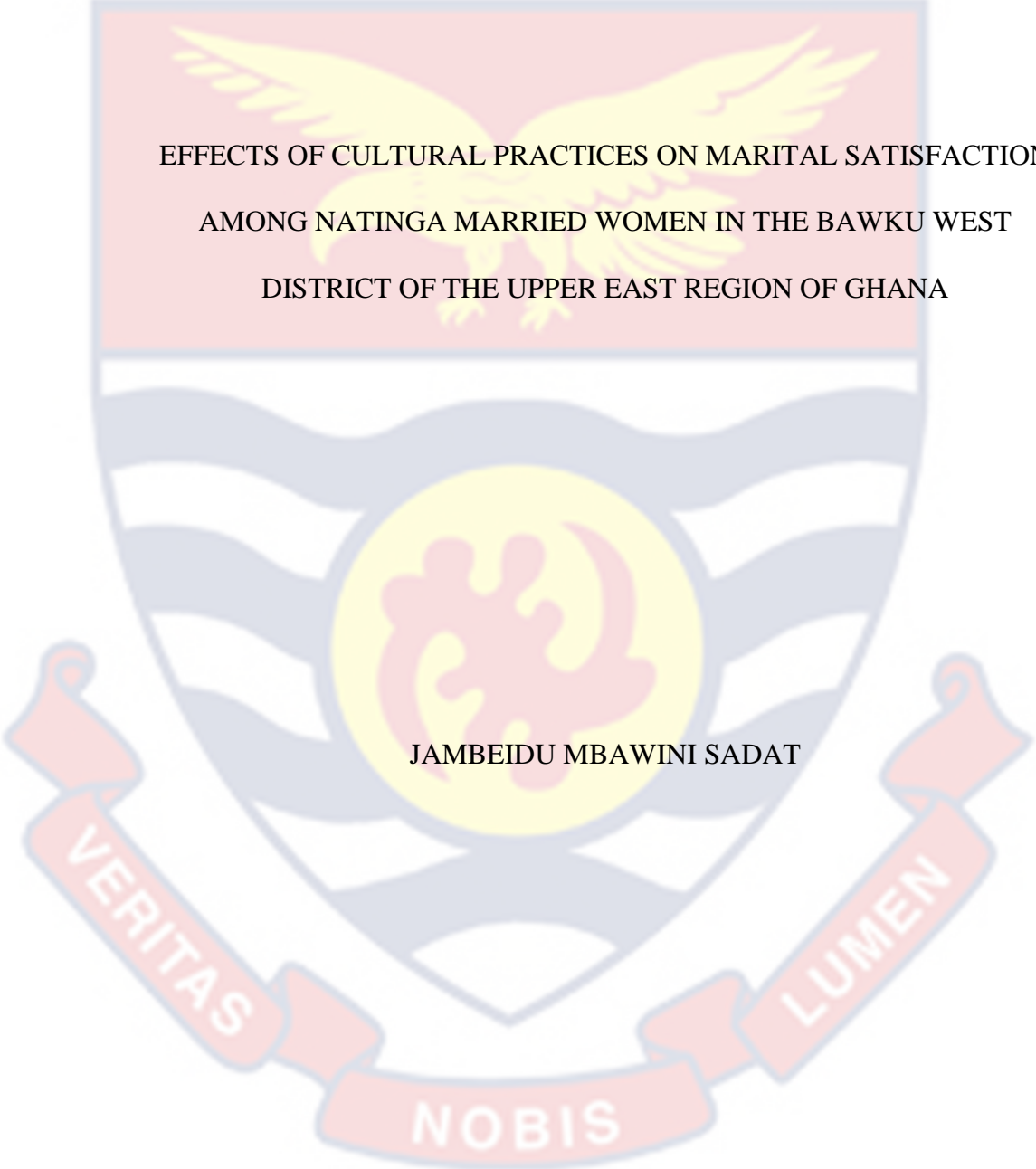


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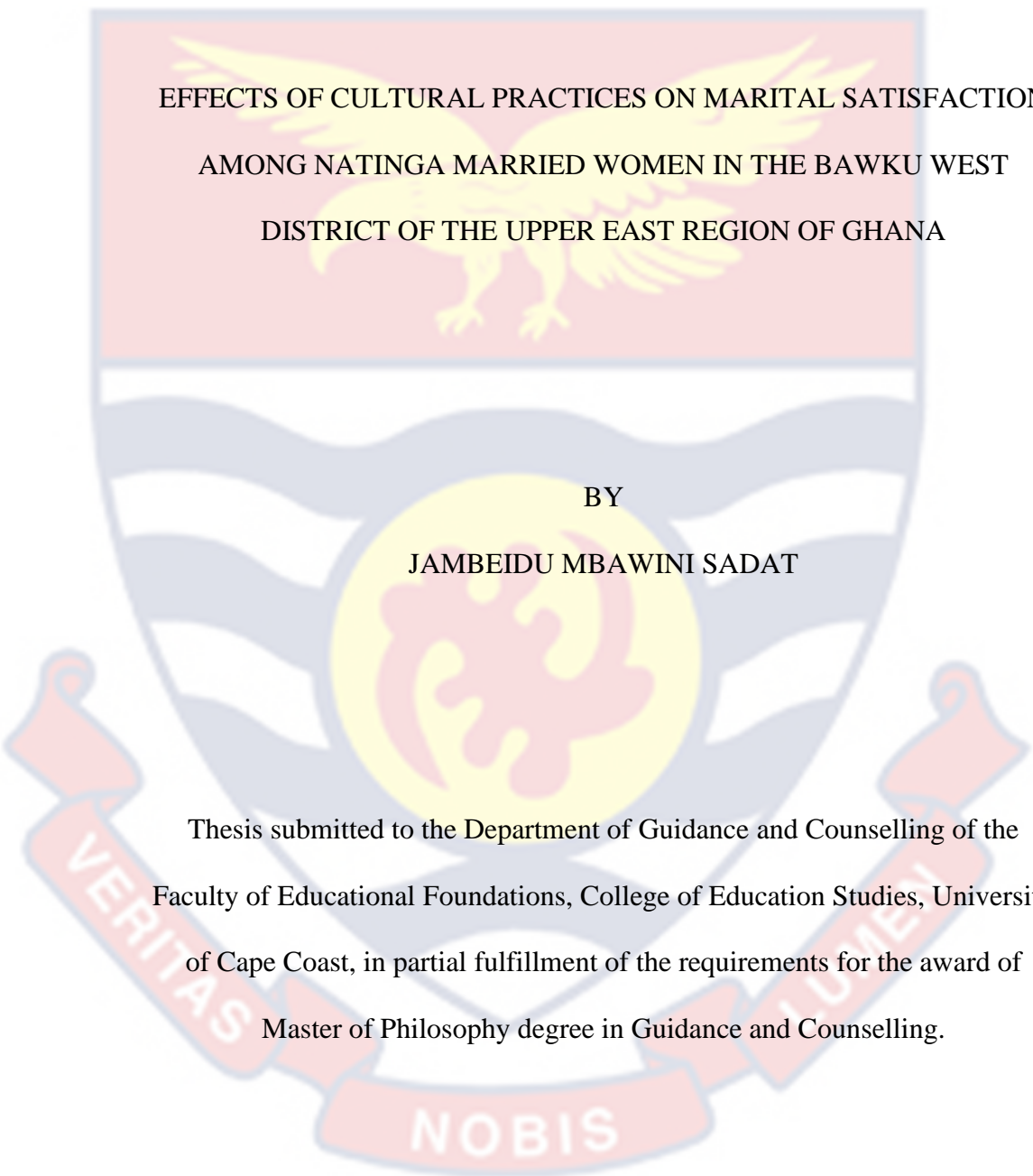


EFFECTS OF CULTURAL PRACTICES ON MARITAL SATISFACTION  
AMONG NATINGA MARRIED WOMEN IN THE BAWKU WEST  
DISTRICT OF THE UPPER EAST REGION OF GHANA

JAMBEIDU MBAWINI SADAT

2022

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The background of the page features a large, faint watermark of the University of Cape Coast crest. The crest is a shield with a red top section containing a yellow eagle with wings spread. Below the eagle are three wavy blue and white horizontal stripes. In the center of the shield is a yellow circle containing a red stylized figure. At the bottom of the shield is a red banner with the Latin motto 'NOBIS' in white capital letters. Two red banners extend from the sides of the shield, with the word 'VERITAS' on the left and 'ALUMEN' on the right.

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BY

JAMBEIDU MBAWINI SADAT

Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the  
Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University  
of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of  
Master of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling.

JULY 2022

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

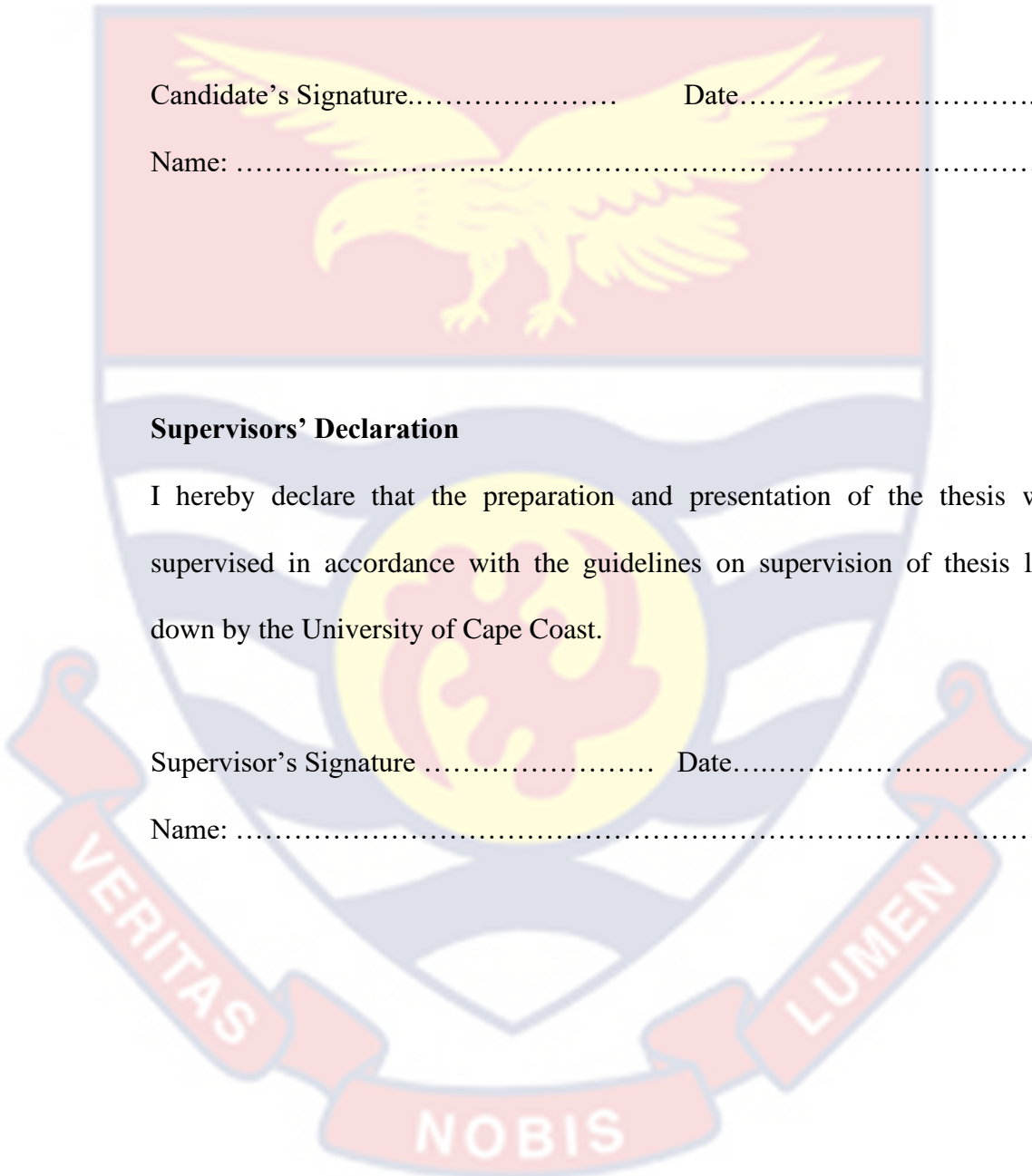
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### Supervisors' Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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Name: .....



