

## **Role of Guidance and Counseling in Promoting Married Career Individuals' Marital Relationship in Kericho County, Kenya**

Gladys Bett<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Merecia Sirera<sup>2</sup> and Prof. Gladys Kiptiony<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Student Affairs Department, University of Kabianga P.O. Box 2030-20200 Kericho Kenya

<sup>2</sup> Department of Psychology, Kenyatta University

<sup>3</sup> Department of Education, Kabarak University

Corresponding Author: Gladys Bett

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**Abstract:** Marital relationships are an important variable in understanding marital performance. Marital relationship dynamics represents couple's action in activities of personal, leisure, domestic, conflict, and conversation. The career family is an emergent family form in our society that offers new sources of satisfaction and at the same time presents new types of problems, which threaten marital satisfaction. Careers represent a major innovation that calls into question traditional aspects of family life and division of labor. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate the role of guidance and counseling on marital satisfaction with an aim of coming up with interventions that could enhance marital satisfaction. The study was guided by the following objectives: to find out challenges affecting the marital relationship and to investigate the role of guidance and counseling in promoting marital relationship. The theories guiding the study were Structural Theory, Family Systems Theory and Common Factors Theory. Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire while qualitative data was collected through interviews. The population of the study consisted of 9113 married career individuals. The sample was identified using purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The pilot study was conducted in Sotik Sub-county, Bomet County with 40 participants who were not included in the sample. Content validity was ensured through intensive review of literature and comparison made with prior validated studies and through research peers and psychology experts. External reliability coefficients of the questionnaires was determined by test-retest method and found to be 0.886. The data obtained was analyzed by use of descriptive using frequencies, means and standard deviations and inferential statistics using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Structural Equation Model. Guidance and counseling was shown to play a significant role in marital relationship ( $\beta = 0.223$ ;  $p = 0.023$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Quantitative data revealed that the issues facing married career individuals are lack of time, exhaustion, pressure from work, role conflict and too much work. It was shown that career has demands that sometimes conflict with family demands. Counseling helps couples to recognize and resolve conflicts caused by too much responsibility arising from careers and family and hence improve their relationships. Marriage counseling helps individuals make thoughtful decisions about building and strengthening their relationship. Guidance and counseling plays a role in empowering couples build strong marital relationships. This study recommended that marriage counseling, with an emphasis on promoting awareness in marital happiness and satisfaction, would be helpful in addressing marital conflicts and help enhance marital satisfaction.

**Key Words:** Challenges, Guidance and counseling, Marital Relationship, Marital Satisfaction

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Marital relationship, which is a union between a male and a female includes: happiness, intimacy, commitment, pleasure, compassion, love, strong communication, typically provides a reliable means for marital satisfaction (Amidu, Owiredu, Gyasi-Sarpong, Woode & Quayle, 2011). Onsy and Amer (2013) argued that marriage binds spouses as one in a way which is not available in other relationships. Marital relationship dynamics represents couple's action in personal, leisure, domestic and conflict activities (Zarepour, 2010). According to Stanley, Markman, and Whitton (2002) there are three fundamental components that have been linked with marital success: communication, commitment, and conflict resolution. Kind of couples' interactions in living environment has direct relationships with feeling miserable or happy. Couples who experience deep, logical, friendly and intimate emotional relationships are successful people with high self-confidence, optimistic, happy and with a sense of happiness. Conversely, couples who do not have appropriate emotional relationships together are solitary, grumpy, with a very low level of consistency in society, unsuccessful, always disappointed with negative and with a sense of misery. However, careers may take the time that couples may have spent together in being friendly and intimate.

According to Tolorunleke (2014) marriage should be an exciting and beautiful adventure and the relationship between husband and wife is intended to get better with every passing day or year. However, some minor conflicts may affect the couple relationship and as Okafor (2002) puts it, when these conflicts are not properly handled, they can cause friction and eventually lead to separation of the marriage partners that may widen over the years. Good relationships can improve communications and increase friendship, trust and support between couples. Ineffective relationships may weaken links; create distrust and hatred (Gillpatrick, 2008). The results of researches indicate that relationships skills are positively related with marital satisfaction and family conflicts resolution process can be simplified by enhancing these skills (Ebrahimi & Janbozorgi, 2008). However few researches had been done on the role of guidance and counseling on imparting marital relationship skills so as to enhance marital satisfaction.

Makinde (1984) defines counseling as an integrative process between a client, who is vulnerable and who needs assistance, and a counselor who is trained and educated to give this assistance. The goal of the interaction is to help the client learn

to deal more effectively with him/herself and the reality of his environment. The role of a guidance and counseling provider is to help people experiencing difficulty to overcome or cope with it and to understand the environment very well so that she/he can anticipate, circumvent and, if possible, forestall difficulties which may arise in future, therefore preventing couples from falling into them. It is also her/his role to help the individuals to plan and derive maximum benefits from educational, social and vocational experiences which will enable them to discover and develop their potential (Makinde, 1984).

According to Bischoff (2005) the individual is mostly responsible for what he becomes, meaning that it solely lies in his responsibility to take such action towards change in case of perceived problems which he wants to have solved. It is the client who must facilitate his own change. It follows therefore, that the counselor and the client must build a relationship in which the counselor succeeds to empower the client to take action towards change in the solution finding process. In career marriages it is important for the couples to understand the effects of balancing between family and work and address challenges that arise from it.

