

**CUMULATIVE DEPLOYMENT LENGTH, PERCEIVED  
STRESS, MARITAL SATISFACTION AND THE MODERATING  
ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AMONG SPOUSES OF MILITARY  
PERSONNEL IN THE DALET CANTONMENT, KADUNA,  
NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The marital satisfaction of military spouses is a critical concern considering the unique family-related stressors they have to face. This phenomenon can be profoundly influenced by factors such as partner deployments, experienced stress, and the level of social support available to them. Despite extensive research on these, there is limited understanding of how they interact specifically within the context of Nigerian military families. Employing a cross-sectional design, the research used convenient sampling to select participants from Dalet Cantonment Kaduna. Three psychometrically sound scales were used to gather data in this study. The questionnaire sought demographic characteristics of the participants, as well as measuring their perceived social support using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, perceived stress using the Perceived Stress Scale and marital satisfaction with the Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS). Result obtained on regressing the marital satisfaction scores of participants on their husbands' cumulative deployment length shows that cumulative deployment length is a significant predictor of marital satisfaction scores ( $\beta = .284, p < .001$ ). Hypothesis two was tested by regressing the marital satisfaction scores of participants on their perceived stress and it showed that perceived stress is a significant predictor of marital satisfaction scores ( $\beta = -.332, p < .001$ ). The analysis for hypothesis three revealed that social support will moderate the relationship between cumulative deployment length and marital satisfaction among wives of military

personnel [ $\Delta R^2 = .0246$ ,  $F(1, 153) = 5.2811$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. The study enhances the understanding of marital satisfaction among military families by highlighting the complex roles of deployment length, perceived stress, and social support. The findings underscore the importance of social support in mitigating stress and maintaining marital satisfaction even during extended deployments. This research provides a basis for developing targeted support interventions and suggests directions for future studies to further explore these relationships.

**Key words:** Military Families; Military Spouses; Deployment; Social support; Spousal marital satisfaction

### **Introduction**

Marital satisfaction among military spouses, particularly wives, is a critical area of study, as military families face unique challenges due to the demands of military life (Owen & Combs, 2017). These challenges, such as frequent deployments, long separations, and the stressors associated with military duties, can significantly impact marital satisfaction and overall well-being. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing effective support systems and interventions that can strengthen relationships, improve communication, and help military families cope with the stressors they face.

One of the most significant factors influencing marital satisfaction is social support. Social support encompasses emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance individuals receive from their social networks. Research has shown that social support can buffer the negative effects of stress, improve conflict resolution, and enhance communication within relationships, all of which are crucial for maintaining marital satisfaction (Umberson et al., 2005). In military families, social support may play a vital role in managing the stress associated with deployments and separations while maintaining healthy relationships despite the challenges of military life.

Marital satisfaction is defined as the perceived benefits and costs of marriage, which can affect both partners' physical and mental health, as well as the well-being of their children (Cummings & Davies, 2010). Recent global statistics highlight growing concerns about marital

stability, with divorce rates steadily increasing over the past few decades. In the United States, approximately 40-50% of first marriages end in divorce (Westrick-Payne, 2022), a trend also observed in other countries, including Nigeria, where divorce rates have risen significantly (National Population Commission, 2023). In Nigeria, infidelity is reported as the leading cause of divorce (National Population Commission, 2023). For military families, the stresses of military life, particularly frequent separations for training, peacekeeping missions, or combat, exacerbate marital dissatisfaction and lead to family conflicts (Shekwolo & Ugese, 2019). Military wives, in particular, face higher levels of stress due to their dual responsibilities at home and the challenges associated with their spouses' frequent absences. This stress can significantly impact marital satisfaction, with unresolved tension often leading to conflict and dissatisfaction within the marriage.

Stress is a key factor that can play a role in marital satisfaction. It can stem from various sources, including work pressures, financial difficulties, the emotional toll of military life and the frequent absence of the significant partner due lengthy deployments. For military wives, the stress is often compounded by the need to manage the household, care for children, and sometimes take on the role of the primary breadwinner. Studies have shown that women tend to report higher levels of stress and anxiety than men, particularly when balancing family demands with work or education (Skomorovsky, 2014). This heightened stress can lead to marital dissatisfaction, as unresolved issues create tension and strain in the relationship (Owusu, 2011). However, social support can act as a buffer to mitigate these stresses. By offering emotional relief, practical assistance, and role models for healthy relationships, social support helps couples manage conflict more effectively, improving marital satisfaction and overall well-being.

