



Satisfaction with the marital relationship and the religiosity of spouses¹

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Abstract: The issue of marital satisfaction has aroused great interest in the scientific community and has been the subject of many analyses. Research conducted in this field has mainly focused on the search for factors that determine marital relationship satisfaction. Among them, the importance of religiosity has been highlighted, in supporting the durability of romantic relationships and leading to greater marital satisfaction. This research aims to verify hypotheses and research questions based on the literature, answering the question: is there a relationship between personal religiosity and marriage satisfaction? The study included 86 married couples, a total of 172 individuals, whose mean age was 38.49 years. Personal Religiosity was characterized by the Jaworski Personal Religiosity Scale, while marital relationship satisfaction was measured with the Norton's Quality Marriage Index (QMI) questionnaire adapted by Czyżkowska and Ciecuch. The results of the study indicate that spouses' personal religiosity has a significant and positive impact on marital satisfaction.

Keywords: marital satisfaction, personal religiosity, religiosity

Introduction

The issue of marriage, the relationships within it, and their determinants has been widely researched in many scientific fields over the years. Sociology primarily emphasizes the functions and roles of marriage in society, law refers to formal content (e.g., Bieńko, 2008; Kwak, 2009; Tyszka, 1990), while psychology focuses on the significance of the bond between spouses and its impact on the relationship, pointing out factors conducive to *marital satisfaction* (e.g., Brudek and Steuden, 2015; Dacewicz, 2014; Orłowski, 2018; Ryś, 1994). However, defining what marital satisfaction is, although intuitively clear, is not unambiguously definable in scientific terms.

1. Theoretical introduction

1.1. Marital satisfaction and related concepts

Defining the concept of marital satisfaction precisely is not easy, as marriage is a complex phenomenon influenced by many factors (Norton, 1983). In the literature, many related terms are used to define marital satisfaction. The most important ones include: *quality of marriage* (Spanier, 1976; Spanier, Lewis, 1980), *durability of marriage* (Ryś, 1994; cf. also: Dakowicz, 2014), *success of marriage* (Braun-Gałkowska, 1980; Orłowski, 2018), *marital success* (Janiszewski, 1986; cf. also: Brudek and Steuden, 2015) and *satisfaction with marriage* (Senko, 2018).

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Spanier and Lewis (1980) were the first to operationalize and introduce the concept of *marital quality*, encompassing all other related terms. Marital quality is a subjective assessment of the marital relationship built on the basis of several dimensions: sense of happiness, integration, satisfaction, attachment and adaptation of partners, as well as quality of communication. This quality is therefore defined through the prism of fulfilling tasks significant for marital life and achieving values recognized by partners (Spanier, 1976).

Ryś (1994) attempted to capture the complex concept of marital satisfaction using two terms: quality and durability. According to her, high-quality marital relationships are associated with a sense of satisfaction and happiness, integration, adaptation, and communication. Braun-Galkowska (1980, 1992) proposes the term *marital success*, which she defines as the subjective sense of satisfaction of spouses with the relationship they create, characterized by a lasting community. Similarly, Orłowski (2018) addresses this issue.

Janiszewski (1986) uses the term *marital success* and defines the quality of marriage as the unity of subjective feelings that can be expressed as a sense of happiness, as well as objective circumstances expressed in the durability of the marital relationship, resulting from the adaptation process from both subjective and objective perspectives (ibid, cf. also: Brudek, Steuden, 2015). The concept of *marital satisfaction* has been described in the literature as the alignment between what currently exists and what is expected; a subjective sense of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It also presents a division into overall satisfaction with marriage and satisfaction with its individual aspects (Senko, 2018).

In the context of the research presented in this article, the term marital satisfaction is considered the most appropriate, which Norton (1983) understands as a subjective assessment of one's own marriage by the wife/husband, resulting from situations experienced during marriage and is perceived as: stable, strong, pleasant, creating a sense of unity and giving satisfaction. He also believes that the quality of the relationship between partners affects the psychological sphere of both women and men as well as

the family atmosphere (ibid). In this approach, the psychological functioning of partners will reflect the level of perceived satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the relationship (Czyżkowska, Ciecuch, 2019). The relationship between these variables also has a reverse direction: marital satisfaction is often determined by the emotional atmosphere prevailing between partners, affecting their positive functioning and communication in the marital relationship (Ghabi et al., 2022; Wańczyk-Welc, Marmola, 2017). Mutual and positive interactions of spouses can strengthen the sense of closeness and bonds and thus improve well-being in the relationship (Otero et al., 2020). However, married life brings a series of changes, causing many tensions, crises and conflicts between partners, which have a significant impact on the feeling of satisfaction from marriage. This "climate of marital life" is therefore largely formed by the husband and wife, who, influencing each other, shape it on many levels (Braun-Galkowska, 2020; Dakowicz, 2021).

1.2. Criteria for success in marriage

The marital relationship and the satisfaction derived from it undergo transformations over the life span. This is a result of the dynamic nature of partners' relationship throughout their entire lives and is influenced not only by subjective feelings but also by various objective and psychological factors of the spouses. Changes observed in life are often perceived as opportunities for the development of bonds and an increase in marital satisfaction, but they can also be a source of crises that diminish the quality of marriage (Dakowicz, 2019; Ryś, 2004; Ryś, Greszta, Grabarczyk, 2019).

