

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES**  
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**Correlates of Marital Satisfaction among Mickyland Condominium  
Residents: Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles, and Love Expression  
In Focus**

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Residents: Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles, and Love Expression  
In Focus

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university and that all sources of materials (published and unpublished) used for the thesis has been dually acknowledged in the text as well as references lists.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

*This study investigates the relationship between religiosity, conflict resolution styles, love expression, and marital satisfaction among Mickyland condominium residents using a cross sectional descriptive design. The data is collected from 339 samples of whom 33% was male and 67% female with 38.77 mean age and 12.91 mean duration of marriage. The findings reveal that 83.3 % of respondents feel moderate level of marital satisfaction with mean value 52.06. A significant positive relationship exists between religiosity and marital satisfaction. Positive problem-solving conflict resolution style shows a significant moderate positive relationship with marital satisfaction, while conflict engagement, self-protection, and acceptance styles exhibit a significant negative relationship. 14.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction can be explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables while positive problem solving, being female and having a diploma were the only statistically significant predictors. Love expression through verbal communication, practical activities, gift-giving, and accommodating spouse preferences significantly contributes to marital satisfaction. Overall, the study underscores the importance of positive problem-solving and love expression in enhancing marital satisfaction beyond the influence of religiosity and demographic factors.*

**Key words: Marital Satisfaction, Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles, Love Expression**

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## **List of Acronyms**

ENRICH- Evaluation and Nurturing Relationship Issues, Communication and Happiness

EMS- ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Score

CRS- Centrality of Religiosity scale

CRSI- Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory

SPSS- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Marital satisfaction is a crucial aspect of marital relationship that influences people's well-being (Chapman & Guven, 2016). It is a widely accepted opinion for evaluating stability and happiness in a marriage (Tavakol et al., 2017). Teghani et al. (2019) defines marital satisfaction as the sincere happiness, contentment, and pleasure that a husband and wife feel when they think about every facet of their marriage. It contributes to the overall health of individuals and families as a whole (Chapman & Guven, 2016). A satisfying marriage, as an institution, serves as the foundation for family stability and unity (Wondimu & Andualem, 2023).

A study by Lundberg et al. (2016) states the majority of individuals, in modern times, no longer view marriage as an obligatory duty that must be fulfilled. Instead, it has evolved into a more voluntary commitment, symbolizing the affection and mutual desire of the couple to share their lives together (Lundberg et al., 2016). In this context, marital satisfaction emerges as a crucial element significantly impacting both the quality and stability of marriages (Sosin, 2015; Li & Fung, 2011).

Meanwhile, it is important to note that marital satisfaction is a multifaceted idea that is influenced by a number of variables (Tavakol et al., 2017). As a result several studies researched marital satisfaction with different variables. Among them, Sorokowski et al. (2017) studied marital satisfaction in their cross cultural study conducted in 33 countries, including Ghana and Uganda, in light of sex, age, marriage duration, religion, number of children, economic status, education, and collectivistic values. Similarly, other researchers studied about socio demographic determinants of marital satisfaction like Ahangar et al. (2016) on Iranian couples living in Malaysia. While Jackson et al (2014) studied only gender difference in marital satisfaction in their meta-analysis of 226 independent samples.

Moreover, other researchers studied marital satisfaction with different variables. For example:- sexual self-efficacy, dyspareunia (painful sex), and socioeconomic status (Taghani et al., 2019); marital expectation (Ngazimbi et al., 2013); communication

(Lavner et al., 2016); conflict resolution styles (Adriani & Ratnasari, 2021; Ünal & Akgün, 2020, 2022; Bisht & Tripathi, 2023); compassionate love (Amathullah & Ponnampuruma, 2023); intimacy (Amato, 2023); five love languages (İnce & Işık, 2021); aging (Sosin, 2015); religiosity (Aman et al., 2019; Fard et al., 2013); religious attendance and conflict resolution (Stinson et al., 2017) and emotional stability (Khalatbari et al., 2013).

Similarly, several studies (Zewdu, 2020; Dires & Ayenalem, 2020; Bayle et al. 2017) that are studied in Ethiopia researched age, sex, duration of marriage, educational background and religion, as determinants of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, Zewdu (2020) take a deeper look in to sexual relationship, marital stability, marital communication and conflict resolution as determinants of marital satisfaction. Likewise, Bayle et al. (2017) found number of children, spousal infidelity, marriage type, leisure spending, interest difference, openness among couples, poverty, type of marriage, ethnic background, age difference, religious discordant marriage, early marriage, in-laws interference, family size, sexual incompatibility, polygamous marriage and other factors to determine the marital satisfaction of couples in the study area. Moreover, Dires and Ayenalem (2020) found sex, first time marriage, family monthly income, religious marriage and religious similarity to have significant positive relationship with marital satisfaction.

Furthermore, Wondimu and Andualem (2023), in their qualitative study about the factors that influence marital satisfaction concluded beliefs in the sacredness of marriage and family, the power of virtues in marital relationships, the neighborhood as a safe haven and source of strength, and self-disclosure to be positive factors for marital satisfaction. Further in their multilevel analysis (Wondimu & Andualem, 2024) they found marital virtues and neighborhood cohesion to significantly predicted marital satisfaction at individual and neighborhood levels.

In exploring marital satisfaction within the Ethiopian context, this study places particular emphasis on religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression. By investigating into these factors, this research seeks to explore the relationship between marital satisfaction and religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression, offering valuable insights into enhancing marital satisfaction.

Hence, it is a fact that religion and human life have a closer relationship in several societies around the world (Aman et al., 2019). Religion in Ethiopia holds a profound influence on marital satisfaction, reflecting the deep-rooted interweaving of religious beliefs and cultural norms (Wondimu & Andualem, 2023). With a predominantly Christian and Muslim population, Ethiopia's diverse religious landscape contributes to varying perspectives on marriage. Tavakol et al. (2017) states relationship with God has an interactive and compensatory role in marital relationships. After reviewing 80 articles, Tavakol et al. (2017) found a positive relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction and identified religion as predictor of marital satisfaction.

Wondimu and Andualem (2023) in their study conducted in Addis Ababa; reported “the beliefs in sacredness and holiness of marriage to have impact on enhancing marital satisfaction” (p.143). Participants in their study characterized marriage as a sacred and immensely valuable institution, closely associated with their satisfaction in marriage and inhibit them from having extra marital affair. A study made in Woldiya town, Amhara region by Dires and Ayenalem (2020) shows couples with same religion to be satisfied than those who had different religious background and marriages formed through religious institutions found to have a better positive effect on marital satisfaction than other forms.

Though marital relationship is expected to have affection and contentment, it is inevitable to have conflict and disagreement (Igbo et al., 2015). Conflict is the quest of incompatible desires and goals by different persons. “It is a natural and unavoidable part of all human relationships” (Ünal & Akgün, 2020, p.2). It occurs in both satisfied and dissatisfied marriages, but with considerable variation in its management (Dildar et al., 2013). Meanwhile, what matters most is not presence or absence of conflicts, rather how they are resolved or managed. Spouses try to resolve their conflicts with various ways that range from yelling each other to finding an acceptable solution for both sides (Ünal & Akgün, 2020). When conflicts are not managed well they may lead to dissatisfaction and psychological problems while, constructive ways may lead to intimacy and satisfaction. Tiruwork (2021) found, on her study in Bahirdar, the participants use of destructive resolution style while having conflicts with spouses, in a way that affects their

marital satisfaction. Moreover, Ünal and Akgün (2020) reported positive problem solving type of conflict resolution style to be a good predictor of marital satisfaction.

Another element in attaining marital satisfaction is love, as it stands out as the foremost factor when selecting a life partner and sustains people's desire for marriage as a lifelong commitment of living together (Hedayati, 2020). The topic of love has long evoked heated discussions among scholars attempting to give a standard and widely accepted definition (Bode & Kushnick, 2021). Hence, Sumter et al. (2013) defines love as a subjective feeling of strong affection for someone in a close personal relationship such as marriage. Beyond its romantic and sexual dimensions, love encompasses individuals' capacity to willingly commit to others (Taghavi et al., 2014).

Many researches analyze love in relation with the three components that Stenberg suggested in Theory of love. Among many aspects of love, how spouses express their love will be given attention here. Love can be expressed in different forms from a simple 'I love you' to giving gifts, spending quality time together, kiss and hug to acts of service (İnce & Işık, 2021). In order for the spouses to convey their love to each other, they must act in line with the spouses' expectations by knowing each other's love expressions (İnce & Işık, 2021). As per the results of İnce and Işık (2021) study, healthy expression of emotions, including love, has direct relationship with marital satisfaction.

Regarding the study setting, Mickyland Condominium is a dynamic neighborhood of 4,656 houses; with half of them occupied by married couples who came from various parts of Ethiopia, each bringing their own customs and traditions. The varied cultural influences within the area offered an ideal context for investigating how religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression, intersect to impact the overall satisfaction of married residents. Besides, the researcher spent 14 years living within the community. Having firsthand knowledge of the community dynamics, cultural diversity, and the daily lives of its residents enhanced the depth of this study.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Marital satisfaction has attracted the attention of many scholars in the modern world (Wondimu & Andualem, 2023) and acquiring insights in to the changing aspects that improve relationship satisfaction is a valued objective (King, 2016). Marital satisfaction is one of the common concepts used for assessing happiness and stability in a

marriage (Tavakol et al., 2017). In fact, what is even more important than the marriage itself is the success of marriage and satisfaction of married couples (Javad et al., 2013). Saying this, it is crucial to examine factors that can affect marital satisfaction. However, much attention is given to the study of divorce, its causes, and effects, (Tegegne et al., 2015) while the exploration of factors affecting marital satisfaction, which is potential preventive factor for divorce, remains largely unexplored. Although many researches have been done on different variables (refer to background section), this research will focus on religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression and their relationship with marital satisfaction.

Ethiopian population is believed to be religious and view marriage as sacred and ordered by God (Wondimu & Andualem, 2023). Hence one's religious practice and their closeness with God will have an impact on marital satisfaction. Several studies (Aman et al., 2019; Fard et al., 2013) report positive relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. While many Ethiopian researchers (Wondimu & Andualem, 2023; Dires & Ayenalem, 2020; Zewdu, 2020) have analyzed the relationship between religion and marital satisfaction in Ethiopian context, no attempts have been made (as per the student researcher's knowledge) to study religiosity and its relation with marital satisfaction. It is evident that if religion plays a vital role, adhering and committing to its beliefs and practices will have an effect too. Specially, for Ethiopians, it is valuable as religion plays a great role beyond marital life. By analyzing five dimensions of religiosity, this research identifies the nature of relationship with marital satisfaction and extent of prediction on marital satisfaction made by religiosity, individually and with other variables.

Since conflict is inherent to human nature, it is more obvious when spouses come from diverse backgrounds (Tasew & Getahun, 2021). Nevertheless, the lasting effects on marriages are often determined by how each incident is addressed (Igbo et al., 2015). Besides, destructive approaches to conflict like verbal and physical abuses can leave enduring marks on spouses (Tiruwork, 2022). Hence, discovering more effective methods to conflict resolution that can enhance marital satisfaction serves as a safeguard against the risk of marital dissatisfaction. Ünal and Akgün's (2022) research in Turkey found constructive conflict resolution leading to increased marital satisfaction while destructive resolution to decreased marital satisfaction and also positive problem solving style as

significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Conversely, Dildar et al. (2013) reported frequent use of avoiding conflict resolution style by dissatisfied couples.

The study of Wolie (2019) indicated marital conflict to have significant positive relationship with infidelity, financial management, and interference of families and/or friends in the life of spouses and a significant negative relationship with sexual relationship and equalitarian role of spouses. Further analysis about predictive factors showed that age, educational status, duration of marriage, sexual relationship, infidelity, monthly income, financial management and interference of families and/or friends in the life of spouses to significantly predicted marital conflict (Wolie, 2019).

Zewdu (2020) reported marital conflict resolution to be significant predictor of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, Tasew and Getahun (2021) identified competing and compromising as frequently used conflict coping mechanisms among Durbete town (Amhara region) residents. Yet, it needs further assessment as per the type of conflict resolution styles mostly used by couples and its nature of relationship with marital satisfaction. Moreover, the conflict resolution style that significantly predicts marital satisfaction is not studied so far.

Equally important aspect of strengthening marital relationship and maintaining satisfaction is communication of love (İnce & Işık, 2021). Everyone can benefit from understanding how a person wants to be loved and how they love others, because it improves someone's relationship with the people around (Farnsley, 2021). However, couples often find themselves unsure of how to convey affection to their spouses and may struggle to interpret expressions of love from their partners (Farnsley, 2021). The study conducted by Farnsley (2021) point the disparity in expressing and interpreting love having the potential to lead to marital dissatisfaction, whereas the finding shows significant and positive correlation between the first preferred love language (expression) and relationship satisfaction.

Moreover, a study conducted in Rwanda and Swaziland by Ruark et al. (2017) shows participants of their study emphasized love expression through actions, gifts, material support, acts of service, proposing for marriage, trust and time spent together. Similarly, Malm et al. (2022) states warmth, friendship, devotion to the family and financial support to positively predict marital satisfaction when irritating habits, egotism

and disrespect significantly associated with marital dissatisfaction. Interestingly, higher rate of beatings by husbands were reported by Malm et al. (2022) which is not significantly related with marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction due the cultural effects and the norms toward beating. Bearing in mind their study is conducted in Ghana, Ethiopian context is expected to be not far from their reality. As a result, understanding expression of love and its relation with marital satisfaction through cultural perspectives is deemed important.

Furthermore, the influence of social media and the cultural change it brings created damaging expectations and breakdown of communication rather than ensuring love and stability (Hedayati, 2020). So it emphasizes the importance of assessing love expressions and their relation with marital satisfaction. A preliminary assessment about the way of expressing love between married couples and its relationship with marital satisfaction is a valuable finding in improving marital satisfaction (Farnsley, 2021).

The novelty of this study lies in its investigation of correlates of marital satisfaction in Ethiopian context by focusing on religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression. As existing research in this field is still in its early stage, especially considering the increasing divorce rates in Ethiopia (Zewdu, 2020), this study contributes by inquiring into specific dynamics of marital satisfaction.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of marital satisfaction?
2. What is the nature of relationship (i.e., direction, strength, statistical significance) between religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and marital satisfaction?
3. How much of the variance in marital satisfaction can be explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables?
4. How do couples express their love, and what is its contribution to marital satisfaction?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study conducted an examination of marital satisfaction, specifically focusing on religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression, acknowledging that the combination of these variables had not been studied previously; understanding the

workings of relationships that contribute to higher marital satisfaction remains a worthy goal for researchers (King, 2016). By examining deeply into these factors, the research discovered useful insights that contributed to an understanding of the dynamics influencing marital satisfaction.

It is important to acknowledge that the majority of research on marital satisfaction has primarily involved non-African study samples. Limited data were available concerning the marital satisfaction of individuals in non-Western societies, and this gap extends to Ethiopia, including Addis Ababa. The existing literature in Ethiopia is scarce, and one of the primary objectives of this research is to address this gap in knowledge. Addis Ababa is experiencing an increase in marriage dissolution (Zewdu, 2020). After obtaining data from Addis Ababa Civil Registration and Residency Service Agency (CRRSA) Zewdu (2020) indicates an increase in marriage dissolutions, implying that relationships between couples are becoming more fragile. The consequences of divorce will continue to negatively impact families, younger children of divorced parents and the community at large; if protective factors to the couple's relationship breakdown are not looked into and disclosed to stakeholders.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to offer valuable insights and practical implications for various stakeholders. For researchers, it contributes to the understanding of marital dynamics within the Ethiopian context, enriching the existing body of knowledge and providing a foundation for further research. For counselors, the study provides evidence-based strategies that can enhance relationship counseling services, enabling counselors to better support couples and improve marital outcomes. For policymakers, the findings can inform policy decisions aimed at strengthening families and reducing divorce rates, thereby contributing to the development of effective family policies and programs. Also, understanding the dynamics of religiosity, conflict resolution styles, love expression, and their impact on marital satisfaction can provide couples with valuable insights into nurturing better, more fulfilling relationships.

