

Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect as Determinants of Marital Relationship Quality among Married Members of an Evangelical Church in Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract: *Emotional neglect or abuse is known to be one of the most common forms of adverse childhood experiences, which is defined as the failure of caregivers to meet the psychological needs of a minor. It has been predicted that childhood emotional neglect may impact adult relationships. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between childhood emotional neglect and the quality of marital satisfaction among married individuals attending an evangelical church in Nairobi, Kenya. This study utilized a descriptive cross-sectional research design to collect data from 288 married individuals sampled from 14,400 married couples across 17 parishes using the Cochran (1963) formula. A total of 288 married individuals' both male (N=150, 52.1%) and female (N= 138, 47.9%) with age ranges from 20 years to 75 years old with a mean age of 45.9 ± (SD: 12.235) were sampled and screened to participate in the study. The ACE International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ) and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) were used to collect data from the participants. Results from the Mantel-Haenszel Common odds ratio estimate indicate a strong statistical association between emotional neglect and the quality of marital satisfaction among the respondents (OR: 2.234; 95% CI: 1.199 – 4.165). Also, the study found a positive correlation between emotional neglect and the quality of marital relationships ($r = .151$; $p = 0.010$) and a negative relationship between emotional abuse and the quality of marital relationships. The study concluded that relevant stakeholders may consider necessary factors to curb the pandemic of emotional abuse and neglect. The study suggested that a longitudinal study may be considered to explore a predictive relationship between emotional abuse and neglect, and the adverse effect on adulthood beyond a single moment in time.*

Keywords: *adverse childhood experiences (aces), emotional abuse, emotional neglect, quality of marital relationship*

INTRODUCTION

Childhood emotional neglect and emotional abuse are two concepts that most scholars use interchangeably. The two concepts are parts of the most common childhood traumatic experiences that need intensive study. According to Kumari (2020), there has been less research attention on emotional abuse and emotional neglect, especially as compared to physical abuse, sexual abuse, and physical neglect. Emotional neglect is defined as negligence and inattentiveness to a child's emotional and developmental needs (Lau, et al., 2020). Emotional neglect, according to Avdibegovic and Brkic (2020), is a relationship pattern in which the emotional needs of a child are persistently ignored, invalidated,

disregarded, and unappreciated by significant caregivers or figures. Also, childhood emotional neglect refers to the failure of the parents or significant figures to provide sufficient emotional support for their children (Yang, Xiong, & Huang, 2021). On the contrary, emotional abuse, which is also known as psychological abuse, is a pattern of conduct that threatens, frightens, stigmatizes, or undermines a child's self-worth (Nesheen & Alam, 2015).

Emotional neglect and abuse are considered parts of childhood maltreatment. Child maltreatment includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and physical and emotional neglect. Also, child exposure to intimate partner violence is considered as child maltreatment (Kimber, et al., 2017). Unlike other forms of childhood maltreatment, childhood emotional neglect, and emotional abuse are less researched. These two forms of maltreatment are characterized as parents/caregivers-child relationships that are described by patterns of harmful interactions, requiring no physical contact with the child. According to Fung, Chung, and Ross (2020), there are two dimensions to emotional maltreatment: Emotional abuse includes acts of commission and hostile parenting, while emotional neglect involves acts of omission that is, having indifferent parenting. Child maltreatment generally has been associated with a wide range of psychological and behavioural problems. Most especially, the long-term health effects of emotional abuse and neglect are consequential to a variety of mental health conditions (Norman, et al., 2012). It becomes imperative to understand the long-term health effects of childhood trauma, especially childhood emotional neglect and abuse, this might be helpful to inform maltreatment prevention strategies and to improve psychotherapy strategies for children who have been abused and neglected emotionally.