Ahmadi (2010) undertook a research in Tehran with married individuals using a family model to study the effects of family problem-solving on increasing the couple's satisfaction. 450 participants participated in the study it was found that there was increased levels of marital satisfaction in the maladjusted couples who went through treatment following fifteen sessions of family problem solving compared to a matched control group with no treatment. The study found that marital therapy is successful in increasing marital happiness (Ahmadi, 2010). The chance of the relationship improving increased from about 30% to about 70% for people who received marital therapy. This study demonstrated that couple counseling plays a role in improving marital relationship, although the study did not look at the married career individuals. However this was in Tehran and a Kenyan study would be useful to give community specific information that would be beneficial to design appropriate interventions. This may be because effectiveness of marital therapy may vary from one context to another since the issues affecting Kenyans may vary.

In Kenya, the situation may be different because the influence of culture on career families may have an effect on the relationships. Marriage in Kenya is largely between families than individuals and there are different expectations on individuals from the extended families, and at the same time, careers have been shown to cause strain in couples resulting from trying to balance multiple competing demands of time and energy. Through the relationship between the counselor and the counselee, couples troubled by problems could be helped to facilitate their personal development leading to effective decision making and awareness of their self. The challenges that come with trying to balance between the demands of work and the demands of the spouse, children, parents, community and employers could be addressed through guidance and counseling. While the review showed that counseling was effective, however there was lack of research in Kericho that explored the role of guidance and counseling in marital relationship and especially for married individuals who are also committed to career. This research aimed at looking at the role played by guidance and counseling in promoting marital relationship and hence enhancing marital satisfaction for married career individuals in Kericho County.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The rates of divorce and separation rates are alarming in the modern society. Given these high rates and their effects, achieving marital satisfaction is very important. Over time, considerable research showed that couple distress had a strong relationship with an individual's level of mental and physical problems. Moreover, there is evidence that couple distress is not only correlated with but also has a causal role in the initiation and maintenance of individual psychopathology. In addition everyday stress in modern life can affect all aspects of human life including family and marital relationships. Stress in couples has a mutual influence; the stress of one partner can affect the other one if he/she cannot cope adequately with it. Given the changes and growing complexity of society and development of social relationships, education of relationship skills for preparing people to deal with people and difficult situations especially shared life seems necessary. No doubt if couples have skills in relationship techniques, they can solve many of life problems and enjoy life and have more adaptability. Careers present many challenges that threaten marital satisfaction and hence affect the family. Support for strengthening existing marriages ought to be sought and the role of guidance and counseling is important. Therefore the problem underlying this research is that although guiding and counseling can help married career individuals to address many of the challenges associated with work and marital relations, few studies have explored the role of guidance and counseling in addressing marital relationship.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The following research objectives guided the study:

1. To establish the effect of balancing between work and family on marital relationships of married career individuals in Kericho County
2. To establish the role of guidance and counseling in promoting marital relationships of married career individuals in Kericho County

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Relationships are an important variable in understanding marital performance (Rasouli, 2001). Research suggests that marital relationships are a strong predictor of marital quality (Mahmoodi, 2016). There are many interactional processes that influence marital success. The marital relationship is important as it is given a lot of value in the society. Career families have become very common in today's society especially with women empowerment. Silberstein (1992) observed that in a single generation the family in which both parents work outside the home was a rare exception but now it has become very common. Career spouses are engaged in career and at the same time are committed to their marital relationship. Marital relationships are affected by several factors:

To begin with is the effect of commitment to the relationship which can promote. Studies have shown that commitment dynamics affect marital relationships (Mabel, 2014). Commitment can be broken down into two types-the dedicated and the obligated (McGinley, 2009). In the former, the spouse has a personal investment in the marriage and wishes to maintain the quality of the relationship so that both partners will benefit. In the latter, one or both spouses stay in the marriage out of necessity and so do it as an obligation. Relationships built on dedication are more fulfilling and couples enjoy them. Stanley, Markman and Whitton (2002) examined the influence of negative interaction in 908 couples and how their interactions affected levels of commitment and as a result marital satisfaction. They found that as the higher the number of negative interactions among married couples the lower the commitment to the relationship and the lower the marital satisfaction. To add to that, they found that spouses who were committed to their relationship were more satisfied with their marriages (McGinley, 2009). This study yielded some useful

information about the behaviors of married couples on measures of commitment but it did not address how careers affect expression of commitment since the couples are not only committed to the relationship but are also committed to careers and how this affected marital satisfaction.

Secondly is time spent together and leisure. Li and Fung (2011) reported significant positive effect when spouses spent time talking or eating and having fun with marital satisfaction, but not for time spent together caring for children, doing housework, watching television, or undertaking organizational activities. This implies that spending quality time together is effective in promoting marital satisfaction. This is seen in the research of Karney, Garvan, and Thomas (2003) in Florida which provided evidence on the relationship between times spent together as a couple and satisfaction for a sample of adults in romantic relationships. The most satisfied individuals in their sample reported spending about fifty percent more waking hours with each other than the least satisfied couples. This implies that time spent together plays an important role in relationship building. Although informative, this study failed to take into consideration individuals engaged in career who spend more time in careers and may have little time for the marital relationship. However research was needed to explore how these individuals create time to spend with each other so as to achieve marital satisfaction.

