ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY

IMPACT OF PREMARITAL EXPECTATION ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG MEMBERS OF ZETSEAT APOSTOLIC REFORMATION CHURCH ADDIS ABABA: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AS A PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

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AUGUST, 2021

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An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

A Research submitted to the school of psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirement for degree of masters in counseling psychology

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Abstract

This qualitative research explores the impact of pre-marital expectations on marriage satisfaction among members of Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church (ZARC). Five married people were selected to attend a semi-structured interview; The interview consisted of questions around their expectations of marriage before getting married, how they found it in the real-life situation and how their expectations impacted their marriage satisfaction. An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to analyze the data. The various themes that emerged indicate the existence of different dimensions of expectation about marriage before getting married and how the pre-marital expectations go within the marriage and impact their marriage satisfaction.

The identified themes were categorized under two superordinate themes. Under the first superordinate theme, which is called the general expectations, seven themes were identified: personality expectation, financial expectations, emotional intimacy, parenting style expectations, gender difference, and sexual expectation. In addition, all of the previous emergent themes, when combined into the second superordinate theme, influenced overall marriage satisfaction. As a result, the participants felt satisfied when their expectations got fulfilled and unmet expectations, on the other hand, harmed marriage satisfaction among the participants.

In conclusion, this research found that people's expectations about marriage tend to affect the satisfaction they have during their marriage. It was also identified that further research should be done to explore the exact effect from a cause-effect perspective.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

People commonly have a high value to and strive for establishing a happy marriage. This high value and strive create in them expectation which can be defined as the conscious and unconscious sentiments, thoughts, beliefs, imaginations, wishes, hopes, and dreams that one has about one's future marriage, its structural and functional realms, as well as one's interaction with the outside world based on one's experiences, settings, and constitution. (Azzopardi & Charlie, 2007).

Among others, a premarital expectation is about and shapes what individuals expect to happen in married life. (Ngazimbi, Daire, Carlson, & Munyon, 2017) Some of these premarital expectations are about gender roles, sexuality, finances, etc. According to Kelley & Burgoon, expectation about marriage can hold two forms, which are prescriptive expectations and predictive expectation. Prescriptive expectations are those that couples consider must occur in a marriage, whereas predictive expectations are those that the couples anticipate will most inevitably occur (Kelley & Burgoon, 1991).

A Study by Deressu and Girma (2019), showed that marriage expectations are a strong predictor of marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is defined as a unique personal perception of one’s happiness in marriage. There might be discrepancies between the ideal marriage and the reality which occurs on the ground of the marriage. Understanding the nature of premarital expectation’s impact on marital satisfaction helps individuals prepare for married life. (Deressu & Girma, 2019).

On this study it is aimed to explore about marriage satisfaction based on the premarital expectation of the participants. Furthermore, it is discussed how are expectations are managed on the marital relationships among couples and where these expectations arise from on the participants beliefs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

People build expectations about almost every aspect of their life. As expected, marital expectations can take front and center stage in comparison to others. Those expectations, as a result, may have an impact on that particular area of their life. People have many expectations about their marriage life before getting married, even before knowing who their spouse will be. My work experience as the head of the family department at Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church, helping many engaged and married couples over the past eight years, prompted me to conduct this research. From what I observed, after getting married, I hear some people complaining about how they thought marriage would be and how what they are experiencing is quite the opposite, while others are enjoying marriage regretting why they were late to marry. These different responses made me curious to study the nature and dimensions of premarital expectations and their impact on marital satisfaction.

Studies shows that there is a positive relationship between premarital expectation and marriage satisfaction (Johnson, 2015; Azzopardi, 2007; Kelley & Burgoon, 1991). The studies had been conducted outside of Ethiopia and cultural differences has an impact on the expectation towards marriage and marital satisfaction. The major aim of this study is to explore the impact of expectation on marital satisfaction under Ethiopia context. However, this study does not aim to make generalization to the general population of Ethiopia.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study will create awareness about the dimensions of premarital expectations and their impacts on marriage satisfaction for the Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church community. Other studies and helping professionals can benefit from the findings of the study by using it as a way of enhancing knowledge about the dimensions of expectation and its relation to marital satisfaction. The in-depth exploration of this topic can contribute to the development of assessment techniques and intervention resources. Furthermore, through identifying different themes on the study, it will inform and guide future researchers on identifying key variables for their studies.

1.3 Research Objectives

General objective

To explore the impact of premarital expectation on the marital satisfaction of married couples.

Specific objectives

1. identify the nature of premarital expectation among research participants.

2. explore the perceived impacts of premarital expectation on marital satisfaction among research participants.

1.4 Research Question

General question

What is the impact of premarital expectation on the marital satisfaction of married couples?

Specific question

1. What is the nature of premarital expectation among the research participants?

2. What are impacts of premarital expectation on marital satisfaction the among research participants?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study has been designed to discuss the relationship of premarital expectations on marital satisfaction, as it can be recognized from the objectives and study questions of the research. The scope of this study is on assessing and describing the impact of varied premarital expectations on marriage satisfaction.

1.6 Operational Definition of Key Terms

1. **Marital Expectation:** This refers to the expectation commonly experienced concerning marriage. Areas of expectation were identified under this category.
2. **Marriage Satisfaction: is** the fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs about marriage, or the pleasure derived from this.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Expectations affect every part of people's lives in a parallel manner several studies, some discussed below, have found that premarital expectation impacts marital satisfaction. A review of findings from these studies is presented below.

The intention and desire to start a family and live a happy married life are universally human. It's also natural to believe that people will be able to accomplish their goals. As the author discusses, what people expect to happen in their married lives is the subject of premarital expectations. When one's expectations aren't met, they may experience frustrations, and their communication with their spouse might be negatively affected. (Deressu & Girma, 2019)

2.1 Marital Expectation and Marital Satisfaction

Marital expectations can be defined as beliefs about how a marriage "should be" ((Juvva & Bhatti, 2006), and distorted expectations can lead to marital distress. (Vaterlaus, 2016). According to Deressu, & Girma (2019), "Marriage expectations" are a strong predictor of "marital satisfaction." Expectations cover various topics, including intentions, attitudes toward values and beliefs, and gender roles. "Marital satisfaction" was stated as to how happy people are in their marriage and is a unique experience in a marriage that each individual can only assess in terms of marital pleasure. The authors believe that pleasure is dependent on the individual's marriage expectations, needs, and desires. And thus, puts the degree of satisfaction between couples as marital satisfaction.

In addition, Deressu & Girma (2019), discovered that married couples' premarital expectations have a significant positive relationship with their marital satisfaction. This finding confirmed that expectations influence marital satisfaction. According to the literature, it's a

positive correlation, meaning that meeting marital expectations lead to higher marital happiness and satisfaction levels. (Deressu & Girma, 2019)

According to researchers, the experiences of individuals in marriages appear to be influenced by marital expectations. Unmet expectations of a spouse's behavior change can affect one's assessment of the behavior. This behavior may harm the marriage in the long run. (Ngazimbi, 2017). Likewise, it was outlined with other authors that expectations can play an influential role in emotions, claiming that people's perceptions of outcomes as positive or negative are related to their initial expectations for the result. Unexpected positive results, for example, are more pleasantly surprising than expected positive outcomes; similarly, unexpected adverse effects are more unpleasantly surprising than anticipated negative outcomes (Lee,Dixon, & Schumm, 2012). In addition, Lee, Dixon, & Schumm (2012) specified that disappointment is a feeling that occurs when the outcome of a situation differs from what was expected. These definitions also imply that the presence of disappointment is contingent on the expectation of a favorable outcome. It's impossible to have one without the other.

According to the authors, empirical research has also shown that the degree of disappointment is proportional to the difference between the actual outcome and what was initially expected. These findings suggest that if, for example, a partner disappoints you in an intimate relationship, such as a marriage, you may experience a decrease in intimacy due to one partner's distancing from the other. The authors predicted that the more minor the discrepancy, the more satisfied they would be with their effort. The more significant the difference, the less happy the individual would be (Daly & Vangelisti, 1997)

Thus, Johnson, (2015) mentioned how high expectations were associated with lower marital satisfaction unless they were met. Expectations were found to be positively correlated

with marital satisfaction. “Regardless of the standards, when they are not met in the relationship, the person exhibits relationship distress in a variety of ways,” says the author. Another research showed that couples tend to have conflict over unmet expectations regarding gender roles. (Tasew, 2021).

In behavioral confirmation, Johnson states that an individual’s expectations will lead them to act in a way that confirms their expectations. And according to how the author presents, expectations cause an individual to interpret events as being consistent with what was expected in perceptual validation. For example, regardless of what behaviors occurred, spouses’ expectations of how a problem-solving discussion would go later predicted their evaluation of the interaction. The author suggests that people’s attitudes toward relationships are resistant to change. Even the change in romantic beliefs that did occur was minor. Researchers have proposed that rather than changing people’s expectations for relationships, it is more effective to teach them the skills they need to meet their goals (Johnson, 2015)

Marriage counselors, researchers, and educators have long believed that having high expectations for marriage is harmful to the relationship. They argue that people who have high expectations for marriage are setting themselves up for disappointment when the reality of marriage does not meet their expectations. Even though the literature shows that individuals report higher marital satisfaction when their expectations are met in marriage, Johnson claims that the literature is divided. According to the author, renowned marriage researcher John Gottman, having high expectations for marriage can help protect it. Several studies have attempted to prove that high expectations are linked to marital dissatisfaction, but the results have been contradictory (Baucom,1996 & Johnson, 2015)

Thus, studies suggest that having high expectations does not necessarily imply a lower likelihood of having them met (Johnson, 2015). According to other findings, it is revealed a weak but significant link between high standards and high relationship satisfaction. As a result, this research suggests that expecting more from one's relationship is linked to higher satisfaction levels. Relationship satisfaction was found to have a much stronger positive correlation with the perception of one's expectations being met. (Daly & Vangelisti, 1997).