The impact of military deployment on marital satisfaction is particularly pronounced. Deployments often involve long periods of separation, which can lead to emotional distance, mistrust, and difficulties in maintaining communication. These separations are especially challenging for military families in Nigeria, where over 500,000 soldiers have been deployed since the beginning of the War on Terror in 2001. Military wives report experiencing a range of issues related to

deployment, including anxiety, infidelity, domestic violence, and divorce (Faber et al, 2008). Despite efforts to address these challenges, including providing support programs for military families, there remains a significant gap in research regarding the physical and psychological healthcare needs of military wives (Warner et al, 2009).

The role of social support in enhancing marital satisfaction within military families remains underexplored, particularly in the Nigerian context. While it is widely recognized that social support plays a critical role in mental health and well-being, its specific influence on marital satisfaction in military families has not been fully examined. This is particularly important given Nigeria's cultural emphasis on family and marriage. Frequent military deployments can place tremendous strain on marriages, and understanding how perceived social support can act as a moderator between cumulative deployment length and marital satisfaction is crucial for developing effective interventions to support military wives.

The proposed study aims to address these research gaps by exploring how social support acts as moderator between cumulative deployment length and marital satisfaction among spouses of military personnel stationed at Dalet Military Cantonment in Kaduna-Nigeria and the role of perceived stress among these spouses. By examining these factors, the study will provide valuable insights into how military families can better manage the challenges they face. Specifically, it will highlight the importance of building strong social support networks in shaping marital satisfaction during periods of deployment. This research has the potential to inform policies and programs designed to improve the well-being of military families, ensuring that military wives receive the support they need to maintain fulfilling and healthy relationships.

### **Aim & Objectives of the Study**

The study aimed at examining the impact of cumulative deployment length as a predictor of marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

- i. To examine the impact of perceived stress on marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

- ii. To explore the moderating Role of Social Support in The Relationship Between Cumulative Deployment Length, Perceived Stress and Marital Satisfaction Among Spouses of Military Personnel in Dalet Cantonment, Kaduna. Specific objectives include:

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses was tested in the study.

- i. Cumulative deployment length will significantly predict marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.
- ii. Perceived stress will significantly predict marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.
- iii Social support will moderate the relationship between cumulative deployment length, perceived stress and marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.
- Iv Social support will moderate the relationship between perceived stress and marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kawo Kaduna.

### **Methods**

#### **Design**

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey design is a type of survey design where the researcher administered and collected data from a small sample of population within a time frame. This survey design helped the researcher quickly measure the opinion of participants on the study variables at one time. The study adopted a cross-sectional design to measure the moderating role of Social Support in the relationship between cumulative deployment length, perceived stress and marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet military cantonment Kaduna.

## **Participants**

This study covered all stable, willing and available participants (military spouse) at Dalet military cantonment Kaduna. The sample size for this study was 161 wives of military personnel who were conveniently sampled to participate in this study. A total of 42 (26.1%) participants were within the age of 25-34 years, 58 (36.0%) participants were within the age of 35-44 years old, 33 (20.5%) were within the age of 45-54 years, 14 (8.7%) participants were within the age of 55-64 years old, and 3 (1.9%) participants were 65 years or older. The remaining 11 (6.8%) were under 25 years old. Of these, 81 (50.3%) participants had a secondary school education, 69 (42.9%) had a Bachelor's degree, 9 (5.6%) had a Master's degree, 1 (0.6%) had a Ph.D., and 1 (0.6%) had a primary school certificate. Regarding years of marriage, 30 (18.6%) participants had been married for 1-5 years, 42 (26.1%) for 6-10 years, 26 (16.1%) for 11-15 years, 29 (18.0%) for 16-20 years, and 34 (21.1%) for more than 20 years. Regarding years in service, 61 (37.9%) participants had served for 1-5 years, 40 (24.8%) for 6-10 years, 36 (22.4%) for 11-15 years, and 23 (14.3%) for 16 years or more. One participant (0.6%) reported 0 years of service. For cumulative length of deployment, 26 (16.1%) participants had been deployed for 1-10 months, 34 (21.1%) for 11-20 months, 42 (26.1%) for 21-30 months, and 58 (36.0%) for 31 months or longer. One participant (0.6%) reported 0 months of deployment.

