Marriage and Subjective Evaluation

The study found the relationship between ATM and subjective evaluation was positive and statistically significant ($r = .159, p < .05$). This result agrees with Murray, Holmes & Griffin (1996), Murray et al., (2000) & Schackelford, (2001) who found a positive link between self-esteem and marital happiness. Further, the study supports Hendrick, Hendrick & Adler, (1988) who found self-esteem to be negatively linked with union dissolution. Based on the analysis and subsequent interpretation of the results, as well as testing of hypothesis the study finding indicates that the higher the age at time of marriage the higher subjective evaluation. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected.

5.2.2 Relationship between Age at Time of Marriage and Emotion Regulation

The findings from the study demonstrated that the relationship between ATM and emotion regulation among married couples in Murang'a County was positive but not statistically significant ($r = .070, p > .05$). The implication of these results is that there is no relationship between ATM and emotion regulation. Results of the hypothesis test illustrated that age at time of marriage did not affect emotion regulation. This finding agrees with (Levenson, Carstensen, Friesen, & Ekman,

1991; Malatesta & Kalnok, 1984) who found level of emotion to be comparable for old and young people. The null hypothesis was thus accepted.

5.2.3 Relationship between Age at Time of Marriage and Patterns of Interaction

Results from the study indicated that the relationship between ATM and patterns of interaction was positive and significant ($r = .118, p < .05$). The findings of this study suggest that the higher the ATM the better the patterns of interaction. The testing of the hypothesis yielded a positive result and hence the null hypothesis was rejected.

5.3 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between ATM and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County. Based on the results of the findings, the conclusion is that age at time of marriage affects subjective evaluation and patterns of interaction but not emotion regulation within a relationship among married couples in Murang'a County.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the empirical findings, several recommendations have been drawn from this study:

- 1) This study noted that there is hardly any literature/information about marital satisfaction levels reported in Murang'a Kenya. To exacerbate this problem, there are major marital issues that cannot be identified. To solve the problem of marital satisfaction, the study recommends that the policy makers should come up with ways of educating the public about marital satisfaction.
- 2) The knowledge about age factor in determining the individual's choice of a suitable partner is useful in determining a long lasting union this study recommends that policy makers, religious institutions and schools should incorporate such information to acknowledge/emphasize this factor.

- 3) There are many factors which influence marital satisfaction. This study recommends that more research is required in the area of MS to determine which factors can enhance the process of marital satisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introductory Letter



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
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July 13, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: CECILIA N. KARIUKI – REG. NO. C50/71653/2014

This is to confirm that **Ms. Cecilia N. Kariuki Reg. No. C50/71653/2014** is a Postgraduate student in the Department of Psychology, University of Nairobi undertaking a Masters degree in Health Psychology.

Her project is entitled “*Relationship between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang’a County*”.

Any assistance accorded to her to facilitate data collection for her study will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Luke Odiemo".

Dr. Luke Odiemo
Chairman
Department of Psychology

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Questionnaire on Examination of the Relationship of Age at Time of Marriage and Marital Satisfaction among Married Couples in Murang’a County

Hallo, my name is **Cecilia N. Kariuki** a Masters of Psychology student at the **University of Nairobi**. I am conducting a study on “**the examination of the relationship of age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction among married couples**”. I would like you to answer a few questions about marriage and satisfaction. Participation in the survey is voluntary. If you agree to participate, please signify your acceptance by signing in the space given below. The questionnaire typically takes 20 minutes to complete and whatever information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used for academic purpose only. Please answer the questions honestly and, to the best of your knowledge and ability, because the subsequent analysis and interpretation of the findings will be based solely on your answers.

