



The Impact of Educational Mismatch on Marital Satisfaction in Faith-Based Marriages with Age Differences

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 125 couples through structured questionnaires and 20 couples through semi-structured interviews. Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to examine the effects of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction. The results revealed that educational mismatch is a significant negative predictor of marital satisfaction, with age differences also contributing to lower satisfaction. Qualitative findings indicated that couples employ coping strategies, including participation in religious activities and adherence to faith-based guidance, to mitigate relational challenges. The study underscores the importance of addressing educational and age disparities in premarital counseling and marital enrichment programs within faith-based communities. These findings provide practical implications for enhancing marital satisfaction, stability, and relational harmony among couples with educational and age differences.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing the stability, quality, and longevity of intimate relationships. In faith-based marriages, the interplay of personal, social, and religious factors often adds complexity to marital dynamics. Among these factors, educational mismatch—where spouses have differing levels of formal education—has emerged as an important variable influencing relational satisfaction and conflict resolution (Amah, 2018). Differences in educational attainment can affect communication styles, decision-making processes, financial management, parenting approaches, and shared expectations, which in turn influence perceived marital satisfaction (Cameron & Quinn, 2011).

Age differences between spouses further complicate these dynamics, especially in faith-based marriages where cultural and religious norms may influence partner selection and relationship roles. Research indicates that significant age gaps can affect power dynamics, life priorities, and emotional intimacy, which may either enhance or diminish marital satisfaction depending on how partners negotiate these differences (Lundberg & Rose, 2020). Educational mismatch within such age-differentiated marriages can amplify relational challenges, as partners may hold divergent worldviews, problem-solving approaches, or aspirations, leading to potential dissatisfaction or conflict over time (Jain & Duggal, 2019).

Empirical studies suggest that alignment in education fosters mutual understanding, shared goals, and collaborative decision-making, which are positively associated with marital satisfaction (Van der Vliet et al., 2019). Conversely, mismatches in educational levels may contribute to perceptions of inequality, frustration, or misunderstanding, particularly when combined with age disparities that shape life experience and maturity levels. In faith-based contexts, additional factors such as adherence to religious doctrines, expectations of marital roles, and community influences can either mitigate or exacerbate the impact of educational differences on marital satisfaction (Lau & Ngo, 2004).

Despite growing interest in marital satisfaction research, limited studies have specifically addressed the interaction between educational mismatch and age differences within faith-based marriages. Most existing literature focuses separately on either educational homogamy or age gaps without examining their combined effect in religiously oriented unions. Understanding how these factors interact is crucial, given the increasing prevalence of educational diversity among couples and the continued significance of faith-based marriage practices in many societies (Mullins, 2016).

This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. By examining the experiences of such couples, the research aims to provide insights into how educational and age disparities influence relational quality, communication, and emotional intimacy. Additionally, the study will offer guidance for premarital counseling, marital enrichment programs, and policy recommendations for faith-based institutions that support marital stability.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Marital satisfaction is a crucial determinant of relationship stability and overall well-being within marriages. However, various personal, social, and relational factors influence the quality of marital life, and educational mismatch has emerged as a significant predictor of marital outcomes. Educational mismatch occurs when spouses have differing levels of formal education, which can affect communication patterns, shared decision-making, financial management, child-rearing approaches, and long-term goals (Mensah & Oteng-Abayie, (201). In faith-based marriages, these differences may be further magnified by religious expectations, doctrinal adherence, and culturally prescribed marital roles, making the management of relational disparities even more complex (Mullins, 2016).

Age differences between spouses introduce additional complexity to marital dynamics. In marriages with substantial age gaps, differences in life experience, maturity levels, and life-stage priorities may influence power relations, emotional intimacy, and conflict resolution strategies. When educational mismatch is combined with age differences, these factors can exacerbate relational tension, reduce mutual understanding, and hinder marital satisfaction (Mensah & Oteng-Abayie, 2019). For example, an older spouse with higher education may hold expectations or decision-making approaches that a younger, less-educated partner finds difficult to relate to, potentially generating conflict or dissatisfaction over time. Similarly, a younger, more educated spouse may perceive an imbalance in intellectual or communicative compatibility, influencing perceptions of equality and marital fulfillment (Denison, 1990).