Kimber et al (2017), in a systematic review of a total of 5,556 publications predominantly on emotional abuse and emotional neglect in children found the prevalence ranging from 21% to 66% and that these childhood experiences are associated with eating-related pathology. Also, findings from a meta-analysis show that emotional abuse is associated with internalizing disorders, whereas emotional neglect is associated with externalizing disorders (Cui & Liu, 2020; Cohen & Thakur, 2021). Subsequently, emotional abuse was found in a cross-sectional study as the main independent predictor of psychiatric symptomatology with differential effects in males and females (Cecil, Viding, Fearon, Glaser, & McCrory, 2017). Similarly, childhood emotional abuse and neglect are found to be significantly associated with poor socioeconomic status and mental health problems (Fung, Chung, & Ross, 2020). Consequently, results from a study that considers the long-term cognitive, psychological, and health outcomes associated with child emotional abuse and neglect by Strathearn, et al., 2020 indicated that emotional neglect was associated with having multiple sexual partners, cannabis abuse, and experiencing hallucinations. The same study found that emotional abuse increased the odds of psychosis, experiencing harassment later in life, pregnancy miscarriage, and injecting-drug use. Likewise, emotional abuse and neglect were found to be associated with depressive symptoms across a range of measures of mood and depression (Hartanto, Yong, Lee, Ng, & Tong, 2020; Grummitt, et al., 2022; Hayashi, 2022).

Regarding the association between childhood emotional abuse, emotional neglect, and the quality of relationships in adulthood, Riggs (2019), explains that the relationship is grounded in attachment theory that describes the development of maladaptive interaction patterns in adult romantic relationships. According to Riggs, childhood emotional abuse and neglect

produce insecure attachment, which is capable of causing emotional dysregulation, promoting a negative view of self and others, and interfering with social functioning, which subsequently impairs the quality of romantic relationships. This explains why results from a study indicated that childhood emotional abuse and neglect were negatively associated with adulthood provisions of emotional support to family members, friends, and romantic partners (Fitzgerald, Hamstra, & Ledermann, 2020).

Furthermore, there is empirical evidence that a statistical link exists between childhood emotional abuse and marital satisfaction. A study among 156 couples examined the linkages between childhood emotional abuse and marital satisfaction and found that both men's and women's childhood emotional abuse were linked with lower marital satisfaction and partners' lower satisfaction (Maneta, Cohen, Schulz, & Waldinger, 2015). Also, findings from a comparative study on attachment styles, marital conflicts, coping strategies, and sexual satisfaction in spouses with childhood emotional abuse and non-abused women indicated that women with emotional abuse experience had more marital conflicts, insecure attachment, dysfunctional coping strategies, and less sexual satisfaction than non-abused women (Fallah, et al., 2019). Peterson, Peugh, Loucks, and Shaffer (2018), reported findings from a study that females' history of childhood emotional maltreatment significantly predicted relationship satisfaction at low levels of dyadic hostility. This suggests that romantic relationship satisfaction is compromised by a history of emotional maltreatment. Pearson correlation coefficient statistics revealed a strong negative correlation between emotional abuse with mental health and quality of life (Qasim & Muzaffar, 2021). In addition, results from research among college students in romantic relationships showed that emotional neglect and self-injurious behaviors mediated the relationship between family satisfaction and depressive symptoms in college students (Saleem, Karamat, Zahra, Subhan, & Mahmood, 2021). On this note, there seems to be a linear relationship between childhood emotional neglect and abuse, and the quality of marital relationships. Therefore, this study hypothesized emotional abuse and neglect as determinants of marital relationship quality in married individuals.

METHODOLOGY

The current research is designed to use descriptive cross-sectional quantitative research methods, which is an extract from the descriptive correlational research design of a Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology dissertation. The dissertation was designed to investigate the relationship between adverse childhood experiences and the quality of marital relationships among married individuals from an evangelical church in Nairobi, Kenya. The objective of this article is to test a hypothesis that childhood emotional abuse and neglect determine the marital relationship quality among married individuals. A total of 288 married individuals' both male (N=150, 52.1%) and female (N= 138, 47.9%) with age ranges from 20 years to 75 years old with a mean age of $45.9 \pm$ (SD: 12.235) were sampled and screened to participate in the study.