The study filled this gap in the literature by providing insights into these less-examined aspects of marital dynamics in the Ethiopian context and how each variable is linked with marital satisfaction. It is important to note that these three variables were not studied in combination so far. Given the scarcity of research in this domain, especially in

Ethiopia, the study contributed to the growing body of knowledge, and lays the foundation for future research endeavors in similar contexts.

### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The scope of the study involved an investigation into the dynamics of marital satisfaction, by taking religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression as independent variables. The research is conducted in Mickyland Condominium, situated in Woreda 13, Addis Ketema Sub city, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia amongst many condominiums found in the city.

The study investigates how these factors interplay within the context of this community, taking into consideration the diverse cultural backgrounds of its residents. The respondents were from both sexes, with varied duration of marriage ranging from one to forty. Their age varies between 20 and 75. They have different educational backgrounds with exception of PhD holder. Additionally, the majority were Orthodox followed by Muslims while Catholics constitute 0.9% of the respondents.

Methodologically, the research employed a quantitative approach of cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The data were collected using questionnaire adopted from other researches. Quantitative analysis, specifically correlational analysis, is undertaken to assess relationship among variables and regression analysis shows predictability of marital satisfaction due to religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables.

### **1.6 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Marital Satisfaction:** is the overall happiness and contentment spouses experience within their marriage, as measured by the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction developed by Fowers and Olson (1993). This includes idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality aspects, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, equalitarian roles and religious orientation.

**Religiosity:** is the feeling of closeness to God and being committed to religious practices as assessed by the Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) of Huber and Huber in (2003). It includes intellect, ideology, public practice, private practice and experience dimensions.

**Conflict Resolution Styles:** is the manner in which spouses approach and handle disagreements and conflicts within their marriage, as measured by the Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI) developed by Kurdek (1994). It includes conflict engagement, positive problem solving, self-protection and acceptance sub scales.

**Love Expression:** is the way in which spouses demonstrate and express love, affection, and care towards their spouses, as assessed by the six questions prepared by the student researcher.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Review of Related Literature**

A comprehensive understanding of current research is essential for researchers. The purpose of this literature review is to gather and evaluate the body of knowledge currently available about marital satisfaction. It is essential to evaluate the breadth and depth of scholarly contributions, pointing out important trends, gaps, and disagreements. By systematically examining pertinent research, theories, and techniques, this review adds to the relationship among marital satisfaction religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression in light of the reviewed related literature.

#### **2.1 Definition of Terms**

##### ***2.1.1 Marital satisfaction***

Marriage is a socially approved age-old coupling arrangement that typically involves economic, social, and reproductive cooperation between the partners (Tegegne et al., 2015). It is important to acknowledge the recent trends and shifts in societal attitudes and practices regarding marriage like the growing acceptance and recognition of same-sex marriages, an increase in cohabitation among couples before or instead of marriage, and a shifting perspective towards diverse family structures and relationships.

Marital satisfaction has a significant impact on how families, individuals, and society as a whole are shaped. Matrimony is still a complicated and dynamic institution that reflects and shapes the fundamental nature of human relationships, from offering a secure home for children to acting as a channel for emotional support and companionship.

Marital satisfaction is a crucial aspect of marital relationship that influences people's well-being (Chapman & Guven, 2016). It is a widely accepted opinion for evaluating stability and happiness in a marriage (Tavakol et al., 2017). Moreover, Teghani et al. (2019) defines marital satisfaction as the sincere happiness, contentment, and pleasure that a husband and wife feel when they think about every facet of their marriage. It contributes to the overall health of individuals and families as a whole (Chapman & Guven, 2016). A satisfying marriage, as an institution, serves as the foundation for family stability and unity (Wondimu & Andualem, 2023).

Marital pleasure is a process that occurs in couples' lives since it necessitates relationship patterns to be formed, standards of behavior to be established, awareness of personality traits, and adherence to preferences (Tavakol et al., 2017).

### **Assessment of marital satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction assessment tools are designed to measure the level of satisfaction and happiness within a marital or romantic relationship. These tools are often used by researchers, therapists, and couples themselves to understand the strengths and challenges in a relationship. Meanwhile, majority of them are designed by Western countries based on their context; little is found from Non Western context.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) of Spanier (1976) is a widely used 32 item self-report questionnaire in the social and behavioral sciences literature with 2,191 citations. It assesses various dimensions of relationship quality, including intimacy, communication, and satisfaction with four subscales namely; Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Affection Expression and Dyadic Cohesion. Other revised versions are also formulated among them is Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) which is developed by Busby et al. (1995). It is an updated version of the DAS and includes additional items to better assess various aspects of relationship functioning. It is commonly used in both research and clinical settings.

The Kansas Marital Satisfaction scale (Schumm et al., 1986) is a three-item measure that assesses satisfaction with 7-point Likert scales. The items are modified to be suitable for dating relationships (e.g., “How satisfied are you with your marriage or partnership?” “How satisfied are you with your partner as a spouse or potential spouse?” and “How satisfied are you with your relationship with your partner?”)

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) (Hendrick, 1988) is a seven-item measure of global relationship satisfaction. The RAS items assess general satisfaction (e.g., “How much do you love your partner?”) and are rated on 5-point Likert scales.

The Quality Marriage Index QMI (Norton, 1983) is a six-item measure of satisfaction, with higher scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction. The items assess overall satisfaction (e.g., “We have a good marriage”, “Our marriage is strong”, “My relationship with my partner is very stable”) and are rated on 6 point Likert scales.

A 32 item Couples Satisfaction Index (CSI) of Funk and Rogge (2007) is a brief and easy-to-use tool designed to assess overall relationship satisfaction. It covers areas such as communication, intimacy, and sexual satisfaction.

While many marital satisfaction scales have been developed in Western countries (some of the above tools are translated to Korean language), there is a growing recognition of the importance of cultural diversity in relationship assessment. As a matter of fact Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale is adapted for use in Chinese populations after considering cultural variations and relationship dynamics specific to Chinese couples.

Emirati Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMSS) developed by Al-Darmaki et al. (2016) is a 30 item one-dimensional assessment tool developed by United Arab Emirates/ Dubai/ researchers by taking in to account cultural differences in life styles and perceptions toward marital satisfaction of Arabs among others. The shortened version (seven items) is used by Lee (2021) to measure African American couples' marital satisfaction.

Couple Functionality Assessment Tool (CAFT) of Ruark et al. (2017) is designed to study the quality of marital relationship in rural African population and validated in Malawi with six domains; intimacy, partner support, sexual satisfaction, gender roles, decision-making, and communication and conflict management; and additional question on intimate partner violence.

This study used ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale of Fowers and Olson (1993) originated from the ENRICH Inventory (Fowers & Olson 1989), which is a questionnaire that is composed of 125 items with 14 scales. Because of the length of questions and its drawback they revise it and it is now available with 47, 35, 15 &10 items. It is often used in premarital counseling and marriage enrichment programs. It covers a wide range of factors, including communication, conflict resolution, financial management, and sexual satisfaction. The 10 item scale is adapted by Dires and Ayenalem (2020) and Bayle et al. (2017) to study Socio-demographic determinants of marital satisfaction in Woldia and Jimma, Ethiopia.

### ***2.1.2 Religiosity***

The term religion denotes the specific religious affiliation of an individual, such as being Muslim, Orthodox Christian, Catholic, Protestant Christian, and various others. On the contrary, religiosity refers to the degree of adherence to one's religion (Charlton et

al., 2013). Religiosity is defined as “beliefs, practices, and rituals having to do with the ‘Transcendent’ or the ‘Divine’” (Koenig et al., 2015, p.530). It encompasses a range of attitudes, behaviors, and experiences related to religious faith and practice like belief in a higher power or Deity (God), spiritual experience, religious Affiliation and Identity, moral and ethical Values, community engagement, and scriptural knowledge. These concepts highlight the multidimensional nature of religiosity, which can vary widely among individuals and across different religious traditions. People may express their religiosity in diverse ways, and its influence can extend to various aspects of their lives.

### **Assessment of Religiosity**

Various scales are designed to measure an individual's religiosity using beliefs, practices, and experiences dimensions related to their faith. The majority of these religious tests were mostly created by Protestant and Catholic Christian populations (Koenig et al., 2015)

Attachment to God Scale (AGS) (Rowatt & Kirkpatrick, 2002) uses attachment theory to analyze a person's relationship with God. It is unclear whether people's attachment patterns which can be characterized as secure, anxious, and distant with God and human attachment figures are comparable. The samples for this 9-item AGS scale, which measures attachment to God, were Christians. It is made up of a 3-item anxiety subscale and a 6-item avoidance subscale. The avoidance subscale is used to assess if a person has a warm, close attachment to God or a cold, avoidant one. The purpose of the anxiety subscale is to identify if an attachment is safe and secure, or anxious and insecure (Koenig et al., 2015).

Religious Coping Index (RCI) by Koenig et al. (1992). The degree to which an individual employs religious practices and beliefs as a coping mechanism for stress is known as religious coping (Koenig et al., 1992). This specific variable measures how much a person depends on their religious beliefs to help them cope with stress in their lives on a worldwide scale. It consists of three items that the interviewer must administer. Protestants made up the majority of participants (Koenig et al., 2015).

This study used Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS) of Huber and Huber (2003) used by over 100 studies in 25 countries, with online available 19 languages (Huber & Huber, 2012). This scale is chosen for its suitability of Ethiopians' religious ideologies,

beliefs and activities. The 15 item scale has three items for each dimension of public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology and the intellectual dimensions; which are considered as representative of religious life. It was originally designed to measure Abrahamic religions i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam. After making a comprehensive overview of the scale in 21 countries, including Morocco and Nigeria, Huber & Huber (2012) made necessary amendments to make it fit for Buddhists and Hindus. Additionally, specific adjustments were suggested regarding Muslims' beliefs and practices (absolute sovereignty of god and difference between regular prayers and Dua').

### ***2.1.3 Conflict Resolution Styles***

Conflict is defined as the pursuit of incompatible wants and goals by different individuals. It is an inherent and inescapable component of all human connections relations (Ünal & Akgün, 2020). In contradiction, individuals we love are frequently the ones we are most inclined to harm. It is a rare person who does not, at some point, feel 'hurt, let down, betrayed, disappointed, or wronged' by his or her relationship partner (Fincham et al., 2004). Conflict resolution styles involve methods and strategies used to address and resolve conflicts in various settings. It involves Communication, negotiation, mediation, collaboration, compromise, assertiveness. Further it can be classified as constructive and destructive type of resolution mechanism.

#### **Assessments of conflict resolution styles**

Various assessment tools are present for different relationships, but this study focuses on conflict resolution styles measurement tools designed for partners. The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory: Self-Report and Partner-Report types are designed by Kurdek (1994). He used Gottman and Krokoff (1989) descriptions of positive problem solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance to generate 16 items (four items for each of the four conflict resolution styles) for each of two parts of the CRSI. In the first part (CRSI-Self), subjects indicated how frequently (1 = never, 5 = always) they used each of 16 styles to deal with arguments and disagreements with their partner. In the second part (CRSI-Partner), they used a parallel set of items to indicate how frequently their partners used the 16 styles. This study used CRSI to assess conflict resolution styles used by Mickyililand condominium residents.

Conflict Resolution Styles Scale (CRSS) by Özen (2006) was developed to measure the conflict resolution styles of spouses in Turkish culture, based on Kurdek's theoretical construct (1994). The scale consists of 25 items and 4 subscales, namely positive conflict resolution style (e.g. 'I try to find alternatives that are acceptable to each of us'), negative conflict resolution style (e.g. By yelling I make my partner to do what I want'), subordination (e.g. 'I accept my partner's request in order to end the conflict') and retreat (e.g. 'I avoid to discuss on the problem when my partner makes me angry'). The scale uses 7-point-Likert-type response format.

#### ***2.1.4 Love Expression***

Love refers to a subjective feeling of strong affection for someone in a close personal relationship (Sumter et al., 2013). Love, often considered the foundation of a marriage, and contributes significantly to overall marital satisfaction. It is a global phenomenon that influences various aspects of human existence, such as selecting and developing marital relationship.

Love expression can be defined as showing affection, care, and commitment towards spouses. It includes a variety of behaviors, actions, and communications that demonstrate love, gratitude, and emotional encouragement. Love can be expressed in many different ways, such as by saying "I love you," giving gifts, spending time together, giving kisses and hugs, or performing deeds of service (İnce & Işık, 2021).

#### **Assessment of Love expression**

Five Love Languages scale is proposed by Chapman about five ways a person feel most loved based on it he developed a 30 item love languages assessment on his book. Further, Egbert and Polk (2006) utilized the Likert scale when they test it for validity. This assessment helps individuals identify their preferred ways of giving and receiving love. The five love languages are words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch. Though it lacks strong empirical background some studies are made to validate it (Suriyah, & Septiarly, 2016; Cook et al., 2013) and different researchers (Farnsley, 2021; Lee, 2021; İnce & Işık, 2021) are using the assessment in their recent studies.

## **2.2 Level of Marital Satisfaction**

Different level of marital satisfaction is reported by studies conducted across several study settings. Nunes et al. (2022) conducted their study on Portuguese couples with 205 sample size and found high level of marital satisfaction. They studied marital satisfaction with parenting topics like parenting sense of competence, parenting stress, and parenting alliance.

Taghani et al. (2019), after studying 350 Iranians women, reported that 68% of the participants rate their marital satisfaction as moderate. Their study samples were women in the reproductive age who were referred to health centers in the year 2018. They studied marital satisfaction along with self-efficacy and pointed the relationship between sexual self-efficacy and level of marital satisfaction.

Likewise, Udofia et al. (2021) found a 50.1 EMS score in their study of Ghanaians. The score demonstrates a moderate level of marital satisfaction. Their samples were mainly women among the 720 purposively selected participants. They reported positive relation between intimacy and marital satisfaction and negative relation between self-esteem and marital satisfaction.

From studies conducted in Ethiopia, the study of Dires and Ayenalem (2020) conducted in Woldia town found that 67% of participants in their study reported satisfaction with their marriage while the rest reported dissatisfaction. They studied large samples with almost equal number of participants from both sexes. They also highlight the negative relationship between duration of marriage and level of marital satisfaction.

Gender based differences in level of marital satisfaction were studied by Adriani and Ratnasari (2021). They found men to have significantly higher marital satisfaction than women. In contrast, a meta-analysis of Jackson et al. (2014) shows statistically significant but small differences in marital satisfaction between wives and husbands, with females marginally less satisfied than husbands. However the effect size for the general population shows no significant difference between husbands and wives marital satisfaction.

Furthermore, high level of marital satisfaction is reported with the use of striking up a conversation, sending loving messages with words or body language, the use of we-

pronouns, effective conflict management and positive communication skills by Du Plooy and De Beer (2018).

### **2.3 The Relationship between Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Satisfaction**

Several studies are made to understand the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. Among them Fraser et al. (2021) found a significant positive correlation between husbands and wives mutual participation in religious sermons, prayers and practices and their overall marital satisfaction. Their study included a sample of 508 Christian couples from 42 countries.