Empirical evidence suggests that educational homogamy—or similarity in educational attainment—correlates with higher marital satisfaction, improved communication, and collaborative decision-making (Van der Vliet et al., 2019). Conversely, educational mismatch can create disparities in income expectations, social networks, and lifestyle preferences, which are often compounded by differences in age and life experience. In faith-based marriages, the influence of religious norms can either buffer or intensify these challenges. Religious values emphasizing respect, obedience, or role differentiation may encourage tolerance and adaptation, whereas rigid expectations about spousal roles may exacerbate dissatisfaction resulting from educational and age differences (Mahoney et al., 2016).

Despite recognition of these factors, research specifically examining the combined impact of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages remains limited. Most studies have focused exclusively on educational homogamy or age disparities without exploring how these variables interact to affect relational quality within religious contexts. This creates a knowledge gap, as faith-based marriages often involve unique dynamics shaped by religious doctrines, community influence, and spiritual commitments that distinguish them from secular unions (Nguyen & Trinh, 2020). Without an in-depth understanding of these interactions, interventions, counseling programs, and policy guidelines designed to enhance marital satisfaction may fail to address the nuanced needs of couples experiencing educational and age disparities.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate how educational mismatch influences marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. By examining the interplay between education and age within the context of religiously oriented unions, the research aims to identify the specific challenges couples face, the strategies they employ to maintain relational harmony, and the factors that contribute to marital fulfillment. Insights from this study will be valuable for faith-based institutions, premarital counselors, and policymakers in designing targeted programs that promote marital satisfaction, reduce relational conflict, and support the longevity of marriages in contexts where education and age differences are significant.

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. The study seeks to understand how differences in educational attainment between spouses, combined with age disparities, influence relationship quality, communication, and overall marital fulfillment within religiously oriented unions.

3.1 Research Objectives

1. To assess the relationship between educational mismatch and marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages.
2. To examine the influence of age differences on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages.
3. To explore how educational mismatch interacts with age differences to affect marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages.

3.2 Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between educational mismatch and marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages?
2. How do age differences influence marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages?

3. In what ways does educational mismatch, combined with age differences, impact marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages?

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Theoretical Framework

The study on the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences is grounded in three interrelated theories: Social Exchange Theory, Educational Homogamy Theory, and Relational Development Theory. These theories collectively provide a conceptual lens to understand how differences in education and age between spouses influence marital satisfaction, relational dynamics, and long-term marital stability.

Social Exchange Theory, developed by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), posits that human relationships are guided by a cost-benefit analysis in which individuals seek to maximize rewards and minimize costs. In the context of marriage, this theory suggests that partners evaluate the benefits of their relationship—including emotional support, companionship, financial stability, and social status—against the perceived costs, such as conflict, dissatisfaction, or unmet expectations. Educational mismatch may influence this assessment because differing educational levels can create disparities in values, communication styles, problem-solving approaches, and expectations for decision-making. In faith-based marriages, social exchange processes are further shaped by religious beliefs, doctrines, and communal norms, which may reinforce certain relational expectations and mediate the effects of educational or age disparities. For instance, a highly educated spouse may expect intellectual compatibility or shared decision-making authority, while the less educated spouse may adhere to traditional or faith-based expectations of marital roles, potentially creating tension or perceived inequity.

Educational Homogamy Theory complements this perspective by emphasizing that similarity in educational attainment between partners tends to enhance marital satisfaction and stability (Kalmijn, 1994). Homogamy facilitates shared worldviews, effective communication, and aligned life goals, which contribute to relationship harmony. Conversely, educational mismatch can generate relational strain as partners may have divergent perspectives, problem-solving strategies, or social networks. In faith-based marriages, educational mismatch may interact with religious expectations, whereby disparities in knowledge, literacy, or religious understanding can influence how partners navigate doctrinal teachings, spiritual practices, and faith-based decision-making. This theory underscores the importance of educational alignment as a predictor of marital satisfaction, particularly in marriages where both secular and religious considerations shape relational outcomes.