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the effects of cultural practices on marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region of Ghana. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach for the study and used a descriptive phenomenological research design for the study. The researcher used purposive sampling technique to get the sample size. The researcher used an interview guide for the collection of the data and a thematic approach was used for the analysis of the data. The findings of the study indicated that majority of the married women in Natinga are not satisfied with their marriage due to bad cultural practices in the community. It was recommended that chiefs, opinion leaders and the government should have a consultative discussion and try and amend the cultural practices in Natinga to enhance marital satisfaction of the women. Finally, it was also recommended that men should be educated on marital issues in order to prevent the abuse of women.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Stephen Doh Fia whose great efforts have crowned this thesis with success. My appreciation and affection go to my parents and sons for their support. I would also like to thank my siblings for their encouragement. Finally, my heartfelt gratitude goes to all well-wishers and those who helped me in diverse ways for the success of this work.



## DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my Family.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Although there is a lengthy history of studies on marital satisfaction, the persistently high divorce rates show that less is understood about how to reach and preserve a high enough level of marital happiness to ensure marital success (Dabone, 2012). Many researchers have conducted studies on marital satisfaction including Dabone (2014), who conducted research on the impact of age on married individuals' marital satisfaction in the Sunyani Municipality.

Bradbury, Fincham, and Beach's (2000) study on the nature and causes of marital gratification. These researchers did not focus much on how some cultural practices affect marriage and for that matter this study will identify some of the cultural practices that affect marital satisfaction of Natinga married women in the Bawku West District of the Upper East region and how to control such practices.

#### **Background to the Study**

Without a healthy marriage between a man and a woman, life and generation cannot really be propagated. This connection ensures not just the couple's blissful union but also the continuation of the human species through reproduction and financial support. In essence, the married institution is necessary for the steadiness and continuity of the social order as well as the necessary fulfillment and individual success. Therefore, after a person reaches a specific age as determined by that society's conventions, many societies around the world view marriage as a very desired and important aspect of life (Myers, Madathil & Tingle, 2005).

The strongest relationship in terms of influencing people's behavior is marriage. Men and women want to be together through marriage for a variety of reasons, including political, social, cultural, economic, and religious considerations. Because they are the result of human creativity, feelings, and intentions that are passed down from generation to generation, cultural variables have unique qualities. A nation's history and traditions are vital components of that nation because they serve to distinguish its residents as a separate group of people (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Belich, 2003; Lentz, 2000; Poll, 2010). Traditions, history, cultural practices, and the evidence they produce come together to establish the nation's national heritage and its future memory (Mulligan & Schultz, 2002). Therefore, nations must create national strategies to get rid of cultural customs that interfere with marriage.

The culture and traditions of Ghana as they exist today are the consequence of a diverse range of customs that have been influenced by a long history of Islamic and European contact. The first book to succinctly present an up-to-date narrative on the most important components of the established cultural life and institutions as well as the most recent changes in the cultural landscape is *Culture and Customs of Ghana*. Ghana aims to cultivate the African personality's concept, as well as restore, maintain, and promote Ghanaian traditions and incorporate them into social and political institutions (Salm & Falola, 2002).

Ghanaians understand their place in relation to the rest of the world and work to adapt to the pressures of globalization. Ghana's colorful and adaptable people are expertly covered in *Culture and Customs of Ghana*, including information on their religions, music, and dance (Salm & Falola,

2002). The purpose of this study is to investigate how cultural traditions in the Zebilla district of the Upper East Region affect Natinga women's marital satisfaction.

One of the most common institutions among people is marriage. Numerous sociologists concur that marriage has always existed in human civilization, despite the fact that it can only be historically dated back some thousand years (Janetius, 2019). Traditionally, marriage and family life are centered on one of five types of man-woman partnerships. They are monogamy, polyandry, group marriage, polygyny, and promiscuity.

Marriage has traditionally been viewed as a lifetime commitment between two people, for better or worse. Socially, starting a family is only possible through marriage (Nadia, 2010). This hypothesis is supported by studies showing that married people live longer than divorced and never-married people (Sarafino, 2002).

Therefore, it is clear that marriage serves as a moral defense, a social necessity, and a savior for the family, which is the cornerstone of any society (Nadia, 2010). To increase marital contentment, all communities strive to decry and suppress factors that minimize the value of marriage (Nadia, 2010). In this study, Natinga women from the Bawku West district in Ghana's Upper East will have their marriage satisfaction examined in relation to cultural customs. Every town or tribe has its own culture, and every marriage incorporates this culture. However, the majority of these cultures have detrimental effects on marriage that lower marital satisfaction among couples.

According to research, stable, happy marriages are linked to longer lifespans and better health (Karren, Hafen, Smith, & Frandsen, 2002). Also,

divorced people also have lower subjective well-being and life satisfaction than married people, particularly if they do not remarry (Evans & Kelley 2004). Additionally, according to recent estimates, roughly 50% of marriages in the United States will result in divorce or separation (Kreider & Fields, 2002). Researchers addressing this societal issue have given marital contentment more consideration. On the other hand, married Natinga females in the Bawku West District of the Upper East area have not given any thought to this matter. The rising divorce rate among the Natinga population may be influenced by certain cultural and socioeconomic situations in Natinga.

The perceived quality of partners' interactions influences marital pleasure. The degree of marital satisfaction is influenced by a couple's relationship contentment, their views about their relationships, and their attitudes and perceptions about marriage in general (Harway, 2005; Holman, 2002; Nichols, 2005). Couples with high levels of mutual marriage satisfaction also have lower levels of stress, greater levels of life satisfaction, and more levels of resolution to deal with challenging circumstances (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000; Holman, 2002).

Particularly during the 1990s, the research projects conducted by many scientists from various schools have garnered interest. Numerous research have been undertaken recently to identify the fundamental elements of the concept of marital satisfaction (Bradbury, Fincham, & Beach, 2000).

Numerous elements have been suggested in the literature as potential influencers on marital satisfaction. Some of the factors influencing marital pleasure include spouse education, dual working, husband fiscal position, sexual relationship, self-perception, division of household duties, and

spending time together. Other elements include culture, spousal support, and in-law relationship.

A couple should enjoy each other in terms of the quantity and quality of their leisure time together (Crawford, Houts, Huston, & George, 2002).

According to research, couples that partake in comparable hobbies are more amicable and produce sentiments of contentment with one another (Crawford, et al., 2002). In contrast to couples that do not have these features, Gaunt (2006) found that couples who share similar personality traits and values report higher levels of marital happiness. In the Bawku West District of the Upper East, this study analyzes how cultural traditions affect married Natinga women's marital pleasure.

### **Statement of the Problem**

African nations like Ghana also experience marital issues that impair marital satisfaction (Agyemang, Agyemang, & Sekyi, 2020). This study aims to identify the cultural practices associated with married women that contribute to decreased marital satisfaction. The rights and obligations of men and women are prescribed by the laws, rules, practices, and beliefs of society, however some of these norms leave the women dissatisfied in the marriage (www.Britannica.com, 2021).

Research on the relationship among romantic attachment style and marital satisfaction among newlywed couples was done in America by Haseley (2006). Adonu (2005) also examined psychological factors of marriage satisfaction in cultural contexts from Ghana and Britain.

Marital happiness is not a recent research issue; in addition to the few forms of research conducted in other countries that were mentioned earlier,



Ghanaian scholars have also looked into this topic. Ahene (2010), for instance, examined the marital satisfaction of spouses in Cape Coast Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations in a case study. Similar research was conducted by Ackumey (2011) on the influence of dispute resolution on marital satisfaction among couples in Duakor, Cape Coast, Ghana. However, I would like to concentrate my attention on how cultural practices affect Natinga married women in the Bawku West area of the Upper East Region of Ghana in terms of marital pleasure.

Due to several cultural customs, the majority of Natinga's married women experience unhappy marriages (Bawku West Social Welfare Survey, 2020). These cultural customs include the confinement of women to the kitchen, the requirement of four cows as dowry, which some men cannot afford, the view of women as slaves to their husbands, the exclusion of women from family decision-making, and the men's control over the women's property, to name a few. This study aims to investigate how these cultural behaviors affect Natinga married women's marital satisfaction in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how cultural practices affect marital satisfaction among married women in Natinga in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region. In particular, the study aimed to:

1. Identify the cultural practices of the Natinga people regarding marriage in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.

2. Examine the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.
3. To assess the effects of the cultural practices on marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.
4. To identify strategies that could amend the cultural practices that affect marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the cultural practices of the Natinga people on marriage in the Bawku West District of the Upper East region?
2. What are the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women of Bawku West District of the Upper East region?
3. What are the effects of the cultural practices on the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region?
4. What strategies are employed to manage the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

### **Significance of the Study**

The outcome of this study would be of immense importance to the people of Natinga; especially the married women whose marital satisfaction is affected by the cultural practices. This research would also enable the

traditional Leaders in Natinga to amend some of the cultural practices to favour married women who are not satisfied in their marriages.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations, such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection, National Council for Women and Development, Ghana Association of Women Lawyers, The Department of Social Welfare, Marriage Counselors, and Religious Organizations, will benefit from the findings of this study in order to be guided in how to handle issues relating to marital satisfaction. The study will assist these organizations in developing sound policies that will result in the accomplishment of their aims and objectives.