Additionally, Aman et al. (2019) who studied large samples of Pakistani Muslim participants with equal proportion of male and female participants found significant but weak relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. They used religious commitment and religious practice dimensions to measure religiosity.

Moreover Stinson et al. (2017) reported that both wife religiosity and husband religiosity had significant positive relationship with wife marital satisfaction and husband marital satisfaction in Latino couples, while majority of the participants were Catholics. Fard et al. (2013) found a significant positive moderate correlation among Iranian married university students. This slight variation might be the result of homogeneity in educational background among participants and small size effects (156 samples were used). Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) found significant positive and strong correlation (.78) between religiosity and marital satisfaction among Nigerian Christian participants who are selected from a church. The study emphasized the role of religiosity to get marital satisfaction.

Bahanaru et al. (2019) further indicates the role of religious education in promoting marital satisfaction. Their study implies the importance of religious teachings for enhancing marital relationships and thereby increases the level of marital contentment.

Though conflict is inherent to human nature resolving it in a constructive manner is vital for marital relationships. In an investigation to examine the relationship between conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction Bisht and Tripathi (2023) found

statistically significant relationship between conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction. In addition, they reported frequent use of positive problem solving and acceptance types of conflict resolution styles among Indian participants. Moreover, their finding shows significant negative relationship between conflict engagement and marital satisfaction, whereas positive problem solving and self-protection show negative but not significant relationship with marital satisfaction. The only positive relation is exhibited with acceptance conflict resolution style and marital satisfaction.

Similarly Adriani and Ratnasari (2021) finding indicate the effect of conflict resolution styles on marital satisfaction. They also further point out positive problem solving and acceptance conflict resolution styles to be preferred largely by husbands while only positive problem solving is mostly preferred by wives among Indonesian participants in their first five years of marriage.

Conflict resolution styles and its relationship with marital satisfaction were also studies by Stinson (2017). He founds when husbands are volatile and validator both husbands and wives were satisfied, whereas wives validator and avoidant styles has small contribution for both husband and wife marital satisfaction.

Marital conflict is highly prevalent and it is increasing from time to time (Tasew & Getahun, 2021). Among the possible factors the study conducted by Wolie (2019) in Debre Markos, indicates significant positive relationship between marital conflict and infidelity, financial management, and third party interference (family/ friends) and significant positive relationship is shown between marital conflict, and sexual relationship and equalitarian role.

Lastly, Ünal and Akgün (2022) suggests using more goal oriented positive problem solving mechanism for a higher level of marital satisfaction because it allows spouses to be “us against the problem” rather than “us against each other”.

## **2.4 Predictability of Marital Satisfaction by Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic Variables**

Understanding the predictability of marital satisfaction by several variables is crucial for identifying key factors that contribute to marital satisfaction. With this regard

this section presents empirical findings about the variance in marital satisfaction that is explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables.

Bahanaru et al. (2019) content analysis investigates texts about the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction and they reported the positive impact of religiosity in marital satisfaction and the capacity to be possible predictor of marital satisfaction. Similarly, Aman et al. (2019) finding shows religious commitment dimension of religiosity to explain 2.71% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Whereas religious practice dimension shows a negative relation and predicts a very small portion of marital satisfaction.

Furthermore, Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) reported finding religiosity to positively significantly predict marital satisfaction with a  $\beta$  value of 0.77. Their study was conducted using Christian participants who were selected from a Church.

Regarding conflict resolution styles Ünal and Akgün (2020) and Adriani and Ratnasari (2021) studies report positive problem solving as best predictor of marital satisfaction. Adriani and Ratnasari (2021) finding shows acceptance conflict resolution style had statistically not significant but positive relationship, while conflict engagement and self-protection styles had a negative but significant relationship with marital satisfaction. Their study used large participants of whom majority were women.

In contrast with Ünal and Akgün (2020) and Adriani and Ratnasari (2021), Bisht and Tripathi (2023) found positive problem solving and conflict engagement conflict resolution styles to be significant predictors but with a negative relationship with marital satisfaction. These results are opposing to the findings in this area (Bisht and Tripathi, 2023).

The joint effect of religiosity and conflict resolution styles on marital satisfaction is not examined much. However, Stinson et al. (2017) make an attempt to assess the relationship between church attendance, conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction among Latino couples and found that couples who used an avoidant style of conflict resolution demonstrated that weekly church attendance positively predicted their marital satisfaction. This finding suggests that couples who preferred avoidant style might be oriented to do so in their weekly church attendance which is not true for other styles. In

contrast, Wolde et al. (2022) found 14.2% of the study participants go to religious leaders to resolve marital conflicts while the majorities discuss with friends.

In the investigation of the relationship between marital satisfaction and demographic variables most of the studies conducted found a relationship and/or statistical significance among marital satisfaction and age, sex, duration of marriage, income, education and religion (Dires & Ayenalem, 2020; Girma & Zewdu, 2019; Bayle et al. (2017).

When we come to the question of predictability of marital satisfaction by demographic variables; Zewdu (2020) found age as significant negative predictor and type of occupation as significant positive predictor of marital satisfaction. Other demographic variables namely; gender, age at first marriage, education, income, religion, interfaith marriage, inter race marriage, number of children and duration of marriage were not significant predictors. Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) also found gender to have not significant but negative relationship with marital satisfaction among Nigerian samples.

In this context, Khezri et al. (2020) evaluated literature published in scientific databases between 1981 and 2017 and discovered that income and economic position have a beneficial effect on marital satisfaction. They also identify the possible effects of work, marriage length, age, number of children, religious beliefs, moral and mental health on marital pleasure. Furthermore, Tavakol et al. (2017) reviewed 80 papers and identified demographic characteristics, personality traits, attachment styles, communication, intimacy, couple's families, forgiveness and sacrifice, religion, emotional intelligence, personal health, and sexual relations as potential predictors of marital satisfaction.

## **2.5 Mode of Love Expression and its Contribution to Marital Satisfaction**

Most of the studies conducted about love are related with love components and types of love. Investigating love expressions and their impact on relationships is a recent phenomenon. Expressing love between couples is one aspect of the marital relationship. The spouse best preferred love expression or love language has the potential to increase marital satisfaction if it is addressed.

İnce and Işık (2021) identified using words of affirmation to be widely used in Turkish culture and among the most important factors that sustain satisfaction in a marital

relationship. Similarly, Beichen and Murshed (2015) found Westerners tend to use verbal expressions whereas East Asians tend to use gift giving.

Finding of Farnsley (2021) shows failure to express love for spouses in their most desired love language decrease marital satisfaction and the least desired type of expression will not increase marital satisfaction. Further indicating that overall marital satisfaction might be predicted by fulfillment of a spouse's love language by their partner. Similarly, after studying African American couples Lee (2021) suggest identifying and employing a spouse's love language is positively related to higher levels of marital satisfaction.

## **2.6 Summary and Implication of Reviewed Literatures**

The reviewed literature provides a comprehensive understanding of the various factors influencing marital satisfaction, particularly focusing on religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression. Studies indicate that religiosity generally has a positive impact on marital satisfaction. Conflict resolution styles significantly affect marital satisfaction, with positive problem-solving strategies linked to higher satisfaction, while negative styles like conflict engagement and self-protection reduce satisfaction.

Additionally, the ways in which couples express love through verbal expression and gift-giving play an important role in marital satisfaction. Besides, demographic factors like sex, age, education level, and duration of marriage also influence marital satisfaction.

The reviewed literature suggests that theories of marital satisfaction should integrate multiple dimensions, including individual, relational, and contextual factors. Incorporating religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression into theoretical models of marital satisfaction offers a more comprehensive understanding of marital satisfaction. Future theoretical frameworks should consider the complex interplay between these factors to better predict and explain marital relationships outcome.

Policymakers should consider the role of religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression in marital support programs. Policies that promote access to marital counseling and training, including components on effective conflict resolution, the benefits of shared religious practices, and healthy love expression, could enhance marital satisfaction.

Practitioners, including marriage counselors and therapists, should incorporate discussions about religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression into their sessions of marital counseling. By integrating religiosity, positive problem-solving strategies and encouraging various forms of love expression they can provide couples with practical tools to enrich their marital satisfaction.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

According to Social Exchange Theory, people choose relationships depending on the perceived benefits and costs. Individuals in marriage may assess their partner's religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression as variables influencing overall marital satisfaction.

Religiosity can influence marital satisfaction by imparting shared values, beliefs, and practices that enhance a sense of togetherness and support within the marital relationship. Conflict resolution styles are important in influencing how disagreements are handled in the relationship, which can affect overall satisfaction. Love expressions, such as verbal affirmations or acts of kindness, can help partners build emotional closeness and connection, and result in increasing marital satisfaction.

Social Exchange Theory also emphasizes the concept of reciprocity, implying that people strive to maximize rewards while reducing costs in their relationships. In the context of marriage, partners may participate in behaviors they feel would improve their own well-being and pleasure in the partnership. This theory views relationships as a social exchange where individuals weigh the costs and benefits of being in a relationship. Marital satisfaction is influenced by the perception of fairness and reciprocity in the exchanges between partners. By examining through the lens of Social Exchange Theory, this study investigates how religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression affects marital satisfaction.

## **2.8 Conceptual Framework**

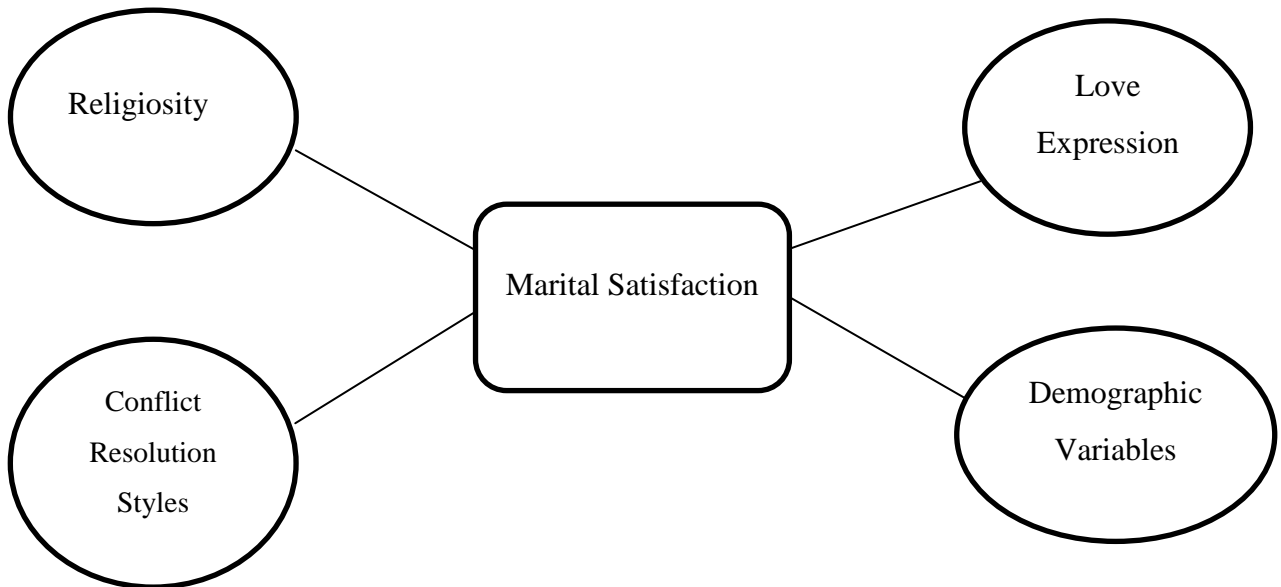
The conceptual framework for this study proposes that religiosity, conflict resolution approaches, and love expression all have an impact on marital satisfaction in different ways. Religiosity refers to an individual's level of religious involvement, beliefs and practice. Conflict resolution styles refer to the tactics and approaches employed by

spouses to resolve disagreements and conflicts within their relationship. Love expression refers to the methods in which partners interact and display affection for one another. Marital satisfaction is the study's dependent variable, expressing total contentment and pleasure within a marriage.

Higher degrees of religiosity are anticipated to contribute to better marital happiness because of shared values, beliefs, and practices that promote better marital relationships. Furthermore, certain conflict resolution styles that emphasize effective communication, compromise, and mutual respect are likely to improve marital satisfaction by promoting healthy relationships and problem-solving abilities. Also love expression, which includes verbal affirmations, physical love, and acts of kindness, is thought to improve marital satisfaction by increasing emotional connection and intimacy between couples.

Overall, this conceptual framework indicates that religiosity, conflict resolution approaches, and love expression all play important roles in determining marital satisfaction.

*Figure 1*  
*The Conceptual Framework*



Source: Author

## **Chapter Three**

### **Methods**

The research approach used to look into and answer the current study questions is described in this part. The research design, study location, study population, data collection instruments, sample, and sampling techniques are all covered in the subsequent subsections, along with explanation of the tools, data collection, and data analysis processes. The goal is to give a clear and thorough explanation of the methodical procedures used in this investigation, enabling to comprehend and evaluate the techniques used to produce significant results. There will also be an explanation of the ethical issues and measures taken to preserve the rights of participants and guarantee the integrity of the study process.

#### **3.1 Design of the Study**

The study employed cross-sectional descriptive survey design. The choice of cross-sectional design for this research is deliberate and stems from the need to comprehensively understand the relationship of religiosity, conflict resolution approach, love expression, and marital satisfaction. According to Kesmodel (2018), cross-sectional design allows gathering data at a single point in time, providing a picture of the relationships and dynamics under study. This design is efficient and allows for the examination of multiple variables without the need for extensive time commitments from participants (Kesmodel, 2018).

Quantitative research method involves using numerical data to describe and explain a phenomenon across various disciplines among them is psychology (Sukamolson, 2007). Quantitative research is chosen for this study as it requires numerical analysis to answer the research questions, and the variables under examination can be effectively captured through questionnaires. With the use of this method, numerical data can be gathered and analyzed to identify patterns, correlations, and possible predictors with statistical accuracy. In addition to making it easier to quantify factors objectively, quantitative approaches also give a clear and simple picture of how much each variable affects marital satisfaction.

### 3.2 Study Setting

The focus of this study is Mickyililand Condominium, situated in Addis Ketema Sub city, Wereda 13, known as one of the earliest condominium projects initiated between 2005 and 2009. It is often referred as Birchiqo due to its proximity to a glass factory along the route. Mickyililand Condominium is a vibrant community comprising 4,656 housing units ranging from studios to three-bedroom houses. Among these, 1,751 units are owned by women, while the remaining 2,905 are owned by men. The neighborhood consists of 123 blocks, each containing 30, 38, 40, or 60 houses, grouped into 16 zones ('qetena' in Amharic) with four to fourteen blocks in each zones (All the information is found from an interview with the site's General Manager Mr. Tesfaye Wondimu). Although a community police survey conducted in 2023 estimated the population size to be 22,945, with 10,950 males and 11,995 females, a study by Betelhem (2019) estimated a population of 23,170. Moreover, on average, five to ten new residents move in as renters daily.

*Figure 2*  
*Mickyililand Condominium Site Aerial View*



Source: Betelhem (2019)

### 3.3 Study Population

The study population consists of married couples living in the Mickyililand Condominium. According to community police estimation, there are 2,676 households headed by males. The police officers assumption is that these households are

representative of marital relationships. This makes the target population under study 5,352 (2676×2 total number of husband and wife) individuals. This population provides a relevant and sufficient sample for examining the relationship among religiosity, love expression, conflict resolution styles, and marital satisfaction.