In the literature, numerous factors influencing the quality of marital relationships can be identified. Among them are: mutual love, satisfaction with sexual life, a sense of happiness in marriage, alignment in terms of professed values, norms and religious beliefs, similarity in attitudes and participation in decision-making, agreement in the division of roles, harmony in economic and housing matters, satisfaction with the spouse's professional work, compatibility of characters and temperaments, having

offspring, interpersonal communication, conflict resolution skills, partner maturity, unity in parenting attitudes, a sense of the spouse's attractiveness, mutual acceptance, a sense of closeness, a sense of connection with the spouse, awareness of marital unity, mutual honesty, a sense of satisfaction and happiness in marriage, a feeling that the spouse is the right life partner, trust in the spouse, mutual fidelity, and openness (Braun-Galkowska, 1980; Ryś, 2004; Brudek, Ciula, 2013; Ryś, Sztajerwald, 2019; Ryś, Greszta, Grabarczyk, 2019).

These criteria are closely intertwined and mutually influence each other. A shared outlook on life among spouses impacts the development of closeness between them through the exchange of reflections and perspectives. It also aids in achieving a certain harmony and alignment on matters related to worldviews, religious beliefs, or material aspects. Communication between partners, therefore, translates into the construction of a deep bond in the relationship, reinforcing a sense of unity in the couple and increasing confidence that the decision to share their life together was the correct one (Brudek, Ciula, 2013; Greszta, Ryś, Trębicka, 2020).

Dew and Wilcox (2013) highlight that generosity, small acts of kindness, magnanimity, expressing love through small gestures, respect, willingness to forgive, self-sacrifice, and overall commitment have a positive impact on marital satisfaction (ibid, cf. also: Zaloudek, 2014). Additionally, recurring moments of mutual care and actions for the well-being of the other person are significant. These contribute to a sense of respect and security for the partner, positively influencing the emergence of emotional intimacy between spouses (Otero et al., 2020).

An equally as important aspect affecting the quality of marriage is intimacy, understood by Wojciszke as a feeling perceived as positive, which is accompanied by actions causing closeness, attachment and mutual dependence between partners (2017). A special form of intimacy between spouses is sexual acts, which significantly contribute to the feeling of satisfaction from the relationship (Dew in., 2020; Komorowska-Pudło, 2014; Leonhardt, et al., 2021).

Research shows that equally important for the feeling of satisfaction in marriage is the way in which the spouse communicates a lack of desire for sexual intercourse. Increased satisfaction in the relationship was felt by people whose partner communicated the lack of desire to engage in intercourse in a gentle and non-rejecting manner towards the spouse. On the other hand, refusal along with a hostile attitude towards the partner significantly affected the reduction of satisfaction (Kim, 2020).

1.3. Religiosity from a psychological perspective

In analyzing the concept of religiosity in psychology, it is essential to distinguish between the terms *religion* and *religiosity*. Religion has two aspects. The first is the objective aspect, consisting of norms, laws, behavioral rules, ritual activities, and specific behavior regulating the relationship between God and humans. The second is the subjective aspect, which is religiosity (Zasępa, 2002). Religion appears as a complex sphere with many dimensions that align with human desires, beliefs, needs, and fears, as well as an individual and positive orientation towards religion (Mishra et al., 2017; Plopa, 2011).

In the field of psychology, religiosity reflects an individual's relationship with God and the transcendental reality, as well as the experience and fulfillment of its norms and truths. It has also been examined in terms of the interdependence between the psychosocial sphere and the individual's psychological life (Jaworski, 1989). Religiosity encompasses subjective and internal acts of the individual, spiritual experiences, thoughts, desires, beliefs, and aspirations, as well as external behaviors such as religious practices, devotions, and rituals (Bukalski, 2016). This diversity arises from the specific characteristics of individuals, as the attitude toward religiosity is always of an individual nature. Moreover, the role of religiosity in each person's psychological life and their orientation toward the surrounding world and people will be somewhat different (Machalski, 2017).

1.3.1. Concepts of religiosity in the context of the psychology of religion

Representatives of psychological schools have devoted considerable attention to this issue, but assumptions regarding the interpretation of the phenomenon of religiosity are presented differently in each psychological approach. According to Freud, “religion, despite its psychological and social functions, does not allow the individual for their full personality development, as it sustains the persistence of infantilism” (cited in: Brudek, Steuden, 2015, p. 17). A different perspective on religiosity, still within the psychoanalytic tradition, was held by Jung. He perceived religions as providing meaning to human life and aiding in adaptation, with religiosity having significant importance for personal psychological development. However, his approach to religion and religiosity is reductionist as he reduces religion to a purely psychological phenomenon (cited in: Brudek, Steuden, 2015; cf. also: Dziedzic, 2017).

James (2001), from a precursor of humanistic psychology perspective, defined religion as the acts, feelings, and individual experiences of a person that relate to something they consider divine (ibid; cf. also: Czernik, 2011). Allport (1988), who expanded on James’s views, argued that mature religious sense is a relatively stable dimension in the model of a person’s personality and behavior, inseparable from emotional and cognitive elements related to higher values – holiness.

1.3.2. Personal and apersonal religiosity according to Romuald Jaworski

The analysis of contemporary psychological literature indicates many typologies of religiosity. However, a particularly inspiring and interesting concept is presented by Jaworski (1989; 2002), who draws attention to the personal dimension of religiosity (cf. also: Suchodolska, Gosztyła, 2010). Its main assumption is that Christian religiosity is a personal religion due to the co-occurrence of three elements: 1) man as the subject of religious experience; 2) the person of God as the object of religious experience; 3) the personal relationship occurring between man and God (Jaworski, 1989).