2.2 Dimensions of Expectation

Marriage expectations have been a strong predictor of marital satisfaction. Expectations cover many topics, including intentions, attitudes toward values and beliefs, and gender roles. Similar or complementary perspectives on each of these topics are said to improve marital quality and stability. (Deressu & Girma, 2019)

Based on previous studies' findings, different factors affect premarital expectation: Personality, Finances, Emotional Intimacy, Parenting Styles, Gender Differences, Sexual Concerns, and Unrealistic expectations are a few of them and are discussed below.

Given that people enter marriage with various personality traits, a marital relationship can be described as a bond between two distinct personalities. On the other hand, people tend to impose their behavioral and performance characteristics on their partners; as a result, their personalities can become a source of stress in their marriage. A long-term and ideal romantic relationship necessitates that people consider personality traits in addition to physical characteristics when evaluating their partner (Sayehmiri, 2020). Moreover, Richard & Lewak (1989) stated that the personality traits that two people bring to their marriage affect marital compatibility, providing it with chemistry characterized by mutual satisfaction or frequently unstable turmoil.

Regarding finances, having similar views and goals about money, life goals, autonomy, and independence is essential for couples' relationship satisfaction and financial satisfaction. In other words, respect for each other's economic views and goals is critical for a couple's relationship and financial fulfillment. Money management should be a shared responsibility for couples, they agreed. This could imply that couples "specialize" in specific financial roles or choose to participate because they enjoy them. In happily married couples' relationships, the most crucial aspect of who made financial decisions was based on who had experience, who had time, and who enjoyed doing it. (Archuleta, 2013)

In prior studies about emotional intimacy, there is a link between marital intimacy and marital satisfaction. An increase in marital intimacy has a positive effect on marital satisfaction over time. Thus, Marital satisfaction and intimacy were found to be correlated to other study findings, which confirms the current study result. Intimacy was viewed as a "relational event in which trusting self-disclosure is met with communicated empathy," and it is a long-term process that is never fully realized. It entails accepting and comprehending the other person's true self, as well as paying attention to them. (Malherbe, 2001)

Parental Style is another factor, and Mothers' high scores in both authoritative and authoritarian child-rearing styles indicate that they do not have a consistent child-rearing style, according to our findings. These findings could be interpreted as the fact that housewives spend more time with their children and are in charge of most of their children's responsibilities. When spending time with their children, fathers, on the other hand, are more socially oriented and thus try to have an entertaining permissive interaction. From this perspective, parents should be critical of themselves when raising children, taking child-rearing practices seriously, and collaborating with their spouses on child-rearing styles. When looking at the relationship

between child-rearing styles and marital harmony from this perspective, the presence of a child, cooperation in child-rearing, and sharing the responsibility for child care are all determining factors in the elicited difference in marital harmony between parents. (Müzeyyen Sevinça, 2010)

The author also indicated that a child and marriage have a complicated and contradictory relationship. According to this two-way relationship, a child will affect the marriage, and the marriage will be affected by the child. There are two ways to explain the effects of having a child in marriage. According to the theory that a child's birth certifies a couple's love and is a source of delight and satisfaction that enriches the marital relationship, a child's birth affirms the couple's love. It is a source of joy and happiness that enhances the marriage relationship. The second approach, which emphasizes the adverse effects of a child on a marriage, claims that children are a source of conflict and difficulty in a couple's intimate life and that the presence of a child causes disagreements between them. According to some research findings, a negative relationship exists between the company of a child and the quality of a marriage. (Müzeyyen Sevinça, 2010)

According to marital scholars, when we look at gender as another factor, men and women have different experiences with marriage. "There are two marriages in every marital union, his and hers." (Jackson, Miller, Oka, & Henry, 2014) And according to recent studies, in an intimate relationship, people often have predetermined expectations of their partners. Spousal role expectations, in particular, refer to the behaviors, roles, and responsibilities that men and women as intimate partners/spouses expect from one another. It's also important to note that each partner's gender role expectations may or may not be congruent with their actual role behavior or performance. (Parveen Azam Ali, 2020)

Regarding sexual concerns, it has been said that satisfied spouses report that the sexual activity that they desire and the sexual activity that they experience is more in line. The satisfaction with one's sexual relationship was significantly related to the level of family functioning in a study on the characteristics of well-functioning families for both men and women. And according to Malherbe, A. P. (2001), men have significantly less sexual intimacy than women. Men may be more dissatisfied with their sexual experiences than women, based on their lower scores. The other finding of this research, which was dissatisfaction among the men participants, was also explained by how sex in marriage unfolds by McNulty, Wenner, & Fisher, (2014), which suggests that it is fueled by novelty and mystery. As they fade away, the desire tends to decrease, which was also true for this research as it was found that when the honeymoon phase ends or the exploration ends, the excitement one way or other decreases. Before marriage, participants' expectations of marriage were frequently described as fantasy-based or unrealistic, with no foreseeing of relationship problems and visions of "happily ever after." (Vaterlaus, 2016)

Lawler, (2018) wrote in her column that cognitive dissonance is a phenomenon that might occur in any relationship when it comes to marriage because it is two different people from different backgrounds into one. This will start to adjust the attitude and perspective about things. However, cognitive dissonance is inevitable in relationships. The severity of the compromise will affect the connection to a different degree. (Lawler, 2018)

2.3 Theoretical Framework

For this study, two theoretical frameworks are used for conceptualizing purposes. The first one is Bhatti's epigenetic model of marital expectations, which examines the domains of (a) expectations from the partner, (b) expectations from marriage, and (c) expectations of and from

children. (d) expectations of the institution of marriage, (e) expectations of the partner's family of origin (e) the concept of an "ideal partner," It also aids in comprehending how various factors in a person's life influence marital expectations. The underlying assumption is that both partners enter the marriage with expectations (on all of the domains mentioned above), which are facts and exist in the social reality on a conscious level. Throughout the marriage, these indicators continue to evolve, refine, and change. (Juvva & Bhatti, 2006)

Expectations are social facts in this model, according to the theorists, and they exist in reality. At a conscious level, these expectations are always present. As a result, the marital system has been disrupted:

1. when the partner doesn't match with the subjective image of the spouse,
2. when the partner's expectations are incompatible,
3. when the institution of marriage's expectations is violated,
4. when the expectations of and from the family of the orientation of the spouse are unmet, and
5. when there is disjunction at the extent of expectations from marriage.

These annoyances are not listed in any particular order. They appear in various marriages in various combinations.

Symbolic Interactionism Theory is that the second theoretical framework claims that facts are supported and directed by symbols. Meanings are at the guts of this theory. Symbolic interaction investigates the implications that emerge from people's reciprocal interactions during a social environment, which specializes in the question of "which symbols and meanings emerge from people's interactions?" (Nilgun Aksana, 2008)

In Blumer's symbolic interaction perspective, there are three core principles: Thinking principle, meaning, and language (language provides means [symbols] for debating meaning).

The focus of meaning is acknowledged because of the center of human behavior in symbolic interaction theory.

As previously stated, the central theoretical tenets of symbolic interaction theory are that one's subjective interpretation of an object, situation, or concept plays a critical mediating role in linking one's exposure to a stimulus (object, situation, etc.) and one's reaction to that. Extending this assumption to marriage, people's perceptions of marriage or the meanings they assign to it should impact marital behavior and subsequent marital success. (Hall, 2006)

In line with Hall (2006), symbolic interaction theory contains similar assumptions that can be applied to the processes involved in making meaning out of marriage. People find out about the nature of the roles they'll be given during "anticipatory socialization. Before assuming the role of spouse, or even a potential spouse (in which one prepares for the possibility of marriage), one must first learn what it means to act in these roles and how they will be integrated into one's identity. The society/culture within which one grows and develops per Hall may be a significant source of data about individual roles. As a result, social norms influence the meaning people stretch to their identity roles related to the institution of marriage and thus influence the meaning marriage can have for them. Then, it might be expected that those for whom marriage could be relevant would share some commonality of meaning that reflects contemporary social norms and mores.

Thus, the epigenetic model of marital expectations and symbolic interaction theory is used to conceptualize this study.

Chapter Three

Methods

3.1 Introduction

The most effective research methods are those that are most appropriate for the research topic. Using qualitative research methods in the context where there is limited knowledge about a topic of study is more fitting than applying quantitative research. This method is also relevant when studying the experiences and perceptions of individuals. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), through its in-depth focus on representing the personal meaning of research participants, is found to fit the purposes of this study more than other qualitative research traditions. The IPA method is a qualitative research approach dedicated to examining how people make sense of their major life events. In that it is concerned with exploring experience in its terms, IPA is phenomenological. (Smith J. A., 2009)

3.2 Research Design

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is used for designing and guiding this study. The goal of IPA is to "explore the participant's view of the world" (Smith, 1996), which is consistent with the purpose and framework of this study in exploring marital expectations. IPA is interested in accurate grasp and representation of both personal and collective narratives. The trends and experiences of the participants are explored individually and then compared with each other. This approach also recognizes and validates the impact of the participant-researcher relationship. It acknowledges the participatory and dynamic role of the researcher in constructing and creating meaning from the lived experiences of research participants. (Chapman & Smith, 2002; Azzopardi, 2007). Therefore, this method is used to answer the following questions: What

is the nature of premarital expectation among research participants?; What are the perceived impacts of premarital expectation on marital satisfaction among research participants?

3.3 Profile of Research Context, Participants, and Researcher

This qualitative research is conducted at Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church (ZARC). It is a religious institution established in 1993 E.C. and is located in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Currently, it is serving the spiritual needs of 1500 people among which 450 are couples. For the past 20 years, the Church has been actively working to improve the quality of family life. As part of this effort, I found it important to closely examine the nature and impact of premarital expectation among members of this community. I chose the site because it actively works on family lives, and the findings of this study will help to prepare resources that fit the context.