Participants were selected based on the inclusion criteria of being married and residing in Mickyland Condominium at the time of data collection, ensuring the study's focus on the targeted demographic. The exclusion criteria included being single, divorced, or widowed. There were no restrictions regarding duration of marriage, age, educational background, or religion. As a result, participants are from both genders and have diverse duration of marriage, ages, educational backgrounds, and religious affiliations.

### **3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Among the several sample size determination formulas the study used Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. The researcher preferred to use this table because the sampling frame is not exactly known. The table suggests using a sample size of 361 for a population of 6,000. To this end 380 samples were distributed considering a 5% non-return rate.

After the sample size is drawn, single stage cluster sampling was used to distribute the questionnaires. Cluster sampling requires getting a random sample of clusters from the population, wherein every member within each chosen cluster is invited to participate (Sedgwick, 2014). Clusters are natural groupings of people. Among the 16 zones two were selected randomly by the student researcher using lottery method that is by writing the numbers of each zone and putting in a plate and randomly selecting two out of it. The selected zones were 3 and 7. These two zones had a total of 15 blocks (five and ten) and 528 houses. As the sampling technique is cluster sampling, all of them had equal chance of being part of the study except for their availability in the time of data collection and willingness to participate.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

Quantitative data gathering tools were used to get quantifiable numerical data for conducting a quantitative analysis. Accordingly, the student researcher used adapted

scales from known psychologists to measure marital satisfaction, religiosity and conflict resolution styles. Though there are a few attempts to measure love expression like love languages scale of Egbert & Polk (2006), a validation of Dr. Gray Chapman's suggestion of love languages in his book "The 5 love languages"; it was not found culturally relevant. As a result, six questions were designed by the student researcher to make a preliminary assessment about love expression and its relation with marital satisfaction. The questions were tested for reliability and face and content validity was done by the researcher advisor and social psychologist.

The questionnaire had five sections with a brief explanation of objective of the research and clear remarks on who is supposed to fill it, the right to withdraw and anonymity. The sections are about socio demographic profile, marital satisfaction, religiosity, conflict resolution styles and love expression.

### ***3.5.1 ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS)***

Enriching relationship issues, communication and happiness or simply ENRICH (Fowers & Olson, 1993) is a 15 questions scale designed to assess different aspects of relationship. It is a widely used scale to measure marital satisfaction with a five point Likert scale showing agreement and disagreement levels for each statement. It is originated from ENRICH inventory (Fowers & Olson, 1989), a 125 items questionnaire with 14 scales (i.e., idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality aspects, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, equalitarian roles, religious orientation, marital cohesion, and marital adjustment). EMS is prepared with 15 questions each assessing one of the areas assessed by the full length inventory; to make its use easy and quick. The participants were 7,261 couples who took the ENRICH Inventory between January 1983 and June 1985, where scores were documented and available for analysis (Fowers & Olson, 1993).

A four week test-retest Cronbach's alpha result shows an internal consistency of .86. Dires and Ayenalem (2020), with .94 reliability result in pilot study, and Bayle et al. (2017) reported using 10 item version of ENRICH in their study conducted in Woldia and Jimma towns of Ethiopia respectively. Similarly, Zewdu (2020) also reported using three subscales of ENRICH inventory (Cronbach's result .73, .78 and .80) for the study

conducted in Addis Ababa, and Wolie (2019) reported using five items from ENRICH inventory for the study conducted in Debre Markos, Ethiopia. Likewise, several studies (Nunes et al., 2022; Taghani et al., 2019) also reported using ENRICH marital satisfaction scale.

The current study used 15 items EMS and obtained .77 reliability result, whereas other researchers from abroad reported using 35 items (Asoodeh et al. 2011) and 10 items (Escribà-Agüir & Artazcoz 2011) of ENRICH shortened versions.

What makes this scale different is its use of idealistic distortion questions to control socially desirable answers and correct marital satisfaction scores (Fowers & Olson, 1993). This approach aims to avoid overemphasizing the positive aspects of marital relationship and get accurate results out of responses (Nunes et al., 2022). The EMS score is derived by reversing the values of Items 2, 5, 8, 9, 12, and 14 and by summing up the items. The percentile score associated with Marital Satisfaction and Idealistic Distortion subscales in relation with the obtained score (which is available in the article of Fowers & Olson (1993) Appendix C, p.185) is used to calculate the total score. The total score of the scale is calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{EMS score} = \text{PCT} - [(.40 \times \text{PCT})(\text{ID} \times .01)]$$

PCT = percentile score for individual Marital Satisfaction scale

ID = percentile score for individual Idealistic Distortion scale

.40= common variance between Marital satisfaction and Idealistic distortion scales

.01= 1% of Idealistic Distortion scale

The higher scores represent higher levels of marital satisfaction and vice versa. The cutoff points used in this study are; EMS score below 37 low marital satisfaction, 38-68 moderate marital satisfaction, 69 or above high marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction score (10 questions) is considered high when the result is 41 or above, moderate for 21-40 and low for less than or equal to 20. Similarly Idealistic distortion is considered high when it is 21 or above, moderate score ranges from 20-11 and less than or equal to 10 is considered low.

### ***3.5.2 Centrality of Religiosity Scale (CRS)***

CRS is a measure of importance of religious ideologies, beliefs and activities in personality. It was developed by Huber and Huber in 2003 (originally by German language) and used by over 100 studies in 25 countries, with online available 19 languages (Huber & Huber, 2012). This scale is chosen for its suitability of Ethiopians' religious ideologies, beliefs and activities.

The 15 item scale has three items for each dimension of public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology and the intellectual dimensions; which are considered as representative of religious life. It was originally designed to measure Abrahamic religions i.e., Judaism, Christianity and Islam. After making a comprehensive overview of the scale in 21 countries, including Morocco and Nigeria, Huber & Huber (2012) made necessary amendments to make it fit for Buddhists and Hindus.

Additionally, specific adjustments were suggested regarding Muslims' beliefs and practices (absolute sovereignty of god and difference between regular prayers and Dua'). The basic scale is available in three lengths comprising 15, 10 and 5 questions. All of them show high internal consistency of .80 to .96. Abbasi et al. (2019) reported the Urdu translation to have three dimensions and 11 items after translation and cross language validation of the scale for Pakistani participants ( $\alpha=0.70$  to  $0.85$ ). This study used 15 items and obtained .91 Cronbach's alpha result. Moreover, cutoff points proposed by Huber & Huber (2012) and used in the study is mean value of 15-30 not religious, 31-59 religious and 60-75 highly religious.

### ***3.5.3 Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory (CRSI)***

CRSI is an inventory designed to identify conflict resolution styles between couples. Kurdek (1994) studied 333 couples living in four types of relationship and designed 16 items CRSI self and partner report scale. It is a widely used measure of conflict resolution styles in marital relationships.

It has four subscales namely, positive problem solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal, and compliance as presented by Gottman and Krokoff (1989). Each subscale has four items. The five point Likert scale ranges from 'never' to 'always'. Higher results under each subscale indicate the type of conflict resolution mostly used by the participants under the study.

Furthermore, high internal consistency across different groups (.66 to .91) is reported by Kurdek (1994). This study got a Cronbach's alpha of .69 to .89 for the subscales using the 16 item scale self-report questionnaire. While, Bisht and Tripathi (2023) found a reliability result .53 to .77 in their study conducted in India. Similarly, Sierau and Herzberg (2012) found a reliability of .78 to .86 in their study conducted in Germany.

#### ***3.5.4 Preliminary Assessment of Love Expression***

The student researcher developed six questions to assess love expression and its relationship with marital satisfaction. There are two open ended questions asking self and partner preferred way of love expressions, two questions on self and partner frequency of love expression, one question on satisfaction level by the mutual love expression and lastly the amount of contribution it has towards overall marital satisfaction. The four close ended questions had a reliability of .85 in the main study.

The self-prepared questionnaire is suggested by the student researcher's advisor and agreed up on its administration after the instrument is pre tested and assessed for reliability (.69 in pre-test) clarity of meanings, content validity and face validity. This is due to unavailability of culturally relevant standard assessment tool. Similarly, the local research gap on love expression creates uncertainty about the culture of love expression among Ethiopians. Hence, the finding will give insight on developing a comprehensive love expression measurement for other studies.

#### ***3.5.5 Instrument Translation and Validation***

Three of the scales used in this study were standard instruments which are developed and validated in other countries. To make use of them, translation of the instruments from source language (English) to target language (Amharic) was the first step. Amharic language is chosen because the student researcher observed its common use in the community as the major form of communication.

In doing so, the student researcher and a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology (with a professional background as a researcher, consultant, data translator and data analyst) independently translated it to Amharic language. Borsa et al. (2012) suggest in their study 'Cross-cultural adaptation and validation of psychological instruments' that

two independent, bilingual translators who are fluent to source language and native in the target language to make translation. Then the two translations were assessed by the advisor and student researcher and made ready for testing clarity of language, reliability and feasibility.

Meanwhile, two of the scales (ENRICH and CRSI) were organized in one table. The CRS religiosity scale was not originally organized in to same response options but for this study questions were reorganized based on their response dimensions in to three tables, to make it easier to fill (See Appendix A). Four questions about love expression were not organized in a table because of their different response options and the small number of questions.

**Pilot Taste of Instruments.** Subsequently, eight questionnaires were distributed using convenience sampling and the instruments were tested. After completing the questionnaire, each respondent was asked about the clarity of language and meaning, readability (font), ease of filling, arrangement of questions and the time it took to complete. Up on getting the feedbacks minor corrections were made to CRSI, two response options were rearranged in CRS (e.g. ‘Never’ was given a value of 5 in the Likert scale by mistake and lettered response options for three questions were changed to numbers), duration of marriage was added in socio demographic section and two questions were added for love expression assessment part. And the average time it takes to fill out was 10 minutes.

However, major corrections were made to CRS following ambiguity of meanings especially for Muslim and Orthodox respondents (e.g. How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God or something divine wants to communicate or to reveal something to you? To what extent do you believe that Gods, deities, or something divine exists? How often do you take part in religious services?). Taking in to account their feedbacks and the suggestions made by the instrument developers (Huber and Huber, 2012) necessary corrections were made to make it suitable for all religions and to avoid ambiguity. In fact the concept ‘deities’ was added by Huber and Huber (2012) considering Buddhist and Hindus which are not present in the study so, the word is removed from the questionnaire.

*Table 1*  
*Preliminary Instrument Test Participants and Reliability Result (N=8)*

Participants	Instruments	Cronbach's Alpha	
Sex	4 Male	ENRICH	.76
	4 Female	CRS	.86
Age	29-51	CRSI sub scales	
	3 Grade 9-12	Conflict Engagement	.67
Education	2 Diploma	Positive Problem Solving	.59
	1 Degree	Self-protection	.75
	2 Second degree	Acceptance	.71
	5 Orthodox	Love expression	.69
Religion	2 Muslim		
	1 Protestant		

Finally, backward translation was made by a high school English subject teacher who had a Master degree in English Literature and fluent in both languages. The forward translation which is compiled after incorporating test results and the backward translation was then assessed for any discrepancies from the main constructs by a social psychologist and PhD student who researched about content validity. The items were assessed using three scales namely; good, needs improvement and total change comparing the English and Amharic versions line by line. Majority was rated 'good' except for three items from CRS and one item from CRSI that was rated 'needs improvement'. Based on that, corrections were made using the remarks suggested by the content validator.

### **3.5.6 Pilot Study**

After the instruments were prepared for the main study, a pilot study was conducted to ensure their reliability, validity, and feasibility. This pretest aimed to identify potential issues and provided an opportunity to estimate how data collection and analysis would be carried out in the main study. Thirty (30) respondents were purposely selected from five blocks, out of the selected clusters, to make it representative of the

main study. Machin et al. (2018) mentioned a flat rule of thumb practice of using 30 samples for a pilot study.

The data was collected in two days by the data collector who is a general service employee in one of the clusters. The student researcher gave him a brief orientation about the purpose of the questionnaire and ethical consideration. He administered it door to door and was able to collect all the 30 questionnaires (23 of them were self-administered and 7 of them interviewer-administered).

Among the participants 18 were female and 12 of them were male. Respondents' duration of marriage range from 4-23 while, their ages range from 26-57. All of them attend above grade seven and 19 of them were Orthodox, 8 of them were Muslims and the rest 3 were Protestant. Cronbach's alpha result for ENRICH was .73, CRS .89, CRSI subscales .71, .73, .65 and .70, LE .79. A descriptive analysis showed a moderate level of marital satisfaction with a mean of 51.6, high religiosity with a mean of 68.3 and the most preferred way of resolving conflicts to be self- protection conflict resolution style.

However, the interview-administered questionnaires which are filled by the data collector posed a limitation due to potential bias of respondents. Respondents might give socially desirable answers and may feel shy or uncomfortable on giving personal and sensitive information. Based on that, the data collectors, in the main study, were given a direction to give questionnaires for respondents and let them fill out in their free and convenient time.

Generally, the respondents give a good feedback on the questionnaires clarity of language, meaning and ease of fill out. Moreover, statistical analyses show workability of the instrument in order to answer the research questions. Therefore, full scale of data collection was ensured.

### **3.6 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection activity begun by communicating General Service employees of Zone three and seven after showing the letter of support obtained from the University and briefing the objective of the research. Fortunately one of them had prior experience in data entry and collection while working in an NGO. They have a frequent contact with residents which make them familiar in the community. Due to its difficulty and time

required for the task, they agreed on payment (1000 and 2000 birr respectively) for the data collection service.

Accordingly, 240 questionnaires were allocated for zone seven and 140 for zone three taking their size in to consideration. They first fill out the questionnaire themselves to get a better understanding and make clarification if asked by respondents. Clear instructions were given on observing ethical considerations and the exclusion criterion. Additionally, they prepared a form to register respondents' house numbers to facilitate the data collection procedure.

The data was collected from April 27 Saturday morning to May 4 evening considering weekend and holiday breaks (Mayday and Easter) to increase availability of respondents. The questionnaires were given door to door by hand after getting a verbal consent from each respondent. Completed questionnaires were collected concurrently. By May 4, zone three data collector was able to collect 124 questionnaires and 216 were collected from zone seven. This makes a total of 340 questionnaires, with approximately 89.5% return rate. According to Baruch and Holtom (2008) a response rate of more than 70% is considered very good.

### **3.7. Data Cleaning and Preparation**

In order to guarantee that the data is reliable, consistent, and ready for analysis, data cleaning and preparation are essential steps in the research process. This stage entails finding and fixing mistakes, discrepancies, and missing data in the dataset to improve its reliability and quality. Researchers can minimize bias, increase the robustness of their studies, and extract valuable insights by carefully cleaning and preparing their data (Rahm & Do, 2000). Up on preparing the data one questionnaire was found to be filled by unmarried respondent (it was detected because duration of marriage was left blank and in love expression open ended question part the respondent disclosed her wish to have marital relationship implying that she is not currently in a relationship), so it was excluded from the study, making the viable questionnaires 339.

#### ***3.7.1 Data Entry and Screening***

Following data collection, it is immediately checked for accuracy to address issues with errors and omissions. Data entry is carried out carefully, and each entry is

revised once it has been made with giving a code similar to the order in the entry. Following the entry of all the data, frequency and descriptive analysis were performed for every variable. Afterward, it was discovered that one variable had a maximum value higher than expected. This difference arose because two data points had a value of seven, while the maximum value should have been five, and two other data points had a value of five when the maximum value should have been three. Upon resolving these differences, other minor inconsistencies were also corrected, and any remaining discrepancies were treated as missing data.