This study used the ACE-International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ), and Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) to collect data from the participants. ACE-IQ measures thirteen categories of childhood traumatic family experiences such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and emotional neglect. Additionally, peer violence; witnessing community

violence, and exposure to collective violence. To calculate the ACEs scores, the binary version of the instrument was used to estimate the respondents' affirmation of their experiences, whereby the total ACEs were assessed to ascertain the number of childhood traumas each of the respondents had as the participants' overall ACEs score. RAS was used to assess the quality of marital satisfaction. The relationship assessment scale is a 7-question, self-report assessment tool that is used to measure general relationship satisfaction among couples engaged in intimate relationships. It is ideal for couples who are dating, cohabiting, married, or even engaged (Chenody, Kondrat, Killian, & Dunk-West, 2022). It is a brief tool that assesses attitudes that are correlated to matters of self-disclosure, measures of love, marital satisfaction, commitment, investment in the relationship as well as sexual attitudes towards the relationship (Rivera, 2020).

This study sought ethical approvals from the United States International University- Africa as well as the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The proposal was submitted and reviewed the by IRB team to ensure that the methods were scientifically sound, the participants were protected against any harm, in terms of no coercion to participate, the individuals' rights to dignity and integrity were upheld and the information collected was kept with utmost confidentiality. Further, the research got a permit to collect data from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Characteristics

This section presents the distribution of participants' sociodemographic characteristics such as age categories, gender, levels of education, and participant's main work status in this current study. The Table below shows the distribution.

Table 1: *Background socio-demographic characteristics*

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Respondent's age		
20-40 years = Young adults	103	35.8
41-65 years = Middle adults	176	61.1
66-75 years = Late adults	9	3.1
Respondent's gender		
Male	150	52.1
Female	138	47.9
Higher level of education		
No formal schooling	2	0.7
Less than primary school	2	0.7
Secondary/high school	3	1.0
College/university	35	12.2
Postgraduate degree	173	60.1
Refused	73	25.3
Respondent's main work status over the last 12 years		
Government employee	59	20.5
Non-governmental employee	75	26.0
Self-employed	117	40.6
Non-paid	2	0.7
Students	8	2.8
Homemaker	8	2.8

Retired	14	4.9
Unemployed	5	1.7

Table 1 presents the background socio-demographic characteristics in this study. Regarding the age distribution, the respondent's age ranges from 20 to 75 years with a mean age of 45.9 \pm (SD: 12.235). The respondent's age was categorized into three categories 20-40 years – young adults, 41-65 years – middle adults, and 66-75 years – late adults respectively. The frequency of the respondents aged 41-65 years was higher (176, 61.1%) as opposed to young adults aged 20-40 years (103, 35.8%), and the late adults aged 66-75 years (9, 3.1%). This shows that most of the respondents were between the ages of 41-65 years. Also, concerning the gender distribution, the frequency of male respondents was slightly higher (150, 52.1%) compared to female respondents (138, 47.9%). This implies that more male respondents participated in the study compared to female respondents.

With reference to higher levels of education, the frequency of the respondents with postgraduate degrees was higher (173, 60.1%) compared to college/university (35, 12.2%), no formal schooling, less than primary school (2, 0.7%) respectively, secondary/high school (3, 1%), and the respondents who refused to respond to the inquiry (73, 25.3%). This indicates that many of the respondents had postgraduate degrees. Furthermore, Table 2 also shows the respondents' main work status over the last twelve years, where the frequency of self-employed respondents was higher (117, 40.6%) compared to non-governmental employees (75, 26%), government employees (59, 20.5%), retired respondents (14, 4.9%), students (8, 2.8%), homemaker (8, 2.8%), and unemployed (5, 1.7%). As shown in the Table, a higher percentage of the respondents were self-employed.