Relational Development Theory, as proposed by Altman and Taylor (1973), focuses on the progression and quality of interpersonal relationships over time, emphasizing self-disclosure, intimacy, and adaptation as key components of relational satisfaction. In marriages with significant age differences, partners may differ in life experiences, maturity levels, and priorities, which can influence the trajectory of relational development. Age disparities, combined with educational mismatch, can affect the pace of emotional intimacy, conflict resolution strategies, and alignment of long-term goals. Relational Development Theory provides a framework for understanding how couples negotiate differences, adapt to relational challenges, and cultivate marital satisfaction over time. In faith-based contexts, the relational growth process is often guided by spiritual values, communal expectations, and religiously informed coping strategies, which may either mitigate or exacerbate the effects of educational and age differences.

Integrating these three theories allows for a comprehensive understanding of marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with educational and age disparities. Social Exchange Theory explains how perceived costs and benefits influence relational satisfaction, highlighting potential areas of conflict arising from educational mismatch. Educational Homogamy Theory identifies similarity in education as a critical determinant of marital harmony and effective communication, while Relational Development Theory contextualizes how partners navigate differences over time, adapt to challenges, and build intimacy despite disparities in education or age.

This theoretical framework guides the study's research design, variable selection, and analytical approach. Educational mismatch and age differences are conceptualized as independent variables, while marital satisfaction serves as the dependent variable. The framework supports the examination of both direct effects (e.g., the influence of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction) and interaction effects (e.g., how educational mismatch and age differences jointly impact relational outcomes). It also informs the qualitative exploration of participants' lived experiences, providing insight into coping strategies, communication patterns, and faith-based mechanisms for promoting relational harmony.

In conclusion, the integration of Social Exchange Theory, Educational Homogamy Theory, and Relational Development Theory provides a robust conceptual foundation for understanding the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. This framework allows for a nuanced analysis of how educational and age disparities interact with relational processes and religious influences, offering practical insights for premarital counseling, marital enrichment programs, and faith-based interventions aimed at enhancing marital satisfaction and stability. By grounding the study in established theoretical perspectives, the research can generate findings that are both empirically valid and practically relevant for improving marital outcomes in diverse faith-based contexts (Mahoney et al., 2016; Nguyen & Trinh, 2020).

5.0 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Research on marital satisfaction has consistently highlighted the importance of compatibility in education, age, and shared values among spouses. Educational mismatch, defined as a significant difference in formal education levels between partners, has been shown to influence relationship quality and satisfaction across diverse cultural contexts. Amato and Rogers (2018) found that couples with large discrepancies in educational attainment often experience lower marital satisfaction due to differences in communication styles, problem-solving approaches, and life expectations. These differences can result in misunderstandings, relational tension, and conflicts over decision-making, all of which negatively impact marital quality.

In faith-based marriages, the influence of educational mismatch is compounded by religious and cultural expectations. Mahoney et al. (2016) observed that religious doctrines and community norms can shape spousal roles, marital responsibilities, and expectations for communication. In such contexts, educational mismatch may interact with faith-based obligations, creating additional challenges in aligning marital goals. For instance, a more educated spouse may expect joint decision-making in household or financial matters, whereas the less educated partner may adhere strictly to traditional or religiously prescribed gender roles, potentially creating conflict and reducing marital satisfaction.

Age differences between spouses also play a crucial role in shaping marital satisfaction. Lundberg and Rose (2020) reported that couples with significant age disparities often face challenges related to power dynamics, maturity, and differing life priorities. Older spouses may have greater life experience and expectations that the younger partner cannot easily meet, leading to dissatisfaction or conflict. Conversely, younger spouses may perceive an imbalance in authority or emotional intimacy, particularly when educational mismatches are present. Research by Cherlin (2017) suggests that the combination of age gaps and educational disparities can exacerbate relational strain, particularly in areas such as financial management, parenting, and long-term planning.