### ***3.7.2 Analysis of Missing Data***

Missing data is a common issue encountered during data collection and analysis, where certain observations or values are absent from the dataset (Jadhav, 2019). This study had also encountered the problem. This may be due to lack of understanding by respondents, time shortage, overseeing questions, lack of clarity of questions, fear of answering sensitive questions, and other reasons.

Mean imputation is a widely used method for handling missing data, especially when the missingness is assumed to be at random (Jadhav, 2019). This approach involves replacing missing values with the mean of the observed values for the respective variable. Mean imputation is chosen as the method to address missing data in this study due to its simplicity and ease of implementation. By replacing missing values with the mean of observed values, mean imputation helps preserve the overall distribution and central tendency of the data (Jadhav, 2019).

### ***3.7.3 Normality Test***

A normality test is a statistical process that determines if a dataset has a normal distribution. The normal distribution is distinguished by its symmetrical shape, with the majority of observations concentrated around the mean. It is a fundamental assumption in many statistical analyses. Among many methods, the study used Skewness and kurtosis values to check for normality as presented in Table 2.

*Table 2*  
*Skewness and Kurtosis Values for the Study Variables (N=339)*

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
-----------	----------	----------

Marital Satisfaction	-.694	.483
Religiosity	-1.037	0.261
Conflict Resolution Styles	0.8	-0.278
Love Expression	-0.586	-0.118

The acceptable range for Skewness and Kurtosis values varies among different scholars. George and Mallery (2010) suggest that values between -2 and +2 for both Skewness and Kurtosis are acceptable, while Hair et al. (2010) argue that Skewness values between -2 to +2 and Kurtosis values between -7 to +7 are acceptable. Upon examination, all variables in the dataset fell within the -2 to +2 range. As a result, the data was considered to exhibit a normal distribution.

#### **3.7.4 Multicollinearity Test**

Multicollinearity occurs when two or more predictors are correlated. A multicollinearity test is a diagnostic procedure used in regression analysis to assess the extent of collinearity, or correlation, among predictor variables (Daoud, 2017). This study utilizes the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) as a tool to assess the presence and severity of multicollinearity within regression analysis. The VIF is a statistical metric that quantifies the increase in the variance of a regression coefficient due to collinearity among predictor variables (Akinwande et al., 2015). VIF value between 5-10 indicates a strong correlation between the predictor variable and other variables in the model, potentially leading to unstable estimates and decreased precision in parameter estimates (Akinwande et al., 2015). The predictor variables in the study were observed to exhibit minimal collinearity, indicating limited similarity with the dependent variable (see Table 3). The SPSS analysis yielded VIF values below five, suggesting low levels of multicollinearity among the predictor variables.

*Table 3  
Multicollinearity Test Using VIF*

Predictor Variable	VIF Value
Religiosity	1.135
Conflict resolution styles	1.135

### 3.7.5 Reliability and Validity

The final step was checking for items internal consistency or items' ability to measure a construct. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used because of its wide use to measure Likert scale items. The rule of thumb used by many researchers for Cronbach alpha result greater than .7 is acceptable (Taber, 2018). However Tavakol & Dennick (2011) pointed a value more than .9 might suggest redundancy and imply that items should be reduced. The reliability test shows more acceptable Cronbach alpha result in the main study than the pilot study (see Table 4).

*Table 4*  
*Reliability Indices (alpha) of the Scales in Pilot (N=30) and Main study (N=339)*

Instrument	Main study		Pilot study	
	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items
ENRICH	.77	15	.73	15
CRS	.91	15	.89	15
CRSI subscales				
Conflict Engagement	.89	4	.71	4
Positive Problem Solving	.75	4	.73	4
Self-Protection	.69	4	.65	4
Acceptance	.74	4	.70	4
Love Expression	.84	4	.79	4

### **3.8 Data Analysis Techniques**

Following data entry, analysis was conducted using SPSS version 25. Descriptive and Inferential analysis techniques were conducted based on the research questions. The p value used for this study is .05.

#### ***3.8.1 Descriptive Statistic***

Descriptive statistic is crucial in the initial stages of research as it simplify complex data for better understanding and making comparison between variables (Kaur et al., 2018). It helps to illustrate and comprehend the features of a specific data by offering concise explanations of the sample and data measurements. In this study, demographic characteristics of respondents' are presented concisely using descriptive statistics. Moreover, levels of marital satisfaction, religiosity, and conflict resolution styles were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentage. Additionally, love expression part was also analyzed using descriptive statistics.

#### ***3.8.2 Correlational Analysis***

Correlation analysis was employed in this study to explain the extent and nature of the relationship between marital satisfaction, religiosity and conflict resolution styles and answer second and third questions of this research. Correlation is a method used to investigate whether there is a potential linear relation between the values of two variables that are normally distributed (Puth et al., 2014). Among the several types of correlation coefficient measures, the study employed Pearson product moment correlation ( $r$ ) which is the most widely used measurement of correlation (Puth et al., 2014). It shows the strength and direction of relationship between marital satisfaction, religiosity and conflict resolution styles.

#### ***3.8.3 Regression Analysis***

Regression analysis was used to examine the prediction of marital satisfaction by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables. It allows to predict the value of the dependent variable based on the values of the independent variables (Uyanik & Güler, 2013). By doing so the fourth and fifth research questions were answered. The student researcher used simple linear regression to analyze the prediction of religiosity on marital satisfaction. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis using enter entry method

was used to assess the predictability of marital satisfaction due to conflict resolution styles. Similarly demographic variables, after changing categorical variables to dummy variables, were investigated for their predictability of marital satisfaction. This allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the outcome variable (Uyanık & Güler, 2013). Through regression analysis, the study identified the individual and joint contributions of dependent variables, and offered a more detailed understanding of their roles in predicting levels of marital satisfaction.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Given the sensitivity and personal nature of the research variables, special care was taken to ensure the informed consent of respondents. Data collectors were reminded time and again to get verbal consents from respondents, to inform them the objective of the research and how the information they provide will be used for the study. Besides, clear and precise information was provided in the first page of the questionnaire, outlining objective of the research, respondents' rights to engage in the study willingly, their right to withdraw at any point and anonymity of their identity.

## Chapter Four

### Results

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between religiosity, conflict resolution styles, love expression, and marital satisfaction. Following the analysis of 339 viable questionnaires using SPSS version 25, the significant findings pertaining to the research questions are presented using tables, graph and chart. The first section presents demographic characteristics of respondents followed by level of marital satisfaction. The third and fourth section shows relationship between religiosity, conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction. The fifth and sixth section shows prediction of marital satisfaction explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic factors. Lastly seventh section present about mode of love expression and its contribution for marital satisfaction.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

To get insights into the demographic characteristics of the respondents, information regarding their duration of marriage, age, sex, educational background, and religion was collected. Subsequently, descriptive analysis, including frequencies and percentages, was employed for analysis. The data on respondents' duration of marriage and age were obtained as continuous variables. Consequently, these variables were analyzed separately using mean and standard deviation.

*Table 5*  
*Mean and Standard Deviation of Duration of Marriage and Age (N=339)*

	Range	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
Duration of marriage	1- 40	12.19	9	8.197
Respondents age	20 -75	38.77	40	9.916

As shown in Table 5, the distribution of respondents' duration of marriage ranges from one to forty, with a mean of 12.19 years and a standard deviation of 8.197. The most frequently occurring length of marriage was 9 years. Similarly, respondents' age ranges from 20 to 75, with a mean age of 38.77 years and a standard deviation of 9.916. The most common age among respondents was 40 years.

*Table 6*  
*Frequency and Percentage of Respondents' Sex, Educational Background and Religion*  
*(N=339)*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	112	33
	Female	227	67
Educational Background	No Formal Education	16	4.7
	Grade 1-6	17	5
	Grade 7-8	25	7.4
	Grade 9-12	90	26.5
	Certificate	30	8.8
	Diploma	68	20.1
	First degree	78	23
	Second degree	15	4.4
Religion	Orthodox	197	58.1
	Muslim	83	24.5
	Protestant	56	16.5
	Catholic	3	0.9

The result presented in Table 6 indicates that a majority of the respondents are female (67%), whereas 33% are male. In terms of educational background, the largest proportion of respondents (26.5%) reported attending grades 9-12, followed by diploma holders at 20.1%. Second-degree holders represented the smallest percentage, comprising only 4.4% of the respondents while 4.7% had no formal education. Analysis of religious affiliation among respondents indicates that the majority identify as Orthodox, constituting 58.1% of the sample. Muslims represent the second largest group at 24.5%, followed by Protestants at 16.5%. Only three of them (0.9%) identify as Catholic.

#### **4.2 Level of Marital satisfaction**

Assessing the levels of marital satisfaction constituted the first question of this study. Descriptive statistics is used for analysis, assuming that normality assumption is

met. Mean and standard deviation values are used to assess the level of marital satisfaction.

*Table 7*

*Mean and standard deviation of Marital Satisfaction, Idealistic Distortion and EMS (N=339)*

	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Marital satisfaction	10 - 50	38.97	6.52
Idealistic Distortion	8 - 25	19.44	3.34
EMS	10 - 79	52.06	11.39

As presented in Table 7, EMS had a mean score of 52.06 and a standard deviation of 11.39. The results suggest a moderate level of marital satisfaction among respondents. The marital satisfaction and idealistic distortion score also shows a moderate value of mean 38.97 and 19.44 respectively. But both results are near to upper boundaries. Accordingly, 83.2% of respondents reported moderate level of marital satisfaction (EMS 38-68) whereas; only 4.4% of respondents reported high level of marital satisfaction with score value more than 69 (see Table 8).

*Table 8*

*Frequency and Percent for Level of Marital Satisfaction (N=339)*

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent
High	15	4.4
Moderate	282	83.2
Low	42	12.4

### **4.3 The Relationship between Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles, and Marital Satisfaction**

The second research inquiry of this study investigates the association between religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and marital satisfaction. The relationship between these variables is examined using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. But before analyzing their relationship frequency and percentage results are presented to investigate religiosity levels of respondents and most preferred conflict resolution style.

*Table 9*  
*Frequency and Percent for Level of Religiosity (N=339)*

Level of Religiosity	Frequency	Percent
Highly Religious	225	66.4
Religious	103	30.4
Not Religious	11	3.2

As depicted in Table 9, majority of respondents were highly religious (66.4%), 30.4% of them were religious and just 3.2% of them are found to be not religious.

Likewise, descriptive analysis of the most preferred conflict resolution styles among respondents shows positive problem solving to be the most preferred one with a mean value of 13.57, followed by acceptance (11.7) as indicated in Table 10.

*Table 10*  
*Mean and Standard Deviation of Conflict Resolution Styles (N=339)*

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Conflict Engagement	8.87	5.035
Positive Problem Solving	13.57	2.650
Self-protection	9.20	4.749
Acceptance	11.70	3.269

A Pearson correlation coefficient result showing the relationship between marital satisfaction, religiosity and four conflict resolution styles is shown in Table 11 and 12.

*Table 11*  
*Correlation between Marital Satisfaction and Religiosity (N=339)*

	Marital Satisfaction	Religiosity
Marital Satisfaction	-	.169**
Religiosity	.169**	-

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

As shown in Table 11, marital satisfaction exhibits a positive significant relationship with religiosity (.169,  $p = .002$ ).

*Table 12*  
*Correlation between Marital Satisfaction and Conflict Resolution Styles (N=339)*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Conflict engagement	-				-.178**
2. Positive problem solving		-			.319**
3. Self-protection			-		-.214**
4. Acceptance				-	-.113*
5. Marital satisfaction					-

\* $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$

Marital satisfaction had significant relationship with all types of conflict resolution styles. The only positive and moderate relationship exhibited is with positive problem solving (.319,  $p < .001$ ). Self -protection, conflict engagement and acceptance styles had a weak negative relationship with marital satisfaction exhibiting -.214 ( $p < .001$ ), -.178 ( $p = .001$ ) and -.113 ( $p = .038$ ) results consecutively.

#### 4.4 The Variance in Marital Satisfaction Explained by Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic Variables

The third research question of this study aims to identify the extent to which religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables predict marital satisfaction; both individually and collectively. A foundational assumption guiding this investigation is that marital satisfaction can be predicted by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables. Before moving on to conducting regression analysis, all categorical variables (Sex, Educational background and Religion) had been changed to dummy variables (i.e., coded 0 and 1).

As depicted in Table 13, religiosity is not a significant predictor of marital satisfaction with  $\beta = 0.067$ . This means a one unit change in religiosity result in .067 increases in marital satisfaction.

*Table 10*  
*Standard Coefficients for Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic Variables (N=339)*

Variables	B	$\beta$	SE	$p$
-----------	---	---------	----	-----

Constant	29.875		6.284	.000
Religiosity	.064	.067	.058	.277
Conflict Engagement	.119	.052	.248	.633
Positive Problem Solving	1.204	.280	.240	.000
Self-Protection	-.368	-.153	.266	.167
Acceptance	-.086	-.025	.224	.701
Duration of marriage	-.004	-.003	.114	.974
Respondents age	.050	.043	.102	.488
Female	3.082	.127	1.512	.042*
Male	-	-	-	-
No formal education	-4.041	-.075	2.923	.168
Grade 1-6	-5.453	-.105	2.892	.060
Grade 7-8	1.067	.025	2.459	.665
Grade 9-12	-	-	-	-
Certificate	-.192	-.005	2.270	.933
Diploma	4.696	.165	1.780	.009*
First degree	1.920	.071	1.738	.270
Second degree	4.426	.080	3.157	.162
Orthodox	-	-	-	-
Muslim	.072	.003	1.505	.962
Protestant	.833	.027	1.683	.621
Catholic	-3.994	-.033	6.335	.529
R Square	.192			
Adjusted R Square	.146			

\* $p < .05$

Moreover, among the conflict resolution styles, positive problem solving had statistically significant predictive value, with a strong positive relationship ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This implies that a one unit improvement in positive problem solving results in a 0.28 increase in marital satisfaction. In contrast, the other conflict resolution styles were

not statistically significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Meanwhile, self-protection and acceptance styles showed negative relationships ( $\beta = -.153$  and  $\beta = -.025$ ) with marital satisfaction, although these relationships were not statistically significant ( $p = .167$  and  $p = .701$ ).

The result in Table 13 further shows being female and having a diploma to be the only statistically significant predictors of marital satisfaction among demographic variables. Being female increase marital satisfaction by 0.127 ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p = .042$ ) and having a diploma also increase marital satisfaction by 0.165 ( $\beta = .165$ ,  $p = .009$ ) Hence, not much of the demographics variables were able to predict marital satisfaction statistically. Conversely being male, attending grade 9-12 and having Orthodox religious affiliation were not able to predict due to a collinearity effect.

Though they are not statistically significant  $\beta = -.003$  shows a .003 decrease in marital satisfaction due to a one unit change in duration of marriage and a one unit change in age result in .043 change in marital satisfaction. Similarly, having no formal education ( $\beta = -.075$ ), attending grade 1-6 ( $\beta = -.105$ ) and having a certificate ( $\beta = -.005$ ) were negatively related with marital satisfaction. Being Muslim and Protestant had a positive relation with  $\beta = .003$  and  $\beta = .027$ , while being Catholic had a negative relationship ( $\beta = -.045$ ). This shows a decrease in marital satisfaction by being Catholic but not statistically significant.

More importantly religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables can explain 14.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction (Adjusted R Square= .146).