Marjhi and Panda (2015) developed this argument further by investigating the effect of leisure on the marital satisfaction of married individuals who work in India. The purpose of the study was to explore the extent couples' leisure patterns and shared leisure activities affect marital satisfaction in married individuals. The results revealed that working, offers dignity and a higher status to the women in India although the wife's employment created problems in adjustment at work as well as in her family. Furthermore employed women were satisfied that they were contributing something to the welfare of their family and society (Marjhi& Panda, 2015). It was concluded that marital satisfaction was a product of complex household labor relations. However this research did not consider what role guidance and counseling could play in addressing adjustment issues and labor relations so as to promote marital satisfaction for careers couples. The research revealed that it was beneficial when both individuals were engaged in employment; but did not reveal an intervention which could address the adjustment issues faced by the working individuals so that marital satisfaction would be achieved, however research was needed to show this.

Another aspect of the marital relationship is good communication which results in a strong friendship. Good communication skills are necessary in the formation and maintenance of a relationship. Communication in a marriage is important, issues about work, roles sexuality and the preferred level of sexual fulfillment need to be shared all the time. Effective communication among spouses involves sending clear messages and receiving them and providing appropriate feedback (Litzinger& Gordon, 2005). Without communication a marital relationship cannot be maintained. The sexual bond formed from a strong friendship is enhanced through communication and involvement and are all interconnected (Strackbeins, 2001). Too much work could make couples tired and instead of communicating effectively they may find themselves answering rudely and thus affect the marital relationship. One may also feel not understood by the spouse and may choose to become silent thus affecting the way they relate to each other. For career couples it's especially important to make time for discussions about important family issues and about the relationship itself. Effective communication skills could be taught in guidance and counseling workshops or seminars which will promote understanding among couples hence achieve marital satisfaction.

Another aspect of marital relationship is conflict resolution. Marital satisfaction may not be possible if married individuals are unable to resolve the many issues and conflicts effectively. Conflict usually results when one spouse does something the other partner does not like. When a situation that causes conflict occurs, partners may respond by confronting and discussing the issue or avoiding the conversation (McGinley, 2009). Careers may present many challenges that may cause conflict in a family and therefore conflict resolution is very important. For example conflicts on who will take which roles like picking children from school, preparing food etc., financial management and other decisions that need to be made on a day to day basis. The results of these interaction styles can have positive or negative effects on the marital relationship (Stanley, Markman, &Whitton, 2002; Verhofstadt, Buysse, DeClerca& Goodwin, 2005). When couples openly discuss problems and attempt to understand the others' way of thinking, effective problem solving can take place (Mabel, 2014). Guidance and counseling has been shown to be very beneficial in different contexts. The objective of guidance and counseling programme is to bring about the maximum development and self-realization of human potential for the benefit of the individual and society (Njeri, 2007). A study was done by Schneewind and Gerhard (2002) which involved 180 couples, who were married for the first time and were recruited from the marriage files of the Bavarian Bureau of Statistics. The results showed a strong correlation between effective conflict resolution skills and marital satisfaction (Schneewind& Gerhard, 2002). The results proved the importance of effective conflict resolution skills for the development and maintenance of a quality marital relationship over time. However although conflicts may arise in career families which may need the use of conflict resolution skills, few researches have been carried out on the role of guidance and counseling in conflict resolution and in training conflict resolution skills so as to achieve marital satisfaction.

Verhofstadt, Buysse, DeClerca, and Goodwin (2005) study looked into how conflicts affect husbands and wives and their relationship. Specifically, they examined levels of emotional arousal and negative affect in the demand/withdraw pattern and they noted gender differences in the way husbands and wives react and respond after a marital conflict. Husbands were found to experience lower levels of discomfort and negative distress when they withdrew than when they initiated change. However, the reverse was true for women; wives experienced higher levels of discomfort and emotional reactivity when they withdrew than when they were the demanders (Verhofstadt et al, 2005). This study yielded some useful information about the effect of conflict on married couples but it does not address the role of guidance and counseling on conflict resolution so that career couples can achieve marital satisfaction. The role of marital counseling, in helping couples to overcome marital conflicts cannot be overemphasized. It means that counseling can be used to train conflict resolution skills to all persons and at every stage of life. A counselor who works with couples that are experiencing marital conflicts needs to develop certain intervention strategies which will help couples to understand themselves, the threat of conflicts to their union and the importance of conflict resolution skills in resolving differences.