3.2 Prevalence of Childhood Emotional Abuse and Neglect among the Participants

The table below indicates the distribution of the proportion of the participants who had experienced childhood emotional neglect and abuse in this current study.

Table 2: Prevalence of Childhood emotional abuse and neglect among the participants

Variables	No	%	Yes	%	Mean	Std. dev.
Emotional abuse	79	27.4	209	72.6	.7257	.44694
Emotional neglect	49	17.0	239	83.0	.8299	.37641

Table 2 shows the proportion of childhood emotional abuse and neglect among the participants. Concerning emotional abuse, the occurrence of exposure to childhood emotional abuse was similarly higher at 72.6% as opposed to the respondents who did not experience emotional abuse at 27.4%. The implication of 72.6% prevalence of emotional abuse shows that significant numbers of the respondents experienced childhood emotional abuse. The mean emotional abuse was $.7257 \pm$ (SD: $.44694$). Not only that, the proportion of the respondents who experienced emotional neglect was significantly higher at 83% as opposed to those who did not experience it at 17%. Meanwhile, the mean emotional neglect in this study was $.8299 \pm$ (SD: $.3764$) which indicates that experiencing emotional neglect in this study is relatively higher among married individuals.

3.3 Key Socio-demographic Characteristics and Emotional Abuse

The table below indicates the distribution of key socio-demographic factors and emotional abuse.

Table 3: Distribution of key social demographic characteristics and emotional abuse

Variables	Total %	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)		Chi-Square Test		Sig.
		No	Yes	χ^2	df	
Emotional Abuse						
Respondent's age						
20-40 years	103(35.8)	25 (8.7)	78 (27.1)	.885	2	.642
41-65 years	176(61.1)	51 (17.7)	125(43.4)			
66-75 years	9 (3.1)	3 (1.0)	6 (2.1)			
Respondent's sex						
Male	150 (52.1)	41 (14.2)	109 (37.8)	.001	1	.969
Female	138 (47.9)	38 (13.2)	100 (34.7)			
Civic status						
Married	235 (81.6)	63 (21.9)	172 (59.7)	.248	1	.618
Living as couple	53 (18.4)	16 (5.6)	37 (12.8)			

Table 3 shows the distribution of key sociodemographic characteristics and emotional abuse among the married individuals who participated in the study. As shown in the Table, the frequency of emotional abuse was higher among the respondents aged 41-65 years at 43.4% as opposed to 20-40 years at 27.1%, and 66-75 years at 2.1%. The statistical test shows that the difference in the distribution was insignificant ($p=0.642$). This implies that the respondents aged 41 – 45 years experienced more emotional abuse than other categories. Also, regarding gender distribution and emotional abuse, data indicates that the frequency of emotional abuse was higher among male respondents at 37.8% as opposed to female counterparts at 34.7%. Likewise, the proportion of emotional abuse was higher among the legally married respondents at 59.7% as opposed to the respondents who live as couples at 12.8%. The statistical test implies that there was no significant difference in the distribution of civic status and emotional abuse in this study ($p=0.618$). This implies that the occurrence of emotional abuse was more evident among married individuals compared to those who just lived together as a couple.

3.4 Key Socio-demographic Characteristics and Emotional Neglect

The table below indicates the distribution of key sociodemographic factors and emotional neglect.

Table 4: distribution of key sociodemographic characteristics and emotional neglect.