#### **4.7 Mode of Expressing Love and its Contribution to Marital Satisfaction**

The final research question aimed to identify how couples express their love within their marital relationships and how it contributes for marital satisfaction. Verbal expression, practical activities, gift giving and accommodating spouse preferences were most mentioned types of expressing love. Interestingly, 19 (5.6%) respondents indicated a lack of expressed affection while no specific response is given by 70 (20.6%) respondents. Table 15 presents various types of love expressions derived from open-ended questions (see Appendix C).

The frequency of love expression between spouses was assessed, and the response shows a high level of mutual love expression. Specifically, 42.2% of respondents

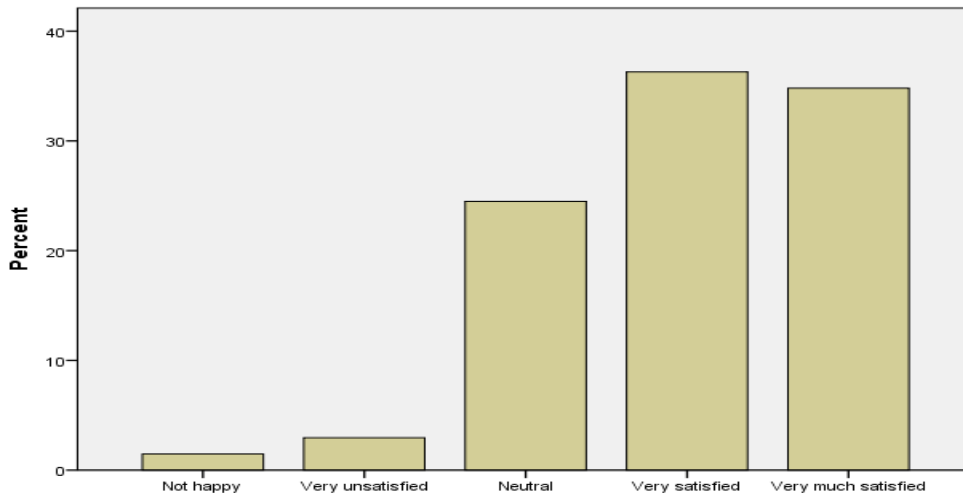
reported that they express love to their spouses ‘often’, while only 2.4% indicated that they ‘never’ express love to their spouses. Similarly, when asked how often their spouses express love to them, 46.6% of respondents reported that their spouses express love ‘often’ (see Table 14).

*Table 14  
Frequency of Love Expression (N=339)*

Response	Respondent		Spouse	
	Frequency	percent	Frequency	Percent
Never	8	2.4	10	2.9
Rarely	42	12.4	38	11.2
Sometimes	77	22.7	59	17.4
Often	143	42.2	158	46.6
Very often	69	20.4	74	21.8

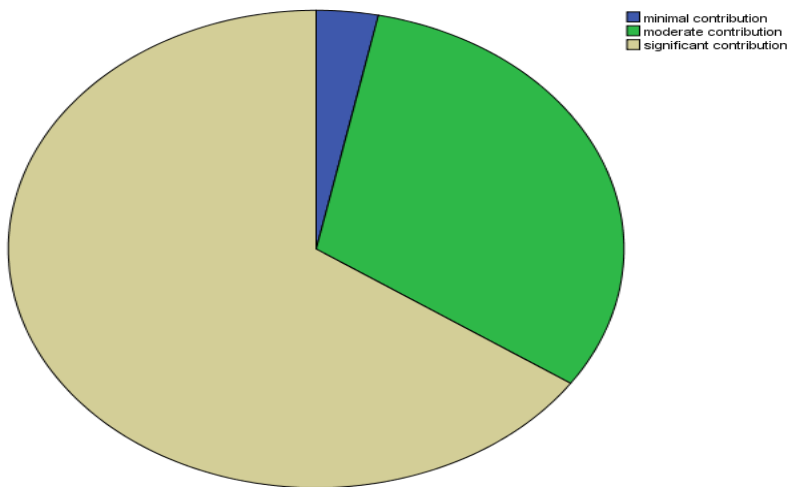
This high frequency of love expression is further reflected in the respondents’ satisfaction levels. As presented in Figure 2 the majority of respondents indicated satisfaction with the love expression between them and their spouse, with 36.3% reporting that they are ‘very satisfied’ and 34.8% responding that they are ‘very much satisfied’.

*Figure 3  
Satisfaction Level for Love Expression*



Furthermore, a significant proportion of respondents believe that love expression contributes positively to their overall marital satisfaction. A considerable 65.5% of respondents reported that love expression has a significant contribution to their marital satisfaction.

*Figure 4  
Contribution of Love Expression for Overall Marital Satisfaction*



## **Chapter Five**

### **Discussion**

In this section, interpretation of the major findings based on existing literature will be made. Each subsection will discuss the findings in relation to the research questions.

#### **5.1 Level of Marital Satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction is a crucial component of marital relationship that contributes to the overall health of individuals and families as a whole (Chapman & Guven, 2016). Understanding the level of marital satisfaction provides insights into the quality of marital relationships and discovers areas that may require improvements. In the endeavor to answer the first question of this study, the result for level of marital satisfaction was found to have a mean of 52.06 (EMS) with a standard deviation of 11.39. Overall, 83.2% of respondents reported moderate level of marital satisfaction. Indicating respondents generally feel moderate satisfaction towards their marital relationships and the vast majority of respondents rate their satisfaction as moderate.

Taghani et al. (2019), after studying 350 Iranians, also reported that majority of the participants rate their marital satisfaction as moderate. Their result shows relatively similar age and educational background with this study's participants but only women were included. Likewise, Udofia et al. (2021) stated finding a 50.1 EMS score in their study of Ghanaians using large sample size (720). Moreover, the study of Dires and Ayenalem (2020) conducted in Woldia town; Ethiopia found that 67% of participants in their study reported satisfaction with their marriage while the rest reported dissatisfaction. They studied large samples with almost equal number of participants from both sexes and same age and educational background with this study.

These similarities in level of satisfaction suggest that moderate satisfaction may be a prevalent experience in marital relationships across different populations and settings. Although the majority reported satisfaction other than dissatisfaction but, moderate level implies improvement areas in marital relationship. Hence, couples should work out in enhancing their relationship to get high satisfaction.

Additionally, marital satisfaction scale had a mean value of 38.97 and idealistic distortion had 19.44, this shows a moderate level for both subscales. The moderate idealistic distortion score indicates that respondents are realistic in describing their relationship. Thus, EMS correction amount is not much. But, it is important to notice the results are near to the upper boundary i.e., the moderate level upper boundary is 20 for idealistic distortion. This proposes responding in a highly favorable way and resist disclosing weaknesses of their marriage. This can possibly distort the information they provided.

Nonetheless, the result of marital satisfaction subscale is different from Nunes et al. (2022) and “ENRICH Marital satisfaction Scale: Factor Structure and Reliability Study in rural population of Uttar Pradesh, India” (2021). They reported relatively lower mean values, 27.3 and 29.92 consecutively. In fact Nunes et al. (2022) study setting and participants are very different than this study. Nunes et al. (2022) conducted their study on Portuguese couples with 205 sample size and their sample also includes single parents. Of course, cultural differences and their effect on marital relationships are expected. Interestingly, the researchers report the result as high satisfaction while the EMS score is 33.69 (lower than this study’s result).

However, idealistic distortion results exhibit similar results with Nunes et al. (2021) 19.06 and relatively smaller value (15.61) is reported by “ENRICH Marital satisfaction Scale: Factor Structure and Reliability Study” (2021). This indicates differences among participants in their tendency toward responding in a socially desirable manner. Therefore, researchers should be aware of potential participant biases that may distort the real information they provide and they should also be careful in selecting research design and method of data collection.

## **5.2 Relationship between Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles and Marital Satisfaction**

Marital satisfaction is a multidimensional concept that can be influenced by a number of variables (Tavakol et al., 2017). Bearing in mind the significant role of religion and religiosity in shaping peoples’ values and behaviors, it is important to examine how religiosity is related with marital satisfaction. This study found a positive

significant relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction (.169,  $p=.002$ ) given that majority of the respondents were highly religious. This indicates that higher levels of religiosity are associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction, although the strength of this association is weak.

Bahanaru et al. (2019) indicates the role of religious education in promoting marital satisfaction. However, the findings of this study show that 28.6% of respondents 'Never' seek religious knowledge through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books, with the overall average response indicating occasional engagement in seeking religious knowledge. This lack of religious education may contribute to the weak relationship exhibited between religiosity and marital satisfaction. Another possible explanation might be that religious teachings and sermons might not include topics about enhancing family and marital relationships. If the content of religious teachings does not focus on strengthening marital relationships, which are derived from stories of Prophets or quotes from scriptures, couples may not receive the necessary guidance about their marital relationship effectively. This lack of religious teachings about marriage could result in religiosity having a weaker influence on marital satisfaction.

Even though, the finding is supported by Aman et al. (2019) who studied large samples of Pakistani Muslim participants with equal proportion of male and female participants. They used religious commitment and religious practice dimensions and found significant but weak relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. Additionally, Fraser et al. (2021) found a significant positive correlation between husbands and wives mutual participation in religious sermons, prayers and practices and their overall marital satisfaction. Their study included a sample of 508 Christians from 42 countries. Moreover, Stinson et al. (2017) reported that both wife religiosity and husband religiosity had significant positive relationship with wife marital satisfaction and husband marital satisfaction in Latino couples, while majority of the participants were Catholics.

In contrast, Fard et al. (2013) found a significant positive moderate correlation among Iranian married university students. This slight variation might be the result of homogeneity in educational background among participants and small sample size effects (156 samples were used). Likewise, Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) found significant positive and strong correlation (.78) between religiosity and marital satisfaction among

Nigerian Christian participants. This difference in finding may be due to the instruments used in the study. Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) used Religious Affiliation Scale which has only 'True and False' options, this might result in over stating results. Moreover, the participants are selected from a church and not from other setting implying they already observe religious affiliation.

More importantly, the findings show the importance of religiosity to strength and promote marital satisfaction. It also implies the positive relationship of religiosity and marital satisfaction across different religions and study settings. Furthermore, it shows the importance of religiosity in feeling satisfied with marital relationship.

Conflict is inherent to human nature but, how each incident is addressed determines its effect in relationships (Ijob et al., 2015). Hence, discovering more effective methods that positively correlate with marital satisfaction is vital. This study found significant positive relationship with positive problem solving (.319,  $p < .001$ ). However, self-protection, conflict engagement and acceptance styles had a weak negative relation with -.214 ( $p < .001$ ), -.178 ( $p = .001$ ) and -.113 ( $p = .038$ ) results consecutively. Respondents report frequent use of positive problem solving followed by acceptance conflict resolution style.

The finding indicates that whenever couples use positive problem solving mechanisms their marital satisfaction will increase whereas, using conflict engagement or self-protection or acceptance style of conflict resolution will result in a decrease in marital satisfaction. Additionally, the finding implies that respondents mostly use discussing the issue at hand, finding alternative solutions and compromising when disagreement occurs within the marital relationship. Though, Wolde et al. (2022) reports 3.3% of respondents discuss their issues and solve their problem by themselves.

Similarly, Adriani and Ratnasari (2021) finding indicates positive problem solving and acceptance conflict resolution styles to be preferred largely by husbands while only positive problem solving is mostly preferred by wives among Indonesian participants in their first five years of marriage.

The study findings are supported by Bisht and Tripathi (2023) that reported significant relationship between conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction. They also found positive problem solving and acceptance types of conflict resolution styles to

be widely used among Indian participants. However, their finding shows significant negative relationship between conflict engagement and marital satisfaction, whereas positive problem solving and self-protection show negative but not significant relationship with marital satisfaction suggesting the relation might be by chance. The only positive relation is exhibited with acceptance conflict resolution style and marital satisfaction contrary to this study's finding.

Marital conflict is highly prevalent and it is increasing from time to time (Tasew & Getahun, 2021). Among the possible factors the study conducted by Wolie (2019) in Debre Markos, indicates significant positive relationship between marital conflict and infidelity, financial management, and third party interference (family/ friends) and significant positive relationship is shown between marital conflict, and sexual relationship and equalitarian role. Therefore couples need to be aware of possible reasons that can create conflicts and using constructive conflict resolution mechanisms whenever conflict and disagreement happens. Otherwise, negative behaviors that are observed during conflicts and disagreements may activate negative interaction pattern and thus decrease marital satisfaction (Ünal & Akgün, 2022). More goal oriented positive problem solving mechanism should be entertained between couples as it allows spouses to be “us against the problem” rather than “us against each other” (Ünal & Akgün, 2022).

### **5.3 Prediction of Marital Satisfaction Explained by Religiosity, Conflict Resolution Styles and Demographic Variables**

This study found the 14.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction to be explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables. The finding shows for every unit of increase in religiosity marital satisfaction had increased by 0.064 units though it is not statistically significant. This suggests that other factors may also play significant roles in determining marital satisfaction.

This finding is inconsistent with Aman et al. (2019) with regards to religious commitment dimension that explains 2.71% of the variance in marital satisfaction with  $\beta$  result of 0.172. It is also different with regards to religious practice dimension which shows a negative relation and predicts a very small portion of marital satisfaction with  $\beta$  - 0.020.

In addition, Bahanaru et al. (2019) content analysis shows the positive impact of religiosity in marital satisfaction and the capacity to be possible predictor of marital satisfaction. Furthermore, Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) reported finding  $\beta$  value of 0.77, which is relatively higher than the finding of this study, among Christian participants from a Church.

The findings indicate the role of religiosity in determining marital satisfaction and suggest that incorporating religious practices and beliefs can contribute to a more satisfying marital relationship. The different degrees of impact observed across different studies highlight the varying nature of the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction, indicating that other factors may play significant role in predicting marital satisfaction.

In Marital relationships, when couples experience disagreement and conflicts they try to resolve using various ways that range from yelling each other to finding an acceptable solution for both sides (Ünal & Akgün, 2020). The important question is how their conflict resolution style affects their marital satisfaction. This study found positive problem solving to have a statistically significant positive predictive value ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This means the more couples use positive problem solving, marital satisfaction will increase. However, conflict engagement, self-protection, and acceptance were not found to be statistically significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Hence, self-protection and acceptance styles showed negative relationships (-.153 and -.025) with marital satisfaction.

These findings suggest that while positive problem solving is beneficial for increasing marital satisfaction, other styles like self-protection and acceptance decrease marital satisfaction. Couples who resolve their disagreements using positive problem-solving strategies are likely to experience higher levels of marital satisfaction, highlighting the importance of constructive conflict resolution in maintaining healthy marital relationship. Conversely, using self-protective or acceptance conflict resolution styles may affect marital satisfaction negatively, possibly due to their destructive and more defensive nature.

The finding that positive problem solving is positive and significant predictor of marital satisfaction is similar with Ünal and Akgün (2020) and Adriani and Ratnasari

(2021). Both studies report positive problem solving as best predictor of marital satisfaction. However, Adriani and Ratnasari (2021) reports acceptance conflict resolutions having not significant but positive relationship, while conflict engagement and self-protection styles had a negative but significant relationship with marital satisfaction. Surprisingly, Bisht and Tripathi (2023) found positive problem solving and conflict engagement conflict resolution styles to be significant predictors but with a negative relationship with marital satisfaction. These results are opposing to the findings in this area (Bisht and Tripathi, 2023).

The difference in results might come from demographic variables and methodological variations across several studies. This suggests further research to understand marital satisfaction and its determinants fully. Nonetheless, the above findings indicate the need for interventions and counseling that promote positive problem-solving methods among couples to enhance their marital satisfaction.