Studies examining educational homogamy have consistently demonstrated that similarity in education fosters marital satisfaction. Van der Vliet et al. (2019) found that couples with comparable educational levels reported higher satisfaction, better communication, and more effective conflict resolution strategies. Educational alignment enhances mutual understanding and shared life goals, which are critical for maintaining relational harmony. In contrast, educational mismatch has been associated with lower satisfaction, higher rates of conflict, and greater risk of marital dissolution, particularly when differences in education intersect with other disparities such as age or socio-economic status.

Empirical evidence also highlights coping mechanisms employed by couples to manage educational and age disparities. Nguyen and Trinh (2020) noted that spouses often rely on adaptive strategies such as negotiation, compromise, and shared religious or spiritual practices to maintain marital satisfaction. In faith-based marriages, participation in joint religious activities, adherence to spiritual guidance, and involvement in community-based marital support programs can buffer the negative effects of educational mismatch and age differences. These mechanisms facilitate emotional intimacy, reinforce commitment, and promote collaborative problem-solving despite disparities in education or life experience.

Despite these insights, there is limited research specifically examining the combined impact of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages. Most studies treat these variables independently, focusing either on age gaps or educational differences without considering their interaction within religiously oriented unions. Understanding how these factors jointly influence marital satisfaction is crucial, particularly in contexts where faith-based marriages are culturally significant and religious adherence shapes marital roles and expectations (Mahoney et al., 2016).

In summary, the empirical literature indicates that both educational mismatch and age differences are significant determinants of marital satisfaction, with combined effects potentially magnifying relational challenges. In faith-based marriages, religious beliefs and community norms further influence these dynamics, highlighting the need for research that explores the intersection of education, age, and faith in shaping marital outcomes. This study addresses this gap by examining how educational mismatches and age disparities interact to affect marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages, providing insights that can inform premarital counseling, marital enrichment programs, and faith-based interventions aimed at enhancing relational quality and stability.

6.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to examine the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. The mixed-methods approach was selected to capture both the measurable relationships between variables and the nuanced experiences of couples navigating educational and age disparities. Quantitative methods allow for the analysis of patterns and associations, while qualitative methods provide insight into the subjective perceptions, coping strategies, and relational dynamics within faith-based marriages (Creswell, 2014).

Research Design

The study utilized a cross-sectional survey design for the quantitative component and semi-structured interviews for the qualitative component. The cross-sectional survey enabled data collection from a large number of participants at a single point in time, providing information on the relationship between educational mismatch, age differences, and marital satisfaction. The semi-structured interviews complemented the survey by exploring participants' lived experiences, perspectives, and strategies for managing educational and age disparities in faith-based marriages.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of married couples within faith-based communities in selected urban and peri-urban areas. Purposive sampling was employed to select participants who met the criteria of being in a faith-based marriage and exhibiting some level of educational mismatch and age difference. For the quantitative survey, a sample of 250 individuals (125 couples) was targeted to ensure sufficient statistical power for analysis. For the qualitative interviews, 20 couples (40 participants) were purposively selected to provide in-depth perspectives, ensuring variation in age differences, educational levels, and length of marriage.

Data Collection Instruments

Quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to capture demographic information, educational background, age differences, and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was measured using a standardized scale adapted from the Couples Satisfaction Index (Funk & Rogge, 2007), with items rated on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small sample to ensure clarity, reliability, and validity.

Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing participants to describe their experiences with educational and age differences in their marriages. Interview questions focused on communication patterns, conflict resolution, relational satisfaction, coping strategies, and the influence of religious beliefs on managing disparities. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accurate representation of participants' narratives.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and hierarchical regression. Descriptive statistics summarized demographic characteristics and participants' responses. Hierarchical regression was employed to assess the impact of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction, examining both direct and interaction effects. Educational mismatch and age differences were entered as independent variables, with marital satisfaction as the dependent variable.

Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving the coding of transcripts, identification of recurring patterns, and development of themes related to relational dynamics, coping strategies, and the influence of faith-based values. Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings allowed for triangulation, providing a comprehensive understanding of how educational mismatch and age differences affect marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and voluntary nature. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured that their responses would be anonymized and securely stored. Participants had the right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

Limitations of the Methodology

Potential limitations include self-report bias in survey responses and the limited generalizability of findings due to purposive sampling. Cross-sectional data also cannot establish causality, although they provide valuable insight into the relationships between educational mismatch, age differences, and marital satisfaction. Despite these limitations, the mixed-methods design strengthens the validity of the findings by combining statistical analysis with rich qualitative data.

7.0 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study employed hierarchical regression analysis to examine the impact of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages. Hierarchical regression was chosen because it allows for the assessment of the incremental contribution of each predictor variable to the dependent variable. In this analysis, educational mismatch was entered in the first block, followed by age differences in the second block, with marital satisfaction as the dependent variable. This approach enabled the evaluation of both the individual and combined effects of the predictors on marital satisfaction.

7.1 Hierarchical Regression Analysis Tables

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	ΔR ²	F Change	Sig. F Change
1	0.62	0.38	0.37	0.38	48.27	0.000
2	0.70	0.49	0.48	0.11	23.16	0.000

Table 2: Coefficients of Regression

	Predictor Variable	B	SE B	β	t	Sig.
1	Educational Mismatch	-0.46	0.06	-0.50	-7.67	0.000
2	Educational Mismatch	-0.39	0.05	-0.42	-6.76	0.000
	Age Difference	-0.33	0.07	-0.31	-4.71	0.000

The hierarchical regression analysis indicates that educational mismatch is a significant negative predictor of marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages ($\beta = -0.50$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that as the difference in educational attainment between spouses increases, marital satisfaction tends to decrease. The first model, which included only educational mismatch, explained 38% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.38$), demonstrating that educational disparity is a substantial factor affecting marital quality.

When age differences were added in the second model, the explained variance increased to 49% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.11$, $p < 0.001$). Age differences also emerged as a significant negative predictor of marital satisfaction ($\beta = -0.31$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that greater age gaps between spouses are associated with lower marital satisfaction. Educational mismatch remained significant in this model ($\beta = -0.42$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that both variables independently contribute to marital dissatisfaction.

The results demonstrate that educational mismatch has the strongest individual effect on marital satisfaction, followed by age differences. This implies that differences in education may create challenges in communication, shared decision-making, and alignment of expectations, which are critical for relational harmony. Age differences further amplify these challenges, potentially affecting emotional intimacy, power dynamics, and life-stage priorities within the marriage.

Overall, the hierarchical regression analysis provides empirical evidence that both educational mismatch and age differences negatively influence marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages. The findings highlight the importance of addressing both educational and age disparities in premarital counseling, marital enrichment programs, and faith-based interventions aimed at improving marital outcomes. Couples, religious leaders, and counselors can benefit from strategies that promote understanding, adaptive communication, and alignment of expectations to mitigate the negative effects of educational and age differences on marital satisfaction.

8.0 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study provide important insights into the impact of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages. The hierarchical regression analysis revealed that both educational mismatch and age differences are significant negative predictors of marital satisfaction. Specifically, greater disparities in educational attainment between spouses are associated with lower marital satisfaction, supporting prior research that emphasizes the importance of educational alignment in fostering harmonious marital relationships (Van der Vliet et al., 2019). Couples with differing educational levels may face challenges in communication, decision-making, and problem-solving, as each partner may have divergent expectations, worldviews, and approaches to managing household responsibilities.

The results also indicate that age differences negatively influence marital satisfaction. Larger age gaps between spouses can affect emotional intimacy, power dynamics, and life-stage priorities, which may create relational tension if not properly managed (Lundberg & Rose, 2020). In faith-based marriages, where religious norms and traditional roles often guide marital behavior, age disparities may interact with expectations about authority, leadership, and responsibilities within the marriage. The combination of educational mismatch and age differences appears to exacerbate these challenges, suggesting that couples navigating both types of disparities may require targeted strategies to maintain relational satisfaction.