All married women who wish to strengthen and preserve their marriages through the advice that this survey will generate will also benefit from the study. The study's conclusions would provide more library resources for students and lecturers, adding to the body of knowledge available in academia. By doing so, additional research might be carried out in other environments.

#### **Delimitations of the study**

Delimitations are the parameters that researchers choose to include in their study (Amoonga,2008). The only cultural behaviors that affect Natinga married women's marital satisfaction in the Bawku West District of the Upper East Region are the topic of this study. This study excluded other districts in Ghana's Upper East Region. This is because the districts in the region have similar characteristics and the outcomes of this readings could be generalize in the region. The researcher used only married women in Natinga.

### Limitations of the study

Some of the restrictions include respondents' negative attitudes, such as their refusal to comply, higher illiteracy rate of some respondents and some respondents needed money before responding to the instrument.

### Definition of Terms

**Marital satisfaction:** the extent to which a person's needs, wants, and expectations are met in their marriage.

**Marriage:** the sexual union that completes a man and woman's formal marriage as husband and wife.

**Culture:** the way of life, particularly the common practices and beliefs, of a specific population at a specific moment.

**Couples:** individuals who are bound together as husband and wife by religious, ordinance, or custom.

**Cultural practices:** Cultural practices are common conceptions of how individuals consistently operate in accordance with a common ideal of a culture.

### Organization of the Study

There were five chapters in the study. The backdrop of the study, the problem statement, the goal of the investigation, specific objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definitions of terminology, and the structure of the study were all included in chapter 1. The study's literature review is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 described the research methodologies and demonstrated how the study will be conducted. The study's findings and discussions were addressed in Chapter 4, and the

summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, and ideas for additional research are presented in Chapter5.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study is to investigate how cultural practices affect marital satisfaction among married Natinga women in the Upper East's Bawku West District. A review of related literature on the conceptual review, theoretical review, and empirical review is provided in this chapter.

#### **Theoretical Review**

Different theorists have put out a variety of theories to explain the concept of marital satisfaction. In this study, several of these theories have been reviewed. The System Theory, Exchange theory, and communication theory.

#### **Systems Theory**

Von Bertalanfy introduced the System theory in 1968. One technique to evaluate how a system's relationships and interactions contribute to the accomplishment of a goal is through the use of systems theory (Rivera, 2020). Systems theory is sometimes described as an interdisciplinary approach that has spawned applications in a variety of sectors, such as management, ecology, engineering, and family therapy (Capra,1996; Heylighen & Joslyn, 2000). This theory's primary objective is to examine the fundamental ideas that underlie how a system works so that they can be used across all academic disciplines (Trop, 2007). The movement's most well-known proponent is Capra, who, in 2002, produced a number of best-selling books that use natural occurrences and ecological dynamics to enhance and broaden our understanding of how systems function. The system theory was created on the foundation that every element in the world, regardless of size or classification,

has a role to play in ensuring that efficiency prevails where needed (Kerzner, 2009).

Price and McKenry, (2009) argued that Systems theory offers a useful framework for researching couples and has paved the way for understanding the impacts of trauma on members of the family, intervention strategies (for drug misuse, domestic abuse, and anger management), and family communication issues. The marriage can be looked as a network of interdependent roles and communication systems. The impression of relationship satisfaction in this system decides whether or not it can continue operating in its current form. According to Gibson (2019), systems theory, also referred to as social systems theory, is the study of society as a complex arrangement of elements, such as people and their beliefs, and how they interact with one another. Systems theory is a way of looking at the world where people are interconnected (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Understanding the behavior of intricately organized systems, such as marriage, is beneficial.

Couple bonding is one of these factors influenced by couple leisure, and it can affect gratification in two different ways. First, shared interests and activities enforce boundaries in a partnership. One of the more significant forces starting and sustaining boundaries in the coupled system may be shared interests and activities. Second, by putting couples in settings where they are learning to enjoy things together, couple leisure activities help to establish collective interest and identity (Fincham, Beach & Kemp-Fincham, 1997). There must first be standards to follow for evaluation in order to more accurately gauge and comprehend the level of pleasure spouses feel with their

relationship. An increased appreciating of how and why the relationship's system works, as well as the best ways to handle issues like communication, growth, adaptation, setting boundaries, rules, setting goals, and interacting with each other, result from recognizing that the marriage is a system and adopting a systems perspective.

This researcher came to the conclusion that system theory is very important in marital satisfaction and helps to know stages in every element of the marriage by comparing and contrasting the opinions offered by the many researchers. According to the researcher, system theory is crucial to marital pleasure because it helps couples identify and enhance their interactions, communication, and amount of love for one another as well as their views about their roles in the marriage and level of commitment to them. This study will help couples implement the system theory in their marriages, increasing marital pleasure.

### **Exchange Theory**

The Exchange Theory was introduced by George Homans in the 1950s. The theory examines the cost-benefit calculations humans conduct before making decisions. In a marriage, both spouses consider the advantages and disadvantages of their decisions. There is satisfaction if the acts are beneficial, but unhappiness if they are perceived as costs. Exchange Theory offers great promise for the current investigation for a number of reasons. First off, the Theory is particularly helpful when examining dyads. Exchange Theory is a suitable viewpoint because the data in the show readings are specifically relevant to married dyads.



The emphasis on individual perceptions in Exchange Theory is another advantageous feature. According to Addis and Bernard (2002), who emphasized a relativistic approach, a married partnership is successful if the assistances to both couples outweigh the costs and are ideal to all other options. She uses the following quote to demonstrate her point: "If A & B do not get along, they irritate one another; the consequences of staying married are enormous frustration and loneliness. But the benefits are substantial since they may jointly finance a beautiful home, enjoy high social standing in the community, shield their kids from controversy, and enjoy the blessing of the church. This notion states that fulfilling a marriage requires meeting the wants of both spouses. In such a marriage, meeting needs comes first and foremost on the minds of the spouses. In general, a person's exposure to psychological, societal, and religious influences shapes how well their needs are met (Eshelman, 2011, p. 449).

According to the exchange theory, trust and dependency play important roles in relationships, and decision-making is a process that follows trust. Couples can discuss the expenses and benefits of their activities that are acceptable to both of them in order to make sure that neither spouse is being taken advantage of. Couples decide which activities they will engage in and which ones they will forgo based on their shared analysis. According to the satiation principle, rewards diminish in value the more you receive of them. The exchange theory's guiding premise also emphasizes personal perspectives. This is because those who are in relationships take in information and assess it in light of their personal perceptions and experiences.

Couples who live together are less likely to divorce, according to Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001), because of the potential "costs" involved. Shared activities are referred to as a sort of "marital capital" and the act of constructing a combined lifestyle creates a collection of items that are considered as "benefits" of the marriage. This premise of Kalmijn and Bernasco is fundamentally based on the language of exchange theory. The expenses and rewards of adopting a combined lifestyle influence how couples plan their leisure time (Kalmijn & Bernasco, 2001). If investigators are already familiar with the terminology and ideas of exchange theory, then this theory may provide a useful lens through which family scientists can study the connection between leisure and marital pleasure.

According to Ofosu (2016), the benefits of Exchange Theory increase with decreasing number and decrease with increasing number. The advantage to the partner seems to increase if the spouse is viewed favorably by the other, but the cost to that person increases if the other partner believes the marriage has some issues. The researcher deduced that Exchange Theory is significant in marriage and when it is taken into consideration, marital satisfaction will be enhanced. If the plunders of the time and effort invested in marriage are larger than the expenses, then marital pleasure is likely to improve. A couple with a high level of trust gets higher advantages than cost in the marriage.

### **Communications Theory**

According to the communication theory of Bateson, Jackson, Haley, and Weakland (as quoted in Nwoye, 1991), poor communication is one of the key elements in a failing marriage. This idea holds that the issue results from a lack of clarity or the presence of misunderstanding in the communication

network that couples share. Verbal (with words) and nonverbal (with gestures, tone of voice, facial terms, words on paper, visuals, etc.) communication between partners is common. When the verbal and non-verbal contradict each other and transmit conflicting messages, confusion results. For example, a lady who says "I don't mind if you go on a business trip," but who then adopts a hunched posture, a dejected tone of voice, and an unenthusiastic demeanor that suggests despair, actually means "I do not want you to go." When a husband says, "I love you and I like spending time with you," but never comes home, never invites his wife out to dinner, or otherwise fails to express his love and gratitude, the woman receives a conflicting double message. The message received must match the one sent in order for communication to be effective.

When it comes to the message that silence sends, Scanzoni and Scanzoni (2008) contend that being silent instead of trying to solve the issue or engaging in what therapists refer to as "crazy producing behavior" is a sign of animosity and fury. Additionally, a person's body language may send a message that is in conflict with their vocal statement. According to Larson, who was cited by Scanzoni and Scanzoni (2008), marital communication weakens in households when the husband is unemployed. This is true because ladies tend to be too judgmental of their husbands when they are inadequate providers. When this occurs, communication among the spouses erupts and is marked by rage. In the same line, it may be extrapolated that communication between wives and their husbands may worsen when wives (especially those who do not underwrite to the family budget) start to become a drain on the family budget.

Regarding household decision-making, Schandorf and Kwarfo (2010) argued that women typically did not participate in most traditional Ghanaian towns. However, they cited Ainsworth (2005) who contended that women's responsibilities in the allocation of labor and family decision-making were influenced by the caliber of education they acquired. According to Asante (1989), decision-making was also influenced by the spouses' ages and employment level. Asante went on to say that where the husband had a higher occupational position than the woman, decision-making was more likely to be autocratic. Kelly (2014) emphasized that making decisions ought to be a big part of newlyweds' lives from the beginning. He listed the topics and areas where making a decision is required. He has noted that by using decision-making, couples can make plans without worrying or being overly optimistic. The wife and husband hunt for shared tasks and interests that would lay a solid likely foundation for their future happiness during decision-making, which is a give-and-take process.

Every author cited in this section of the discussion has provided evidence that both effective and ineffective communication can strengthen or destroy marriages. To create a harmonious marriage, communication has been defined as decision-making on its part. As was already mentioned, when just one spouse always makes decisions in a marriage that affects the couple as a whole or the marital unit, the disenfranchised spouse is compelled to seek redress by unusual measures, including angrily lashing out. Because no two people can jointly decide on topics without employing one or both types of communication, decision-making and communication are closely related. All of the authors whose work has been cited in this section of the discussion have

provided examples of how both good and bad communication may strengthen or destroy marriages. To create a harmonious marriage, decision-making has been characterized as communication. As was already said, the disenfranchised spouse is required to seek redress through unusual means, such as angrily lashing out, when only one person routinely makes decisions that affect the couple or the marital unit. Since no two people can jointly decide on issues without utilizing one or both of the communication styles, communication and decision-making are strongly intertwined.

