

# Does Having Children Lead to Greater Marital Satisfaction?

Alayna Carter  
Brylee Palmer  
Rubie Rafie  
Tiffany Smith  
Roberts —FLHD 1500

## Arguments FOR

Many factors affect marital satisfaction and having children is not the sole benefactor of achieving this. Having children can potentially make or break a marriage. However, having children can hugely impact feelings of purpose, joy, fulfillment, and ultimately satisfaction within marriage as a whole.

Studies show that while having children can be one of the biggest stressors it is also a major source of joy and love exclusive to couples who take on this noble challenge.

There are ways to navigate the complexity that children bring to a marriage:

- Communication
- Co-parenting (divide and conquer)
- Family alliance
- Resilience
- Flexibility
- Positive Dyadic Coping (common, supportive, delegated)
- Respect
- Perspective taking (someone's shoes)
- Make time to spend time together as a couple
- Plan family activities and do them



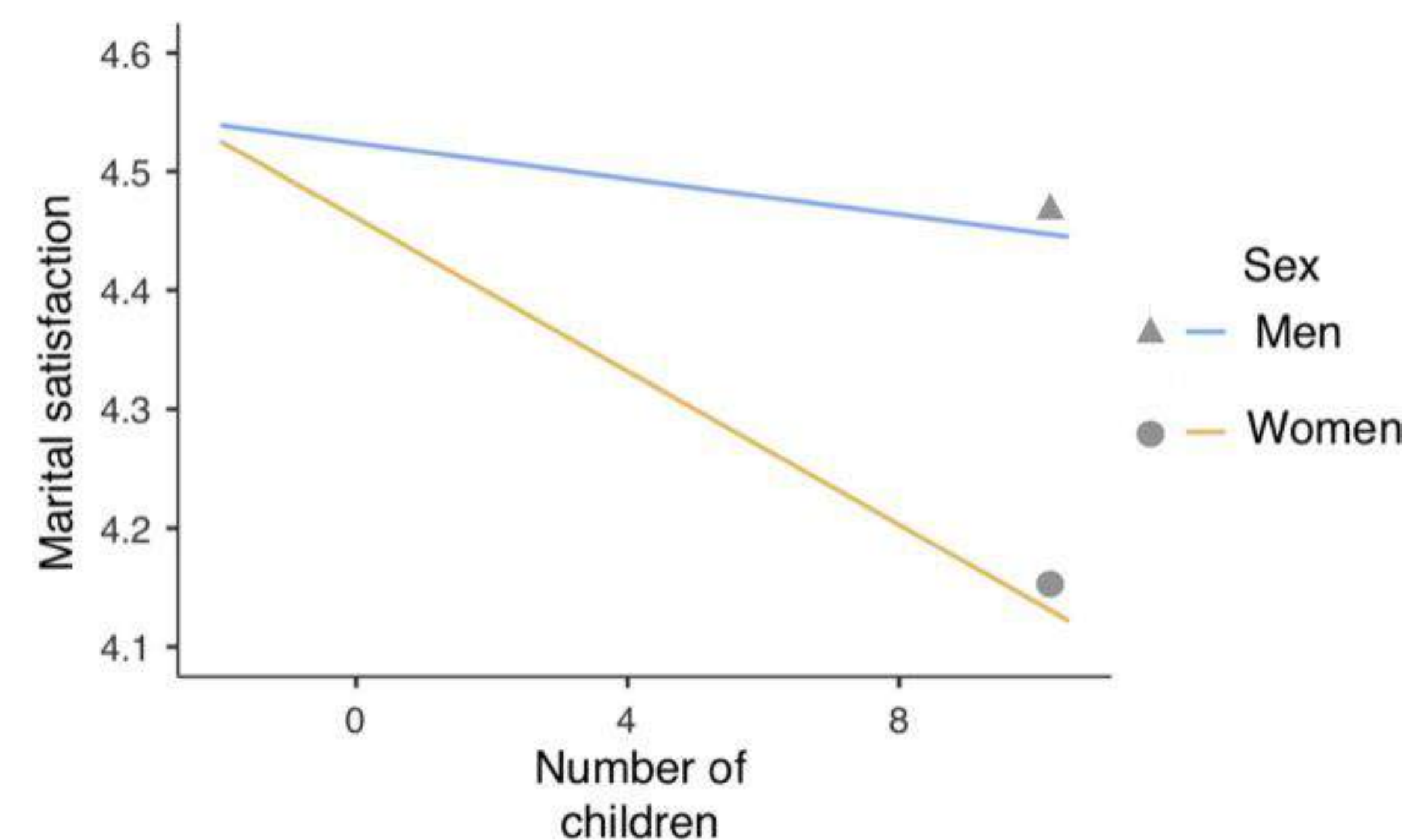
## Arguments AGAINST

- Children and their role in a marriage will never be the leading factor of marital satisfaction
- Mothers of children with developmental delays faced higher rates of depression and lower marital satisfaction
- Difference in gender societal roles, more women do housework over men
- More children = **more** energy and effort couples expend on raising them = **less** time and energy spent on love and support in a relationship
- Crisis theory, acknowledges that expanding the family, expands and introduces stressors as well
- Raising children creates an extra workload and burden: increase stress and decreases marital satisfaction, family cohesion, and affection

Factors which can lead to decreased marital satisfaction once children are involved:

- Reduced quality time
- Increased stress
- Financial strain
- Lack of intimacy
- Uneven workload (gender societal roles)
- Conflicts over parenting decisions
- Unexpected/unplanned disabilities

This graph highlights the differences with gender, and how a seemingly simple factor can have a huge effect.



## Opinion

- Marriage is complex and ever changing
- There are many contributing factors to marital bliss:
  - Age
  - Number of children
  - Occupation
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Education
  - Household income
- Children have the potential of bringing a couple closer
- There is also the potential that having children will increase the strain on a relationship
- There is no single factor to marital satisfaction or marital struggle, there multiple factors that the benefit or disintegrate a marriage based on a number of circumstances
- A married couple cannot rely on a child to resuscitate a dying relationship, however, based on many factors that have been listed, having children does have the potential of increasing marital satisfaction



## Conclusions

Ultimately, having children does not directly correlate with greater marital satisfaction. There are various contributing and confounding variables that play a role in how happy and satisfied or how stressed and miserable a couple is.

Some of the factors that contribute to a fulfilling and joyful marriage include:

- Dyadic coping mechanisms
- Communication
- Co-parenting

Contrary factors that lead to stressful and strenuous marriages include:

- Co-rumination
- Gender Equality
- Developmental Delays

Although all these factors play a part in overall marital satisfaction, how the parents react and deal within these various situations ultimately decides how satisfied a couple will be within their marriage.

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