Sampling Frame and Technique

This research used a non-representative sampling; hence, the sampling frame is limited on the participants themselves. The sampling technique that is used to select the participants is purposive sampling. As Creswell & Poth (2013), stated the essence of IPA relay on homogeneity of the participants. To be included in the study, an individual should be married and a member of ZARC. To maintain the homogeneity of personal experiences, I avoided including married individuals who are not members of ZARC. I informed 15 married members of ZARC about the study and asked if they are willing to participate in the study. Five (three women and two men) willing individuals were interviewed. The table below shows gender, length of a marriage, and an age gap between participants and their spouses.

I have been working at ZARC for about ten years in various positions. I am currently the head of the family department and a member of the leadership team. Even though I have known the participants as members of the Church, we never had an in-depth conversation about their perspectives on the topic other than this interview. Before conducting the interview, I wasn't sure the participants would be comfortable to deliberate the topic with me, but I found that we were able to build rapport quickly. I experienced the interview to be authentic and rich when I saw that my participants were openly sharing their perceptions and experiences with me.

To give some background on myself, I am married and a mother of two daughters. I've had a strong interest in families since high school and wanted my future career to involve on around them. Understanding and assisting families is critical because society is founded upon families. From my interactions with married and not yet married Individuals, I have observed that people have numerous expectations about their marriage life even if they don't know the person they will marry. I heard some people complain about how they did not find marriage life as they expected while others expressed contentment and satisfaction with their marriage. These contrasting personal experiences made me interested to examine the nature and impact of premarital expectations. I expect the findings of this study to inform my work with the population.

Table 1

List of Participants

Demographic segmentation	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
Marital age	1 year and 9 months	2 years	22 years	5 years	8 years
Age gap	8 months	1 year	2 years	3 years	5 months

Demography of Participants

3.4 Data Collection Instrument

Using open-ended or semi-structured interviews helps achieve a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. This is a preliminary process before developing standardized norms, instruments, and resources in the area (Azzopardi, 2007). In line with this, a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews fits better to identify the dimensions of premarital expectations experiential underpinnings and their impact on marital satisfaction. With this in mind, semi-structured interview questions were prepared to elicit participants' perceptions and facilitate their sharing taking place the topic. One-to-one interviews are good to develop a rapport; and create a conducive environment that allows participants to freely think, speak, and be heard. They are ideal in giving participants a context of uninterrupted, in-depth, and free exploration of the issue.

The interview questions were piloted with two volunteering married people who share the same demographic profile similar to the actual participants. Volunteer participants liked most of the interview questions and then based on their feedback and my assessment, I edited some

questions and an additional question. The interview questions were initially developed in English and were then translated into Amharic. Interview questions were designed with some flexibility to allow the researcher to ask additional related questions when necessary.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

I requested and was granted permission to conduct interviews with members of Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church (ZARC). I informed 15 married individuals about the study and told them to participate in the interview only if they are interested and able. They were also notified that the information would be used solely for research purposes; their anonymity will be kept throughout the process; that there would be no right or wrong answers to any of the interview questions; and they were encouraged to freely share their experiences and opinion. Before the interview was conducted, they signed the consent form that honored the above-mentioned rights. (See Appendix B).

Following the oral and written consent, each participant was interviewed at ZARC. ZARC was selected for its quality and convenience. Each interview was conducted smoothly without distractions. At the end of each interview, participants were asked to give their feedback about the interview. They appreciated the reflective process and said they were comfortable and relaxed to share their stories. Two of them found it helpful to revisit the strength and weaknesses of their marriage life.

All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. After transcription, it was translated back to English. I carried out all the interviews myself, and the interview took on average about an hour. Before the actual interview, participants were given the interview questions to give them a chance to reflect on the topic A copy of the guiding questions of the interview has been included (See Appendix A).

3.6 Data Analysis

Following the transcription and translation of the interview, the first step in the analysis was to familiarize oneself with the transcripts by reading and re-reading them. I jotted down relevant and exciting statements in the margins and a separate notebook. Relevant themes for the particular couple were also jotted down in the opposite margin. After re-reading the transcripts, lower-order themes were discovered. The transcripts were cross-referenced repeatedly to ensure that the emerging themes were well-founded and well-supported. Once the codes and themes in a transcript had been exhausted, a new one was analyzed in the same way. All transcripts were analyzed and coded using the same method. Peers looked over sections of the transcripts and found themes that were similar to what I had seen. (Charlie, 2007)

After all of the transcripts had been analyzed, the themes were cross-referenced for similarities and differences, and a better understanding of the interconnections between the transcripts and the themes was gained. As a result, it was discovered that specific patterns in the transcript were similar. Some themes were more prominent than others. Following a thorough examination of these emerging themes, I found that they share a strong connection (common ground), causing them to be grouped. Finally, the interpretive process created a superordinate theme that grouped all of the previously identified emergent themes. The transcripts were used throughout the process to ensure that the themes, categories, and superordinate themes were all rooted in the raw data (Charlie, 2007)

While analyzing the data, it has tried to maintain the validity of the results in different ways. One was through triangulating the original data and maintaining the consistency of the results.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The participants gave oral and written consent for their participation in the interview and the subsequent process of data analysis. (See Appendix A) The participants were shown the potential interview questions before giving consent. They were offered the right to withdraw at any time during data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were also kept through the writeup process. (See Appendix B)

Chapter Four

Results and Analysis

After the transcription and translation of the interview, I read and reread the transcript line by line, imagining the participant's voice during subsequent readings. I needed to ask questions about what the word, phrase, or sentence meant to me and then double-check what it meant to the participants because having a rational conversation with each line of the transcript is critical. I used a hard copy of the transcript to underline important points and take notes for analysis. Part of the work involved taking notes, emphasizing the types of words they use and how they say them, and commenting on the concept. (Smith J. A., 2009) (Charlie, 2007)

As a result, certain patterns from the interviews were discovered to be similar. Some themes stood out more than others. Similar patterns are collected and grouped under a common theme. The following were the emergent themes that were discovered:

Table 2

List of Emergent Themes

- Gender Role
- Unrealistic Expectation
- Personality Fit
- Emotional Intimacy
- Sexual Issues
- Finances
- Parenting Style
- Cognitive Dissonance/Disturbance
- Conflict
- Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction

Emergent Themes

Table 3

List of Superordinate Themes

I. General Expectations	II. Perceived impact on Marriage satisfaction
▪ Gender Role	▪ Cognitive Dissonance/ Disturbance
▪ Unrealistic Expectations	▪ Conflict
▪ Personality Fit	▪ Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction
▪ Emotional Intimacy	
▪ Sexual Issues	
▪ Finances	
▪ Parenting Style	

Superordinate Themes

After thoroughly analyzing these emergent themes, I discovered a strong connection (common ground) between them, causing them to fall into a specific category. As a result, I created a superordinate theme for each of them. The two superordinate themes identified: General expectation and perceived impact on marital satisfaction. General expectation refers to the expectation commonly experienced concerning marriage. Areas of expectation were identified under this category. The second superordinate theme interview focused not only on the dimensions of the premarital expectations but also on the impacts of these expectations on marriage satisfaction. This explores whether it was positive, that is, if it was met, or negative if the expectations were unmet. When expectations are not met, they may be partially fulfilled or entirely unfulfilled.

Using the above two superordinate themes, the emergent themes were categorized according to their connection to one another.

4.2 Superordinate Theme I: Expectation areas

In this category, analysis of the interview transcript led to the development of themes of expectations. I organized these themes under a superordinate theme called 'expectation areas.' As can be expected, participants talked about various areas of expectations that I grouped by labeling the theme with a term that shows what the expectation is about. These expectations were developed under a label of a subtheme that was further grouped under a superordinate theme. This process was done based on the frequency and/or emphasis participants gave to similar expressions of topics of expectations about married life. Because it was not possible to develop an exhaustive list of expectations mentioned in the interviews, the focus was given to the development and analysis of themes of expectations that were emphasized either by one or discussed by several participants. Those expectations that were mentioned on a few occasions were grouped with similar ones based on the strength of the connection between themes.

4.2.1 Gender Roles:

Participants often talked about their expectations and thoughts about the nature of marriage in terms of roles and responsibilities they expected from themselves and their future spouse. They often viewed these roles within the gendered framework. Their perceptions reveal that they expect males to be successful in certain roles in marriage relationships while women should be responsible for others. For instance, they shared perspectives that men should be primary bread winners and should take responsibility for the safety and security of the family while women should take the lead in parenting and the daily care for the needs of the family. Their thoughts reflected more gender role differentiation than overlap in a way consistent with the historical and cultural context in Ethiopia that assigns particular and separate roles, behaviors, and expectations for men and women. The strength and centrality of these gendered

roles are evident from the participants' gendered framework when they talked about various components of the marriage relationship including finances, sexual intimacy, parenting, safety and security, personality. etc. From a gendered framework than a gender-neutral one.

One of the interviewees stated that his wife's father is a very skilled individual who settles and gets things done before anyone notices. He talked about the impact of his father-in-law's behavior on his wife referring to her expectations that there are some roles set aside to be done only by a husband and father. This interviewee spoke about how this expectation caused him a challenge because he was not raised in a family that made such a level of distinction between the roles of the man's and woman's role.

> "Even from her upbringing, I could tell her father was a talented individual. Like, he is the kind of person that gets things done before they even know and keeps the family upright; When it comes to me, I had never worked anything before I got married. I have never helped with anything. I walk in, I go out, I eat, I drink, and I live. And I see a significant gap in myself. When she is expecting something, the husband will fix it soon. What she faced is quite the opposite. Our closet door has been broken for months, but I called my brother to come and fix it."