A qualitative study was carried out by Wong and Goodwin (2009) in UK in three different cultures in the Hong Kong, United Kingdom, and Beijing, China to study factors related to marital satisfaction. Interviews were carried out on 79 respondents and the findings revealed many themes that are important in a marital relationship. They include: having a stable relationship that gave a feeling of happiness; sharing similarities or being compatible with your spouse on the philosophy of life (for example shared values, beliefs and life goals), similar personality, interests, or background; need for companionship and sharing leisure activities together, and conjugal roles- which includes: spousal support and partnership with the spouse (Wong and Goodwin, 2009). Results indicated that, a stable relationship with the spouse, compatibility with spouse, spousal support, shared activities, partnership with the spouse, and stable relationship were important factors that contributed to marital satisfaction. However careers and family

demands may present challenges to the marital relationship which may threaten the relationship between the spouses affecting their marital satisfaction. Cultural differences emerged among the three cultures which belies the importance of carrying out studies in different cultures so as to come up with interventions that suits the region. The effectiveness of marital therapy may vary from one context to another since the issues affecting Kenyans may vary. For example, in the west partners are independent persons who hold clear cut status role in marriage and family and the family is largely nuclear while in Kenya it is more an extended family. In Kenya there was a gap in the role of guidance and counseling in marital satisfaction for married career individuals. This information was important as it helped to explore the effect of African culture in shaping marriages and marital roles could be affecting marital satisfaction and how to adapt guidance and counseling to fit different cultures so that counselors could be multi-cultural and help all couples despite their cultural backgrounds.

In Kenya, Mbunga (2010) carried out an exploratory study of marital satisfaction in 40 couples who were members of the Africa Inland church, Nairobi to explore their levels of marital satisfaction. It emerged that most of the respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the time spent together, the way problems were solved in their family and sexual intimacy. Although the study is informative it failed to look at intervention measures. In addition, the sample used for the study was small and the study concentrated only in the urban area and more research needed to broaden to rural areas. The study was done only among couples who attended church and this limited their generalization to all couples. The study also did not look at how careers could affect the different aspects of relationship building and did not look at how these couples could be assisted. The present study specifically sought to explore the different aspects of relationships which affected marital satisfaction and what role guidance and counseling could play on those aspects to enhance marital satisfaction.

In conclusion, literature review has shown that guidance and counseling played a great role in facilitating growth and positive adjustment in couples through self-understanding which promoted marital relationship. The review examined the available outcomes for the effectiveness of different therapies in couples and how they promoted marital satisfaction. Guidance and counseling has been shown to make couples fully aware of themselves and the ways in which they respond to the influences of their environment. For example, research that assessed changes in marital satisfaction found that approximately 48% of couples after counseling showed either enhancement or complete recovery in marital satisfaction in a five year follow up period. It was determined that relationship decline was shown for 38% of spouses and only 14% stayed the same (Foote, 2014). However, most of these studies have been done in the west where marital guidance and counseling has been shown to be well developed with many counselors trained to handle different issues and little research has been done in Kericho to show interventions used by married people so as to promote marital satisfaction.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by three theories: Structuralism, Family Systems Theory and Common Factor Theory. All these theories explain how families adopt to change and the interventions that can be put in place to make them adopt better.

### **2.1.1 Structuralism by Parsons (1951) and adopted by Rice (2012)**

Structural functionalism views society as an organism that is built on an order, and there is balance among parts as a means of maintaining the smooth functioning of the whole. In order for a society to survive; then subsystems in the society must operate in ways that promote the maintenance of the society as a whole. At the heart of structural functionalism are three major aspects of society (Parsons, 1951). Firstly, norms and values are considered to be the basis of each society. Secondly, social order that is based on unspoken agreements between groups and organizations is inherent in social structures. Finally, social change is seen as happening in a slow but orderly manner. This study was therefore interested in how couples adapt to the changes in their structure, since if one or more parts of a system conflicts with others, adaptations will have to be made.

### **2.1.2 Family Systems Theory by Murray Bowen (1966)**

The key tenet in this theory is a family is a system. According to this theory every system in the family is made up of component parts which are linked together in a specific way to accomplish a common purpose (Wegscheider, 1984). The components of the system in a family are the members. All the component members are interlinked together by unwritten family rules. The family rules reveal the family values, and this values help set up family roles consistent with these values. These rules determine the functions of each member, the relationship between them, the goals toward which they want to achieve, how they intend to get there, and what will be required and forbidden along the way (Wegscheider, 1984). However, career is likely to make family members violate the family rules. In a career family, there are several roles that are related with work on one hand and family on the other hand. The couples need to agree on how this roles and responsibilities are to be shared so as to achieve a common purpose.

### **2.1.3 Common Factor Theory by Lisa Grencavage and John Norcross (1990)**

The common factor theory argues that different psychotherapy and counseling approaches and practices share common factors that account for the effectiveness of a psychological treatment. Common factors theory states that the main causes of change in therapy are the factors which are common to all therapies rather than those which are specific to a particular therapeutic approach. The common factors approach groups counseling to five areas: the counseling relationship, expectations of clients on treatment effectiveness, confronting or control experiences and clients attributions of successful outcome as a result of internal or external causes. Tiredness, the requirement of work and other stressors can overflow into family life and affect the marital satisfaction of couples. Guidance and counseling is expected to provide new ways to adapt to the changes caused by the disequilibrium and ensure achievement of marital satisfaction

## **III. Research Methodology**

This research employed a mixed method approach; the quantitative data was collected through descriptive survey design and qualitative data was collected through phenomenological design. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) defines the descriptive survey design as a process of collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the status of the subjects (behavior, attitudes, values and characteristics) in a study. The research sought to obtain information that described existing phenomena by asking individuals about their behavior, perceptions, attitudes and values with an aim of answering some research questions hence the decision to use it as a design for the present study. Surveys also aim at obtaining information, which can be analyzed, patterns extracted and

comparison made (Bell, 1993), hence its choice for this study. The interviews were aimed at providing phenomenological accounts of the married career individuals' experiences with an aim of understanding it. The role of guidance and counseling on marital satisfaction was measured using a Guidance and Counseling scale adopted from Njeri, (2007) which had sixteen items and a Marital Relationship Scale which had six items was used.