## **Instruments**

This study used a comprehensive instrument divided into four sections to assess various factors in relation to marital satisfaction among military wives. Section A focused on gathering demographic information about the participants, including their age, education level, years of marriage, number of children, the duration of their spouse's military deployments, and their husband's length of service. This section helped to understand the background and context of the participants.

Section B of the instrument was the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Zimet et al., 1988), designed to measure perceived social support from three sources: family, friends, and significant others. The MSPSS consists of 12 items, with four items per subscale, and uses a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly

disagree to strongly agree. The scale measures the participants' perceptions of social support in their lives, and scores were interpreted as indicating the level of social support received. The instrument is widely used and has been validated in multiple contexts, including Nigeria, where studies show good reliability with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.70 to 0.90. This study found a high Cronbach's alpha of 0.956, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Section C comprised of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), a widely used instrument developed by Cohen (1983) to measure the level of stress perceived by the participants. The PSS items are on a five-point Likert scale that ask participants to rate how often they have felt or thought in certain ways over the past month. Scores ranged from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived stress. A score of 20 or above was considered indicative of high perceived stress. The PSS has been validated in multiple contexts, including Nigeria, with Cronbach's alpha reliability ranging from 0.87 to 0.93, and a content validity index of 0.94. In this study, the PSS achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.683.

Section D consisted of the Index of Marital Satisfaction (IMS), a 25-item instrument developed by Hudson (1997) to assess the degree of problems in marital relationships. Participants rated their marital satisfaction using a Likert scale from 1 to 7, with higher scores reflecting greater marital satisfaction. The IMS addresses various aspects of marital relationships, including communication, intimacy, trust, conflict resolution, and overall happiness. It is a reliable tool, with Cronbach's alpha typically ranging from 0.80 to 0.95, indicating high internal consistency. The IMS has also been validated in different countries, including Nigeria, with reliability coefficients between 0.88 and 0.94. In this study, the IMS achieved a Cronbach's alpha of 0.754, demonstrating adequate reliability.

These collectively provided a comprehensive measure of perceived stress, social support, and marital satisfaction, allowing for an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing marital relationships among military wives.

### **Procedure**

Researchers applied to the ethical committee of Dalet military cantonment Kaduna seeking permission to conduct research within their organization. Upon obtaining approval from the Dalet military cantonment ethical committee, the researchers then proceeded to the barracks where the study was conducted. Participants were explicitly briefed about the purpose and objectives of the study. Participants who indicated interest in taking part in the research were given copies of the questionnaire to fill. The questionnaire had a consent form at the beginning, and participants who consented to participate were given sufficient time to complete the research tool. The overall data collection exercise lasted a few days. At the end of data collection, the participants were debriefed. Carefully sorted out questionnaires (to remove incompletely or inappropriately filled questionnaires) were used for analysis.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Data collected in this study were subjected to the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 27.0). Data collected on the demographic characteristics of the participants were fully analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, simple percentages, means and standard deviations. While inferential statistics were used to test the study's hypotheses. Specifically, simple linear regression was used to test hypotheses one and two. Hypotheses three and four were tested using the Model 1 of Hayes' Process software. This software is based on Ordinary Least Regression principles and the Model 1 tests moderation hypotheses in line with hypotheses three and four of this study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Careful attention was paid to ethical concerns to ensure the protection and well-being of research participants. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, beneficence, voluntary participation, research integrity and transparency were ensured.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis one:** Husband's cumulative deployment length will predict marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.



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A simple linear regression was conducted to test this hypothesis. Table 1 below shows the relevant statistical indices obtained from the regression analysis.

**Table 1:** Statistical Indices Obtained from the Simple Linear Regression of Marital Satisfaction of Wives on Husband’s Cumulative Deployment Length among Participants in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

Predictors	<i>b</i> & 95% <i>CI</i>	SE	$\beta$	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>SEE</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>F</i> -ratio	<i>p</i>
Constant	97.156 [91.564, 102.747]	2.831		34.323	<.001	16.90	.081	13.650	<.001
Cumulative Deployment Length	.511 [.238, .784]	.138	.284	.3.695	<.001				

SEE- Standard Error of the Estimate; SE- Standard Error; *b* &  $\beta$ - Unstandardised and Standardised beta coefficients. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction Total.