Another example mentioned by the participant was:

> "Then there's the problem with the house lock! Uh! Oh my God, one of the things that caused a fight between us was locking up the house. The house she knows is very secure, and the father locked the house and everything. And in our house, I have forgotten to lock the door of our house many times; it became a source of

conflict. The husband she knew was the one who checked and closed the door and secured everything."

4.2.2 Unrealistic Expectation:

The findings of my analysis of the conducted interview indicate that unrealistic expectations that do not recognize the truth about marriage, particularly the difficulties involved in achieving something related to marriage, exist. Some of them had romantic ideas of marriage where all needs are met perfectly and consistently. According to the interviewee, this expectation is created by observing other people's marriages.

> "And from my experience in church, I had such an expectation that we would have a wonderful marriage."

Another unrealistic expectation was that marriage would be a place of endless pleasure where both partners would spend their time traveling to different countries and recreational places. According to my analysis, the interviewee holds her spouse accountable for contributing to the "fairytale" kind of life she expected from her marriage. However, it appears that her frustration stemmed from the failure of her high expectations to be met after the marriage. The interviewee also mentioned an incident in which she and her husband disagreed about the importance of staying in a hotel one night.

> "Before we married, he made me think of a fairytale kind of life. I raised this thing until now. He used to say; I don't know how much we stay here in "Addis Ababa" throughout the year. But I don't even remember when we went out. I remember a day that we fought over planning to stay a night in the hotel; because he said, 'why do we do this while we have a house?"

4.2.3 Personality Fit:

According to the findings of the study, one of the main expectations observed is personality fit. Participants used the term personality to describe their own and their spouses' behavioral patterns. Interviewees mentioned that it is difficult to have the same personality as another person. In a marriage, having the same understanding is essential, and this is achieved through open communication. Willingness to adapt to change and grow is also a factor when it comes to personality expectations. For instance, one of the participants mentioned as follows:

> "I began to realize how difficult it is to be like-minded with someone with a different personality."
>
> "We have to have the same understanding, about marriage, the relationship, about financial issues, personal development, everything we have should come around the same understanding."
>
> "If we start to deal with an issue; we will not sleep without solving it. Even if midnight passes,"

Another essential point extracted from this study is, understanding and accepting personality differences contributes to satisfaction and happiness in marriage. Some personality traits are expressed when certain conditions such as living together or anger is met. Due to differences in personalities, conflict may happen. One reason for conflict may be compared. But among the interviewees stated what she was expecting from him and how she realized her husband thinks through time.

> "The way he expresses his love and respect is different from what I see in the family of my friends. Now, I understand that this is the way he expresses his love, and I accept and live happily about it."

4.2.4 Emotional Intimacy:

In the premarital stage, people used to expect that marriage will be the most intimate place they will ever have in their life without considering the inconveniences in it. As many of the interviewees stated, there are a lot of responsibilities in marriage. But they get into it without even considering the responsibilities it holds.

Especially in the early stage of a relationship, because of exaggerated expectations about marriage, they face difficulties in deciding logically. As well as, because of strong emotional attachment in the first season of the relationship, they tend to compromise some issues to solve them in marriage.

One of the sides of emotional intimacy is projected through communication. Some people expect a higher level of communication in marriage, but they become disappointed with their spouse due to some personality differences. They tend to think their partner is not willing to be the most intimate person.

> "From the time we were engaged, some things that I expected to increase in marriage did, and some didn't. This might be the reason for not spending time together. Meaning, what I expected to increase in marriage, stayed the same or some of the things decreased."
>
> "I don't mind if we don't spend much time together. I don't say such things; why aren't we having the quality time or you haven't called me; which used to bug me a lot." In fact, in this case, I am the one who is failing to meet his needs."

4.2.5 Sexual Issues:

A Sexual expectation is another dimension of expectation analyzed from the interview. A Sexual expectation is one of the common expectations experienced by most of my interviewees.

The sexual expectation is mainly concerned about the expected frequency of sex experience and appetite for sex exhibited by married couples.

One of the interviewees frankly explained his beliefs and expectations concerning sex to be experienced in marriage. He said he had never been involved in any kind of sexual activity before marriage. He had imagined how it would be using the word "fantasy." to explain the premarital expectations concerning the marriage sex life when he recalls it.

This whole new experience impacted the interviewee. He claims to be hurt by it. He **starts** to question why? Until he figured it out to understand that sex has a different meaning or impression for him and her. It has been a long journey to understand this. There were nights he was irritated and upset. He even ruminated on the creator because He didn't create her in the same desire as his. He claims to have done everything to have sex, but he failed to have one many in days. However, things are becoming better and more natural as he understands the sex perception differences between men and women.

> "And another thing I expected from marriage, of course, was to be sexually fulfilled, every day. If possible, two times a day; even three or four times. What a fantasy! That's how it was! Because I haven't been involved in anything like this before, I used to say that after getting married, we will exercise such things freely and easily, stuff like that. But unfortunately, that wasn't the case."

When the expectation concerning sex life before marriage is easily inside marriage, there is a strong feeling of satisfaction that accompanies it. Though there might be many who face challenges about their sex life inside marriage, there still are satisfied families due to the fulfilled expectation of their desires.

"God has given us a wonderful sexual life. To the level that he speaks to people in a dream. Someone told us in a way we would understand. In his dream he saw a beautiful bed with flowers, so he ran to visit our bed. He thought he saw our bed, but he said this is not the bed I saw in my dream, then he went disappointed. But for us, it was a confirmation. Because we experience it. I think the presence of sexual satisfaction plays a key role in our marriage."

4.2.6 Finances:

In the study conducted, the study group had predetermined expectations regarding financial management in marriage. Participation and involvement in decision-making is one expectation. According to one participant, the burden of financial responsibility, management, and lack of freedom like premarital life puts strain on the relationship.

"As I am the provider, "the man" of the house, I have to follow up on this matter. When I think about something, I think of it deeply; fulfill it myself. That's what I'm used to. Nevertheless, she wants to hear my plans in detail. Like, after we do this, we do that; she wants to hear that, this gives her satisfaction. But I want to do this within myself and finally, tell her just as soon as all the arms and legs of the idea are joined. Unfortunately, she doesn't want that, she wants to be Involved and participate there. She has that expectation every time."

Another participant, on the other hand, mentioned how he wants his wife to participate in the financial issues; that is, to discuss their income and make decisions together. But she is a person that avoids such kinds of conversations.

"At our home, our father was a money spender, and our mother was a good saver. Until it seems like our father's job was to scatter money, and our mother's job

> was to collect the money that was scattered. Although I am not a money spender like my father in my family, I want my wife to play a key role in finance. She is not a money spender but is more careful than I am. But I expect her to be more involved in our financial decisions. For example, I want to tell her about our monthly income, to discuss what we were going to spend openly, but I found it very difficult to sit down and talk because she will be stressed and want to avoid the conversation as much as possible."

4.2.7 Parenting Style:

According to the interview conducted, I have analyzed that one of the dimensions of expectation towards marriage is parenting style. Due to different reasons, the interviewees had developed certain beliefs (some disclosed and some are hidden) towards child-raising.

These expectations have brought differences in the parenting style among the parents. For example, there was a clear difference between the wife's and the husband's perspectives of parenting their kids. There were moments in which the husband permitted things that the wife forbids. One of the participants mentioned as:

> "My husband and I have a hard time uniting because we have such different ideas about our children. Sometimes I get confused; the things I say no are too easy for him to say yes. It doesn't matter to him, even while sitting together; when I forbid the kids to do something, he will allow them."

Another interviewee explained how what he saw growing up as a child and what he later saw in his married life contradicted him. He stated that his mother taught him about parental love. She was a nurturing and protective housewife mother. He then expected his wife to parent their children in the same manner as his mother.

> “My mother is a woman who loves her children very much, extra caring, and a woman whose life calling seems like raising her children. And she’s so busy with our issues; there is no issue of us that she doesn’t know about. When we look for her, she is always there for us. When we fall, we feel her shock more than our falling. My wife is not that kind of woman. She is unused to running when a child falls. I am the one who runs first. Getting shocked when a child falls, caring when they get a little scratch, and responding quickly when a child calls, they might get a response after they called three or four times. And it was a miracle for me. To the point of saying, what a cruel person have I married? When I learned this after we had our first child, I had reached the level of deciding that we should not have more than one child.”

4.3 Superordinate Theme I Interconnectedness

During the investigation process between the themes were classified as belonging to the first superordinate theme: general expectation. Interdependence has been discovered. For instance, it seems like the gender role expectation has some sort of connection with almost all of the other six themes, namely personality fit, financial management, emotional intimacy, parenting style, sexual and unrealistic expectations. Such as, when trying to look at the finance’s premarital expectation side, people develop beliefs in their financial responsibility and management as a man and as a woman, which shows the gender role. One of the participants said:

> “As I am the provider, “the man” of the house, I have to follow up on this matter.”

Almost all of the women in the study have a say in emotional issues with their husbands. Some are satisfied, while others wish they had the same intimacy with their husbands as they did during their courtship.

> “I’ve been dating for five years. For sure, it’s been a long time from now. By then, we used to talk a lot; there were times where we talked the whole night. While I was at my home, we had a residential phone, and I would deliberately say that I’m sleeping in the living room, and after everyone went to bed, we talked for very long hours. Likewise, I thought it would increase when we are married, but it didn’t happen as I expected.”

Some of the participants’ expectation of the parental style of their spouse is directly derived from what they saw from their parents. For example, one of the interviewee's beliefs arose from his relationship with his mother. As a result, because his mother was the primary parent figure in their upbringing, he sees child care as primarily his wife's responsibility as the mother of their children.