Based on psychological, philosophical, and theological theories, Jaworski (2002) distinguished two extreme forms of religiosity. The first is personal religiosity, which is a kind of pattern and model of religiosity, characterized by maturity, engaging man in experiencing a personal relationship with God. The opposite of such a form is apersonal religiosity, in which the relationship with God is instrumental, devoid of significant value. Both types of religiosity contain differences referring to the characteristics of the subject, the object, and the type of relationship in the personal contact between man and God. The person being the subject experiencing a relationship with God is distinguished by different features depending on the form of religiosity and the way in which the object, namely God, is treated. The issue of personal and apersonal religiosity is also related to the relationship that occurs between a person and God (ibid; cf. also: Juroszek, 2014).

1.4. Religiosity and marital satisfaction

The quality of the marital community relationship plays a significant role in building the durability and happiness of family life. Therefore, the issue of marital satisfaction has been the subject of many scientific considerations. It has been analyzed on various levels, but attention has particularly focused on finding factors causing an increase and decrease in satisfaction with marriage. Among the causes affecting the relationship, the religiosity of spouses has often been mentioned (Brudek, Lachowska, 2014; Dew et al., 2020).

Religiosity, as an individual sphere of beliefs, values, convictions, experiences, and references to God, plays a significant role in a person’s life. It shapes attitudes and hopes, helps to discover the meaning of existence, and indicates ways of coping with the difficulties of everyday life (Wnuk, Marcinkowski, 2012). In psychological research, its functional dimension has been particularly emphasized, which is associated with: openness to relationships, the mental health of the person (Bożek, Nowak, Blukacz, 2020), the durability of the family, general satisfaction with life, and the quality of marital relations (Krok, 2012; Yeganeh, Shaikhmahmoodi, 2013).

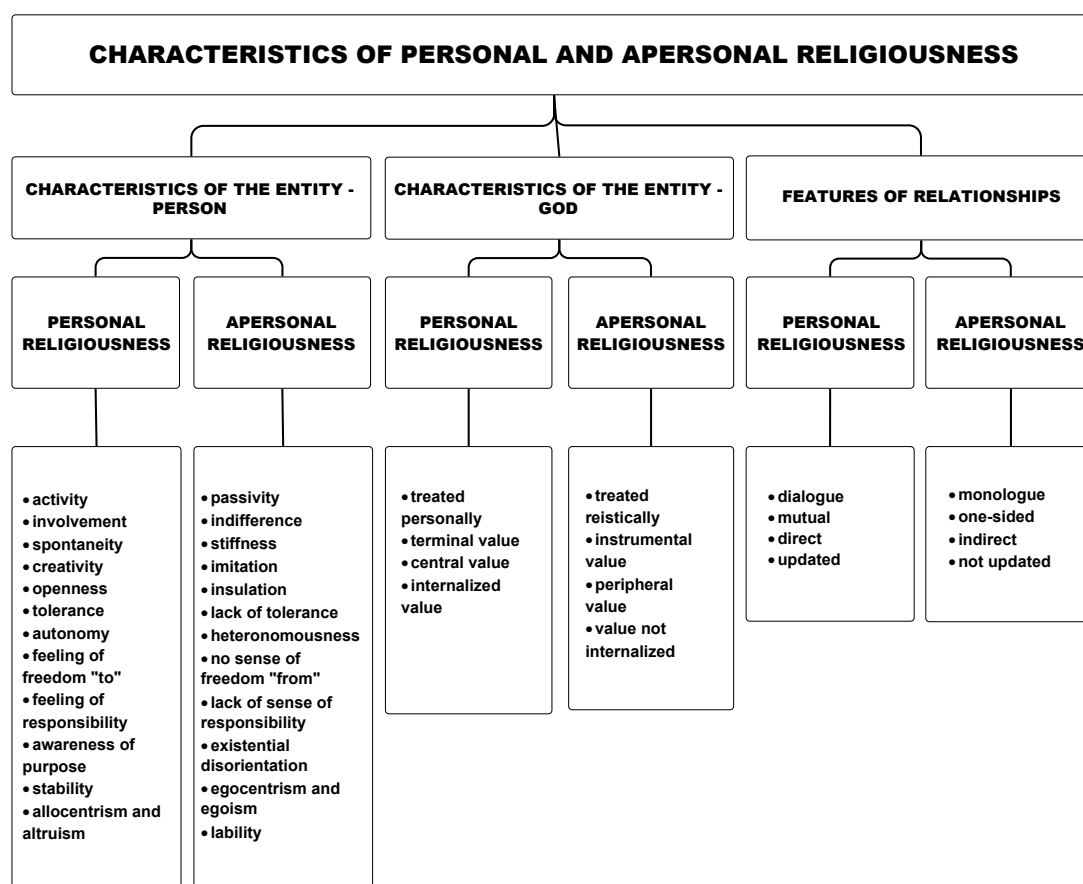


Fig. 1. Characteristics of personal and apersonal religiosity. Source: based on Jaworski (1989).

In Poland, marital satisfaction and religiosity have been and continue to be the subject of many scientific inquiries. Descriptions of studies available in the literature concerning the interdependence between religiosity and marital satisfaction largely emphasize the positive impact of religiosity on the level of satisfaction with one’s own marriage (Brudek, Lachowska, 2014; Brudek, Ciula, 2013; Surma, 2023).