The result obtained when hypothesis one was tested by regressing the marital satisfaction scores of participants on their husbands’ cumulative deployment length shows that cumulative deployment length is a significant predictor of marital satisfaction scores ( $\beta = .284, p <.001$ ). Interestingly, this indicated a positive relationship suggesting that the longer the husband’s cumulative deployment length the higher the scores obtained on the marital satisfaction measure. That is, there is a .284-unit increase in wives’ marital satisfaction resulting from a one-unit increase in husband’s cumulative deployment length. Husband’s cumulative deployment length accounted for a significant 8.1% of the variations observed in wife’s marital satisfaction scores ( $R^2 = .081, F = 13.650, p <.001$ ). Therefore, hypothesis one is supported by the data obtained from this sample. It would appear that husband’s cumulative deployment length can predict wife’s marital satisfaction score.

**Hypothesis two:** Perceived stress will predict marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

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A simple linear regression was conducted to test this hypothesis. Table 2 shows the relevant statistical indices obtained from the regression analysis.

**Table 2: Statistical Indices Obtained from the Simple Linear Regression showing Marital Satisfaction among Wives on Wives Perceived Stress in Dalet Military Cantonment Kawo, Kaduna.**

Predictors	<i>b</i> & 95% CI	SE	$\beta$	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	SEE	$R^2$	<i>F</i> -ratio	<i>p</i>
Constant	142.857 [126.235, 159.480]	8.416		16.975	<.001	16.55	.110	19.412	<.001
Perceived Stress	-1.180 [-1.709, -.651]	.268	- .332	- .4406	<.001				

SEE- Standard Error of the Estimate; SE- Standard Error; *b* &  $\beta$ - Unstandardised and Standardised beta coefficients. Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction Total.

The result obtained when hypothesis two was tested by regressing the marital satisfaction scores of participants on their perceived stress shows that perceived stress is a significant predictor of marital satisfaction scores ( $\beta = -.332, p < .001$ ). Interestingly, this indicated a negative relationship, strongly suggesting that the more the wife perceived stress the less the scores obtained on the marital satisfaction scale. That is, there is a .332-unit decrease in wives' marital satisfaction resulting from a one-unit increase in wives' perceived stress. Wife's perceived stress accounted for a significant 11% of the variations observed in wife's marital satisfaction scores ( $R^2 = .110, F = 19.412, p < .001$ ). Therefore, hypothesis two is supported by the data obtained from this sample. It would appear that wife's perceived stress can predict wife's marital satisfaction score.

**Hypothesis three:** Social support will moderate the relationship between cumulative deployment length and marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

In order to test this hypothesis, an ordinary least square (OLS) linear multiple regression was conducted using husband’s cumulative length of deployment, wife’s social support and the interaction term between husband’s cumulative length of deployment and wife’s social support (moderation effect) as predictors of wives’ marital satisfaction. Specifically, the Model 1 of the Hays’s *Process* Software (an add-on on SPSS) was used to test the moderation hypothesis. The statistical indices obtained from this analysis are shown on Table 3.

**Table 3:** Results from a Regression Analysis Examining the Moderation Effect of Social Support on the Relationship Between Husband’s Cumulative Deployment Length and Marital Satisfaction among Wives of Military Personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

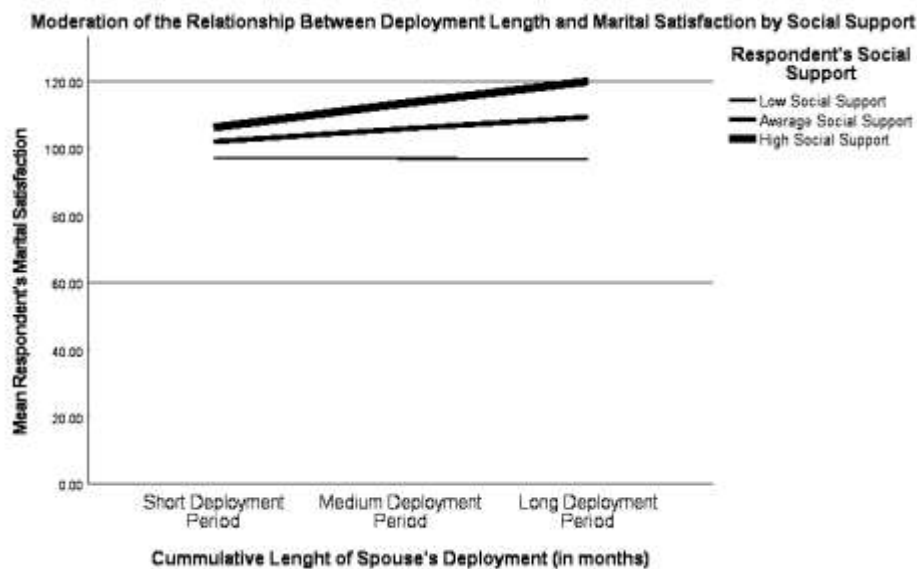
Predictors		Unstandardised Beta Coefficients	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	$i_y$	92.3487	7.5985	12.1536	<.001
Husband’s Cumulative Length of Deployment (X)	$b_1$	-.5351	.3816	-1.4024	.1628
Wives’ Social Support (W)	$b_2$	.1551	.1632	.9501	.3436
Length of Deployment X Social Support (XW)	$b_3$	.0175	.0076	2.2981	<.05
$R^2 = .2875, MSE = 224.2972$					
$F(3, 153) = 20.5832, p <.001$					