Communication is the vehicle through which all other significant aspects of marriage are carried out, yet it is frequently not taken seriously in marriage since many couples tend to believe that its absence does not affect them on a daily basis. Because communication between men and wives is the foundation of every successful, long-lasting marriage, effective communication in marriage will increase marital pleasure. In fact, as it establishes the proper foundation for the relationship, the value of communication should be taken into account even during the wooing phase. The researcher is of the view that, the Communication Theory will help married women in Natinga in the Bawku West district of the Upper East region to develop good strategies in communication in their marriage which will improve their marital satisfaction.

### **Conceptual Review**

This section contains the concept of marital satisfaction and other concepts related to the marital gratification.

## Concept of Marriage

According to the Bible, God created marriage and instituted it. In Genesis 2:18 God declared, "I will make a helper suited for him since it is not desirable for a man to be alone." Marriage is the most significant of all interpersonal association because the majority of people marry at least once in their lifetime (Berscheid & Regan, 2005). Marriage is a social institution that impacts people's lives in addition to being a close personal bond. It is the cornerstone for starting a family in terms of having children and raising them (Ponzetti & Mutch, 2006) due to the legalization of sexual interactions and the promotion of marital loyalty (Rao, 2002; Stutzer & Frey, 2006). Marriage can be defined as a relationship between two people who are not biologically related to one another but who live together and pursue benefits from their relationship, such as sexual satisfaction, love, companionship, etc. They may also use their relationship as a legal way to start a family (Abra, 2001).

In its simplest form, marriage can be defined as the formal joining of a man and a woman as husband and wife. Marriage, in the opinion of Omari (1989), entails the union of a man and a woman in order to start a family and satisfy the need for security, long-lasting love, and companionship. It is a partnership in which two individuals of the opposing sex agree to live together legally and emotionally, he continued. Marriage as a sacrament, marriage as a contract, and marriage as a covenant are the three main perspectives on the nature of marriage, according to Kostenberger (2004). The idea that marriage is a sacrament comes from Christian tradition. Sacrament, which means mystery in Latin, is the root of the word sacrament. This mystery serves as an illustration of how Christ and the church are one. The dominantly

representational perception of Western culture is that of marriage as a contract. According to the contract viewpoint, marriage is a voluntary bilateral contract that can be made, maintained, and ended at any time (Köstenberger, 2004).

According to the covenantal perspective, marriage is a holy connection among a husband and a wife in the eyes of God. Among evangelical Christians, a covenant marriage is one where the couple makes a lifelong commitment to one another (Cade, 2010). Marriage is increasingly being understood contractually rather than covenantal, according to Worthington, Lerner, and Sharp (2005). Every culture in the world values and strongly approves of marriage as a social institution. Marriage is frequently consummated in an atmosphere of love, happiness, and celebration for the couple, their family, and their friends. Marriage, as a social institution, encourages the union of two utterly different people from various socioeconomic backdrop to create a family. Marriage is a partnership where trust is developed over time as dedicated spouses put their personal interests aside for the benefit of their partner and learn how to maintain a positive and open relationship.

Glenn, as cited in Benokraitis (2008), asserts that financial hardship, job loss, and poverty all have a negative impact on a couple's marital happiness. Therefore, getting married does not definitely guarantee that one will be happy than they already are. Benokraitis stated that "marriage itself isn't a miraculous potion that makes us healthier and happy" in reference to marital contentment (p. 300). More significant to a person's health than merely being married or being married is the quality of their marriage. Our emotional

and physical health depend on the quality of our marriage, according to a medical document (quoted in Benokraitis, 2008).

### **Types of Marriage in Ghana**

In Ghana there are three main types of marriage. These are the traditional marriage, civil marriage and religious marriage.

#### **The Traditional or Customary Marriage**

Nukunya (2007) notes that “traditional marriage is the oldest and legal union of a man and a woman or women. It is a durable union in which the man and the woman agree to live together as husband and wife after they have gone through all the procedures recognized by the families of both the man and the woman in the society for such purpose.” Traditional marriage, according to Nukunya (2007), is a social compact that guarantees stability, security, and the survival of the human species while protecting women and children and respecting men.

According to Damankah, who was mentioned by Abrah (2001), traditional marriage is a partnership that the elders treat specially because they consider it to be very important. According to Akinade (1997), it looks to be the most ancient kind among Africans and is also the type that predominates among most people, particularly those who live in villages and small towns. In this kind of union, the husband serves as the head of the home. This implies that he controls the marriage's tempo and trajectory. Only traditional courts have the authority to dissolve traditional marriages.

The practice of planned weddings in the society is largely explained by the fact that traditional marriage, among other things, helps to forge significant ties with other families in the community, according to Amoateng and Heaton



(1989). Such extended families, which are a byproduct of conventional marriage and hold a prominent place in society, were prevalent. The organizational structure of the family scheme will be defined in terms of wholeness, hierarchies, and boundaries, and this understanding will allow us to perceive traditional marriage through the lens of systems theory (Sperry & Carlson, 1991).

### **Types of art Forms and Symbols in Customary Marriages**

Prior to, during, and following traditional marriage ceremonies, many forms and symbols of art are shown, claims Huber (1993). According to him, these art forms could take the form of music, dance, musical instruments, or even specific dance styles that are performed at these rituals. Huber believes that even the dancing style performed by couples, family, and visitors during these celebrations may have a special significance related to the marriage ceremony. The music and dance styles that are displayed during, for example, funerals, child naming ceremonies, and other customary events may be different from those that are displayed during marriage ceremonies. Ashe (2012) demonstrates that marriage ceremonies have been identified in many cultures, notably in Africa, as occasions that give members of the community a chance to showcase their art and culture to the outside world. Ashe (2012) lists dance, music, and body painting as examples of these art forms. However, Ashe includes additional symbols, such as beads, jewelry, sculptures, unique attire, and other artifacts, as some of the fundamentals of traditional marriage presentations in various African contexts. Antubam (1963) claims that married couples participate in customary marriage rites using a variety of objects, including jewelry, rings, beads, necklaces, ceramic items, bowls, vases,

silverware, and footwear. During such traditional marriage rites, drama, dance, and poetry are performed.

### **Religious Marriage in Ghana (Christian and Islamic Marriages)**

Religious marriage in Ghana comprises of the Christian marriage and the Islamic marriage.

#### **Christian Marriage**

According to Abrah (2001), the Christians' view of marriage is founded on the idea of marriage that is held to be God-ordained in the Bible. Marriage in the Christian sense is should be understood as a pledge and not as gladness.(Brown & Brown,1999). The suggestion is that married people shouldn't look for ways to benefit from their union; instead, they should be focused on what each of them can do to help the other or have a selfless attitude toward one another. Christian marriage is also viewed by Kisseme, Megesa, and Shorter (1977) as a covenant among two persons based on the Biblical instruction "and they shall become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). This command means that partners or spouses become "one," which denotes closeness and camaraderie, in a Christian marriage. The type of connection that should exist among a husband and a wife is a Christian marriage, which (Ephesians. 5:22-31) is meant to function like a system with various elements working together to produce a whole.

The following below are the processes or stages of Christian marriage:

The two lovers will first meet and greet their parents. This will enable parental involvement in the marriage. In order to ascertain whether a tie based on blood kinship exists, parents will then research family history. If the lovers are related in any way, the parents will forbid the union, thus there won't be a

wedding. However, even if they are not related, parents can offer them guidance on how to coexist peacefully. After deciding to move in together, a date will be scheduled to meet with the woman's parents to discuss the amount of the dowry and the method of payment. A day is also set for the dowry to be paid (Saira, 2017).

Furthermore, the man and the woman then go through marriage counseling from the church and this is done by the pastor or the priest of the church (Myrick, Green & Crenshaw, 2014). After the marriage counseling, a date is then set for the wedding. During the actual wedding, relatives and friends usually gather in the church to celebrate with the couples. The priest (minister) takes charge during the whole wedding ceremony. For blessings in the marriage, bride's parents and grandparents as well as groom's parents and grandparents will be available to witness the whole ceremony.

Bridesmaids and groomsmen, the maid of honor and best man, the flower girl, and the ring bearer are additional significant individuals. If the ring bearer is not available, the best man can hold the bride's wedding band. The maid of honor will also carry the groom's wedding band in the event that the ring bearer is not there. Wedding vows and exchange of rings are usually done at the directions of the priest/minister and the couple and their parents sign on the marriage book of the church and the marriage certificate. There is also cutting of cake by both couples during the reception (fabweddingsmn.com, 2018).

### **Islamic Marriage**

Islam views marriage as a social requirement because it establishes families as a unit in society. Certain prerequisites must be satisfied for a

marriage to be recognized in Islam. It is necessary to get both parents' approval. A present from the groom to the bride is the payment of the "Mahr" dowry. At the moment of the dowry, there should be two male or female witnesses from each party. The marriage should be announced; never keep it a secret as this breeds distrust and causes problems in the society.

The Prophet claimed that when a man weds, he has completed half of his religious obligations and that the other half will be satisfied once he has developed a fear of Allah. The law of Allah requires a husband to treat his wife fairly, respect her sentiments, and be kind and considerate, especially if he has other wives. He is once more in charge of her upkeep. The authority of the Quran and the Sunnah establishes this privilege. Whether the wife is Muslim or not, wealthy or not, healthy or ill, is irrelevant (Agyemang, Agyemang & Sekyi, 2020). The woman must also be dependable, honest, and faithful. She must not purposefully forego using contraception in an effort to trick her husband. She must prevent anyone from having access to sexual intimacy, which is solely the husband's right (Agyemang, Agyemang & Sekyi 2020). She needs to make herself appealing to her spouse sexually and be receptive to his approaches. Failure can disrupt relationships in marriages and, worse yet, entice a man to cheat on his wife. The man has the right to expect to be obeyed because he is the leader, not because he is superior, since the purpose of obedience in a partnership is to ensure the greatest possible functioning of the family unit. Obedience is contingent and does not imply blind submission: It is only necessary if the wife is asked to do anything that falls under one of the acceptable categories of behavior.

## Civil Marriage

A newspaper announcement and a public ceremony in a church are frequently held prior to a couple becoming legally wed. Notifying family members and close friends of your wedding plans will help you confirm your partners' commitment to one another as well as gather the financial and social resources you need to start your marriage off on the right foot (Knox 1985).