The most well-known authors of studies comparing the personal nature of religiosity with the sense of marital satisfaction are Kiełek-Rataj (2013), Brudek and Steuden (2015), and Plopa (2011). Their investigations have shown that the degree of personal religiosity, assessed on multiple levels, has a positive impact on marital satisfaction.

Furthermore, it has been indicated that a high level of relationship satisfaction is influenced by the individual’s religious maturity (Kiełek-Rataj, 2013), as well as the role played by religiosity understood

in the category of a system of meanings (Brudek, Steuden, 2015). Studies have shown that less disappointment in the marital relationship is associated with the evaluation and interpretation of oneself, others, and the world from the perspective of the individual’s religious commitment (ibid).

In the context of the religious system of meanings, investigations by Brudek and Lachowska (2014) demonstrated that the higher the religiosity, the higher the satisfaction with the relationship between spouses. Additionally, there is an increase in the sense of fulfillment in the relationship and the achievement of common marital and family goals, while disappointment in the marriage decreases (ibid).

Psychological research also indicates that a significant factor in marital satisfaction is the alignment and similarity of partners’ religious attitudes. Women and men who have greater alignment in the religious sphere exhibit higher levels of marital satisfaction than spouses

with different attitudes (Braun-Galkowska, 1980; Kielek-Rataj, 2013; Tykarski, 2018). On the other hand, disagreement in the religious sphere can cause marital relationship disintegration due to the sense of physical and even psychological distancing from the spouse (Tykarski, 2018; Walesa, 1978; Śliwak et al., 2017).

Research on the correlations between religiosity and marital satisfaction has enjoyed great success not only in Poland, but also worldwide. Many foreign considerations confirm the assumption that religiosity has a positive relationship with marital satisfaction, as it strengthens the unity and quality of marriage (cf. e.g. Abdullah, 2017; Agu, Nwankwo, 2019; Aman i in., 2019; Bozhabadi i in., 2020; Cho, 2014; David, Starfford, 2015; DeMaris, 2010; Fardd i in., 2013; Homaei i in., 2016; Hwang i in., 2019; Lester, 2013; McDonald i in., 2018; Olson i in., 2015; 2016). Factors that often contribute to high satisfaction include: joint fulfillment of religious practices, understanding in the spiritual sphere, similarity of beliefs as well as the emotions they evoke, prayer, and mutual forgiveness (Abdullah, 2017; Fardd et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2019; Lester, 2013; McDonald et al., 2018). Religiosity is associated with points of view, values, and attitudes, which, when shared, can strengthen the relationship between husband and wife and increase marital satisfaction (Amann et al., 2019; Olson et al., 2016).

Researchers have also confirmed that the alignment of partners in religious aspects weakens the impact of stimuli threatening relationship satisfaction, thus protecting marital well-being. Additionally, it was noted that the relationship between marital stress and satisfaction with the relationship is significantly weaker under conditions of high forgiveness by the spouse and a high level of prayer for the spouse compared to low forgiveness (Agu, Nwankwo, 2019; Olson et al., 2015).

For David and Stafford (2015), the basis of marital success lies in the individual relationship of a person to God. The authors also argue that the adoption and practice of virtues stemming from religion, such as love, sacrifice, forgiveness, and compromise, and the promotion of pro-family values and sexual fidelity, have a significant impact on the foundation of satisfaction with the marital relationship.

Observations by other researchers have established that religion provides people with general guidelines for life, and their realization leads to the strengthening of bonds between spouses. This improves psychological ability, the ability to cope with difficult everyday situations, and mutual understanding of partners, which results in an increase in marital satisfaction (Bozhabadi et al., 2020; DeMaris, 2010; Homaei et al., 2016).

Hunt and King (1978) note that when spouses are both involved in religious and church activities, this can lead to increased marital satisfaction (cf. also: Aman et al., 2019; Cho, 2014).

Based on the above research, we can see a correlation between personal religiosity and high marital satisfaction, which helps spouses in various ways to regain stability and control over life difficulties and serves as a way of gaining meaning of and significance in life (Brudek, Ciula, 2013). The results also show that religiosity is essential in creating a properly developing marital relationship, which also indirectly affects the proper functioning of the family environment (Dollahite et al., 2018). Elements of the spiritual well-being of spouses therefore seem to be one of the more important aspects of increasing marital satisfaction (Hoesni, Kasim, Zakaria, 2021).

2. Own research

2.1. Research goals and hypotheses

The general aim of the conducted research is to understand the relationship between marital satisfaction and the personal religiosity of spouses. This will allow us to verify the spouses' attitude towards the issue of religiosity and its impact on satisfaction with the marital relationship. The considerations carried out in the theoretical part of this article may indicate the existence of positive correlations between the religiosity of spouses and the level of their marital satisfaction. Therefore, the main research problem is the analysis of the relationships occurring between these two variables.

The above problem required answers to the following research questions:

1. Religiosity and marital satisfaction: Is marital satisfaction associated with religiosity?
2. Types of religiosity: Does the type of religiosity matter for marital satisfaction—do people with personal and impersonal religiosity differ in terms of marital satisfaction?
3. Engagement in religious and church activities of husband and wife: Do people who are in the Catholic community differ from those who are not in the community in terms of marital satisfaction?

When starting the research, the following hypotheses were set:

- H 1. People with a higher level of religiosity are characterized by higher marital satisfaction.
- H 2. People with personal religiosity are characterized by higher marital satisfaction than people with impersonal religiosity.
- H 3. People who are in the Christian community have a higher level of religiosity than people who are not in the community.
- H 4. People who are in the Christian community have a higher level of marital satisfaction than people who are not in the community.