From Table 3, the unstandardised beta coefficient (B or  $b_3 = .0175$ ) for the interaction term between husband’s cumulative deployment length and wife’s social support’s prediction of marital satisfaction is

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significant ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates a significant moderation effect [ $\Delta R^2 = .0246$ ,  $F(1, 153) = 5.2811$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. In order to visualise this moderation and offer explanation for its kind, data points are generated for the plot of the moderation of the relationship between husband's cumulative deployment length and wife's marital satisfaction by wife's social support.

This moderation plot is show in Figure 1 below.



It is evident from Figure 1, that for wives with low social support there is no relationship between husband's cumulative deployment length and wives' marital satisfaction as the average value or scores on marital satisfaction remain the same across the three levels of deployment period. But as social support increases among wives, the positive relationship between husband's cumulative deployment length and wives' marital satisfaction begins to emerge. Therefore, the positive relationship that is existent between husbands' cumulative deployment length and wives' marital satisfaction is only found among wives with high and sufficient social support. This is the moderation effect that social support has on husbands' cumulative deployment length and wives' marital satisfaction.

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**Hypothesis four:** Social support will moderate the relationship between perceived stress and marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kaduna.

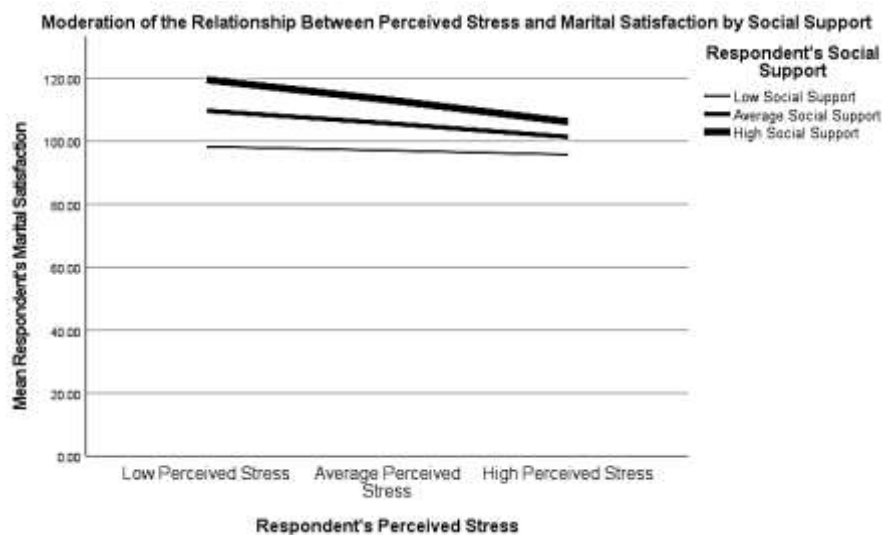
In order to test this hypothesis, an ordinary least square (OLS) linear multiple regression was conducted using wife’s perceived stress, wife’s social support and the interaction term between wife’s perceived stress and wife’s social support (moderation effect) as predictors of wives’ marital satisfaction. Specifically, the Model 1 of the Hays’s *Process* Software (an add-on on SPSS) was used to test the moderation hypothesis. The statistical indices obtained from this analysis are shown on Table 4.