> “My mother is a woman who loves her children very much, extra caring, and a woman whose life calling seems like raising her children. And she’s so busy with our issues; there is no issue of us that she doesn’t know about. When we look for her, she is always there for us. When we fall, we feel her shock more than our falling. My wife is not that kind of woman.”

Some of the participants mentioned how sexual expectation is dependent on gender. For the women, it's more about relationship, affection, and intimacy first, while for the men, it seems to be the intercourse itself alone could be ok. One participant puts this as:

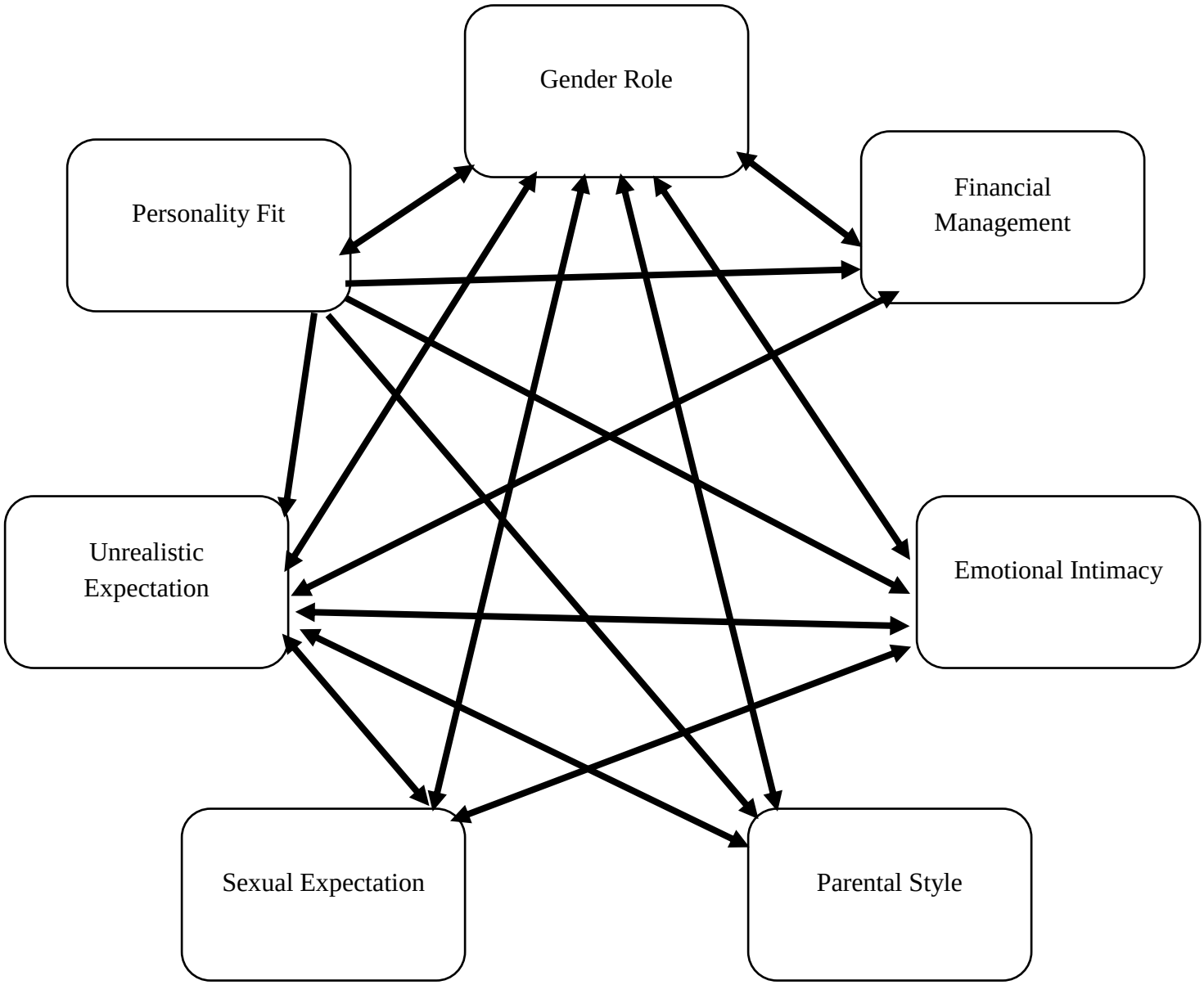
> "Sex for me and sex for her is different. Completely different. Sex for me is simple, but for her, it is emotional, psychological, and a hormone. There are different things."

Another observation is that the gender of the participants played a role in some of their beliefs and expectations, implying that their gender influenced their personality in some way. Furthermore, it is discovered that both the women and men interview participants had unrealistic expectations based on the gender of their spouses, which could not be seen in real-life situations.

In general, gender roles and unrealistic expectations have an interconnection with the other dimensions of expectation. Likewise, the personality fit expectation by itself has a connection with five dimensions: financial management, emotional intimacy, parenting style, gender role, and unrealistic expectations. On the other hand, emotional intimacy has a connection with four dimensions: personality, gender role, sexual, and unrealistic expectations. Lastly, the investigation indicates that the other three dimensions: financial management, parenting style, and sexual expectations, have a connection with only three other dimensions of the premarital expectations. (See figure 1: Superordinate Theme I)

Figure 1

Superordinate Theme I Interconnection



4.4 Interpretation of Results: Expectation Areas

After analyzing the emergent themes under the first category; expectation areas concerning marriage, it is clear that the interviewees had multidimensional expectations. Expectations aren't the only thing to deal with. They demand that a collection of multi-variant beliefs be fulfilled in the future. The findings show that people, whether they realize it or not, have expectations about their future marriage. And they expect their desires to be met within their marriage.

The above seven dimensions of expectations – gender role, unrealistic expectations personality fit, emotional intimacy, sexual issues**,** finances, and parenting style are the most common areas in which the interviewees made their expectations of their future marriage before getting married. Each has a connection with the other.

4.5 Superordinate Theme II: Perceived Impacts

In this category, the analysis was made to discuss how these expectations impacted their marriage satisfaction. Participants used different words and sayings that indicate the impact on them and their marriage as well.

The analysis of the interview shows the following possible impacts on marriage in general:

- Cognitive Dissonance/ Disturbance
- Conflict
- Marital Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction

4.5.1 Cognitive Dissonance:

Some of my interviewees indicated the impact of unmet expectations on the cognitive stability of their beliefs. Cognitive dissonance is the term used by psychologists to refer to the

paradox that occurs between two values or beliefs. Such a scenario created confusion, frustration, even anxiety in the interviewees.

One interviewee explained his experience of a complete collision of beliefs while he engages in a real-life setting. He said he was shocked and unable to comprehend what was going on. He tried to fix it, but nothing changed. He finally turns into confusion for a while till he figures it out through other means.

> "When being a mother, I took the meaning completely from my mother. I was shocked that this was not what was happening. It took me a while to realize that her motherly meaning and love were different and to have two children and add the third. For example, for education, she takes responsibility. I see her worrying about things that I don't care about.
>
> There are many expressions of her love. Every time I figured these things out, I said, so, this girl is not cruel, so she loves her children. It took me a while to grasp the meaning of her love expression. This also was an issue that has reached to the level of changing the marriage's atmosphere."

4.5.2 Conflict:

There is an undeniable fact of conflict in a marriage. It's unavoidable. When children are added to the family, there are even more stories to tell. The critical thing to remember is that there is always something to learn from discussing and viewing an issue from various perspectives. Unmet expectations can be mentioned as one reason why marriage suffers from conflict. The interviews were conducted to support this fact to a certain level. Analyzing the interviews regarding this category gave me a good insight into how unmet or unrealistic

expectations could become a source of conflict in marriage. Take a look at the following response taken from one of the interviews:

> "When we think about marriage before we get married, we don't think we'll fight. But there is a lot of conflicts, and when children come, it's a different story."

One of the interviewees' expectations of how a man of the house should carry himself is different from what she came across in her family back home. She had a very tight father and had a very authoritarian tendency. On the other hand, her husband is a bit careless, which is seen as a source of conflict.

> "He always says to me, "Don't make it a matter of life and death." For example, if I make a plan to do something, I must follow through on it. He is always saying, "If you can't, you can't, so why don't you postpone it?" This is a common topic of conversation in our house."

The interviewee grew up in a strict family; where everything had to be fixed on the day it was broken. On the other hand, her husband is relaxed on matters of life, and he is a person of tomorrow. This has become a reason for conflict between them as she takes things seriously, and he has more of a reluctant personality.

> "There is a way of life I grew up with; for example, even if a blot drops, it should be made the same day; don't even think about damage to goods. Because I've grown accustomed to it, I expect something similar at home. My love might not be able to do it for a month. I mean, he's a thinker for the future."

4.5.3 Marriage Satisfaction:

Marriage Satisfaction is the fulfillment of one's wishes, expectations, or needs about marriage, or the pleasure derived from this. One of the precise impacts of fulfilled expectations

on marriage is satisfaction, while unfulfilled expectations would result in dissatisfaction, as can be seen from the interviews conducted. The analysis of the discussions under this category shows that fulfilled expectations led to marriage satisfaction, and the unmet expectations negatively impacted marriage satisfaction.

One participant, for example, is delighted in her marriage and expresses her happiness by saying that she has found her marriage to be exactly what she expected before getting married and that she trusts her husband to be more stable than herself.

> "Honey keeps on surprising me; he listens to me while I am talking about my day, whether it is essential for him or not. My love has made me valuable in his family. I look like their daughter when I am with them. Even his mother says that it is better if she asks me something."
>
> "I want to say that there is no one like my love practicing the scripture saying, "Love does not want its own." He wouldn't think for himself. He always wants me to have all the good things."

On the other hand, one of the participants stated that he expected to be heard. In his job as a teacher, for example, he had the opportunity to be heard. He has every expectation of being accepted because he is in that position. In his marriage, he didn't find the same thing. His wife doesn't take things just because he says so; she thinks about it first. That was a problem for him because it prevented him from experiencing complete satisfaction of being heard.