2.2. Measures

The Norton's Quality Marriage Index (QMI) was used to measure marital satisfaction, in the Polish adaptation by Czyżkowska and Ciecuch (2020). The questionnaire consists of 6 statements, which are rated on a seven-point scale, where 1 – *I strongly disagree*, and 7 – *I strongly agree*. The overall score indicates the degree of marital satisfaction. The scale is characterized by high reliability and validity. In the Polish version of the scale, Cronbach's alpha is $\alpha = 0.97$ (Czyżkowska, Ciecuch, 2020). In the studied sample, the reliability of the scale for all respondents was $\alpha = 0.96$, in the group of women $\alpha = 0.97$ and in the group of men $\alpha = 0.98$.

To assess religiosity, the Personal Religiosity Scale by Jaworski in a shortened form (1989) was utilized. The original version comprised 100 statements but was condensed by the author to 30 statements. The scale includes four subscales. The first is belief, determining the level of unity with God, giving meaning to the believer's life. The next is morality, indicating the alignment between moral conduct and religious beliefs of the believer. Following that is religious practices, realized through prayer, contemplation, and deepening knowledge about God. The final subscale is self-religious, indicating self-identification regarding the level of relationship and closeness with God and the sense of being a Christian (cf. Opalach, 2012). Respondents rate their agreement on a five-point scale with statements reflecting the compatibility of their beliefs and behaviors. The religiosity score is the sum of the obtained points, considering the weighting in reversed questions, as per the respondent's answer key (Jaworski, 1989). The maximum score denoting personal religiosity is 150 points, while the minimum indicating impersonal religiosity is 30 points (cf. Kielek-Rataj, 2013). The reliability was checked by the authors of the study using the retest method and for the entire scale it was $\alpha = 0.97$, for faith $\alpha = 0.85$, for morality $\alpha = 0.8$, for religious practices $\alpha = 0.93$, and for religious self $\alpha = 0.9$.

2.3. Research procedure and participants

To verify the formulated research questions and hypotheses, a study was conducted from July 1 to September 1, 2021. The research involved online completion of the attached research methods by married couples. The time for completing the questionnaire was unlimited.

A total of 240 individuals were examined. Due to data gaps, the results of 68 questionnaires were excluded from the statistical analysis. Only the responses of 86 married couples, totaling 172 individuals ($M = 1.5$, $SD = 0.5$), were considered for analysis. Among the participants, there were 86 women and 86 men. The average age of the respondents was $M = 38.49$ years ($SD = 9.24$; Table 1).

Table 1. Age of participants

	Woman		Man		General	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	37.23	9.19	39.74	9.17	38.49	9.24

Among the participants, 48.3% declared affiliation with Christian communities, while the remaining 51.7% did not. The majority held higher education degrees (68%), with the smallest group comprising individuals with vocational (2.3%) and elementary (2.9%) education.

The surveyed group exhibited diversity in terms of their place of origin. A significant portion came from large cities with over 100,000 inhabitants (32%) and rural areas (27.3%), while a smaller percentage originated from medium-sized cities with 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants (15.1%). The examined couples differed in the type of relationship they had established. More than half of the respondents (67.4%) had entered into a concordat marriage (both civil and church ceremonies), a significantly smaller portion (26.7%) had only a church wedding, and the least represented were couples with only a civil marriage (5.8%). Regarding the duration of relationships, 52.3% of respondents had been in a relationship

for 6 to 20 years. Out of the 86 examined marriages, 30.8% had two children, slightly fewer (27.3%) had one child, and only 2.3% of couples had five offspring. Among all surveyed couples, only 16.3% did not have children.

2.4. Results

The aim of the statistical analysis of the obtained results was to test the research questions and hypotheses in order to examine the relationship between individual dimensions of personal religiosity (Personal Religiosity Scale – PRS) and marital satisfaction (overall score of the Quality Marriage Index – QMI). IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 was used for the conducted analyses.

To determine the properties of the distributions of scales and assess the normality of measured variables, descriptive statistics were calculated. The results for all participants, considering the division between women and men, are presented in Table 2.

Based on the assessment of skewness and kurtosis, which, for most scales, exhibited values outside the range of -1 to 1, it was concluded that the distribution of the examined variables in the group deviates from a normal distribution. Therefore, non-parametric tests were chosen to test all research questions and hypotheses.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for PRS and QMI for the entire group and divided by participants' gender

	Variables	Religiosity	Faith	Morality	Religious Practices	Religious Self	QMI
General	<i>M</i>	118.540	4.087	3.643	3.857	3.965	5.585
	<i>SD</i>	24.881	0.994	0.939	1.039	1.017	1.426
	Skewness	-1.362	-1.611	-1.160	-1.285	1.423	-1.351
	Kurtosis	1.137	2.158	0.942	0.965	1.482	1.642
Woman	<i>M</i>	120.337	4.183	3.678	3.939	4.008	5.525
	<i>SD</i>	24.147	1.003	0.944	0.994	1.029	1.422
	Skewness	-1.666	-1.938	-1.275	-1.618	-1.692	-1.224
	Kurtosis	2.203	3.358	1.488	2.303	2.331	1.296
Man	<i>M</i>	116.744	3.991	3.608	3.775	3.921	5.633
	<i>SD</i>	25.608	0.981	0.937	1.082	1.009	1.448
	Skewness	-1.122	-1.352	-1.070	-1.027	-1.179	-1.470
	Kurtosis	0.496	1.434	0.553	0.168	0.851	2.029

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for marital satisfaction and religiosity

Variables	QMI	Religiosity
<i>M</i>	5.585	118.54
<i>SD</i>	1.426	24.881
Skewness	-1.351	-1.362
Kurtosis	1.642	1.137

To examine hypothesis 1 (*Individuals with higher levels of religiosity exhibit higher marital satisfaction*) and the research questions, correlations were conducted using non-parametric tests due to the non-normal distribution of variables. A non-parametric *Spearman's rho* test was employed. The results are presented in Table 4.