Marriage law is the corpus of legal requirements governing the beginning, duration, and legality of marriages, according to Compton's Encyclopedia (1998). The act of marriage results in a significant change in the couple's legal standing. They assume particular traits and responsibilities toward one another. The couple might be required to reside in the same or close-by homes in various societies. The husband may be expected to offer financial support as well as food, clothing, shelter, and other domestic services including childrearing, cooking, and housework. The rights of marriage may comprise joint property ownership and inheritance, as well as the sole right to have sex with your spouse in a monogamous relationship. The marriage customs and rituals differ as much as the marital laws, according to Compton's encyclopedia. From one culture to another, it differs.

Every civilization, past or show, has had its own conception of marriage, and many have developed rules governing marriage that correspond to those conceptions. Contrary to the Reformation, the Catholic Church's canon law was the only rule governing Christian marriage in Western Europe, and several Roman Catholic Constitutions still heavily rely on it. Historically, the church has viewed marriage as a permanent and sacred union that can only be ended by the passing of one of the spouses. According to this idea of

marriage, husbands and wives are converted into "one flesh" by an act of God. As a result, marriage was changed from a legal arrangement that could be dissolved under Roman law to a sacrament and an occult union of the souls and bodies (web.archive.org, 2019).

According to canon law, consent followed by consummation was considered to have completed the force and mutual consent of both parties. Canon law maintained that marriages between people who had intimate, dissimilar relationships were void (web.archive.org, 2019). The majority of marriage laws in Western countries are derivatives of Roman Catholic canon law, which has been significantly altered by the new social and cultural norms of the modern world. Only monogamous unions are permitted under modern marriage laws, which view marriage as a civil transaction. The legal ability to marry is generally the same around the world, subject to limitations like blood relationships and mental capability.

The prevalent Islamic law in Muslim nations of the Middle East, Asia, and North Africa viewed marriage as a contract for the "legalization of sexual activity and the generation of children." Although polygamy has historically been authorized by Islamic law, it appears to be declining in almost all Muslim nations in recent years (web.archive.org, 2019). Many African countries still allow polygamous marriages, but monogamy is becoming more popular. There are many emerging countries in Africa that differ noticeably from Western countries in that they lack a unified marriage law. Marriage rules are either based on religious doctrine or local customs in a certain area.

In Ghana, being married is both socially and legally required. It is socially reliant since it involves parties other than the pair, such as the man

and woman's families. Because it is viewed as a contract with legal ramifications, it is legally binding. Therefore, there are guidelines governing who may contract for it and how. Brew and Ekuban (1991) add that under customary law, a community's customs and practices govern the obligations and rights deriving from a union.

Olson and DeFrain (2002) stated that there are both good and bad reasons for getting married, and that those who are really in love are frequently unable to be objective in their assessments of their motivations and behaviors. It can be difficult to be sensible and realistic about one's motivations for getting married, but those who do are more likely to have solid marriages. Companionship, affection, and closeness, a supportive partnership, a sexual partnership, and shared motherhood are a few of the beneficial factors. One popular justification for marriage is companionship, which is the sharing of one's life with another person. It makes it possible for couples to enjoy life together. Contrary to popular belief, marriage rarely eliminates loneliness unless both partners are content with their own identities. Love and intimacy: Companionship is a prerequisite for the yearning for love and intimacy.

### **Concept of Marital Satisfaction**

According to the idea of marital pleasure, a couple should enjoy each other in terms of the quantity and value of their leisure time together (Crawford, Houts, Huston, & George, 2002). Marital satisfaction is one's overall and general judgments or attitudes toward the partner and the relationship (Sabatelli, 1988). Again, Kalmijn (1999) made a distinction between stable marriages and happy marriages. He said that whereas marital

gratification is a personal trait that shows how the individual views his or her marriage, marital stability is tied to a quality of the couple.

An attitude of more or lower favorability toward one's own married connection is what is meant by the subjective and multidimensional idea of marital satisfaction, also known as marital quality (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981, p. 537). Marital satisfaction is "a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person," according to the Encyclopedia of Social Psychology (2006, p. 541). This means that couples who see their marriage as having more benefits and fewer costs are happier (Dewall & Baumeister, 2006). As a result, the costs a spouse incurs on their spouse, the less content they are with the benefits of their marriage and the more satisfied they are with their marriage and their spouse.

There has not been a consistent finding on marital pleasure in the middle and later years of marriage. According to Mackey and O'Brien (1999), marital satisfaction is high when a couple first gets married, but it steadily decreases as they become used to their new marital conditions. Similar research has shown that when couples have children, their level of marital happiness drops (Lawrence, Cobb, Rothman, Rothman, & Bradbury, 2008). Couples' tendency to negotiate their responsibilities in real married life and childrearing is the primary factor shown to be the cause of why their marital pleasure tends to deteriorate, leading to numerous difficulties.

Additionally, according to VanLaningham, Johnson, and Amato, married couples do not demonstrate greater marital gratification in later years of marriage (2001). It's important to understand how these variables contribute to the evolution of marital satisfaction over time as well as the factors that now



influence it. Marriage pleasure seems to diminish dramatically on average throughout the first ten years and then continues to decline over the ensuing decades.

One crucial element of one's life satisfaction has been found to be the quality of their marriage (Waite, 1995). According to Holt-Lunstad, Birmingham, and Jones (2008), marital satisfaction can have an impact on both partners' physical and mental health as well as the growth, wellbeing, biological functioning, academic achievement, social skills, and associations of their children (Cummings & Davies, 2010; Hetherington & Kelly, 2002).

### **Concept of Culture**

Culture is a social construct that has been extensively studied across several academic fields. Anthropologists believe the concept to be very complicated and challenging to describe (Erikson, 2009). Culture is difficult to define since there are many different interpretations of what it means; this is true even within the field of anthropology (Brumann, 1999). Because different schools of thought have defined culture in diverse ways, Clark (2006) argues that definitions and descriptions of what constitute culture may alter substantially depending on the theory being employed.

Fox and King (2002) make reference to a study by Kroeber and Kluckhohn from 1952 titled *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. In this study, definitions of culture as used in anthropology and related fields were surveyed, and it was discovered that the concept has hundreds of definitions. The survey uncovered a total of 162 definitions of culture, ranging from conceptual explanations of the idea (using icons, ideals, and representations) to thorough descriptions of the idea (which incorporates

ideas, symbols, social organizations and other dimensions of group life) (Fox & King, 2002). There are also divergent views on whether culture is something that exists in behavior rather than in the human mind (with behavior and artifacts emerging from mental models) (culture viewed as socially transmitted behaviour). Defined differently depending on whether culture is found within an individual (who has the ability to choose and manipulate) or within a social group (which "has" a culture) (Fox & King, 2002).

Despite these differences in how the concept of culture is used and defined, there are some similarities and overlaps among the many definitions. According to conventional definitions, culture is a highly structured, interconnected, and coherent body of beliefs that influence human behavior and are passed down through generations through the process of enculturation (Billington, Strawbridge, Greensides & Fitzsimons, 1991; Crapo, 1995; Fox & King, 2002; Robinson & Howard-Hamilton, 2000). The same authors define enculturation as a process wherein kids pick up their culture's traditions, beliefs, and values. Either a formal information transfer to the younger generation or the younger generation witnessing how the seniors in their culture construct their lives might lead to this learning (Crapo, 1995). People behave as expected in a circumstance as a result of enculturation because they have internalized the norms and values of their particular society (Crapo, 1995).

Socio-cultural theorists contend that culture is a collection of values, customs, and behaviors that are passed down through socialization from one generation to the next (Foster & Louw-Potgieter, 1991; Robinson & Howard-

Hamilton, 2000). According to the study's author, culture is simply the accepted norms and values of a given society. For a variety of reasons, the diverse definitions of culture have drawn criticism.

Fox and King (2002) list a number of objections that have been raised against the use of the concept of culture. The first criticism focuses on the idea that people are homogeneous or distinct from one another as a result of how culture is constructed. Groups are said to have hazy boundaries, making it challenging to define boundaries between them. Additionally, differences exist inside groups, and occasionally these differences might even outweigh those between groups. As a result, it is asserted, we cannot construct boundaries between cultures and rather recognize that culture is dynamic and fluid instead. Brumann (1999) claimed that it is wrong to think of culture as something that suggests boundedness, stability, and coherence because social reality are marked by variety, conflict, and change. According to Eriksen (2009), it is crucial to understand that, even when a group of people share meanings, this does not mean that everyone in that culture is equally knowledgeable and skilled. Instead, it merely implies that individuals who share a culture do so because of their worldview.

The second criticism focuses on the incorrect use of the concept of culture. Erikson (2009) contends that the term of culture appears broad and nebulous and is applied crudely in daily interactions. The use of the term "culture" as a noun has been criticized by other academics. These academics support the word's adjective form. According to Brumann (1999), when the word "culture" is employed as a noun, the concept is transformed into a thing with power. He also contends that when the word is used as an adjective, the

concept is transformed into the world of variances. The adjective form of the cultural concept supports the idea that culture is varied since it recognizes the various boundaries of cultural behaviors. Even in fields like psychology and sociology, the concept of culture is frequently used to refer to something that governs and influences how people behave and interact with one another in society. For instance, Clark & Tiggemann (2006) contend that culture has a significant influence on daily life and that people's behavior is mostly determined by cultural traditions.

The third criticism of the notion of culture is that it is "humanistically" positioned, which has the tendency to be exclusive and judgmental. Examples of phrases that are obviously evaluative are "some persons are more cultured than others" (Barnard & Spencer, 1996; Erikson, 2009). In order to support the existence of several cultures in society and uphold the notion that all cultures are valuable, it is argued that a more pluralistic and relativistic definition of the construct would be more acceptable.

### **The Ghanaian Culture and Marriage**

Africa is home to many different cultures. According to Smithe (2002), there are about 3,000 different ethnic groupings in Africa that speak over 1,000 different languages (Thomas, 2005). The inhabitants of the continent are guided by a rich religious and cultural history that has deep roots in the region (Olupona, 2014)

Since many of Ghana's ethnic and cultural groups are impacted by many cultures, religious beliefs, and ceremonial practices, the country's culture is not imposing or uniform (Gender Policy for Ghana, 2011). However, marriage continues to play a significant role in all tribal societies since it

allows for the continuance of the family. Additionally, the family serves as the major socialization agent, allowing for the internalization of culture (values, beliefs, and worldviews) and the development of later interpersonal behaviors (Goodwin 1999). Ghana generally recognizes three different sorts of unions: weddings under ordinance, marriages under customary law, and marriages between Muslims (Kuenyehia & Aboagye, 2004). While the other two are polygamous unions carried out under the traditional system, the marriages under ordinance are monogamous and associated with the western system. Due to these ethnic differences, patterns of marriage customs in Ghana have come to be representative of nearly all tribal traditions, if not all of them (Adonu, 2005).