> "I am heard a lot from the beginning… but if I just told her this is white, she wouldn't just accept by saying; okay, it's white. Uh! How white is it? Why is it white?"

One of the primary reasons that bring satisfaction in marriage is when previous expectations are fulfilled. One of the interviewees said that he likes that his wife has confidence in him, and she believes in his visions. He also likes independent women and is happy and surprised that he got a rare one in her.

> "What I appreciate and wish every marriage could be like mine is the respect and love she has for me. I can see her regard, love, and dedication to me. This gives my life strength."

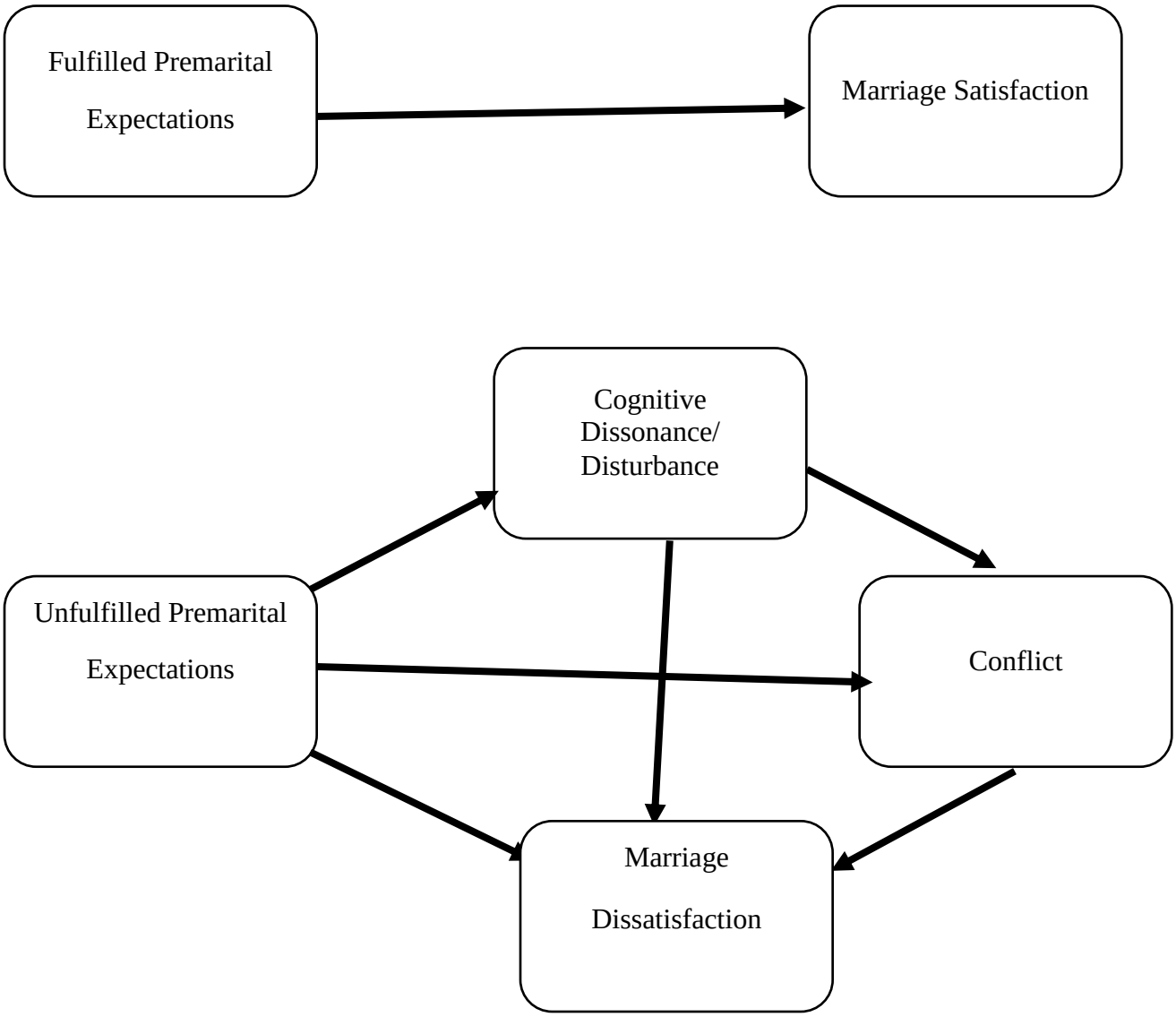
4.6 Superordinate Theme II Interconnectedness

According to the analysis done in this category, met expectations resulted in marriage satisfaction, whereas unmet expectations resulted in marriage dissatisfaction. Not only that, but when people encounter situations that contradict their expectations, their beliefs become cognitively unstable, resulting in cognitive dissonance and conflict may happen as a result.

After investigating the connection of the second superordinate theme, it is discovered that when people's premarital expectations are met, they are satisfied. Unfulfilled expectations, on the other hand, may result in one or more of the following three outcomes: marital dissatisfaction, cognitive dissonance, and conflict. Unfulfilled expectations can sometimes cause cognitive dissonance, which can lead to conflict and, eventually, marital dissatisfaction. Alternatively, the created cognitive dissonance or conflict as a result of unmet expectations may eventually lead to marital dissatisfaction. (See figure 2: Superordinate II Connections)

Figure 2

Superordinate Theme II Interconnectedness



4.7 Interpretation of Results: Perceived Impacts

Even though these expectations affect marriage differently, this analysis is concerned with a few of them. This is because the interview displays these majorly above others. The analysis also shows that expectations can even be one possible source of conflict in marriage.

Further research has to be conducted to understand the relationship between expectation and conflict. However, there are some indications in which conflicts can emanate from participants' expectations in marriage.

Some of the interviewees also exhibited a certain level of disturbances because of their prior expectations of marriage. When they found it quite different from their expectation, it impacted their beliefs and values. Cognitive dissonance is one of the phenomena that the participants experienced while they got into marriage. Some even couldn't comprehend what was happening.

Finally, it was discovered that there were seven dimensions of expectations (emergent themes) in the first superordinate theme, which was referred to as general expectations. Personality, Finances, Emotional Intimacy, Parenting Styles, Gender Differences, Sexual Concerns, and Unrealistic Wishes are all factors to consider.

All of the above-mentioned emergent themes combined into a single superordinate theme impacted marital satisfaction in general. As a result, the participants experienced a sense of satisfaction as their expectations were met. Unmet expectations, on the other hand, harmed the participants' marriage satisfaction.

4.8 Reasons for unfulfilled expectations

The participants genuinely discussed that not all of their expectations were fulfilled in the manner they expected. There was a clear deviation/gap between their expectation and the reality they found out about the marriage. Either the expectations were utterly disappointed, or they were not unfilled to the expected level. There were underlying reasons why these expectations were fulfilled. The perceived reason behind every unfulfilled expectation analyzed from the interview includes the following.

- Misunderstanding/Miscommunication
- Individual's Unresolved issues
- Unrealistic Expectation
- Personality Difference

4.8.1 Misunderstanding/Miscommunication

One of the reasons those expectations were not fulfilled is the miscommunication, hence misunderstanding, of the expectations. The analysis of the interview reflects this phenomenon. One interviewee says. There was a change in how she views relationships after some lack of understanding of her first relationship, which, in turn, is impacting her marriage now.

> "Because of what had happened to my first relationship, it had done this to me. My x and I did not understand each other. I felt as if I became very needy because I ended up being someone who argues and cries and says, what is this? and stuff like that. So, after thinking about a lot of things, it all somehow led me to the decision that there is no such romantic life in a relationship. Thus, in my current relationship, I have become more ignorant and emotionally invested than before."

The interviewee says there is a lack of communication in her marriage, and she feels there are things that she can't openly discuss with her husband. She even refrains from asking questions on specific topics. And that is seen to keep her from realizing her previous expectations. Not understanding how to communicate the feelings and emotions inside was a problem faced by the interview. Failing to frame expectations and beliefs is the reason for unfulfilled expectations.

> "when something happens to him, he doesn't want to talk about it. It might be due to situations at the office. It could be with certain people, but he will be impacted by it and be depressed. When he comes home being like that, the house will be filled with that feeling. This is a problem for me. It would be easier for me if the issue were with me. We would talk about it. Either he or I would say sorry, and it would be resolved soon. But with others, he wants to deal with it alone. When he doesn't tell me anything about it, as he is an introvert, I will begin to wonder what happened to him and why he was like that."

4.8.2 Individual Unresolved Issues

One of the reasons why the interviewee's expectations were unmet was because the interviewee had individual unresolved issues. The interviewee had to sit down with herself and make important decisions at times. Those unresolved personal issues were the underlying reason for the unmet marriage expectations.

4.8.3 Unrealistic Expectation and Personality Difference

The unrealistic expectations and the personality differences have been discussed under the general expectations section. It can be inferred from the summary that both components were also a potential reason for unmet marriage expectations.

(See both concepts under the general expectations category).

4.9 Interpretation of Results: Reasons for Unfulfilled Expectations

There might be numerous reasons why these expectations are not fulfilled. However, the participants indicated the above possible reasons for the gap created. Communication plays a significant role in helping the other party understand what kind of expectation you have. Where there is no clear communication, misunderstanding might be outstanding. Henceforth, there is a

high probability for expectations not to be fulfilled. Likewise, personality differences and unresolved personal issues contributed a significant portion to unfulfilled expectations. Participants walked in their terms and ways of understanding patterns. This also means that they would fulfill the other party's expectation on their terms, not in the course of the expectant.