Acknowledging the gap in literature about the joint effects of religiosity and conflict resolution styles on marital satisfaction; Stinson et al. (2017) make an attempt to assesses the relationship between church attendance, conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction among Latino couples and found that couples who used an avoidant style of conflict resolution, other than volatile and validator, demonstrated that weekly church attendance positively predicted their marital satisfaction. This finding suggests that couples who preferred avoidant style might be oriented to do so in their weekly church attendance which is not true for other styles. This suggests the importance of religiosity in preferring a particular type of conflict resolution style over others and thus may result in an increase in marital satisfaction.

In contrast, Wolde et al. (2022) found 14.2% of the study participants go to religious leaders to resolve marital conflicts while the majorities discuss with friends. This suggests the minimal interaction of religiosity and conflict resolution styles in marital relationships and conflicts. The findings imply the need to further investigate the interaction of religiosity and conflict resolution styles and the resulting effect on marital satisfaction.

To further understand the dynamics of marital satisfaction, variance explained by demographic factors was also analyzed. Regression results show being female and having

a diploma were the only statistically significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Other predictors like age, duration of marriage and religion were not significant predictors of marital satisfaction. Despite showing a trend they do not suggest having a direct impact on marital satisfaction given the study's samples.

Overall, these variables together predict 14.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction. This indicates that though some factors play a role, they explain a small proportion of the variance in marital satisfaction. This suggests that other factors may have a more significant impact than religiosity, conflict resolution styles, duration of marriage, age, sex, education and religion. Additionally, the finding shows lack of statistical significance in variables like being male, attending grades 9-12 and having an Orthodox religious affiliation. These variables were highly correlated with other predictors in the model which reduced their individual predictive power.

Most of the studies conducted in this regard found a relationship and/or statistical significance among marital satisfaction and age, sex, duration of marriage, education and religion (Dires & Ayenalem, 2020; Girma & Zewdu, 2019; Bayle et al. (2017). However, the statement age is not significant predictor of marital satisfaction is in contrast with Zewdu (2020) who found only age as significant but negative predictor of marital satisfaction, suggesting that as age increase marital satisfaction decrease. Similarly, this study's finding of sex (female) being significant predictor is different with Dike-Aghanya et al. (2019) who found gender to have not significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction among Nigerian samples.

This contradiction in literature and the indication of resultant small effect of demographic variables on marital satisfaction suggest the need to study other potential factors when investigating marital satisfaction. In this regard, Khezri et al. (2020) reviewed articles published on scientific databases from 1981-2017 and found income and economic status to have a positive effect on marital satisfaction. They also pinpoint the potential effects of occupation, length of marriage, age, number of children, religious matters, moral and mental health on marital satisfaction. Moreover, Tavakol et al. (2017) reviewed 80 papers and found demographic specifications, personality attributes, attachment styles, communication, intimacy, couple's families, forgiveness and sacrifice,

religion, emotional intelligence, personal health and sexual relations to be potential predictors of marital satisfaction.

Khezri et al. (2020) and Tavakol et al. (2017) findings suggest the need to incorporate other dimensions while investigating marital satisfaction, gives a better understanding of the marital dynamics. Saying this Zewdu (2020) found 74% of variance in marital satisfaction to be explained by sexual relationship, marital stability, marital communication and marital conflict resolution while sexual relationship and marital stability constituting the large proportion. Further, Girma and Zewdu (2019) found a 41% variance in marital satisfaction explained by marital communication.

Therefore, marital satisfaction is better explained by other factors than duration of marriage, age, sex, education or religion. Further researches have to consider potential determinants while investigating marital satisfaction.

#### **5.4 Mode of Love Expression and its Contribution to Marital Satisfaction.**

Expressing love between couples is one aspect of the marital relationship. Under this preliminary assessment the study found verbal expression, practical activities, gift giving and accommodating spouse preferences to be the most frequently used types of expressing love between spouses. This finding represents both husbands and wives. Furthermore, majority of the respondents often express their love and their spouses also express their love often. Additionally, the finding highlights the significant contribution of love expression on marital satisfaction when 65.5% of respondents believe their mutual love expression had significant contribution for their marital satisfaction.

The study finding exhibits all types of love expressions as proposed by Dr. Gray Chapman's five love languages namely, words of affirmation, physical touch, act of service, spending quality time and gift giving (see Appendix C). The findings suggest that mode of love expressions are relatively consistent across different study settings. This might be a result of social media and the cultural change it brings or it might be specific to study samples. We might not get the same result if the study is conducted in rural areas. Furthermore, this indicates the possibility of using the standard five love languages scale for further investigate love expression and its relationship with marital satisfaction after checking for its reliability and validity.

The findings are supported by İnce and Işık (2021). They state that using words of affirmation is widely used in Turkish culture and it is among the most important factors that sustain satisfaction in a marital relationship. Similarly, Beichen and Murshed (2015) found Westerners tend to use verbal expressions whereas East Asians tend to use gift giving. Amathullah and Ponnampereuma (2023) studied Sri Lankan couples and found that compassionate love, as exhibited through expressions, actions, and behavior, had a significant but weak relationship with marital satisfaction across young, middle, and old age groups.

It is important to note that using the most preferred love expression is necessary to keep marital relationships stable and satisfied (Farnsley, 2021). Finding of Farnsley (2021) shows failure to express love for spouses in their most desired love language decrease marital satisfaction and the least desired type of expression will not increase marital satisfaction. Further indicating that overall marital satisfaction might be predicted by fulfillment of a spouse's love language by their partner. Similarly, after studying African American couples Lee (2021) suggest identifying and employing a spouse's love language is positively related to higher levels of marital satisfaction.

## Chapter Six

### Summary and Conclusion

#### 6.1 Summary

The study was about the relationship among religiosity, conflict resolution styles, love expression, and marital satisfaction among Mickyland condominium residents. Using cross sectional research design an attempt is made to answer the level of marital satisfaction, the nature of relationship between religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and marital satisfaction, the extent of variance in marital satisfaction explained by religiosity conflict resolution styles and demographic variables and lastly mode of love expression and its contribution to marital satisfaction.

Quantitative data was collected using questionnaire from 339 respondents of which 33% male and 67% female. The sampling technique was single stage cluster sampling. The collected data was analyzed mainly using descriptive, correlation and regression analysis.

The result shows moderate level of marital satisfaction with mean value of 52.06 and 83.2% of respondents reported moderate satisfaction. The relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction exhibits a positive significant relationship (.169,  $p=.002$ ). Additionally, the only positive and moderate relationship is exhibited between marital satisfaction and positive problem solving (.319,  $p<.001$ ) and it is also indicated to be the most used form of resolving conflicts. Hence, self -protection, conflict engagement and acceptance styles had a significant negative relationship with marital satisfaction exhibiting -.214 ( $p<.001$ ), -.178 ( $p=.001$ ) and -.113 ( $p=.038$ ) results consecutively.

In addition, for every unit of increase in religiosity marital satisfaction had increased by 0.067 units though it was not significant. Among the styles positive problem solving was the only statistically significant predictor of marital satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p<.01$ ). Similarly, being female ( $\beta=.127$ ,  $p=.042$ ) and having a diploma ( $\beta=.165$ ,  $p=.009$ ) were statistically significant predictors of marital satisfaction among demographic variables. While all the variables explain 14.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction.

Finally the preliminary assessment about mode of love expression and its relationship with marital satisfaction shows verbal expression, practical activities, gift

giving and accommodating spouse preferences as the widely used types. Furthermore 65.5% of respondents believe their love expression had a significant contribution for their marital satisfaction.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Following quantitative analysis, significant results are found while investigating the relationship between religiosity, conflict resolution styles, love expression and marital satisfaction. The following conclusions are made in line with the research questions.

The first research question seeks to examine the level of marital satisfaction. It was found that 83.2% of the respondents feel moderate satisfaction. Therefore, this study concludes that the level of marital satisfaction is moderate among Mickyililand condominium residents. The finding suggests that while couples are generally satisfied with their marriages, there is still an area that needs improvement that could possibly enhance overall marital satisfaction.

The second research question tries to identify the nature of relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. The result shows Pearson  $r=0.169$ ,  $p=0.002$ . As a result, this study concludes there is a significant positive relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among Mickyililand condominium residents. The nature of relationship between conflict resolution styles and marital satisfaction result indicates positive problem solving ( $.319$ ,  $p<.001$ ), self-protection ( $-.214$ ,  $p<.001$ ), conflict engagement ( $-.178$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and acceptance ( $-.113$ ,  $p=.038$ ). For that reason, this study concludes positive problem solving has significant positive and moderate relationship with marital satisfaction among Mickyililand condominium residents. Conversely, conflict engagement, self-protection and acceptance styles of conflict resolution have significant negative but weak relationship with marital satisfaction. This indicates that constructive conflict resolution like positive problem solving is beneficial for marital satisfaction, while destructive resolution styles may decrease marital satisfaction.

The third research question investigates the extent of prediction on marital satisfaction explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables. The result exhibits 14.6% of the variance in marital satisfaction is explained by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables. Positive problem solving is the only significant predictor among the styles with  $\beta = 0.280$ ,  $p<.01$ . Consequently,

this study concludes 14.6% of marital satisfaction is predicted by religiosity, conflict resolution styles and demographic variables among Mickyliand condominium residents. Among demographic variables, being female ( $\beta = .127$ ,  $p = .042$ ) and having a diploma ( $\beta = .165$ ,  $p = .009$ ) were significant predictors of marital satisfaction, suggesting gender and educational attainment play roles in marital quality. Therefore, it is important to consider other factors, such as sexual relationships, communication, marital stability, personality traits when investigating marital satisfaction.

Lastly, the fourth research question attempts to explore how couples express their love and its contribution to marital satisfaction. This study concludes verbal expression, practical activities, gift giving and accommodating spouse preferences as the widely used types of love expression among Mickyliand condominium residents. Furthermore, the study concludes that love expression has significant contribution on marital satisfaction. This indicates the ways in which couples express their love to their spouses play a vital role in their marital satisfaction.

### **6.3 Limitations**

Limitations of this study include:

The use of quantitative approach limits the ability of this study to explore and get an in depth insight on the relationship of variables. Mixed approach makes sure comprehensive understanding by complementing strength and weakness of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The use of a cross-sectional design limits the ability of this study to establish causality between variables or determine possible changes over time; it only provides an overview of the relationships at a single point in time. Longitudinal and experimental studies might show the causal relationship between variables and changes observed through time resulting in an in depth understanding of the dynamics of marital satisfaction.

The study was conducted only at Mickyliand condominium site; this limits the generalizability of the findings to other study populations or settings. Other study sites might possibly bring different findings and comparison can also be made.

## **6.4 Implications**

Based on the findings the following implications are provided:

Policymakers should consider the role of religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression in family strengthening programs. As family is the smaller unit in a community its wellbeing should be ensured by policies that promote access to marital counseling and training, including components on effective conflict resolution styles, the benefits of shared religious practices, and healthy love expression should be given attention.

Marriage counselors and therapists, should incorporate discussions about religiosity, conflict resolution styles, and love expression into their sessions of marital counseling. By integrating religiosity, positive problem-solving strategies and encouraging various forms of love expression they can provide couples with practical tools to enrich their marital satisfaction.

Future researches should be conducted across different study settings using different methods to get a holistic understanding. And especially, the relationship between love expression and marital satisfaction should be well understood among Ethiopians since it is mentioned to have significant impact on marital satisfaction and there is a gap in literature on this regard.

Religious figures should include in their sermons about the importance of marital cohesion and the sacredness of marriage in the eyes of the Lord. They should emphasize that marriage is not merely a social contract but a divine covenant that reflects the unity and love of God. By fostering a deep understanding of this sacred bond, religious leaders can help couples appreciate the spiritual dimensions of their relationship, encouraging them to cultivate mutual respect, commitment, and love and thereby increase marital satisfaction.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A- English version of Data Collection Instrument

Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Behavioral Science

School of psychology

#### A questionnaire to be filled by married residents of Mickyililand Condominium

This questionnaire is prepared for the partial fulfillment of masters of art degree in social psychology. Its aim is to examine the level of religiosity, love, conflict resolution approach, and marital satisfaction and their relationship among Mickyililand condominium residents, with six sections. Therefore, your genuine response is very crucial for the success of the research. There are no correct or wrong answers for the questions. You are requested to simply reflect your feeling.

I would like to thank you in advance for your willingness and cooperation!

#### Remarks;

1. Don't write your name
2. The information you give will be used only for the purpose of this research work
3. The information is given based on your willingness

#### Section one- Background information

1. Duration of marriage \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age in years \_\_\_\_\_
3. Sex    Male     Female
4. Education level

No formal education     Grade 1-6     Grade 7-8     Grade 9-12

Certificate     Diploma     First degree     Second degree (Masters)     PHD

5. Religion

Orthodox     Muslim     Protestant     Catholic     Other

Section two: ENRICH Marital Satisfaction scale

Below are 16 questions designed to measure the level of marital satisfaction, please read all the statements carefully and give the first natural answer as it comes to you. It is essential to answer all the statements by marking a ‘tick’ (√) in the given box in front of each statement to indicate the level of agreement or disagreement for each statement.

- 1= Strongly disagree                      2= Moderately disagree                      3= Neither agree nor disagree  
 4= Moderately agree                      5= Strongly agree

No	Items	Response				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	My partner and I understand each other perfectly					
2	I am not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of my partner					
3	I am very happy with how we handle role responsibilities in our marriage					
4	My partner completely understands and sympathizes with my every mood					
5	I am not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me					
6	Our relationship is a perfect success					
7	I am very happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts					
8	I am unhappy about our financial positions and the way we make financial decisions					
9	I have some needs that are not being met by our relationship					
10	I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together					
11	I am very pleased about how we express affection and relate sexually					
12	I am not satisfied with the way we each handle our responsibilities as parents					
13	I have never regretted my relationship with my partner, not even for a moment					
14	I am dissatisfied about our relationship with my parents, in-laws, and/or friends					
15	I feel very good about how we each practice our religious beliefs and values					

Section three: Centrality of Religiosity scale

It is used to measure ones' religious belief and practice. Below are 15 items compiled by three tables, please make a 'tick' (√) under the number which is more representative of your belief and religious experience.

1=Never                      2= Rarely            3= Occasionally            4= Often            5= Very often

No	Item	Response				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	How often do you think about religious issues?					
2	How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God intervenes in your life?					
3	How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that you are touched by a divine power?					
4	How often do you keep yourself informed about religious questions through radio, television, internet, newspapers, or books?					
5	How often do you experience situations in which you have the feeling that God is present?					

1=Not at all    2= Not very much    3= Moderately    4=Quite a bit    5=Very much so

No	Item	Response				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	To what extent do you believe that Gods exists?					
2	How interested are you in learning more about religious topics?					
3	To what extent do you believe in an afterlife—e.g. immortality of the soul, resurrection of the dead or reincarnation?					
4	How important is to take part in religious services and sermons?					
5	How important is personal prayer for you?					
6	In your opinion, how probable is it that a higher power really exists?					
7	How important is it for you to be connected to a religious community?					

1=Never                      2=Less than a few times a year            3= A few times a year  
 4=One to three times a month            5=Once a week            6= More than once a week

7= Once a day

8=Several times a day

No	Item	Response							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	How often do you take part in religious services?								
2	How often do you pray?								
3	How often do you pray spontaneously when inspired by daily situations?								

Section four: Love expression measuring items

Please write the appropriate answer for question 1 and 2, and choose the right item and make a 'tick' (✓) for question 3,4, 5 and 6.