Variables	Total %	Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)		Chi-Square Test		Sig.
		No	Yes	χ^2	df	
Emotional neglect						
Respondent's age						
20-40 years	103 (35.8)	19 (6.6)	84 (29.2)	.408	2	.516
41-65 years	176 (61.1)	29 (10.1)	147 (51.0)			
66-75 years	9 (3.1)	1 (0.3)	8 (2.8)			
Respondent's sex						
Male	150 (52.1)	25 (8.7)	125 (43.4)	.102	1	.749
Female	138 (47.9)	24 (8.3)	114 (39.6)			
Civic status						
Married	235 (81.6)	43 (14.9)	192 (66.7)	1.491	1	.222
Living as couple	53 (18.4)	6 (2.1)	47 (16.3)			

Table 4 indicates the distribution of key sociodemographic characteristics and emotional neglect in this study. Concerning the respondents' age, the frequency of emotional neglect was higher among the respondents aged 41-65 years at 51% compared to 20-40 years at 29.2%, and 66-75 years at 2.8%. The statistical test shows that the difference in the distribution of respondents' age categories and emotional neglect was not significant ($p=0.516$). Similarly, male respondents experienced more emotional neglect at 43.4% as opposed to female respondents at 39.6%. Although, the difference in the distribution was not significant ($p=0.749$). Also, regarding respondents' civic status, the frequency of emotional neglect was much higher at 66.7% compared to those living as couples at 16.3%. The statistical test shows that the difference in the distribution of emotional neglect and civic status was not significant ($p=0.222$).

3.5 Estimate of Adverse Childhood Experiences(ACEs) and the Quality of Marital Satisfaction

Table 5 presents the relationship estimate of ACEs and the quality of marital satisfaction.

Table 5: Mantel-Haenzel Common odds ratio estimate of ACEs and the quality of marital satisfaction.

ACEs Variables	Total	Relationship assessment scale		Mantel-Haenzel odds ratio estimate			
		Low	High	Sig.	Estimate	Lower	Upper
Emotional abuse							
No	79 (27.4)	19 (6.6)	60 (20.8)	.017	.490	.273	.881
Yes	209 (72.6)	82 (28.5)	127 (44.1)				
Emotional neglect							
No	49 (17.0)	25 (8.7)	24 (8.3)	.011	2.234	1.199	4.165
Yes	239 (83.0)	76 (26.4)	163 (56.6)				

Table 5 presents the Mantel-Haenzel Common odds ratio estimate of ACEs and the quality of marital satisfaction. Mantel-Haenzel Common odds ratio estimate is a statistical test used to determine the association between a binary predictor and a binary outcome, in which the stratified data are categorized into a series of two-by-two contingency tables and assumed that the odds ratios within each binary group are significantly equal to 1. As indicated in the Table, the proportion of married individuals who were emotionally abused equally experienced high levels of marital relationships (44.1%) was higher compared to the participants who were not abused emotionally.

Consequently, the frequency of high levels of marital relationship satisfaction was high among the respondents who were emotionally neglected in childhood (56.6%) compared to the respondents who did not experience emotional neglect at 8.3%. Similarly, low marital relationship satisfaction was higher among the respondents with emotional neglect at 26.4% as opposed to the respondents with no experience of emotional neglect at 8.7%. Mantel-

Haenzel Common odds ratio estimate indicates a strong statistical association between emotional neglect and the quality of marital satisfaction among the respondents (OR: 2.234; 95% CI: 1.199 – 4.165). This is interpreted that being emotionally neglected in childhood is 2.2 times more likely to affect the quality of marital satisfaction among the respondents negatively or positively.

3.6 Binary Logistic Regression Analysis of childhood emotion abuse, neglect, and quality of marital relationships

The below Table attempts to assess predictive relationships of childhood emotional abuse, neglect, and quality of marital relationships.

Table 6: Binary Logistic Regression testing the predictability of childhood emotion abuse, neglect and quality of marital relationships.

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
							Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a Respondent's sex (1) (Male)	.608	.255	5.677	1	.017	1.837	1.114	3.030
Emotional Abuse (1) (Yes)	.702	.304	5.324	1	.021	2.017	1.111	3.662
Emotional Neglect (2) (NO)	-.787	.325	5.848	1	.016	.455	.241	.861
Constant	.280	.200	1.952	1	.162	1.323		

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Respondent's sex, Emotional Abuse, Emotional Neglect.