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS: PLEASE TICK/CIRCLE OR FILL GAPS WHERE APPROPRIATE

QUESTION	RESPONSE
SERIAL NUMBER
DATE OF INTERVIEW
SUB-COUNTY(DISTRICT) NAME
LOCATION NAME
SUB-LOCATION NAME
ENUMERATION AREA
ENUMERATOR NAME
DATA ENTRY CLERK NAME

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

QUESTION	RESPONSE
A1 Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> Male
	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
A2 Age
A3 Highest level of education attained	<input type="checkbox"/> No formal education
	<input type="checkbox"/> Primary education
	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary education
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary/college education
	<input type="checkbox"/> University Education
A4 Religion	<input type="checkbox"/> Christian
	<input type="checkbox"/> Muslim
	<input type="checkbox"/> Hindu
	<input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (Specify)
A5 Ethnic group
Spouse/partner Ethnicity
A6 What do you do for a living?	<input type="checkbox"/> Employed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Self Employed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Student
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (Specify)
A7 Family background	<input type="checkbox"/> Single parent
	<input type="checkbox"/> Both parents
	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
	<input type="checkbox"/> Others (Specify).....

- B1** Marital status Married
 (IF SINGLE/UNMARRIED, END THE SURVEY) Separated/ Divorced
 Widowed
 Single/Unmarried
 Others (Specify).....
- B2** How many times have you been married (including current Once
 marriage)? Twice
 Thrice
 Others (Specify).....
- a) If divorced, Please tell me the circumstances that led to
 your divorce.....
- B3** How old (in years) were you when you married your current
 partner?.....
- a) If married more than once, how old were you when you
 married your first partner?.....
- B4** How long (in years) have you been in your current marriage?

Section B: Marital Satisfaction

Listed below are several statements that reflect different attitudes about marriage. For each statement fill in the blank using the response that indicates how much you agree or disagree with that statement. The items refer to a specific marital relationship. Whenever possible, answer the questions with your current partner in mind. If you have divorced or widowed, answer in terms of what you think your response was most likely.

Subjective Evaluation

S1. Please indicate the degree of happiness, all things considered, of your marital relationship.

Extremely Unhappy	Fairly Unhappy	A Little Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Extremely Happy
0	1	2	3	4	5

		Not at all	A little	Some-what	Mostly	Almost Completely	Completely
S2	My relationship with my spouse is rewarding	0	1	2	3	4	5
S3	My partner meet my needs	0	1	2	3	4	5
S4	My original expectations in a marriage have been met	0	1	2	3	4	5
S5	I am satisfied with my marriage	0	1	2	3	4	5

		Worse than all others (Extremely bad)					Better than all others (Extremely good)
S6	My marriage is good compared to others	0	1	2	3	4	5

		Never	Less than once a month	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a week	Once a day	More often
S7	I enjoy my partners company	0	1	2	3	4	5
S8	My partner and I have fun together	0	1	2	3	4	5

Section D: Emotional Regulation

Please indicate below the extent of agreement between you and your partner on each item in the below table.

	Statement	Always Agree	Almost Always Agree	Occasionally Disagree	Frequently Disagree	Almost Always Disagree	Always Disagree
E1.	Amount of time spent together	5	4	3	2	1	0
E2	Making major decisions	5	4	3	2	1	0
E3	Demonstrations of affection	5	4	3	2	1	0

How often do you engage in the following activities related to your marriage?

	Activity	All the time	Most of the time	More often than not	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
E4	Thinking that things between my partner and I are going well	5	4	3	2	1	0
E5	Wishing I hadn't gotten into this marriage?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Indicate the extent to which the below statements are true with regard to your marriage.

		Not at all True	A little True	Somewhat True	Mostly True	Almost Completely True	Completely True
E6	I still feel a strong connection with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
E7	If I had my life to live over, I would marry (or live with / date) the same person	0	1	2	3	4	5
E8	Our relationship is strong	0	1	2	3	4	5
E9	I sometimes wonder if there is someone else out there for me	5	4	3	2	1	0
E10	My relationship with my partner makes me happy	0	1	2	3	4	5
E11	I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
E12	I can't imagine ending my relationship with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
E13	I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually anything	0	1	2	3	4	5

E14	I have had second thoughts about this relationship recently	5	4	3	2	1	0
E15	For me, my partner is the perfect romantic partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
E16	I really feel like part of a team with my partner	0	1	2	3	4	5
E18	I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does	0	1	2	3	4	5

Section E: Patterns of Interaction

The statements in the table below are about the overall feelings you hold about your marriage.