The study was carried out in Kericho County, Kenya. In this study the target population was all married career people in Kericho County. Stratified random sampling procedure; purposive sampling procedure and random sampling procedures were used in the study. The accessible population was 9113. In the study, each of the constructs was assessed from two perspectives: self-report by questionnaire (e.g. role of guidance and counseling scale and marital relationship) and interviews. To ensure validity of results, the instrument was piloted on a randomly selected sample of forty spouses. The sample was picked outside the divisions designated for actual data collection study. To ensure external reliability the researcher used test-retest method and found to be 0.886. Internal constituency of items was tested using Cronbach's alpha and all were found to be above 0.70. This study generated both qualitative and quantitative data; hence descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data obtained. Descriptive statistics involved the use of means, frequencies, percentages and inferential statistics was done using Pearson Correlation Coefficient and Structural Equation Model. Qualitative data was cleaned, coded and summarized into working themes in line with the study objectives. Codes were then given in line with the themes and all materials related were placed together. A summary report was then developed identifying the major themes and the relationship between them.

#### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

##### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This section gives a summary of the personal characteristics of the respondents. This includes gender, age, education level, and annual income, number of children, and years in marriage. Descriptive statistics were used to describe and summarize the data. Gender of the respondents is summarized in Table 1

*Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender*

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	male	206	57.7
	female	152	42.3
	Total	358	100.0

A total of 358 participants responded to the questionnaire, out of which were 206 (57.7%) males and 152 (42.3%) females. This showed that there were more males in career in Kericho County than females and this could be because of cultural effects where in Africa, men were socialized to become bread-winners and women socialized as caregivers. In the Kipsigis community where the majority of the respondents are from, studies revealed that it is a patriarchal society where males wield more power than females (Chepkwony, 2014). Because of this culture could have played a role in pursuing of career and thus fewer women have pursued professions than their male counterparts may be because wives discharged more household responsibilities than their male counterparts. These findings mirror the global picture on gender and career, for example, a report from International Labor Organization in 2012 indicated that men were directly engaged in the labor force at significant higher rates than women in developing countries (ILO, 2012). Guiding and counseling could play a vital role in serving both males and females in ensuring that they all achieve their deemed goals and full potential irrespective of their gender. The ages of the respondents were investigated and the frequencies are presented in Table 2:

*Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age*

	Frequency	Percent
20-29 years	22	6.2
30-39 years	82	22.7
40-49 years	165	46.2
50-59 years	89	24.9
Total	358	100.0

The ages were grouped into five categories with a ten year range: 20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50-59 years and 60 years and above. The highest number of participants ranged between 40-49 years (165; 46.2%), followed by 50-59 years (89; 24.9%), while 30-39 years followed (82; 22.7%) participants. This shows that at the age of 40 to 49, many of the married career individuals have now settled in their professional careers. The dynamic theory argues that middle-aged couples prioritize the instrumental goals so in this case, many of them may have now settled in their families and are able to pursue their careers. Gordana, Irma, and Gordana (2012) conducted a study on adolescents' parents and found that they have been able to acquire the knowledge and the skills necessary for their careers and have developed mechanisms to balance between careers and family. The group with fewer participants was the 20-29 years with 22 (6.2%). This may be because by this age many people are still pursuing careers so they may not have married and established families at the time. The dynamic goal theory advocates that young couples are motivated by personal growth goals and so spend most of their time achieving these goals. Personal growth is the feeling of continued development; a person must see self as growing and expanding. It is openness to new experiences and it is the sense of realizing one's potential.

These findings resonate with a study done by Nabong (2012) in Philippines where the majority of the respondents fell in the age group between 41-50 years (37.8%); this was followed by 31-40 years (31.4%), and 21-30 years (24.1%). Attaining work and family balance was shown to be transcendent and crossed over all generations. This meant that counseling services should be provided to all ages because the challenges career individuals face transcended all the ages and generations. According to Erick Erickson psychosocial theory, each age group has conflicts that need to be resolved before they move to the next level. For instance, early adulthood stage is a time of forming intimate relationships, pursuing careers and at the same time settling down so there is need to offer guidance and counseling services that is tailored to each group needs. All this inferred that counselors need to offer counseling services to individuals of all ages so as to help them meet their developmental goals and at the same time achieve marital satisfaction. The study established the number of children the respondents had and the results were presented in Table 3:

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by the Number of Children**

	Frequency	Percent
	0-1	77
	2-3	135
Valid	4-5	124
	above 6	22
	Total	358
		21.6
		37.8
		34.5
		6.2
		100.0

The highest percentage of respondents had 2-3 children (135; 37.8%) followed by those who had 4-5 children (124; 34.5%), and then those with 0-1 child at (77; 21.6%) and lastly is the group with more than six children (22; 6.2%). This could be due to the fact that since career people are empowered, they make decisions on number and timing of children and some could have decided to have fewer children because of the demands related to parenting so as to get opportunities to develop their careers. It may also be because of the expenses that go with providing for the children in modern times. The cost of living has gone up and the on-going campaigns of family planning, couples could have made deliberate efforts to reduce the number of children so as to be able to provide for them.