Table 6 presents the binary logistic regression to test the predictability of childhood emotional abuse, emotional neglect, and quality of marital relationships. Binary logistic regression models the relationship between a set of independent variables and a binary dependent variable i.e. dependent variable that is dichotomous in nature such as low and high marital satisfaction. The results from the Table indicate that being male is predictive of marital satisfaction (AOR: 1.84; CI 95%: 1.114 – 3.030). This simply means that men are 1.8 times more likely to experience marital satisfaction compared to female.

Additionally, the binary logistic regression shows that participants who experienced childhood emotional abuse are at risk of lower levels of marital satisfaction (AOR: 2.02; CI 95%: 1.111-3.662). This is interpreted that participants who experienced childhood emotional abuse are 2 times more likely to experience a lower quality of marital satisfaction. Conversely, logistic data analysis shows that participants who were not emotionally neglected to protect them from experiencing lower levels of marital satisfaction (AOR: 0.455; CI 95%: .241-.861). This implies that not experiencing emotional neglect is a protective factor of the lower level of marital satisfaction.

3.7 ANOVA Results for the relationship between emotional abuse, and neglect are determinants of the quality of marital satisfaction

This section presents the null hypothesis testing that emotional abuse and neglect do not significantly determine the quality of marital relationships in this study. The univariate-ANOVA test below shows the outcome of the statistical testing.

Table 7: Univariate Analysis of Variance (Univariate-ANOVA) testing the hypothesis that emotional abuse, neglect are determinants of quality of marital satisfaction.

Dependent Variable: classification of relationship assessment scale						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	2.709 ^a	3	.903	4.079	.007	.041
Intercept	45.596	1	45.596	205.964	.000	.420
Emotional Abuse*	2.709	3	.903	4.079	.007	.041
Emotion neglect						

a. R Squared = .041 (Adjusted R Squared = .031)

Table 7 presents the univariate analysis of variance testing the null hypothesis that emotional abuse and neglect are not significantly related to determining the quality of marital relationships. Univariate ANOVA is used to determine the relationship between categorical predictor variables and a single numerical dependent variable, which yields a predictive model of the dependent variable. In this case, it measures the variance between emotional abuse and emotional neglect as control factors and the quality of marital relationships. The result of the hypothesis testing indicates that the null hypothesis is rejected, whereas the alternative hypothesis is accepted ($p=0.007$). This implies that both variables are significant determinants of the quality of marital relationships.

DISCUSSION

This current study found the occurrence of exposure to childhood emotional abuse at 72.6%, and emotional neglect at 83%. The prevalence of 72.6% for emotional abuse and 83% prevalence of emotional neglect in this current study seems to be high. However, these findings were consistent with previous studies among intimate partners, where the prevalence of emotional abuse was found to be at 80%, and neglect at 40% (Carney & Barner, 2012; Stephenson, et al., 2006). In the same way, Ramos-Olazagasti and Gebhart (2023), reported findings in a study among couples who experienced maltreatment in childhood, where the most common type of maltreatment reported was emotional abuse at 28%, followed by emotional neglect at 19%. This aforementioned data was also similar to a study reported by Mathews, Pacella, Dunne, Simunovic, and Marston (2020), where the prevalence of emotional abuse (29.1%), and emotional neglect (45%) was found.

This current study also found the frequency of emotional abuse and emotional neglect higher among the respondents aged 41-65 years at 43.4% and 51% respectively. Also, regarding gender distribution and emotional abuse, data indicates that the frequency of emotional abuse was higher among male respondents at 37.8% as opposed to female counterparts at 34.7%. male respondents experienced more emotional neglect at 43.4% as opposed to female respondents at 39.6%. Similarly, findings from a study among 59 football players showed that 37.3% of the participants have experienced emotional abuse (RayatSarokolaei, Vaezmousavi,

& Memarmoghaddam, 2022). This indicates that emotional abuse is prevalent among male individuals compared to female counterparts.