The analysis of the results shows that religiosity and all its dimensions correlate significantly with marital satisfaction. Each correlation is positive and moderate. This means that with an increase in religiosity and its dimensions, marital satisfaction also increases.

The analysis also examined the relationships between overall religiosity assessment and marital satisfaction, divided by gender. The overall results of the correlation analysis for women and men reveal statistically significant moderate positive relationships between marital satisfaction and religiosity, significant at the 0.01 level.

The dimensions of religiosity for women indicate statistically significant weak relationships between faith, morality, religious self, and marital satisfaction, as well as a moderate correlation between religious practices and marital satisfaction for women. Conversely, statistically significant moderate correlations were found between all dimensions of religiosity and marital satisfaction for men. This result suggests that the higher the need for religious practices and rituals, the more frequent the contemplation of faith, adherence to religious norms and principles, seeking a relationship with God, as well as recognizing Him as a central value in life, and the more significant the impact on perceived marital satisfaction for both women and men.

Table 4. Results of the correlation between religiosity and marital satisfaction

Variables	Religiosity	Faith	Morality	Religious Practices	Religious Self
Marital Satisfaction	0.468**	0.416**	0.388**	0.453**	0.407**
Women	0.415**	0.364**	0.306**	0.408**	0.364**
Men	0.558**	0.491**	0.515**	0.532**	0.490**

Table 5. Descriptive statistics for groups of individuals based on the division of religiosity level into personal and apersonal

Variables	Religiosity	Faith	Morality	Religious Practices	Religious Self
<i>M</i>	4.697	2.936	2.631	2.633	2.639
<i>SD</i>	1.605	0.744	0.735	0.757	0.774
Skewness	-.417	-0.807	-0.049	-0.348	-0.644
Kurtosis	-0.565	-0.952	-0.343	-1.189	-0.739
<i>M</i>	6.297	4.698	4.447	4.828	4.797
<i>SD</i>	1.042	0.230	0.286	0.147	0.207
Skewness	-3.331	-1.088	-0.170	-0.675	-0.793
Kurtosis	14.680	1.255	0.344	-0.144	-0.356

Table 6. Results for the U Mann-Whitney Test for personal and apersonal religiosity regarding marital satisfaction

Variables	Mean Ranks		U	Z	p
	Apersonal Religiosity N = 43	Personal Religiosity N = 46			
Marital Satisfaction	30.56	58.50	368.0	-5.133	0.001
	Being in a Religious Community	Not being in a Religious Community			
	106.22	68.11	2056.5	-5.045	0.001
Religiosity	105.61	68.68	2107.5	-4.862	0.001
Faith	99.92	73.98	2579.5	-3.425	0.001
Morality	103.64	70.52	2271.0	-4.370	0.001
Religious Practices	106.73	67.63	2014.0	-5.156	0.001
Self Religiosity	103.43	70.71	2288.0	-4.327	0.001

The group was divided based on the results of percentile ranges, where scores below the 25th percentile were identified as indicating apersonal religiosity, and above the 75th percentile as indicating personal religiosity. In the subsequent analysis, tests of differences between the group with personal and apersonal religiosity were conducted. Due to the lack of normal distribution, the differences between groups were assessed using the non-parametric U Mann-Whitney test, the results of which are presented below.

The Mann-Whitney U test showed that in terms of marital satisfaction, when divided into personal and apersonal religiosity, the rank direction ran from personal religiosity to apersonal religiosity. The differences between the average results were statistically significant at the $p = 0.001$ level. Thus, hypothesis 2 was confirmed (*People with personal religiosity are characterized by higher marital satisfaction than people with apersonal religiosity*).

To examine hypothesis 3 (*People who are in the Christian community have a higher level of religiosity than people who are not in the community*) and 4 (*People who are in the Christian community have a higher level of marital satisfaction than people who are not in the community*) as well as research questions related to differences between groups, data were tested when divided into groups according to the level of religiosity of the respondents and membership in the Christian community.

All results for the conducted Mann-Whitney U test in the field of religiosity and marital satisfaction, when dividing the group according to membership in religious communities, turned out to be statistically significant. It can be observed that marriages between individuals in the Christian community have significantly statistically higher results in terms of satisfaction with the relationship and all scales of personal religiosity than marriages that do not belong to the community. The direction of average ranks ran from people who are in the community to those who are not.