**4.2 Results and Discussion**

This study sought to investigate the effect of balancing between work and family on the different aspects of marital relationship and the role of guidance and counseling on these aspects of marital relationship.

**4.2.1 Effect of Balancing between Work and Family on Marital Relationships**

Marital relationship dynamics represents couple's action in activities of personal, leisure, domestic, conflict, and conversation. This objective sought to investigate the effect of work on different aspects of marital relationship. The descriptive statistics summary is presented in Table 4:

**Table 4: Different Aspects of Marital Relationship**

STATEMENT	Mean	Std. dev
My partner meet my needs	3.66	1.264
In general, I am satisfied with relationship	3.87	1.090
Our relationship is better compared to most relationships I know	3.74	1.231
I often wish shouldn't have gotten into this relationship	2.09	1.257
My spouse has met my original expectations	3.56	1.098
I truly love my partner	4.06	1.132
Every Relationship has problems	3.99	1.297
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>1.179</b>

From Table 4 most items indicate positive outcomes with the mean ranging from 3.56 to 4.06 on a scale of 1 for "strongly disagree" to 5 for "strongly agree". The statement with the highest mean is 'I truly love my partner'. This showed that many individuals love their partners. This meant that married individuals love their partners and want the best for them. This is followed by the statement that 'Every relationship has problems'. This showed that relationships pass through different challenges but how the challenges faced are solved makes the difference for they could either build the marital relationship or destroy it. Maintaining a home and a family can be taxing in addition to the demands of the career. The counseling relationship between the counselor and counselee could provide a safe environment where the problems faced are explored and dealt with. Guiding and counseling could play a very important role of giving the career couples who are dissatisfied with their marital relationship a platform to get clarification on processes and their experiences in lives. Dissatisfaction does not emerge overnight; it develops over a period of time. As such, it gives them an avenue to ask questions about circumstances in their lives that could be making them dissatisfied without fear since the counselors are willing to help them to solve such issues. The problems facing married career individuals were captured in the following excerpts:

*We rarely get time for each other. I work away from home and my husband stays with the children. Most of the time we only have weekends together but there are a variety of roles that need to be accomplished on Saturday as Sunday is a worship day where we go to church and engage in church activities. I travel home on Friday evening and most of the time I arrive late. On Saturday I do the washing and food preparation for the whole week. We do many of these activities with my children so as to bond with them. My husband is then freed and gets time to go out with friends. Even if he arrives late I don't complain because he stays with the kids the whole week, helping them to do homework and many other things. We have very little time for each other. (A 38 year old lady)*

*Another participant shared this; There are so many expectations in my work-place, as a teacher. I'm required to be in class early morning and late in the evening for remedial classes. The day is also occupied by normal classes, marking and lesson preparation. This steals time that was to be spent with the family. This greatly affects the relationship with my spouse (25 year old lady)*

*Career has strained our relationship. When I got this new job which I earned more money I thought that life was going to be better but our relationship has been affected. I am now forced to work even over the weekends and many times I carry work home because I have to meet deadlines. One thing when there is less personnel and you are expected to do all the work then it becomes a big challenge.*

*There is too much that need to be done at the same time. I can't manage my time...(pause) you see am expected to perform family responsibilities, school work and studies. I am also studying during the holiday and I have assignments to do and complete. Sometimes I do not sleep. Therefore managing all these becomes a challenge and sometimes one of them suffers. (A 26 year old respondent)*

*There are many challenges as a parent and a worker. Some of these roles require your attention at the same time and it is very challenging...I remember a time when we were opening school and I was to go for form one selection and one of my children was not feeling well. I had a very big problem of explaining this to the person concerned so as to be able to send my deputy to represent me. Being a head teacher also demands that you are in school almost throughout the term. This means that I get little time with my husband who also is committed in his career. (A 56 year old female respondent)*

*Sometime there is nobody to leave the children with especially the young ones who have not gone to school. Maids are very unreliable now days and their father is out working too (A 32 year old lady respondent).*

In the excerpts it is evident that sometimes too much work can affect the marital relationship. From the first respondent's comments, it can be observed that career takes the majority of time from Monday to Friday. There are also roles that need to be accomplished at home over the weekend and there is freedom that the husband has to be given to be with friends. All this together leaves very little room for the couple relationship. The second respondent also emphasizes that career takes too much time. There was too much work that needed to be accomplished which left very little time for the spousal relationship. This has affected their marital relationships. This showed that some individuals were not able to spend time with their spouses as they were trying to meet their career expectations and as a result their marital relationship was affected. The findings show that there are a lot of demands at work that affect the relationship in that too much work makes couple tired at the end of the day and so spend less time bonding, and less time for interaction. This denies spouses opportunities to learn and understand each other as well as the fatigue associated with too much work which affects the couple relationship. Therefore, it is important for counselors to psycho educate couples on the importance of spending quality time together to improve their marriage or increase the likelihood of higher marital satisfaction and success. Spouse support is important in contributing to the marriage life and satisfaction; this is because they can help each other ease the many expectations that their spouses have. It is probably necessary for marriage counselors to encourage communication and support between husbands and wives (Rohany&Sakdiyah, 2010). Therefore the role of guidance and counseling is to help spouses realize the importance of spending time together so as to achieve marital satisfaction.