In Ghana, two lineages are involved in the marriage ceremony, and the rituals include an exchange of goods (such as drinks, cash, kola, sheep, etc.) and a rousing party to lift the couple's spirits. In both rural and urban settings, these privileges connect the two families together and provide the cornerstone of the marriage's social validity. However, this is not typical of how the western marriage system is portrayed in literature. (Adonu, 2005). However, over the past three decades, marriage and gender roles have significantly changed both globally and in the Ghanaian cultural context (Akotia & Anum, 2012).

The functions of parents and the extended family in choosing spouses and other marriage arrangements have been severely weakened. Once more, adjustments have been made to the roles that partners play in marriage. This can be largely attributed to powerful modernizing factors like technology,

education, religion, and mass media that have profoundly impacted Ghanaian culture (Nukunya, 2003).

Due to these outside influences, Ghanaian society has undergone what is known as cultural hybridization, with a significant shift toward western ideals while retaining some traditional ones. After a conventional marriage, it is becoming more and more popular to obtain extra documentary proof of the union through a church ceremony or a court deed (Adonu, 2005). In practice, achieving monetary goals has taken priority over meeting psychological demands and carrying out marital duties. This is recognized as a sign of impending marital difficulties in Ghana (Klomegah, 1997).

Some of the cultural practices in Natinga have affected the marital satisfaction of their women. According to Bawku West Social Welfare Survey (2020), Some of these practices are as follows:

- ❖ Women do not take part in decision making in their homes.
- ❖ Women are responsible for all house chores.
- ❖ Most women are not allowed to continue their education after marriage.
- ❖ Men can marry additional wife without the consent of the first wife.
- ❖ The men decide the number of children they want.
- ❖ Men have their separate rooms.

#### **Marriage Processes in Natinga, Bawku West District**

Bawku West District is in the Upper East region of Ghana. Majority of the people in the district are Kusasis, Basari and Mossi but most of them are the Kusasis. The people of Bawku West celebrate samanpiid as their festival every year. The following are the processes of contracting marriage in Bawku West district:

Firstly, the man informs his parents about his intention to marry and the lady he wants to marry. The parents then will find out more information about the lady's family; some of the things the man's parent will like to find out will be whether there are curses, sicknesses, social vices etc. in the lady's family. Secondly, when the investigation is done and the man's family is satisfied about the lady's family, they will then proceed to inform the lady's family about their intention.

The lady's family will also do their investigation about the man's family before they agree for their daughter to marry that man. If the girl's family is also okay with the man's family, they will then tell the man's family the things they are expected to bring; the items are usually money, drinks, cola, tobacco, guinea fowls, sheep, clothes, cows and other valuable items for the marriage rituals. A day is then set for the marriage ceremony and on this day, both families will meet and the man's family will present the items to the lady's elders to begin the ceremony according to the culture and also celebrate for a successful marriage. In this stage, the couple receives gifts and wishes from both families.

### **Empirical Review**

This section of the literature review focuses on readings that have an impact on the study's pertinent variables.

### **Studies on Selected Indices of Marital Satisfaction**

In order to examine how marital satisfaction is attained with various aspects of marriage over the course of a marriage, Burr (1970) investigated a randomly selected middle-class sample. With regard to six various components of the marriage connection, he sought to identify the particular

regions of satisfaction. The topics include: how money is managed, how a couple interacts socially, how a spouse handles home duties, companionship in marriage, sexual connection, and the association with the kids.

First off, the study found no significant trends of decreasing scores in any of the six areas of satisfaction, in contrast to the hypothesised finding that satisfaction decreases from the early stages of family life to the later stages. In fact, several of them actually tended to rise over most of the life cycle. Contrary to what is commonly believed, these results imply that as marriages get older, the conditions that once made the partners happy still make them happy indeed, Burr (1970) found that as marriages get older, the conditions that made the partners happy in the beginning still make them happier than they were before. Additionally, it was found that the notion that the pre-launching stage of the family life cycle was the most challenging one was unfounded. According to the findings, the years spent in school were more often linked to difficulty (Burr, 1970).

Perry (2016) aims to clarify whether having a spiritually devoted spouse increases marital happiness. According to Perry, a small majority of earlier studies came to the conclusion that having a religious partner benefit both men and women, however women benefit more. Men profit from all marriages, regardless of their quality, whereas women benefit from high-quality marriages, according to explanations given. Thus, the authors estimate that returns to marital quality will be bigger for women than for men as a spouse's religious engagement increases. The authors find that having a strong religious commitment often enhances marital quality using data analysis techniques including OLS and logistical regressions. The 12 authors conclude



that respondents with a more religious spouse have more positive interactions with their spouse, such as tenderness, praises, and deeds of kindness, as well as a decrease in insults or harsh criticism; overall, religion led to happier spouses. Finally, it is discovered that women are more likely than men to benefit from a companion who practices their religion.

Danso (1997) found that the success of marriage was guaranteed by egalitarian rather than patriarchal marital relations in his study "Marital Instability and Divorce in a Typical Akim Kotoku Village." Other factors that contributed to stable marriages included satisfaction with the level of affection shown and confidence in the other spouse's affection. The expression of love or affection, according to Korson (1969), is treated relatively subtly among Muslim couples or even those who are engaged to be married. In a Muslim society in Pakistan, Korson studied how college students felt about choosing their partners. Graduate students without spouses from the Universities of Punjab in Lahore and Karachi were used in the study. The fact that the students' attitude toward choosing partners was well known and fascinating was that the word "love" was taboo. This is due to the fact that, according to Pakistani custom, "the requirements for a successful marriage are not necessarily friendship and love, but fertility, permanence, and the union of the two-family groupings." This data supports the claim that Muslims do not view "love" as a prerequisite for marriage.

An important step has been made in appreciating the connection amid communication and conflict in marital relationships by Rausch, Barry, Herfel, and Swain (1975). In their study, each couple was given four conflict situations that ranged in intensity, and each was recorded so that each conflict

encounter could be categorized and evaluated. The study provides both a quantitative analysis and a qualitative overall sense of the relationship between conflict and communication. The authors discovered that husbands and spouses engage in remarkably similar ways while addressing conflict. The study was utilized by the authors to make a compelling case that social roles and other people's expectations are also important factors of human behavior, in addition to the circumstances that initially sparked it. They contended that different situations call for various responses to the same message. These talks have moved into the area of role prospects and role performance as a result of Rausch et al's (1975) conclusion assertion that social roles and prospects of others lead to conflict.

To find out how sex role norms and economic issues affect the marital solidarity of black and white couples, Scanzoni (1979) studied these couples. A probability selection of responders was made. According to his research, when white husbands and wives were compared on measures of sex role norms, self-concept, and task performance rating of wives, blacks appeared as more egalitarian on the more creative and behavioral sex role measures. But when it comes to neo-traditional and more ideological sex role characteristics, blacks are less egalitarian.

Again, when it comes to task performance, black women are rated more favorably than white wives. The conclusion expressed by Scanzoni in the theoretical portion of this review that lower-status couples are familiar to more gender-role distinction is supported by Scanzoni's (1979) findings on sex role norms. The research mentioned above have demonstrated that a multitude of factors, rather than just one, affect how happy a couple is in their marriage.

For instance, while one study examined the influence of roles, decision-making, love, etc., other studies also took into account matters like financing and customs in the couple's community.

### **Influence of Religion and Marital Satisfaction**

Marriage pleasure is significantly influenced by one's religion. According to (Lukoff, Lu & Turner, 1995), religion is the allegiance to the teachings or customs of a church or other institution. His sixty-year study of family research on Cultural issues in the assessment and treatment of religious and spiritual disorders divided the literature on the effect of religion on marital satisfaction. Jenkins (1991), who conducted a study on "Belief and behavior," discovered that strong religiosity and increasing church attendance boosted marital satisfaction. Does religion still matter in marriage today? There is no connection between religiosity and marital satisfaction, according to research done by Booth, Johnson, Branaman, and Sica in 1995.

Although higher levels of individual religiosity and religious homogeneity have been linked to better marital adjustment and satisfaction, this reading area needed conceptual advances (Thomas & Cornwall, 1990). According to Heaton's (2002) research, religiously inclined couples who practiced their preferred religions were happier in their relationships than nonreligious couples.

In their study of the causes of stability and contentment in long-married couples, Bachand & Caron (2001) discovered that both support and religious agreement played a role. In this study, 36% of the married couples believed that religion was a good thing, 26% claimed that religion had a direct effect on their marriage, and 36% claimed that religion had little to no bearing

on their level of marital happiness. Brooks (2006) found that religion was the sixth most frequently cited factor that contributed to long-lasting and fulfilling marriage relationships in a study of eleven qualitative studies on marital satisfaction. The study examined elements that support long-term African American marriages' satisfaction and resiliency.

Five indices of religion were connected with five markers of marital satisfaction in Booth, Johnson, Branaman, and Sica, (1995) study. All five of the religiousness characteristics were shown to have a substantial impact on one measure of marital satisfaction (divorce propensity), but none of the other measures were altered. Additionally, they discovered that religion was impacted by the interaction and happiness markers of marital satisfaction. Additionally, they discovered one gender-specific difference: Marital interaction only had a favorable impact on men's prayer. There were no other gender differences in any way. Overall, they came to the conclusion that any rise in religion results in a strengthening of the marriage. They acknowledge that fundamentalism and religiosity of the parties involved in a marriage are important considerations.

Specifically, within Catholic and conservative Protestant communities, Heaton & Albrecht (1991) showed that religious values function as obstacles to marriage dissolution, encouraging spouses to address their issues as a healthy alternative to divorce. To continue the Ghanaian example, Acheampong & Heaton's (1989) study on the sociodemographic correlates of the date of marital breakup in Ghana revealed a similar rise in divorce rates in Ghana. However, they cited Akinade (2010), who conducted research on moving toward a satisfying marriage. An approach used by a marital

counseling counselor revealed that protestant couples were more likely to divorce than Catholic ones, who were much less likely to do so. These research on religion and divorce rates revealed that when various religions (such as Christians, Muslims, and traditionalists) were compared, there were no appreciable differences in the divorce rate. Can it be concluded from these research that the factors that influence marital pleasure across these various religions are similar? Can it be assumed that given marital discontent is the main reason for divorce, the level of satisfaction that each of them would have would not differ statistically? I believe that there would undoubtedly be some differences, but would they be substantial? (Akinade,2010)

### **Culture and Marital Satisfaction**

Culture has a significant impact on marriage which can influence marital satisfaction. People who get married create a social contract that takes on various shapes in various countries depending on the acceptable ways of life in those society. In light of this, culture is crucial since it affects how weddings are arranged in various societies (Mkandawire & Daka, 2018). The majority of researchers (Broman, 2002; Nakamatsu, 2005; Toth & Kimmelmeier, 2009) have attempted to pinpoint the root causes of the global lack of marital pleasure. According to Broman's research from 2002, some cultural groups' cultural values have an impact on marital satisfaction while others do not. Sometimes it might be challenging to negotiate cultural values because they normally take years to integrate into a system of rules and guidelines for each individual.