1. How does your spouse express their love for you?

---

---

2. How do you express your love for your spouse?

---

---

3. How often do you express your love for your spouse?

Not at all  Rarely  Sometimes  Often  Very Often

4. How often does your spouse express his/her love for you?

Not at all  Rarely  Sometimes  Often  Very Often

5. How satisfied are you with the expression of love between you and your spouse?

Very much unsatisfied  Very unsatisfied  Neutral

Very satisfied  Very much satisfied

6. To what extent do you believe your expressions of love contribute to your overall marital satisfaction?

Minimal contribution  Moderate contribution  Significant contribution

Section five: Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory

Below are 16 items designed to measure conflict resolution approaches. It is essential to answer all the statements by marking a 'tick' (√) in the given box in front of each statement that indicate the type of measure that you take whenever conflict happens with in your marriage.

1= Never      2=Rarely      3=Sometimes      4=Often      5= All of the Time

NO	Item	Response				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Launching personal attacks.					
2	Focusing on the problem at hand.					
3	Remaining silent for long periods of time.					
4	Not being willing to stick up for myself.					
5	Exploding and getting out of control.					
6	Sitting down and discussing differences constructively.					
7	Reaching a limit, shutting down, and refusing to talk any further.					
8	Being too compliant.					
9	Getting carried away and saying things that aren't meant.					
10	Finding alternatives that are acceptable to each of us.					
11	Tuning the other person out.					
12	Not defending my position.					
13	Throwing insults and digs.					
14	Negotiating and compromising.					
15	Withdrawing, acting distant and not interested.					
16	Giving in with little attempt to present my side of the issue.					

THANK YOU!

## Appendix B- Amharic Version of Data Collection Instrument

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የትምህርትና ባህሪ ጥናት ኮሌጅ

**የሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ቤት**

**ባለትዳር በሆኑ የሚኪሊላንድ ኮንዶሚኒየም ነዋሪዎች የሚሞላ መጠይቅ**

ይህ መጠይቅ የተዘጋጀው በማህበራዊ ሳይኮሎጂ የማስተርስ ዲግሪ ጥናት ለማሟላት ነው። አላማውም በሚኪሊላንድ የጋራ መኖሪያ ቤት ነዋሪዎች መካከል ሀይማኖተኝነት፣ ፍቅር እና የግጭት አፈታት ዘዴ ከትዳር ደስተኝነት ጋር ያላቸውን ግንኙነት በስድስት ክፍሎች መመርመር ነው። ስለዚህ ለጥናቱ ስኬት እውነተኛ ምላሽዎ በጣም ወሳኝ ነው። ለጥያቄዎቹ ትክክለኛ ወይም የተሳሳተ መልስ የለም። ስሜትዎን እንዲያንጸባርቁ ብቻ ነው የሚፈለገው። ለፈቃደኝነትዎ እና ትብብር አስቀድሜ ላመሰግኖት እወዳለሁ!

**ማሳሰቢያ**

1. መጠይቁ ላይ ስም መጻፍ አያስፈልግም
2. የሰጡት መረጃ ጥቅም ላይ የሚውለው ለዚህ የጥናት ሥራ ዓላማ ብቻ ነው
3. የመረጃ መስጠት ሂደቱ ሙሉ በሙሉ በፈቃደኝነትዎ ላይ የተመሰረተ ነው

**ክፍል 1: አጠቃላይ መረጃ**

1. በትዳር የቆዩበት አመት \_\_\_\_\_
2. እድሜ \_\_\_\_\_
3. ያታ  1. ወንድ  2. ሴት
4. የትምህርት ደረጃ
  1. መደበኛ ትምህርት አልተማርኩም
  2. ከ1-6ኛ ክፍል
  3. ከ7-8ኛ ክፍል
  4. ከ9-12ኛ ክፍል
  5. ሰርተፍኬት
  6. ዲፕሎማ
  7. የመጀመርያ ዲግሪ
  8. ሁለተኛ ዲግሪ(ማስተርስ)
  9. ፒኤችዲ
5. ሀይማኖት
  1. ኦርቶዶክስ
  2. ሙስሊም
  3. ፕሮቴስታንት
  4. ካቶሊክ
  5. ሌላ

**ክፍል 2: የትዳር ደስተኝነት/አርካታ መለኪያ**

ከዚህ በታች የትዳር ደስተኝነት ደረጃን ለመለካት የተዘጋጁ 16 ጥያቄዎች አሉ። እባክዎን ሁሉንም አረፍተነገሮች በጥንቃቄ ያንብቡ እና የመጣሎትን የመጀመሪያውን መልስ ይስጡ።

ለእያንዳንዱ ጥያቄ የስምምነት ወይም ያለመስማማት ደረጃን ለማመልከት ከፊት ለፊት ባለው ሳጥን ውስጥ (✓) ምልክት በማድረግ ሁሉንም ጥያቄዎች ይመልሱ።

1= በጣም አልስማማም                      2= በመጠኑ አልስማማም    3= መወሰን አልችልም  
 4= በመጠኑ እስማማለሁ                      5= በጣም እስማማለሁ

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄዎች	መልሶች				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	እኔና ባለቤቴ በደንብ እንግባባለን					
2	በባለቤቴ የግል ባህሪና ልማድ ደስተኛ አይደለሁም					
3	በትዳራችን ውስጥ ያለንን ሚና የምንወጣበት ሁኔታ ያስደስተኛል					
4	ባለቤቴ ሙሉ-በሙሉ ስሜቶቼን ይረዳኛል/ትረዳኛለች					
5	ከባለቤቴ ጋር ባለኝ ተግባራት ደስተኛ አይደለሁም በተጨማሪም እንደማይረዳኝ/እንደማትረዳኝ አስባለሁ					
6	ትዳራችን ፍፁም ስኬታማ ነው					
7	ከባለቤቴ ጋር ውሳኔዎችን የምንወስንበት እና ግጭቶችን የምንፈታበት መንገድ በጣም ያስደስተኛል					
8	ባለን የገንዘብ አቅምና ገንዘብን በተመለከተ በምናሳልፈው ውሳኔ ደስተኛ አይደለሁም					
9	በትዳራ ያልተሟሉ አንዳንድ ፍላጎቶች እንዳሉኝ ይሰማኛል					
10	የመዝናኛ ሰአታችንን የምንጠቀምበት ሁኔታና አብረን በምናሳልፈው ጊዜ ደስተኛ ነኝ					
11	ፍቅርን የምንገለጻለንበት ሁኔታና በፆታዊ ግንኙነታችን በጣም ደስተኛ ነኝ					
12	የወላጅነት ሀላፊነታችንን የምንወጣበት መንገድ አያስደስተኝም					
13	ከባለቤቴ ጋር ባለኝ ግንኙነት ለአፍታም ቢሆን ተጸጽቼ አላውቅም					
14	ከወላጆቼ፣ ከአማኞቼና ንጹሎቼ ጋር ባለን ግንኙነት ደስተኛ አይደለሁም					
15	እያንዳንዳችን ሃይማኖታዊ ስርአቶችንና እሴቶችን የምንተገብርበት መንገድ በጣም ደስ ይለኛል					

**ክፍል ሶስት- የሀይማኖተኝነት መለኪያ**

ይህ ክፍል የተዘጋጀው ሀይማኖት ላይ ያለን እምነትና ተግባርን ለመለካት ነው። ከስር ባሉት ሶስት ሰንጠረዦች 15 ጥያቄዎች ተቀምጠዋል፣ የእርስዎን ልማድና ሀሳብ የሚገልፁ ቁጥር

ወይም ፊደል መደዳ ባለው ሳጥን ውስጥ (✓) ምልክት በማድረግ ሁሉንም ጥያቄዎች ይመልሱ።

1=በፍፁም                      2=አንዳንድ                      3=አልፎአልፎ                      4=ብዙ ጊዜ                      5=በጣም ብዙ ጊዜ

ተቁ	ጥያቄ	መልስ				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	ስለ ህይወጥኛታዎ ጉዳዮች ምን ያህል ጊዜ ያስባሉ ?					
2	ፈጣሪ በህይወትዎ ውስጥ ታድጎኛል የሚል ስሜት እንዲሰማዎት የሚያደርጉ ሁኔታዎች ምን ያህል ጊዜ ያጋጥሞታል?					
3	ፈጣሪ እንደረሰልዎ / እንደተገለጸልዎ የሚሰማዎ ሁኔታዎች ምን ያህል ጊዜ ያጋጥምዎታል?					
4	ስለ ሃይማኖታዎ ጉዳዮች በራዲዮ፣ በቴሌቪዥን፣ በኢንተርኔት፣ በጋዜጣ ወይም በመጻፍት ምን ያህል ጊዜ እራስዎትን ያሳውቃሉ?					
5	ፈጣሪ እንዳለ እንዲሰማዎ የሚያደርጉ ምን ያህል አጋጣሚዎች ገጥሞዎታል?					

1=በጭራሽ                      2= በጣም ብዙ አይደለም                      3=በመጠኑ                      4=በብዛት                      5=በጣም ብዙ

111	ጥያቄ	መልስ				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	ፈጣሪ አለ ብለው እስከ ምን ያህል ድረስ ያምናሉ?					
2	ስለ ሃይማኖታዎ ርዕሰ ጉዳዮች የበለጠ ለማወቅ ምን ያህል ፍላጎት አለዎት?					
3	ከሞት በኋላ ባለው ህይወት እስከ ምን ድረስ ያምናሉ?					
4	በሃይማኖታዎ ተግባራት/ አገልግሎቶች ውስጥ መሳተፍ ምን ያህል አስፈላጊ ነው?					
5	የግል ፀሎት ለእርስዎ ምን ያህል አስፈላጊ ነው?					
6	በእርስዎ አመለካከት ከፍ ያለ ሃይል ይኖራል ብለው ምን ያህል ያስባሉ?					
7	ለእርስዎ ከህይማኖተኛ ማህበረሰብ ጋር መተሳሰር ምን ያህል አስፈላጊ ነው?					

1=በጭራሽ                      2=በአመት ከጥቂት ጊዜ ያነሰ                      3=በአመት አንዳንድ ጊዜ  
 4=በወር ከአንድ እስከ ሶስት ጊዜ                      5=በሳምንት አንድ ጊዜ                      6=በሳምንት ከአንድ ጊዜ በላይ  
 7=በቀን አንድ ጊዜ                      8=በቀን ውስጥ ብዙ ጊዜ

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	መልስ							
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	በሃይማኖታዊ ስርአቶች፣ አገልግሎቶች ወይም ክንዎኔዎች ውስጥ ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይሳተፋሉ?								
2	ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይፀልያሉ?								
3	በዕለት ተዕለት ሁኔታዎች በመነሳሳት ምን ያህል ጊዜ በድንገት ይፀልያሉ?								

**ክፍል አራት፡ የፍቅር አገላለፅ መለኪያ ጥያቄዎች**

እባክዎን ለጥያቄ 1 እና 2 ተገቢውን መልስ ይጻፉ። ለጥያቄ 3፣4፣5 እና 6 ትክክለኛውን መልስ ይምረጡ እና (✓) ምልክት ያድርጉ።

1. ባለቤትዎ ፍቅርን/ፍቅሯን በምን መልኩ ይገልፀልዎታል/ ትገልፀሎታለች?

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2. እርስዎስ ለባለቤትዎ ፍቅርዎን በምን መልኩ ይገልጻሉ?

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3. ለባለቤትዎ ያለዎትን ፍቅር ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይገልጻሉ?

- 1.በጭራሽ     2.አንዳንዴ     3.አልፎአልፎ     4.ብዙ ጊዜ     5. በጣም ብዙ ጊዜ

4. ባለቤትዎስ ለእርስዎ ያለውን/ ያላትን ፍቅር ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይገልፀሎታል/ ትገልፀሎታለች?

- 1.በጭራሽ     2.አንዳንዴ     3.አልፎአልፎ     4 ብዙ ጊዜ     5. በጣም ብዙ ጊዜ

5. እርስዎና ባለቤትዎ ፍቅራችሁን የምትገላለፁበት መንገድ ምን ያህል ያስደስቶታል?

- 1.በፍፁም አያስደስተኝም     2.በጣም አያስደስተኝም     3.ምንም አይልም   
 4.በጣም ያስደስተኛል     5. እጅግ በጣም ያስደስተኛል

6. ፍቅርን የምትገላለፁበት መንገድ ለትዳርዎ ደስተኝነት ምን ያህል አስተዋፅዖ አበርክቷል ብለው ያምናሉ?

- 1.አነስተኛ አስተዋፅዖ     2.መካከለኛ አስተዋፅዖ     3.ጉልህ አስተዋፅዖ

ክፍል አምስት፡ የግጭት አፈታት አይነቶች መለኪያ

ከዚህ በታች የግጭት አፈታት መንገዶችን ለመለካት የተዘጋጁ 16 ጥያቄዎች አሉ። ከስር ከተዘረዘሩት ውስጥ በትዳርዎ ውስጥ ግጭት ሲገጥምዎ እርሶ የሚያደርጉትን የሚመስለው ሀሳብ ፊት ለፊት ባለው ሳጥን ውስጥ (√) ምልክት በማድረግ ሁሉንም ጥያቄዎች ይመልሱ።

1=በጭራሽ                      2=አልፎ አልፎ                      3=አንዳንድ ጊዜ                      4=ብዙ ጊዜ                      5=ሁልጊዜ

ተ.ቁ	ድርጊቶች	መልስ				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	ጥቃቶችን መሰንዘር መጀመር					
2	ወቅታዊ ችግሮች ላይ ማተኮር					
3	ለረጅም ጊዜ ማኩረፍ					
4	የራስን ፍላጎት አለማስከበር					
5	በጣም መበሳጨትና ክቁጥጥር ውጭ መሆን					
6	ተቀምጦ ገንቢ በሆነ መልኩ በልዩነቶች ዙሪያ መወያየት					
7	በቃኝ ማለት፣ ዝም ማለትና ለመነጋገር ፈቃደኛ አለመሆን					
8	በቀላሉ መስማማት					
9	ስሜታዊ ሆኖ ያልተገባ ነገር መናገር					
10	በሁለታችንም ዘንድ ተቀባይነት ያላቸውን አማራጮች መፈለግ					
11	ለሌላ ሰው እድል አለመስጠት/ ችላ ማለት					
12	የራስን አቋም አለማስከበር					
13	መስደብና ማንቋሽሽ					
14	መደራደርና መግባባት					
15	ራስን ማግለል፣ መራቅና አለመፈለግ					
16	የራስን ሀሳብ በደንብ ሳያስረዱ መስማማት					

**አመሰግናለሁ!**

**Appendix C-Types of Love Expression**

Type of Love Expression	Frequency
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Verbal expression	188
Practical activities	124
Gift giving	57
Accommodating spouse's preferences	53
Respectful behavior	21
Engaging in outings and entertainment	20
Endearing nicknames	20
Demonstrating care	17
Showing empathy	16
Uttering "I love you"	15
Kissing	14
Smiling and showing humility	13
Hugging	9
Expressing appreciation	8
Physical intimacy/cuddling	7
Seeking to please	6
Maintaining eye contact	4
Greeting upon arrival	4
Sexual intimacy	2
Praying	2
Expressing gratitude	2
Allocating quality time	2
Taking care of children	2
Demonstrating obedience	2
Showing respect to extended family	1
Surprising	1
Demonstrating understanding	1
Accepting partner's flaws	1
Admiring partner's beauty	1
Listening attentively	1
Providing assistance	1
Checking in regularly	1
Providing motivation and support	1
Granting permission to visit family	1

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Organizing the house	1
Difficulty expressing love	1
Maintaining silence/ lack of expression	19
No response	70

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