From the above sentiments the issues facing married career individuals can be summarized as: lack of time, exhaustion, pressure from work, role conflict, too much work etc. As can be seen career has demands that sometimes conflict with family demands. There are emergencies that can happen in the family that may also affect the job and as a result both suffer. It is also observed that outside help is very useful but when it lacks it strains the concerned spouse which also affect the career. These sentiments were similar to other studies done, for example Onsy and Amer (2014) found that the most common conflicts faced by career spouses were time spent together and lack of communication. The following challenges emerged in literature reviewed: first, both work and family roles were shown to be causing stress (Ortega &Hechanova, 2010); secondly, parenting had so much responsibility (Neault&Pickerell, 2005) and sharing household division of labor unequally (Yogev& Brett, 1985) could cause stress among career couples and hence need for an intervention (Sultana, Tabassum, & Abdullah, 2014). These situations emphasized the need for career spouses to be provided with psychological support to enable them to overcome or cope with the challenges noted to achieve marital satisfaction.

Next was the statement that 'In general, I am satisfied with our marital relationship' with a mean of 3.87 and this was followed by the statement that 'my partner meets my needs'. This revealed that many people were generally satisfied with their marital relationship and that they strive to meet the needs of their spouses. Although a few may be too busy to meet their spouses needs or may not understand the needs of their spouses. This is where intervention could help couples to discuss openly their expectations and needs and how best to satisfy those needs.

The respondents were also asked their opinion when they compared their relationship with most of the other relationships but it was obvious that the majority of the participants felt that their relationship were better. This could be because of their financial empowerment, educational empowerment which makes them in a better position to address their issues amicably or to also use outside support to assist them manage the many roles and responsibilities. Since marital satisfaction is a subjective analysis of once satisfaction, it is important that married career individuals are helped through counseling to evaluate what aspects in their relationship need to be changed and how it can be changed so as to enable the individual to live a more fully satisfying life.

Majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that 'My spouse has met my original expectations' with a mean of 3.74. In real life situations, couples go into marriage with a variety of expectations to be met in the relationship. Once they are in the relationship, some expectations may be met and others may not. A discrepancy between the expectations and the reality may happen that needs to be addressed. Couples need to discuss and openly inform their partners their expectations and what they can do to meet them. When it is done well it can lead to marital satisfaction. Failure to be resolved may lead to couples evaluating their marriages that their expectations have not been met. The role of guidance and counseling is to help couples identify the differences between what they expected their marriages to be and the reality. They can then be helped to improve their expectations by making them more realistic or lower them with the understanding that no relationship is perfect. By so doing they could achieve satisfaction.

Results also revealed that the majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement that 'I often wish that i had not gotten into the relationship' with a mean of 2.09. This means a few participants were not satisfied with their marriage and that is why they regret having entered into the relationship. This meant that many couples are committed to their relationship and hence are satisfied with it despite the many responsibilities. Sternberg, (2004) noted that commitment maintains the relationship through hard times and is an important factor in intimate relationships. It is established together with trust in a relationship and it is needed to promote commitment to and dependence on the relationship. In a study done in Qom City in Iran; Danesh&Hydarian (2006) revealed that the more the spouses trusted and loved each other, their marriage was happier. So, for marital success to be achieved, marital communication, trust, love, respect and happiness are required. An absence of even a single component will affect the quality of the marital relationship.

#### **4.3 Role of Guidance and Counseling on Marital Relationship**

Respondents were asked whether they used guidance and counseling to address relationship issues and descriptive statistics is presented in Table 5

Table 5: Couples Seeking Guidance and Counseling Services

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev
I seek counseling services when faced with career or/and family conflict	3.95	1.049
The cost of seeking counseling services is too high for me	4.16	.943
I often attend guidance and counseling seminar/ workshop/ sessions	4.29	1.144
Guidance and counseling has helped me to balance between the demands of work and family	4.30	.862
Guidance and counseling seminars/sessions/workshop has helped us achieve marital satisfaction	4.25	1.062
<b>Average mean</b>	<b>4.15</b>	

The majority of the participants agreed that guidance and counseling had helped them to balance family and career with a mean of 4.30 and followed by the statement that they “often attended guidance seminars &/or workshops” with a mean of 4.25. This meant that despite so many challenges career couples face guidance and counseling has played an essential role in helping them to balance the many roles. As one counselor put it:

*‘There are many cases that are brought for counseling that touch on marital relationships. The most common issues are breakdown in communication and infidelity. Spouses lack effective communication skills which make them build walls between them. A few cases are on drug and substance abuse’ (a 45 year old counselor)*

*‘Three quarter of the cases I handle are on marital issues. Many individuals who seek counseling admit that their spouses are reluctant to seek counseling. Younger spouses are more than the older ones. Many of them come with adjustments issues’ (A 41 year counselor)*