Marriage relationships are also greatly impacted by culturally determined norms, behaviors, and expectations (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu,

& Tatla, 2004). The extent to which culturally imposed expectations and obligations are met in a marriage largely determines how satisfied a person is with their spouse. The requirements for a happy marriage might vary greatly and may be based on a particular set of culturally imposed conventions, beliefs, and obligations (Myers, Madathil & Tingle 2005). Therefore, it is essential to comprehend how cultural circumstances might influence the power and quantity of marital pleasure both directly and indirectly through certain psychological components (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

One of the most important decisions in a person's life, choosing a spouse is the first step in marriage (Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2006). The methods, technique, laws, and standards for choosing a spouse differ primarily from one community and culture to another. Sometimes people choose their partners on their own, while other times partners are chosen for them by other people, such as family or friends. The Natinga culture has an impact on married Natinga women's marital satisfaction, which could result in divorces. The women in the family are not permitted to participate in important choices, they are treated as slaves by their husbands, and they are only permitted in the kitchen, among other things.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

The theoretical Review, the conceptual review, and the empirical review were the three primary categories under which the literature in this chapter was reviewed. In the theoretical review, theories including the System theory, Exchange theory and the Communication theory were taken into consideration as they relate to marital satisfaction. The conceptual review

examined various marriage concepts, Ghanaian marriage kinds, concepts of marital fulfillment, and concepts of culture.

The processes of contracting marriage in Natinga in the Bawku West district of the Upper East region, according to Ghanaian culture. A review of empirical studies on the influences of relevant factors of marital pleasure, such as culture and religion, was done last. Following a study of the relevant empirical studies, it was discovered that there was generally a connection between marital pleasure and religion. While the majority of the research we analyzed found that going to church and praying did boost marital satisfaction, others did not. Regarding variations in marital satisfaction levels, the same inconsistent pattern was observed once more.

The researcher evaluated how culture affects marital satisfaction in her final analysis. Every marriage is significantly influenced by culture, which has an effect on marital pleasure. While certain cultural standards enhance marital bliss, others are detrimental to couples, particularly women.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

In the Bawku West District of the Upper East, this study will look at how cultural traditions affect married Natinga women's marital satisfaction. The research methodology outlines the procedures for carrying out the complete study. Additionally, it outlines the framework and best practices for gathering data, analyzing it, and coming to logical and reliable conclusions (Kumekpor, 2002). This chapter covered the following topics: research methodology, research design, study area, population, sampling technique, data collecting instrument, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis.

#### Research Approach

This study employed a qualitative research methodology. Creswell and Creswell (2003) define qualitative research as a type of educational research in which the researcher relies on the opinions of participants, asks open-ended and general questions, primarily gathers participant data through words (or text), describes and searches for themes in these words, and conducts the investigation in an objective manner.

The researcher is interested in exploring the effects of cultural practices on marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in the Bawku West District of Upper East region, hence the qualitative research approach is appropriate for this study. The qualitative approach can also be used to learn more about complex phenomena that are difficult to extract or understand



using more conventional techniques, such as feelings, thinking processes, and emotions (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

### **Research Design**

Research design is a method for carrying out a study, and it provides the overarching structure for data collection. As a result, research design describes the steps involved in gathering the data needed to address a research challenge (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). It is the plan or strategy for how data will be acquired to most efficiently and affordably address the research questions. It enables the researcher on how to plan and conduct the reading in a way that will most likely achieve the targeted goals (Saunders, 2009). Investigative techniques used in qualitative methodology include case studies, grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnographic investigations, and narratives. Given that the research is qualitative, a descriptive phenomenological research design was selected for the study.

The goal of the science of phenomenology is to characterize specific phenomena. Phenomenology is a method for investigating and comprehending people's everyday experiences that has its roots in a philosophical tradition (Polit, & Beck, 2010). Aiming for the most intuitive presentation possible, descriptive phenomenology is the direct examination, analysis, and description of a specific occurrence (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). People's sense of actual experiences is stimulated by descriptive phenomenology.

### **Study Area**

The investigation was carried out in Natinga, a Zebilla neighborhood. The Bawku West District's capital city is Zebilla, which is located in Ghana's Upper East Region. It was established in 1988 by Legislative Instrument (LI)

1442 under the 1988 Local Government System. It roughly lies between longitudes 0° 20'E and 0° 35'E and latitudes 10° 30'N and 11° 10'N. The dominant tongue of the Bawku West District is kusaal. Kusasi make up the majority of the district's population, but there are also many Basari and Mossi from nearby communities.

A total of 1,070 square kilometers, or around 12% of the Upper East region's total land area, make up the district. After Garu Tempane, it is the third largest district in the Region in terms of land area. The district is bordered to the north by the Republic of Burkina Faso, to the east by the Talensi and Nabdam districts, to the east by the Binduri and Garu-Tempane districts, and to the south by the North East region. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, Natinga has a population of 4072 (1,781 male and 2,291) females, making up 13.25 percent of the district's total resident population of 94,034, which is made up of 45,114 males and 48,920 females. 9.0 percent of the people living in the Upper East Region live in the district. The Samanpiid festival is observed by the residents of Bawku West district.

*Sudan Savanna makes up the district's vegetation, which is made up of sparsely spaced, tiny, fire- and drought-resistant deciduous trees. The grass is incredibly sparse, and the landscape is typically bleak and severely damaged. In the less eroded sections of the Bawku West district, grasses including *Andropogan gayanus* (Northern Gamber Grass) and *Hyparhenia spp.*, *Aristida spp.*, and *Heteropogon spp.* (Spear grass) can be spotted. Common tree species in the region are the *Anogeissus spp.*, *Acacia spp.* (Thorn tree), and *Triplochiton**

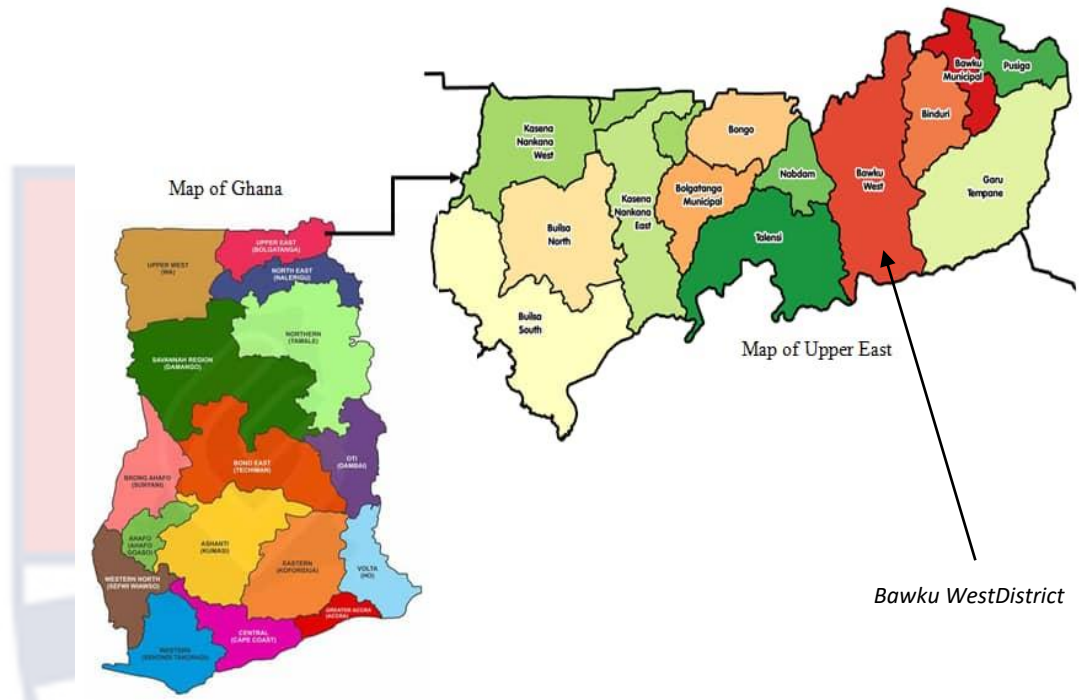
*spp.* Other useful plants are *Ceiba pentandra*, *Parkia filicoidea* (Dawadawa), *Butyrospermum parkii* (Sheanut), and *Andansonia digitata* (Baobab)(Kapok).

The majority of the time, land clearing for farming, the collection of fuel wood, overgrazing, yearly bushfires, and the harvesting of poles severely degrade the vegetation. Since most of these illegal activities take place on agricultural lands, they have significant effects on soil fertility for sustainable crop production. Illegal mining activities also contribute to the degradation of vegetation in some areas of the district such as Teshie, Widnaba, Zongoyire, Zebilla. When it comes to women working in agriculture, the situation is even more dangerous. This is due to the district's ban on women owning land. Because of this, women who work in agriculture frequently have access to land that is unsuitable for producing crops sustainably.

Additionally, the movement of the harmattan and the monsoon, two oscillating air masses, has an impact on the region's climate. The harmattan air mass, which originates from the Sahara and winds northeasterly across its region, reaches its maximum southward extent in January. It is dry and dusty. When the monsoon air mass, which blows from south to north, passes across the region in August and September, it has extended the farthest north. It's hot, rainy, and muggy. These two air masses have an impact on the Bawku West district, which is located in Ghana's desertification zone (Manga Agricultural Station, Bawku, 2014). The district experiences a prolonged dry season that lasts six months each year and a 4- to 6-month unimodal rainfall regime. The average annual rainfall, temperature, and relative humidity are 956mm, 34oC, and 56%, respectively, with a potential evapotranspiration of more than

2882mm. Evapotranspiration is therefore out of control in relation to rainfall.

The districts in the area are depicted on the map of Ghana's upper east below.



*Figure 1:* Map of Upper East Region showing the Study Area of Bawku West District

Source: commons.m.wikimedia.org (2012)

### Population

Population is crucial to every research project. This is because identifying concepts with broad applicability is one of the main goals of most research. However, given some populations' large size and their indefinite or open-ended nature, it is typically impossible to examine a whole population for a project in order to come at generalizations. According to Jennings (2001), the population consists of all the study participants who are the subject of the investigation. Population, according to Amedahe (2002), is the whole collection of cases that satisfy a certain set of requirements. The study's 980 target participants were all married women living in Natinga in the Bawku West District (Ghana Population census, 2010).