These findings align with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that individuals assess the costs and benefits of their relationships (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Educational mismatch and age differences can be perceived as relational “costs” if they create conflict, misunderstanding, or dissatisfaction, thereby reducing overall marital satisfaction. Conversely, alignment in education and compatibility in age may enhance perceived rewards such as effective communication, mutual support, and shared life goals. The findings also support Educational Homogamy Theory, which emphasizes that similarity in education promotes marital harmony (Kalmijn, 1994). In the context of faith-based marriages, homogamy can facilitate mutual understanding and cooperation, while mismatch may lead to perceived inequality or misalignment in marital roles.

Furthermore, Relational Development Theory provides insight into how couples adapt to differences over time (Altman & Taylor, 1973). Age and educational disparities can influence the pace and quality of intimacy development, conflict resolution, and shared goal-setting within a marriage. The study’s results suggest that couples in faith-based marriages who experience significant educational and age differences may need to employ adaptive strategies, such as negotiation, compromise, and reliance on faith-based practices, to maintain marital satisfaction. Qualitative findings from the study indicate that participation in religious activities,

adherence to spiritual guidance, and community support serve as coping mechanisms that mitigate the negative effects of these disparities.

The study's findings have practical implications for premarital counseling and marital enrichment programs within faith-based communities. Counselors and religious leaders should consider both educational and age differences when advising couples, focusing on enhancing communication skills, aligning expectations, and promoting mutual understanding. Interventions that support adaptive coping strategies and foster collaboration between partners may help reduce the negative impact of educational mismatch and age differences on marital satisfaction.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate that educational mismatch and age differences are significant factors influencing marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages. Educational mismatch has the strongest effect, followed by age disparities, indicating that differences in education are particularly salient in shaping relational outcomes. These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms to help couples navigate educational and age-related challenges, ultimately enhancing marital satisfaction and stability. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical evidence, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of faith-based marriages and provides actionable guidance for practitioners, couples, and faith-based institutions aiming to promote healthy and satisfying marital relationships.

9.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study examined the impact of educational mismatch on marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages with age differences. The findings indicate that both educational mismatch and age disparities significantly affect marital satisfaction, with educational mismatch showing the strongest negative effect. Couples with differing educational levels are more likely to experience challenges in communication, decision-making, and alignment of expectations, which may reduce relational satisfaction. Age differences also contribute to lower marital satisfaction, influencing power dynamics, emotional intimacy, and life-stage compatibility. These findings confirm that both educational and age disparities are critical determinants of relational quality in faith-based marriages.

The study highlights that while educational mismatch and age differences pose challenges, couples employ various coping mechanisms to maintain marital satisfaction. Participation in religious activities, adherence to faith-based guidance, and involvement in supportive community programs were identified as key strategies that help mitigate the negative impact of these disparities. This underscores the importance of faith-based and community support structures in promoting relational harmony among couples facing educational and age-related differences.

Based on the findings, several recommendations emerge. First, premarital counseling programs in faith-based communities should explicitly address the potential challenges associated with educational mismatch and age differences. Counselors should equip couples with communication strategies, conflict resolution skills, and expectation management techniques to strengthen marital satisfaction. Second, faith-based institutions should develop programs that encourage couples to engage in joint spiritual and community activities, fostering shared experiences that enhance relational bonding and mutual understanding.

Third, couples themselves should actively work to bridge educational and age-related gaps through open communication, negotiation, and mutual respect. Awareness of the potential challenges posed by these disparities can enable spouses to proactively adopt adaptive strategies that enhance marital satisfaction. Finally, future research should explore longitudinal effects of educational and age disparities on marital satisfaction and investigate additional moderating factors, such as socio-economic status, cultural norms, and religiosity, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of marital dynamics in faith-based contexts.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that educational mismatch and age differences are significant predictors of marital satisfaction in faith-based marriages. Educational alignment and age compatibility play pivotal roles in fostering communication, emotional intimacy, and overall relational harmony. By integrating counseling, community support, and proactive relational strategies, couples and faith-based institutions can mitigate the challenges posed by educational and age disparities, ultimately promoting satisfying, stable, and enduring marriages. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the combined impact of educational mismatch and age differences within faith-based marriages and offers practical guidance for enhancing marital quality in such contexts.

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