The other primary reason for unfulfilled expectations goes to the nature and degree of the expectation itself. Some of the participants' expectation was somehow exaggerated and highly difficult to become true. These unrealistic expectations couldn't be fulfilled due to the lack of capacity or availability to perform. Expectations that are far from facts (which are not based on truth) and do not consider the ability become unrealistic. Hence, they fail to be fulfilled.

Table 4

Superordinate Theme I	Superordinate Theme II
General Expectations	**Perceived impact on Marriage satisfaction**
▪ Personality related	▪ Satisfaction/ Dissatisfaction
▪ Financial related	▪ Cognitive dissonance/ disturbance
▪ Emotional Intimacy	▪ Conflict
▪ Parenting Style	
▪ Gender Difference	
▪ Sexual concern	
▪ Unrealistic wishes	

Analysis Result Summary Table

Chapter Five

Discussion

The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of premarital expectations and their perceived impact on marital satisfaction. As described in the previous chapter, the findings of these studies are organized and discussed in two superordinate themes, expectation areas and perceived impacts, which further are elaborated through sets of themes under each of these two categories. Seven emergent themes were identified within the first superordinate theme: Gender Roles, Unrealistic expectations, Personality, Emotional Intimacy, Sexual Issues, Finances, and Parenting Styles. Under the second superordinate theme, perceived impacts, three themes were identified: cognitive dissonance/ disturbance, conflict, and satisfaction/ dissatisfaction.

There are observed interconnections among emergent themes under each superordinate category. This discussion mainly focuses on exploring the prominent connections among emergent themes. For instance, when looking at personality fit, I observed that other themes interact with personality fit. To give an example, a person who defines their personality as dominant and extrovert may expect their spouse to be emotionally expressive and responsive in a way that matches their personality. This shows that personality fit and emotional intimacy interact. In my observation, each emergent theme as well as the interconnection between themes influences marital expectation and its related impact on marital satisfaction. However, the way gender role expectation cuts across emergent themes make it a call for a focus in this discussion. Because of practical limitations, I chose to discuss the interaction between gender role expectations with the remaining emergent themes.

Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed that participants had expectations about their as well as their future spouse's role and responsibility within the marriage relationship.

Most of these role expectations are categorized in terms of gender roles where each spouse is expected to take the primary responsibility for a particular role as a husband or as a wife. One's childhood observations of their parents and surrounding marriages since childhood may contribute to categorizing the responsibilities in a marriage relationship based on a spouse's gender. The person may experience satisfaction when their spouses embrace and respond to their ascribed gender roles. Likewise, spouses may experience dissatisfaction with their own and/or their spouses' roles in the marriage if their perceived ideal roles are not experienced in real life.

These observations are consistent with findings from previous studies According to Parveen Azam Ali (2020), in an intimate relationship people often have predetermined expectations of their partners. Spousal role expectations, in particular, refer to the behaviors, roles, and responsibilities that men and women as intimate partners/spouses expect from one another. It's also important to note that each partner's gender role expectations may or may not be congruent with their actual role behavior or performance. Men and women have different experiences with marriage, according to marital scholars. "There are two marriages in every marital union, his and hers." (Jackson Jeffrey B., 2014)

Another theme participants explored focuses on perceptions and expectations about managing behavior and personality differences between spouses. They mentioned that they had expectations that their personality might be different from their spouses and they will be able to work through the resulting differences by maintaining open communication. Given that people enter marriage with various personality traits, a marital relationship can be described as a bond between two distinct personalities (Sayehmiri K. K., 2020)

As it was observed with the other emergent themes gender influenced some of their beliefs and expectations, implying that their personality is impacted by their perceived gender role which also has implications on their expectation for the personality patterns of their spouses to be shaped by cultural expectations for the opposite gender. In line with another study, women are more aware of relational issues than men and have more complex thinking about relationships. Because women are socialized to place a relatively high value on interdependence, communication and effect are typically central to defining and evaluating intimacy (Vangelisti A. L., 1997). Thus, personality fit is one of the unavoidable aspects of expectation because it is influenced by other factors, such as gender, as mentioned above, in influencing marriage satisfaction. Furthermore, Richard & Lewak (1989) stated that the personality traits that two people bring to their marriage affect marital compatibility, providing it with either mutually satisfying or frequently unstable chemistry.

The gender role expectation has also influenced the financial management expectation of the participants in that; there are some sets of conventional rules that categorize the role of husbands and wives when they get married. People develop beliefs in their financial responsibility and management as men and women, which shows the gender role. Role identifications are consistent in another study that describes it as couples who have been married for a while tend to recognize a division of labor. The husband is the expert in some areas and the wife in others. (Ronald L. Simons, 1990)

On the other hand, regardless of their gender, some people may want to engage deeply in finance issues while their spouses would wish for space. On the other hand, some may wish to involve their spouse in detailed planning and decision-making while their spouses would be stressed cause it’s not enjoyable. In line with the above writer, money management should be a

shared responsibility for couples. This could imply that couples “specialize” in specific financial roles or choose to participate because they enjoy them. The most crucial aspect of making financial decisions in happily married couples’ relationships was who had experience, time, and wanted to do it. (Archuleta L. K., 2013)

Regarding the “emotional intimacy” of the dimension of premarital expectation, most women in the current study have a say in their husbands’ emotional issues. Some are content, while others wish they could have had the same intimacy with their husbands as they did during their courtship while the men participants didn’t mention it once. This, in other words, implies that the emotional intimacy issue seems more coherent with wives than husbands. This is in line with the study of Ronald L. Simons (1990). Wives are more likely to monitor the relationship’s emotional quality. They provide an inequitable amount of emotional work by supporting their husbands and managing the emotional climate of the relationship. Among the women participants, some expect a higher level of communication in marriage but become disappointed with their spouse due to personality differences. They tend to think their partner is not willing to be the most intimate person. Another finding of this research is an exception that said they had a hard time being emotionally intimate with their partner.

In prior studies, there is a link between marital intimacy and marital satisfaction, and an increase in marital intimacy has a positive effect on marital satisfaction over time. Thus, to other study findings, marital satisfaction and intimacy correlate. which confirms the current study result. (Malherbe, 2001)

From the detected dimensions of expectation, parental style is the fourth one. A parenting style between married couples appears to contribute to overall marriage satisfaction. Because parenting is such an important factor in marriage, some of the participants’ expectation of the

parental style of their spouse is directly derived from what they saw from their parents. For instance, one of the interviewee's beliefs developed from the relationship he had with his mother. Thus, since his mother was the primary parent figure in taking care of them back home, for him taking care of children is mainly the responsibility of his wife as a mother of their children. This again shows how parenting style is connected with gender. This confirms the finding of Ronald L. Simons, L. B. (1990); The majority of people agree that parenting is the wife's responsibility. Husbands often see themselves as supporting characters whose job is to help the mother's primary caregiver. Husbands and wives may disagree and even argue about the best parenting approach. Still, to the extent that there is a division of labor, husbands are more likely to accept their wives' parenting beliefs as expert knowledge than vice versa.

Given this, it is also observed that having a completely different parental style could lead to conflict and dissatisfaction. Other studies also indicate that parents should be critical when raising children, take child-rearing practices seriously, and collaborate with their spouses on child-rearing styles. When looking at the relationship between child-rearing styles and marital harmony from this perspective, the presence of a child, cooperation in child-rearing, and sharing the responsibility for child care are all determining factors in the elicited difference in marital harmony between parents. (Müzeyyen Sevinça, 2010)

Another dimension of expectation analyzed from the interview is the sexual expectation, which is the sixth one. The sexual expectation is mainly concerned about the expected frequency of sex experience and the appetite for sex exhibited by married couples. It was found that individuals have high expectations about sex, and that expectation tends to affect the sexual relationship they have with their partner. This research was similar to Malherbe, A. P. (2001) studies that explain that satisfied spouses report that the sexual activity they desire and the sexual

activity they experience is more in line. The satisfaction with one's sexual relationship was significantly related to the level of family functioning in a study on the characteristics of well-functioning families for both men and women.

On the other hand, some participants mentioned how sexual expectations differ by gender. For women, it appears that relationship, affection, and intimacy come first, whereas, for men, the intercourse itself seems to be sufficient, which resulted in some being dissatisfied. This confirms another study indicating that husbands frequently struggle to understand their wives' needs, manage their wives' emotional demands, experience rejection during sexual intimacy, and feel unable to meet their wives' desired communication levels and styles. Women are socialized to value interdependence; communication and affect are typically central to defining and evaluating intimacy. Women place a higher value on pleasant emotional behavior in their relationships than men do; they see chat as a more prominent and necessary component of their interactions with others. Men, who have been socialized to value independence and competition, tend to organize their intimate relationships around shared activities. (Ronald L. Simons, 1990)

The last dimension is an unrealistic expectation; in the research, different participants have mentioned unrealistic expectations regarding the sexual, financial, personality, gender role, and various aspects of marriage. This was also seen in other studies mentioned as before marriage, participants' expectations of marriage were frequently described as fantasy-based or unrealistic, with no foreseeing of relationship problems and visions of "happily ever after." (Vaterlaus J. M., 2016)Moreover, it was found that unrealistic expectations have led to further disappointments and conflicts in their marriage. For example, one participant mentioned he had a hard time coming to terms with the fact that his ideas are not the only ones done in the household because that was his expectation and experience in the past. Another participant mentioned that

her unrealistic expectation about their lifestyle had caused problems which is true as mentioned in the research done by Deressu & Girma (2019), which indicated that unspoken and impracticable expectations about marriage have connotation on the marriage satisfaction as hinder as from realizing what the partner has because our perception has been affected by the expectation. Although the expectation is the default for life, if it is unrealistic and unattainable in marriage, it might harm spousal relationships if not addressed soon. Past research has also found that aligns with this study's findings that one's ideals can influence marital functioning, emphasizing relationship expectations. The researchers looked at the real-ideal discrepancies of newlywed couples. They discovered that the more significant the gap between an individual's partner's "ideals" and their "real" ratings, the lower their marital well-being. (Lee J. Dixon Kristina, 2012)