2.5. Discussion

The presented research aimed to examine three threads in the area of religiosity and marital satisfaction: 1) the relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction; 2) distinguishing two types of religiosity as well as examining their significance for marital satisfaction; and 3) examining the significance of engagement in religious and church activities of spouses for marital satisfaction. The analysis of the obtained empirical data related to the variables allowed for a positive verification of all research questions and hypotheses. The results of the conducted research clearly indicate that satisfaction with the marital relationship correlates positively with personal religiosity and all its dimensions. This result has also been confirmed in other studies

(Abdullah, 2017; Bahnaru et al., 2019; Bozhabadi et al., 2020; Braun-Gałkowska, 1979; Brudek, Ciuły, 2013; Brudek, Lachowska, 2014; Brudek, Steuden, 2015; Dudley, Krosinskiego, 1990; Fardd et al., 2013; Hwang et al., 2019; Juroszek, 2014; Kielek-Rataj, 2013; Lester, 2013; McDonald et al., 2018; Olson et al., 2016; Surma, 2023).

In line with the research assumptions, the analysis of the results indicated that people with a higher level of marital satisfaction are characterized by personal religiosity. On the other hand, people with apersonal religiosity showed a lower level of marital satisfaction. Therefore, it can be assumed that satisfaction and benefits in the functioning of the marital relationship are related to the mature religious life of a woman and a man. This is seen in her scientific inquiries by Braun-Gałkowska (1980), stating that spouses who showed greater maturity were more satisfied with marriage. This maturity was manifested by empathy and awareness, the ability to reflect and create, as well as flexibility of thinking and internal activity (*ibid*). Therefore, following Chlewiński (1991), it can be assumed that mature religiosity is a value that plays a significant role in the psychic life of a person, as it reaches as far as the structures of his personality, beliefs, way of thinking, attitudes and behaviors. He also believes that the characteristics of a person associated with mature religiosity, which is acquired at various stages of life, are an opportunity to shape valuable characteristics and behaviors of a person not only towards God, but towards himself, other people and the whole world around him (*ibid*). It seems that from mature religiosity also grows the desire, and even the obligation, to constantly maintain closeness between spouses who want to create a community and are focused on cooperation for mutual good and the good of the relationship. Such an approach by partners to each other and the relationship is consistent with the concept of personal religiosity, which assumes that religiosity experienced in an individual relationship with God is characterized by a person's readiness to work on oneself, to sacrifice for others and awareness of the goal to which he strives. It is also characterized by the immutability of beliefs and feelings. This therefore testifies to

psychological and religious maturity. This maturity of a man and a woman seems to contribute to the positive perception of life in terms of values and purpose, but also to favoring the building of a satisfying relationship with a partner (Jaworski, 1989).

It can also be assumed that people with apersonal religiosity, who do not base their life and marriage on religiosity, can much more easily succumb to the instability of moral principles, discouragement, loss of a sense of purposefulness of their existence, in difficulties, in dealing with crises, which can lead to internal dissatisfaction, closing off to the partner, lack of hope and willingness to make an effort and joint work on the relationship. Therefore, it seems to be a manifestation of psychological and religious immaturity, characterized by not placing God at the center of life, lack of ability to build relationships, lack of a sense of responsibility, easy susceptibility to changes, frequent fluctuations in reactions and lack of reflection (Jaworski, 1989). This attitude therefore does not provide a developmental perspective for a satisfying relationship between spouses. For, as Kaźmierczak (2017) claims, the morality of people with apersonal religiosity is becoming increasingly independent and affects not only the individual life of a person, but also transfers to family and marital morality. Therefore, the influence of religiosity on marital satisfaction is different for spouses who are internally oriented, i.e., religion, values, and principles flowing from it are recognized and implemented, as opposed to externally oriented spouses, for whom religion and rules are not fully respected and there is no involvement in religious practices.

The analysis of the results allowed us to verify, for the studied sample, that satisfaction with the relationship is associated with religiosity and all its dimensions. It is worth noting that the more often people engage in life and religious practices and belong to the Christian community, the higher their level of religiosity. People who were in religious communities statistically significantly rated satisfaction with the relationship higher than people who did not belong to communities, who at the same time show a significantly lower level of religiosity. Therefore, it seems correct to state that religiosity,

being an important value, grows in a person through shaping, deeply experiencing, and practicing it, and co-creating a religious community (Popielski, 1996; cf. also: Wojtarkowska, 2019).

It can therefore be assumed that through joint participation in worship and prayers, a specific and strong bond is built between a woman and a man. Perhaps faith and religious practices experienced together also strengthen those traits that lead to communication and help reduce marital conflicts. Deep religiosity, according to Wandrasz (1998), shapes in a person an attitude of respect for oneself and another person, and also emphasizes the value and dignity of the person (*ibid*; cf. also: Bejda, Lewko, Kulak-Bejda, 2018). In turn, Śliwak and others (2017) prove that with an increase in religiosity, there is also an increase in engagement in the development of relationships between spouses, showing support and respect, and mutual work to resolve conflicts (*ibid*). Therefore, it seems particularly important for spouses to communicate aiming at agreement.

David and Stafford (2015) emphasize the relationship between marital satisfaction and joint religious communication. They point out that strong engagement of partners in conversation about common values, goals, and the role of God in their marital life affects mutual attitudes of spouses towards each other, empathy, and forgiveness (*ibid*). Therefore, it can be assumed that in the absence of joint religious communication, different religious preferences, as well as differences in religious practice and belief system, there is a higher level of marital disagreement, which according to researchers, among other things, affects the weakening of the forgiveness process as opposed to believing people. Therefore, it seems that a significant factor for marital satisfaction is communication, which plays an important role in getting to know partners, deepening bonds and dealing with problems, as well as agreeing on behavior in various matters of everyday life (Braun-Gałkowska, 1980).