Select the responses which describe your marriage.

Statement	Response						
	Completely	Almost completely	Mostly	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	
Interesting							Boring
Bad							Good
Full							Empty
Lonely							Friendly
Powerful							Fragile
Discouraging							Hopeful
Enjoyable							Miserable

General comment

.....

.....

END

Appendix III: Focus Group Discussion Guide

How many times have you been married (including current marriage)?

Age at time of first marriage

How long (in years) have you been in your current marriage?

How old (in years) were you when you married your current partner?

Influence of age at time of marriage on subjective evaluation on the marriage

Do you feel more loved /respected/secure?

Relationship between age at time of marriage and emotional regulations on the marriage

How do you react when your partner wants to have intimate conversations? Do you avoid or flee?

Do you have the ability to soothe your own emotions?

Relationship between age at time of marriage and couples patterns of interaction on the marriage

How do you respond to your partner when not in good terms; Stonewalling: shutting down, withdrawing!!

Appendix IV: Research Permit



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
when replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/16/43539/12620**

Date:

15th July, 2016

Cecilia Njeri Kariuki
University of Nairobi
P.O. Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Relationship between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Murang'a County** for the period ending **15th July, 2017.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Murang'a County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Murang'a County.

The County Director of Education
Murang'a County.

Appendix V: Research Authorization



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Email: cdemuranga@gmail.com
Telephone: 060 2030227
When replying please quote

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,
P.O BOX 118 – 10200,
MURANG'A.

Ref: MGA/CTY/GEN./64/VOL.II/115

DATE: 19th July , 2016

Cecilia Njeri Kariuki,
University of Nairobi,
P.O. Box 30197-00100,
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

The County Education office is in receipt of your request and authority letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, reference no. NACOSTI/P/16/43539/12620 dated 15th July, 2016 to carry research on "**Relationship between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County.**"

Authority is granted to carry out research in **Murang'a County** - for a period ending **15th July, 2017.**

L.K. KARUNTIMI
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
MURANG'A



Appendix VI: Research Authorization County Office

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



THE PRESIDENCY

MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telephone: 060-2030467

Email: cmuranga@gmail.com

When replying please quote

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MURANG'A COUNTY
P. O. BOX 7-10200
MURANG'A**

REF.NO.PUB.24/11/VOL.II/117

19th July, 2016

Cecilia Njeri Kariuki
University of Nairobi
P.o Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Relationship between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction among married couples in Murang'a County,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Murang'a County for a period ending 15th July, 2017.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Henry Kaminda'.

Henry Kaminda
For: **COUNTY COMMISSIONER**
MURANG'A COUNTY

Appendix VI: Research Permit Certificate

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

MS. CECILIA NJERI KARIUKI
of UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,
12901-20100 Nakuru, has been
permitted to conduct research in
Muranga County


on the topic: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
AGE AT TIME OF MARRIAGE AND
MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG
MARRIED COUPLES IN MURANGA
COUNTY.

For the period ending:
15th July, 2017

[Signature]
Applicant's Signature

[Signature]
Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation


Permit No. : NACOSTI/P/16/43539/12620
Date Of Issue : 15th July, 2016
Fee Received : Ksh 1000



CONDITIONS

- 1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit**
- 2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.**
- 3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.**
- 4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.**
- 5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one(1) soft copy of your final report.**
- 6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice**

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

Serial No. A 10139

CONDITIONS: see back page





Appendix VII: Originality Report

Document Viewer

Turnitin Originality Report

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AT TIME OF MARRIAGE ... By Cecilia Kariuki

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<1% match (Internet from 27-Nov-2017)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Handwritten: *13-12*