When we come to the second superordinate theme called the perceived impact of premarital expectation on marriage satisfaction, The analysis of the interview showed the following three possible impacts on marriage in general: Marital satisfaction/ dissatisfaction, conflict and, Cognitive dissonance/ disturbance. One of the clear findings of this study is that the impacts of fulfilled expectations before marriage led to marriage satisfaction. It was under the investigation of Deressu & Girma (2019), which stated, "Marriage expectations" be a predictor of "marital satisfaction." Likewise, according to theorists, when people's relational standards are met or exceeded, partners are relatively satisfied with their relationships. (Vangelisti,1997)

In the current study, it was found, on the other hand, that the unfulfilled expectations impacted the marriage negatively; that is, it resulted in dissatisfaction. According to Daly, Vangelisti & John (1997), if the relational standard expectations are not met, people are likely to become dissatisfied or disillusioned. Which was a confirmation from other studies too, which

mentioned that disappointment is a feeling that occurs when the outcome of a situation differs from what was expected. These definitions also imply that the presence of disappointment is contingent on the expectation of a favorable outcome. It's impossible to have one without the other. According to the authors, empirical research has also shown that the degree of disappointment is proportional to the difference between the actual outcome and what was initially expected. These findings suggest that if, for example, a partner disappoints you in an intimate relationship, such as a marriage, you may experience a decrease in intimacy due to one partner's distancing from the other. The authors predicted that the more minor the discrepancy, the more satisfied the individual would be with their effort. The more significant the difference, the less happy the individual would be. Thus, it confirms the findings of this study. (Lee, Dixon,& Schumm 2012)

In this study, conflict is the second perceived adverse impact of premarital expectations on marriage. Every marriage has undeniable conflict, according to the findings. It is unavoidable. Unmet expectations are one of the factors that contribute to marriage problems. To some extent, the interviews conducted in the direction of support this fact. Analyzing the interviews in this category gave me a good understanding of how unmet or unrealistic expectations can lead to marital conflict. With the research done by Tasew & Getahun (2021), couples tend to have conflict over unmet expectations regarding gender roles. Another study indicated that unmet expectations in a marriage are a source of conflict. This research noted that unmet expectation in the union has resulted in dissatisfaction and marital conflict in marriage**.** (Deressu & Girma, 2019)

In addition, there are even more stories to tell about conflict when children are added to the family. Among the participant interviewees, it was found that one central area of conflict was

their different parental styles. Studies done before also confirm this with a different perspective. A study indicated that a child and marriage have a complicated and contradictory relationship. According to this two-way relationship, a child will affect the marriage, and the marriage will be affected by the child. There are two ways to explain the effects of having a child in marriage. According to the theory that a child's birth certifies a couple's love and is a source of delight and satisfaction that enriches the marital relationship, birth affirms the couple's love. It is a source of joy and happiness that enhances the marriage relationship. The second approach, which emphasizes the adverse effects of a child on a marriage, claims that children are a source of conflict and difficulty in a couple's intimate life and that the presence of a child causes disagreements between them. A negative relationship exists between the company of a child and the quality of a marriage, according to some research findings (Müzeyyen Sevinça, 2010)

The third impact of premarital expectation on marriage is found to be cognitive dissonance. Some of my interviewees indicated the impact of unmet expectations on the cognitive stability of their beliefs. Cognitive dissonance is the term psychologists use to refer to the paradox between two values or beliefs. Such a scenario created confusion, frustration, even anxiety in the interviewees.

As indicated in this current study, the participant stated that the way he believed a mother should be and how his wife treated the children was so different that he had to amend his belief. This is similar to what Lawler (2018), wrote in her column; she describes that cognitive dissonance is a phenomenon that might occur in any relationship when it comes to marriage because it is two different people from different backgrounds into one this will start to adjust the attitude and perspective about things. However, cognitive dissonance is inevitable in relationships. The severity of the compromise will affect the connection to a different degree.

To summarize, it is explored that people have general premarital expectations. These expectations can have many dimensions more than stated in this study, which will need further study. From this study: Gender Roles, Unrealistic expectations, Personality, Emotional Intimacy, Sexual Issues, Finances, and Parenting Styles were the dimensions identified. Moreover, these dimensions are found to have certain connections with each other. For instance, gender role expectation has a connection with the other six dimensions of expectation, and it has been perceived that these general expectations before marriage impact marital satisfaction.

Chapter Six

Summary and Conclusion

6.1 Summary

The findings of this study can assist premarital counselors in helping their clients. Finally, this study discovered seven possible dimensions of premarital expectation that fall under one superordinate theme called expectation areas: gender role; unrealistic expectations; personality; emotional intimacy; sexual issues; finances; and parenting styles additional, all of the previous emergent themes, when combined into a single superordinate theme, influenced overall marriage satisfaction. As a result, the participants felt satisfied because their expectations were fulfilled. Unmet expectations, on the other hand, harmed marriage satisfaction among the participants.

6.2 Conclusion

This study highlighted the diverse dimension of expectations of marriage and their impact on marital satisfaction, which generated more questions about the topic, thus increasing curiosity in the area of study. The importance of researching premarital expectations in particular needs attention. As if the disillusionment of original expectations of marriage is taken for granted as a natural occurrence in developing relationships, little is known about this phenomenon's psychological and relational dynamics.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out among five married members of ZARC, and caution is needed to apply the findings to other populations. Because of the small number of participants and the distinctive nature of this study, generalizations have not been attempted. However, some more comprehensive application was possible in cases where findings matched findings in more

extensive studies. Links with these studies actually potentate findings in this research and locate them within the larger field of systemic knowledge. While an idiographic approach, like the one used here, yields greater profundity and provides a greater understanding of participants' meanings, the information is limited of the width often generated by quantitative approaches.

Though the relationship with the participants is viewed as casting doubt on the research's findings due to a fear of social desirability, the participants' responses were completely genuine when they were asked the interview questions. As a result, knowing each other in this situation was not seen as a problem; instead, it helped create a relaxed and trustworthy interview environment. During the interview, all of the participants were being themselves.

6.4 Recommendation

The findings of this study can be used by premarital counselors to enlighten their clients about the dimensions for them to have realistic marriage expectations and understand their impact on marital satisfaction. Premarital therapy can also help couples develop a positive attitude toward seeking future assistance. One of the critical factors for marriage satisfaction is fulfilled expectations. Therefore, this study will be helpful for singles and couples to revisit their expectations and tune them if necessary.

As this study explores, further research must be done on premarital expectations because it shows its unignorable impact on marital satisfaction. This research also created room for further research, which can be categorized as "identifying the possible reason why premarital expectations are unfulfilled”. Although there is so much significance taken from it for this specific research, readers can benefit from some of the additional analysis made from the results of the interview mentioned below:

Reasons for unfulfilled expectations

- Misunderstanding/Miscommunication
- Individual's unresolved issues
- Unrealistic expectation
- Personality difference

There might be numerous reasons why these expectations are not fulfilled. However, the participants indicated the above possible reasons for the gap created. Communication plays a significant role in helping the other party understand what kind of expectation you have. Where there is no clear communication, misunderstanding might be outstanding. Henceforth, there is a high probability for expectations not to be fulfilled.

Likewise, personality differences and unresolved personal issues contributed to a large portion of unfulfilled expectations. Participants walked in their terms and ways of understanding patterns. This also implies that they would fulfill the other party's expectations on their terms rather than in the form of the expectant.

The nature and degree of the expectation itself is another major cause of unfulfilled expectations. Some of the participants' expectations were somehow exaggerated and highly difficult to become true. These unrealistic expectations couldn't be fulfilled due to the lack of capacity or availability to perform. Expectations that are not based on facts (that is, they are not based on truth) and do not take into account become unrealistic and thus fail to be met. As a result, more research can be done in the previously mentioned and other areas.

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Appendix A

Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. What was your expectation about marriage before getting married?
2. How did you find it now?
3. What was your expectation about your spouse before marriage?
4. What expectations of your spouse are you satisfied and happy with?
5. How is your marriage relationship affected by your expectations that your spouse didn't adequately achieve?
6. What do you think was your spouse's expectation from you?
7. How did you try to achieve it?
8. How is your marriage relationship affected by your failure to perform your spouse's expectations?
9. How do you respond to the gap between your pre-marital expectation and your actual marriage experience?
10. What expectations should unmarried couples have about marriage, in your opinion?

Appendix B

Consent Form

Code NO_____

I am Selam Demissew, a post-graduate student at Addis Ababa University, College of Behaviour and Educational Studies in the School of psychology. I am doing qualitative research on the perceived impact of premarital expectation on marriage satisfaction among the married members of Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church Addis Ababa, Ethiopia as partial fulfillment of masters of art in counseling psychology.

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to understand the relationship between premarital expectations of individuals on the marriage satisfaction they experience during their marriage, where this expectation came from, and how it has contributed to the day-to-day life of the couple.

Method

You are chosen for the research because you are a member of Zetseat Apostolic Reformation Church and you are married. An interview, which could last up to an hour, will be used as a research tool for the study. As a result, you'll be asked about your premarital expectations before marriage, during courtship, and how they've affected your marriage now, as well as whether they've contributed to any positive or negative effects on your marriage satisfaction.

Confidentiality: if you are willing to participate in this research, everything you will inform me during this research will remain private and unidentified because the number will only code it.

Benefit: there is no direct or indirect profit to you.

Discomfort: there will not be any harm because of the result of this research.

Withdrawal: you can stop the interview at any moment you want to.

Person to contact: Selam Demissew

Mobile: +251 91 207 5019

Email: selamdemissew@gmail.com

Are you willing to participate?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Signature: _____