It can also be assumed that the reference point for assessing marital satisfaction will be a similar system of values and attitudes derived from moral norms having their source in religion. This suggests that the religious beliefs of spouses have a significant impact on expectations, deeds, thoughts, and feelings, and

consistency in professed values has a positive relationship with experiencing satisfaction from the marital relationship (Kielek-Rataj, 2013; Tykarski, 2018). Similarity of beliefs and religious values may also make marriages more harmonious. In other words, denominational differences can cause tensions in marriages due to difficulties in reconciling different expectations and lack of acceptance in the family, as shown, for example, in the case of mixed Catholic-Protestant marriages in Northern Ireland (Wright, Rosato, O'Reilly, 2017). Both Braun-Gałkowska (1984) and Elżanowska (2012) notice that spouses who build their relationship on similar religious values are much more satisfied with the relationship than spouses for whom religious principles and values are not significant.

It can be assumed that more religious couples, due to their professed values and beliefs, are much less inclined to make decisions about divorce, and are much more engaged in repairing relationships, forgiving, or seeking help from specialists to survive a crisis. This also suggests that religiosity somehow indicates how to behave towards a spouse based on the permanence and unity of marriage and the attitude of love and responsibility. Such a thesis seems to be confirmed by Dudley and Kosinski (1990), who showed that religiosity strengthens the bond between spouses, helps them in showing love, presents ways in which to think about the needs of others, treat each other with respect, resolve conflicts and forgive. These studies also confirmed that thanks to the religiosity of the husband and wife, many marriages avoided divorces. A similar result is visible in Sullivan (2001), where a higher level of religiosity of spouses was a predictor of more orthodox attitudes and views on divorce, was associated with much greater engagement of husbands and wives in the relationship, and predicted a greater desire to seek help in times of crisis. Therefore, it can be assumed that religiosity plays an important role for marital satisfaction because it shapes, gives deep meaning and sense to marriage, and also helps to direct interactions between a woman and a man. It is also associated with a specific approach to marital life and mutual engagement of the husband and wife in the relationship.

On the other hand, a low assessment of satisfaction with the marital relationship by people not belonging to religious communities may suggest that the lack of spiritual bonds and experiencing common religious values makes it difficult to deepen relationships between spouses. This leads to the conclusion that the religious sphere is not indifferent for a satisfying life in marriage. Therefore, it can be assumed that situations of divergence of religious attitudes of the husband and wife are frequent, and hence misunderstandings in matters of needs, goals, moral, axiological and family matters, as well as everyday circumstances. These misunderstandings seem to resonate in the daily life of the couple and implicate behaviors, ways of communication, mutual understanding or stability of the relationship, and also lead to the disintegration of the previous way and rhythm of life. These assumptions seem to be confirmed by Curtis and Ellison (2002), who observed that more frequent marital misunderstandings are associated with differences in the religiosity of the husband and wife (*ibid*; cf. also: Lambert, Dollahite, 2006). Taking this into consideration, one could speculate that the discordance between partners in terms of religiosity leads to a decline in the quality of communication, consequently resulting in a reduction of marital satisfaction. Such an association is highlighted by Jankowska (2016), emphasizing that disrupted communication leads to disappointment in the relationship and significantly influences a decrease in satisfaction with the marital bond (*ibid*). Therefore, one may conclude that lower satisfaction in marital relationships for individuals not belonging to the Christian community will be influenced by distinct beliefs and perspectives regarding faith and life.

The results of the analysis on the perception of marital satisfaction in relation to religiosity and its dimensions by men and women showed slight statistically insignificant differences between genders. However, these findings serve as supplementary measurements and aimed to explore whether it would be worthwhile to investigate the relationships between religiosity and marital satisfaction in the future, considering gender

differences. Nevertheless, one can conclude that faith in God and establishing a personal relationship with Him contribute to the development of mature religiosity. This, in turn, shapes an individual's personality, influencing their worldview, hierarchy of values, and attitudes towards others, regardless of gender.

Conclusions

In summarizing the considerations, it is crucial to emphasize that the obtained research results confirmed the assumptions about the coexistence of a positive relationship between marital satisfaction and religiosity, particularly engagement in religious life and practices through membership in the Christian community. However, it is worth noting that not every type of religiosity positively influences relationship satisfaction. It appears that only the personal dimension correlates positively with marital contentment. The gathered data thus present an intriguing perspective on marital relationships, portraying them as complex existential and spiritual experiences.

The relationships identified in the research also allow for practical implications. Specifically, religiosity can be regarded as a unifying factor in the husband-wife relationship, fostering communication and maturity, facilitating coping with challenging situations by overcoming difficulties, and preventing marital dissolution. Therefore, the obtained data can contribute to an increased understanding of family psychology, drawing psychologists' attention to the significance of religiosity for marital satisfaction. This information can be utilized in psychotherapeutic practice as well as family counseling.

The knowledge gained from the analysis can also be incorporated into premarital courses for individuals preparing for the sacrament of marriage, emphasizing the importance of the religious dimension for a fulfilling relationship.

The results of these studies may serve as inspiration for further exploration of the connections between religiosity and marital satisfaction, as well as with other aspects of human life. In future

scientific inquiries, it would be valuable to expand these studies, for example, by examining the relationships between personal religiosity and marital satisfaction with a gender breakdown. Additionally, enriching the study by incorporating other dimensions of marital satisfaction or exploring different correlates of relationship satisfaction could provide a more comprehensive assessment of the areas under investigation.

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