**Table 4:** Results from a Regression Analysis Examining the Moderation Effect of Social Support on the Relationship Between Perceived Stress and Marital Satisfaction among Wives of Military Personnel in Dalet Military Cantonment Kawo, Kaduna.

Predictors		Unstandardised Beta Coefficients	SE	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Constant	$i_v$	60.0239	22.0567	2.7213	<.01
Wife’s Perceived Stress (X)	$b_1$	.7384	.6730	1.0971	.2743
Wife’s Social Support (W)	$b_2$	1.4830	.4351	3.4086	<.01
Perceived Stress X Social Support (XW)	$b_3$	-.0328	.0137	-2.3911	<.05
$R^2 = .3012, MSE = 218.8792$					
$F(3, 154) = 22.1273, p < .001$					

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From Table 4, the unstandardised beta coefficient (B or  $b_3 = -.0328$ ) for the interaction term between wife's perceived stress and wife's social support's prediction of marital satisfaction is significant ( $p < .05$ ). This indicates a significant moderation effect [ $\Delta R^2 = .0259$ ,  $F(1, 154) = 5.7175$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. In order to visualise this moderation and offer explanation for its kind, data points are generated for the plot of the moderation of the relationship between wife's perceived stress and wife's marital satisfaction by wife's social support. This moderation plot is shown in Figure 2 below.



It is evident from Figure 2, that for wives with low social support there is no relationship between wives' perceived stress and wives' marital satisfaction as the average value or scores on marital satisfaction remain the same across the three levels of perceived stress. But as social support increases among wives, the negative relationship between wives' perceived stress and wives' marital satisfaction begins to emerge. Therefore, the negative relationship that is existent between wives' perceived stress and wives' marital satisfaction is only evident among wives with high and sufficient social support. That is, this relationship is conditioned on social support. This is the moderation effect that social support has on wives' perceived stress and wives' marital satisfaction.

## **Discussion**

The study examined several hypotheses about factors influencing marital satisfaction among military wives, particularly in relation to deployment length, perceived stress, and social support.

The first hypothesis posited that a husband's cumulative deployment length would predict marital satisfaction among military wives. The findings supported this hypothesis, showing a positive relationship: the longer the husband's deployment, the higher the marital satisfaction reported by wives. This result disagrees with findings of earlier research, such as Olowu & Alabi (2022), which found that longer deployment durations were associated with increased stress and marital dissatisfaction among Nigerian military wives. Prolonged separations were found to exacerbate marital strain.

However, the findings of this study are consistent with the Double ABCX Model of Family Adjustment and Adaptation by McCubbin and Patterson (1983). According to this model, families undergo stressors (such as deployment) that require adaptation and coping strategies. The initial stressor may be exacerbated or mitigated by other variables, such as communication, social support, and individual coping mechanisms. Longer deployments could lead to increased adaptation and bonding, possibly resulting in a more positive perception of marital satisfaction over time. While the model typically suggests that deployment-related stress tends to negatively impact marital satisfaction, it also acknowledges the potential for couples to develop coping strategies that can improve relationship quality. Longer deployments could enable couples to build stronger communication and emotional resilience, potentially leading to greater marital satisfaction as they learn to navigate long periods of separation.

Similarly, a study by Lester et al. (2010) on family-related factors and the adjustment of children of deployed soldiers found that, although shorter deployments were associated with higher levels of marital satisfaction due to fewer periods of separation, longer deployments (especially those lasting 6-12 months and above) led to improved marital satisfaction in some couples. Lester argues that during extended deployments, spouses often develop a sense of independence and self-

efficacy, which can, in turn, lead to increased marital satisfaction upon reuniting, particularly if the couple has built effective communication and coping strategies during the absence.

The second hypothesis tested showed that perceived stress predicted significantly marital satisfaction among wives of military personnel. This finding is supported by other studies. The study by Zeb et al., (2022) report that among a sample of Pakistani couples, there was observed a significant negative relationship perceived stress and marital satisfaction as well as well-being. According to the study these were more pronounced among military than civilian spouses.

Similarly, a study carried out by Olapegba et al. (2020) and reported significant family/marital strain among spouses of military personnel as a result of military roles. High stress levels, particularly those related to the husband's deployment and communication gaps, have been found to significantly increase the strain in family life thus reducing marital satisfaction. Qualitative findings from interviews also supported these results, revealing that stress from managing household duties alone and emotional strain from worrying about the spouse's safety are major contributors to marital dissatisfaction. Furthermore, in line with this result Carter and Renshaw (2015) noted that another challenge military wives face during a deployment is the concern about how their own actions and behaviours will affect their spouse serving in a combat zone. This can amplify their existing stress.