This revealed that since career couples are empowered people they are aware of the importance of guidance and counseling services and can utilize it if they are aware of it. Guidance and counseling could help spouses develop an exercise program that prioritizes the different roles they have for a week, which anticipates and accommodates the demands of the many roles. The role of the counselor in this case is to look at the issues relating to career and relationship, how it affects couples as individuals and how they can best change or resolve those issues. They also help come to terms with their situation, help them identify ways and means of coping more effectively and resourcefully so as to achieve satisfaction. Counselors could help those couples who have been deprived of sleep to re-examine the choices that they are making and create strategies to balance the many roles and build sufficient sleep back into their programs. In addition, guidance and counseling could help these couples to gain an understanding on the conflict arising from the different roles and expectations and how to develop a ‘work-family’ balance which could create time to relax and also be together despite the challenges faced and hence attain marital satisfaction. As one respondent had this to say:

*‘I had reached a dead end and everything was in a mess. I thought I would not live another day when my friend suggested that I see a counselor. I went without objection. It was a beginning of a reflection about my life. There was so much I carried but in counseling I learnt so many things and my life changed’. I can even decide that since am tired I can sleep from eight to six for one week and forget all the responsibilities (a 48 year old lady)*

From the excerpt, the respondent was helped through counseling. Counseling created awareness on the individual and the ‘reflection’ made the client to explore the strengths and weaknesses and may be the best way forward. This means that if guidance and counseling services were made available to married career individuals then they would be put to good use for their attitude towards it is positive. Counseling helps couples to recognize and resolve conflicts which could arise as a result of too much responsibility arising from careers, family and improve their relationships. Through marriage counseling, couples can make thoughtful decisions about building and strengthening their relationship. According to Strong (2003), counseling involves talk, that is, between the counselor and the client, through the talk the couples could be helped to gain new meaning and insight into their situations which would bring about meaningful change.

The second objective of the study was to explore the role of guidance and counseling on marital relationship. The Hypothesis tested was that there was no significant role of guidance and counseling on marital relationship. The finding on this hypothesis was  $\beta = 0.223$ ;  $p = 0.023$ . This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis and it was thus concluded that there is a significant positive effect on the role of guidance and counseling in promoting married career individuals’ marital relationship (see Table 6)

Table 6: Hypothesis Testing

Relationship	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	p
Marital Relationships <-- Guidance & Counselling	0.223	0.123	2.268	0.023

4.4 Conclusion

From the findings it is evident that guidance and counseling plays an important role in the lives of married career individuals. The hypothesis tested that there was no significant role of guidance and counseling on marital relationship was rejected ( $\beta = 0.223$ ;  $p = 0.023$   $p < 0.05$ ). This suggests that guidance and counseling could be used to help career couples address marital relationship issues. It means that it can be used to promote marital satisfaction in terms of closeness, bonding and understanding each other. If the services are made available for them then they will put it into good use and it will promote marital satisfaction. Guidance and counseling could play a role in empowering career couples to fully utilize their potential and at the same time build strong marital relationships that can withstand pressure. Couples could be empowered through skills such as problem solving, decision making abilities, assertiveness and effective communication.

V. IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNSELING

Through guiding and counseling, married career individuals are in a position to devise diverse ways of bonding together as well as listening skills which also play a hand in dealing with the regular hurdles that affect them and their lives in careers and marital relationship. Counseling could be sought by couples to strengthen their partnership and gain a better understanding of each other. It could also be used to address dissatisfaction issues by providing a platform to openly discuss and clarify issues. A guidance

and counseling program could be developed with an aim to provide an educational experience for career couples that would enable them to increase their communication and problem solving skills, listening skills and associated with effective marital functioning and the prevention of future marital distress. The program could teach and enhance the level of marital commitment, help couples change the negative attributions they have into positive, promote positive solving of problems by making appropriate adjustment and constructive communication.

To relieve the overload crisis, couples may need to share responsibility for household and child care activities, improve their time management skills, develop more realistic standards, hire outside help, and focus attention on ensuring leisure time for everyone. The overload dilemma, for instance, can be reduced by "outsourcing" quite a few housekeeping tasks. The economic situation of career couples is often such that the couple can afford this help and they should not hesitate to do so. In addition, the development of effective communication provides the basis for mutual life planning. Time management skills can be useful and can be addressed in counseling. It is important to schedule the work fairly and to balance that with leisure time for everyone. Leisure is important in maintenance of the energy and enthusiasm for a life style that includes continuing commitment to careers and to family. If all these skills are learned by couples and practiced out of counseling then it would lead them to a happy and satisfying marriage. Lastly, couples could be taught the role played by trust and commitment to the marital relationship in promoting marital satisfaction.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made:

1. Marriage counseling, with an emphasis on promoting awareness in marital happiness and satisfaction, would be helpful in addressing marital conflicts and help enhance marital satisfaction.
2. Counselors should provide a working approach which helps all career spouses with decision making process, to understand themselves and the effects of careers on their marital satisfaction
3. Counselors should focus on strengthening relationships, addressing role conflicts, enhancing life skills, and helping to foster wellness and resiliency to cope with stress, fatigue, and role overload.

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