The results from binary logistic regression indicate that being male is predictive of marital satisfaction (AOR: 1.84; CI 95%: 1.114 – 3.030). This simply means that men are 1.8 times more likely to experience marital satisfaction compared to female. This is consistent with recent data as shown in a meta-analysis of 226 independent studies involving 101, 110 participants. The study showed that wives were less satisfied than husbands in marital relationships (Jackson, Miller, Oka, & Henry, 2014). Also, another recent study found gender differences in marital quality evaluation where it was argued that women experience lower marriage satisfaction than men (Yu & Liu, 2021). The implication of this asserts that generally as indicated by marital scholars men and women experience marriage differently, and precisely, women consistently experience significantly less marital satisfaction than men.

Additionally, the binary logistic regression shows that participants who experienced childhood emotional abuse are at risk of lower levels of marital satisfaction (AOR: 2.02; CI 95%: 1.111-3.662). This means that married individuals who experienced emotional abuse are 2 times more likely to experience a lower level of marital satisfaction. This finding is consistent with several studies. For example, Maneta et al (2015), found a statistical link between childhood emotional abuse and marital satisfaction, and that childhood emotional abuse was linked with lower marital satisfaction and partners' lower satisfaction. Likewise, a comparative study among spouses with childhood emotional abuse and non-abused women indicated that women with emotional abuse experience more marital conflicts, insecure attachment, dysfunctional coping strategies, and less sexual satisfaction than non-abused women (Fallah, et al., 2019).

Also, Peterson, Peugh, Loucks, and Shaffer (2018), found that females' history of childhood emotional maltreatment significantly predicted relationship satisfaction at low levels of dyadic hostility. Several other recent studies affirm the link between childhood traumatic experiences and relationship satisfaction (Abu-Raya & Gewirtz-Meydan, 2023; Barker, Volk, Hazel, & Reinhardt, 2022; Baumann, Daspe, Belanger, & Godbout, 2024; Baumann, Bigras, Paradis, & Godbout, 2020). In other words, childhood emotional abuse and neglect imprint difficulties in forming quality romantic relationships as found in this current relationship. Conversely, logistic data analysis shows that participants who were not emotionally neglected are protected from experiencing a lower level of marital satisfaction (AOR: 0.455; CI 95%: .241-.861). Zamir (2022), similarly found that emotional neglect, sexual abuse, and physical abuse are associated with lower relationship quality. This means that the absence of emotional neglect is associated with higher relationship quality (Pflieger, Richardson, Stnder, & Allen, 2022).

The hypothesis testing in this current study implies that both emotional abuse and neglect are significant determinants of the quality of marital relationships. This is interpreted that as emotional abuse is found to be predictive of lower marital satisfaction, no experience of emotional neglect protects married individuals from experiencing a lower level of marital satisfaction. Qasim and Muzaffar (2021), likewise found a strong negative correlation between emotional abuse with quality of life. Also, Saleem et al (2021), argued that

emotional neglect and self-injurious behaviors mediated the relationship between family satisfaction and depressive symptoms in college students. Both childhood emotional neglect and abuse are determinants of the quality of marital relationships.

CONCLUSION

The current study aims to test the hypothesis that childhood emotional abuse and neglect are determinants of the quality of marital satisfaction. The study was among 288 married individuals, in which the prevalence of childhood emotional abuse and emotional neglect was found to be at 72.6% and 83% respectively. The current study likewise found that childhood abuse was predictive of lower marital satisfaction while not being neglected or being cared for emotionally protects married individuals from low levels of marital satisfaction. This current study concluded that childhood emotional abuse and neglect have an adversative and hostile psychological effect on adults' quality of relationships. It is therefore imperative for relevant stakeholders to consider the necessary factors to curb the pandemic of emotional abuse and neglect. This study therefore recommends that a longitudinal study be considered to explore a predictive relationship between emotional abuse and neglect, and the adverse effect on adulthood beyond a single moment in time.

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