The third hypothesis examined the moderating effect of social support on the relationship between deployment length and marital satisfaction. The study's findings supported this hypothesis, showing that social support significantly moderated the relationship between deployment duration and marital satisfaction. Specifically, higher levels of social support were associated with less negative impact from long deployments on marital satisfaction. These results align with Vest et al., (2017); Abbas et al., (2019) that support the role of social support helping to buffer the negative effects of stress such as deployments on marital satisfaction. Military wives with strong social support networks experienced less marital dissatisfaction despite the challenges posed by prolonged deployments.



Finally, the fourth hypothesis suggested that social support would moderate the relationship between perceived stress and marital satisfaction. The results confirmed this hypothesis, with social support acting as a buffer against the negative effects of stress on marital satisfaction. Studies by with Vest et al., (2017); Abbas et al., (2019) reinforce these findings, showing that strong social support networks helped reduce the negative impact of stressors on marital satisfaction. Wives with higher levels of social support experienced less marital dissatisfaction, even in the face of high perceived stress and stressful family situations.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The following limitations are observed in the course of carrying out this study:

1. The study focused on a specific military cantonment, Dalet Cantonment in Kaduna, which may not be representative of all military families in Nigeria or elsewhere. The sample was limited to wives of military personnel in this particular location, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings.
2. The study may not have fully accounted for external factors that could influence marital satisfaction, such as individual differences in coping strategies, financial stress, or pre-existing marital quality and these may be considered in future studies
3. The use of cross-sectional surveys to collect data could be limiting to findings

### **Contribution to knowledge**

The study offers several key insights into the factors influencing marital satisfaction among military wives, particularly in the context of extended deployments and other stressors this unique population may face.

1. The research highlights a critical finding that longer deployments are generally associated with lower marital satisfaction. This contributes to existing knowledge by reinforcing the idea that extended separations, a common aspect of military life, place significant strain on marriages but other factors such as support and adaptation may influence the negative role.

2. A major contribution of the study is its emphasis on the moderating role of social support. The findings indicate that higher levels of perceived social support are linked to greater marital satisfaction, even during long deployments. This insight underscores the importance of effective support systems in mitigating the negative effects of deployment-related stress. The study provides empirical evidence to support the development of tailored support programs for military families, aiming to enhance marital well-being.
3. The research provides valuable context-specific insights, particularly for military families in Dalet Cantonment, Kaduna. By focusing on the unique experiences of this population, the study offers a deeper understanding of how local factors influence marital satisfaction. These findings can inform localized policies and programs tailored to the specific needs of military spouses in Nigeria, making the research more relevant to the target population.

### **Conclusion**

The study reveals important insights into the factors contributing to the role of Cumulative Deployment Length, Perceived Stress and Social Support in Marital Satisfaction among Wives of Military Personnel in the Dalet Cantonment, Kaduna. The study also demonstrated the significant role of Cumulative Deployment Length, Perceived Stress and Social Support in Marital Satisfaction among Wives of Military Personnel, supporting findings from studies conducted outside of this. The study concludes that wives who perceived high levels of stress were low in satisfaction, while those who had longer deployments got adapted and showed higher marital satisfaction than those with shorter deployment experiences. Strong social support served as a buffer to these wives and improved their marital satisfaction, even when their husbands were deployed for extended periods or they faced high levels of stress.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are thus made:

1. Wives of military personnel should actively seek to build and maintain strong personal support networks, including family,

friends, and community groups. Engaging in social activities and fostering relationships can provide emotional and practical support, which is crucial in coping with military life stressors such as deployment.

2. Individuals should focus on developing effective coping and adaptation strategies to manage the stress associated with long deployments. Techniques such as mindfulness, stress management, and maintaining open communication with partners may help mitigate the negative effects of perceived stress.
3. The military should invest in and expand support programs aimed at assisting military families. Programs could include counselling services, family support workshops, and stress management training to help spouses develop resilience to cope with the challenges of deployment.
4. Establish and improve communication channels between deployed personnel and their families. Regular and reliable communication can reduce feelings of isolation and maintain marital connection during deployments.

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