## Sampling Procedure

Amedahe and Asamoah-Gyimah (2002) define sampling as the procedure of choosing a subset of the population to represent the full population. A sample is a portion or subset of the study population which is used to represent the population of the study (Kothari, 2008). The sampling procedure is selecting a subset of the population, conducting an investigation, and then extrapolating the fallouts to the entire population.

The degree to which the sample chosen is typical of the target community determines the power of generalization of a qualitative survey (Frank & Min, 2007). Sampling methodology and responder size must be taken into account in order to generate a representative sample for adequate generalization. Sampling is the process of choosing a subset of the population to represent the complete population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Kothari (2004) defined sampling methodology as a method the researcher uses to choose the items for the sample. Sampling can be carried out using many techniques.

The researcher found it useful to use the purposive sampling strategy in selecting the sample for the study. The reason why the researcher used purposive sampling is that it is better matching of the sample to the aims and objectives of the research, thus improving the rigour of the study and trustworthiness of the data and results. The purposive sampling is credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling strategy that takes place when "components picked for the sample are chosen by the researcher's judgment. The researcher is confident that by exercising smart judgment, they

can gather a representative sample and save both time and money (Black, Jensen, Mostrom, Perkins, Ritzline, Hayward & Blackmer, (2010).

### **Data Collection Instrument**

All investigations are planned to either test hypotheses or provide information (Amedahe, 2002). Data were gathered by the researcher using an interviewing guide as the study instrument. According to Bradbury, Fincham, and Beach (2000), in-person interviews are necessary for family life studies. It consists of open-ended questions that permit the participants' unrestricted expression of thinking. The standardized open-ended interview's question phrasing is somewhat formal. Participants are consistently asked the same questions, but they are written to allow for open-ended responses (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

### **Pilot Study**

Pilot research was conducted in Tanga, a community in the Bawku West District, to examine the viability of the study as well as the dependability of the interview guide. Ten (10) married women were sampled and used. The decision to pilot the instrument was in relation to findings by Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) concerning the significance of piloting a study. That is to assess the difficulties or challenges the team might encounter in advancing our set objectives on the real grounds. Also, the pilot study served the purpose of informing the researcher on what to expect on the field.

### **Validity and Reliability of Instrument**

To ensure a good quality of the research, the researcher determined the validity and reliability of the research. Validity refers to the soundness, legitimacy and appropriate use of a test result. It is also seen as the ability of

an instrument to measure what it seeks to measure. According to Johnson & Christensen (2004), validity is the appropriateness of the interpretations, inferences and actions that we make based on test scores. Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2004) explained that examination of the validity of a questionnaire aims at making sure that the adopted instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. To establish the content validity of the instrument, it was critically reviewed by the supervisor for the needed corrections.

Reliability on the other hand reflects consistency and replicability over time. Also, reliability is seen as the degree to which a test is free from measurement errors since the more measurement errors occur the less reliable the test (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). According to Orodho (2003), reliability is the degree to which a particular measuring procedure gives similar results over a number of repeated trials. Trustworthiness was used to determine the interview guide's validity and dependability. A qualitative study's trustworthiness refers to its validity and dependability, which includes its credibility, confirmability, dependability, authenticity, and transferability.

### **Credibility**

In qualitative research, rigor and internal consistency of the study are indicators of credibility (Lincoln 2004). Credibility is determined by how accurately and credibly the participants' opinions and responses match the researchers' interpretation (Bryman 2012). According to Morrow (2005), the research's credibility was enhanced by a sustained relationship with its participants, the researcher's reflexivity, and a detailed presentation of the data that included in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences. The employment of numerous methodologies and the use of research validation are

two additional requirements that can be used to meet the criterion for credibility. Multiple methods were employed in this reading to increase understanding and trustworthiness. Two weeks following the interview, I went back to the participant to confirm and validate their comments.

### **Confirmability**

Study objectivity and potential bias in the conducted research are the foundations of confirmability (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). The objectivity of a qualitative study is its confirmability. It is crucial that one's thoughts, assumptions, and ideas do not impact how data is presented or how it is interpreted. The voices of the participants should be reflected in the debates and conclusions (Bryman, 2008). Prior to final submission, the researcher will assure objectivity and prevent improper interpretation of the participants' ideas by sending the results to them as previously specified.

### **Dependability**

Morrow (2005) asserts that consistency across time, researchers, and analytical methodologies is dependent on the process employed to reach results and should be adequately documented. To check the reliability of the results, I applied the inquiry audit strategy suggested by Pilot and Beck (2014). My supervisor received the study's findings and examined them to determine whether the data, interpretations, and conclusions were applicable. Additionally, the researcher thoroughly described the findings' outcomes to assure dependability.

### **Authenticity**

The degree to which the researcher has provided a fair, faithful, honest, and balanced account of social life from the perspective of someone who



experiences it on a daily basis, displaying a diversity of realities, is referred to as authenticity (Polit and Beck, 2014). The researcher accurately represented the information provided by the 30 participants when presenting the findings to guarantee objectivity. Additionally, I included enough verbatim replies from several participants under each theme found to demonstrate the study's conclusions (Connelly, 2016).

### **Transferability**

Transferability measures how widely results can be used (Gasson 2003). In qualitative research, transferability occurs when the researcher provides information about the research design, procedures, sample, and self (as a research tool) that enables the reader to apply the findings to his or her own situation. Qualitative data cannot be viewed as broadly relevant due to smaller sample sizes and a lack of statistical analysis (Morrow 2005). However, this study attempted to provide comprehensive details regarding the research methodology, processes, and sample in order to provide a means of transferability in order to allow comparison to various contexts.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection is the process of gathering and examining information on pertinent variables in a predetermined or structured manner that enables one to answer to the specified research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate results (Nyakundi, Nyamita & Tinega, 2014). A sample size of 30 people was selected for the investigation. Before the researcher used the interview guide, introductory letter obtained from the department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast was sent to the chief of Natinga and other influential figures asking for permission.

The researcher explained the significance of the research to the participants to prepare their minds for the interview and after that the researcher then conducted the interview and assisted the participants in getting their questions answered. The researcher spoke with each participant individually for 45 minutes throughout the interview. The interview was conducted within two weeks.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Data examination is the process of condensing, reviewing, and evaluating data using statistical and/or logical techniques in a scientific manner. Various analytical techniques, according to Shamo and Resnik (2003), offer a mechanism to deduce conclusions from data and separate the signal (the phenomenon of interest) from the noise (statistical fluctuations) contained in the data.

Thematic approach which is an inductive form of data analysis was used to analyse the data. The researcher recorded the interviews in the local dialects were transcribe into a text data. The transcribed data were coded and themes were developed and used to respond to the research questions. The summary of the analyses after coding and categorization was represented using simple frequency tables and percentages.

### **Chapter Summary**

The study's research methodology is covered in this chapter. The study was conducted using a qualitative technique, and the research design was a descriptive phenomenological one. In the Bawku West district of the Upper East region, a sample of the Natinga people was taken using the purposive sampling technique. As an additional study tool for data collecting, the

researcher used an interview guide. Before and after data collection, the researcher examined the instrument's accuracy and dependability. The data collected was analyzed using thematic analysis, which was summarized by using tables, frequencies and percentages.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Introduction

The study's findings and analyses are showed in this section. The study's aim was to investigate how cultural practices affected married Natinga women in the Upper East's Bawku West District in terms of marital satisfaction. 30 married women were designated for the study using a purposive sampling strategy and a descriptive phenomenological research design. The thematic approach was used for the data analysis.

#### Demographic Data

The background details of the responders are covered in this section. It includes information about the respondents' ages, educational attainment, and length of marriage. The outcomes are shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Background data of respondents**

Items	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 40 years	25	83
41years and above	5	17
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Basic	6	20
Secondary	7	23
Tertiary	11	37
Non-educated	6	20
<b>Duration of Marriage</b>		
1 – 20 years	21	70
21 – 40 years	5	17
41-60 years	4	13

Source: Field Survey (2022)

According to Table 1, 25 (83%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 40, while 5 (17%) were between the ages of 41 and over. Regarding educational attainment.

Table 1 also shows that 11 (37%) of the respondents had a postsecondary education, 7 (23%) had a secondary education, 6 (20%) had a basic education, and 6 (20%) had no formal education. Finally, Table 1 shows that 21 (70%) of the respondents had been married for between one and twenty years, five (17%) had been married for between twenty-one and forty years, and four (13%) had been married for between forty-one and sixty years.

## **Results of the Study**

### **Research Question One**

What are the cultural practices of the Natinga people on marriage in the Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question ascertained the views of married women on the cultural practices of the Natinga people on marriage in the Bawku West District of the Upper East. The responses of the married women constituted their understanding of the cultural practices on marriage at Natinga in Bawku West District. The themes that emerged from their responses to this research question was presented below.

### **Themes**

Decision making in marriage

Ownership of property in marriage

Payment of dowry

Choice of religion in marriage

### Decision-making in Marriage

Married women who contributed in this research were interviewed about the cultural practices of marriage of Natinga people in the Bawku West District. The narratives given by all the participants interviewed indicated that the culture of Natinga does not allow married women to take part in decision-making in their marital homes. To buttress this assertion, verbatim responses of the married women are presented:

*Hmmm, women are not involved in decision-making in Natinga, we the women only obey and do whatever our husbands want us to do and married women in Natinga are confined to the kitchen (participant 2)*

*It is serious ooo, immediately after I got married, my father-in-law told me that decision-making in the house is for men only and for that matter my view or contribution to decision-making is not needed.(Participant 14)*

*There was a family meeting in my husband's house which they excluded me and I asked why, the elders in the house said the culture doesn't permit women to take part in any family meeting and suggestions from women are not accepted.*

**(Participant 4)**

Based on the narratives given by the married women, it could be concluded that the culture of Natinga does not allow women to take part in decision-making in their marriages. Only men are to take decisions in marriage according to the tradition of Natinga.

### Ownership of Property in Marriage

Married women who partook in this research were interviewed about the cultural practices of marriage at Natinga in the Bawku West District. The narratives given by all the married women interviewed suggested that in the Natinga married women do not own properties in their marriage. To buttress this assertion, verbatim responses of the married women are presented:

*Married women are not allowed to own properties in their husband's houses at Natinga and the Payment of dowry is high in the Natinga community. (Participant 5)*

*My husband told me I can't own any property in his house so I should never think of it. (Participant 3)*

*Anytime I want to buy a property, i give the money to my father to buy and keep it in his house because if I send it to my husband's house, I will not get access to that property. (Participant 7)*

### Payment of Dowry

On the part of payment of dowry, the participants indicated that;

*One of the cultural practices in the Natinga community is the payment of dowry during the marriage. (Participant 10)*

*If my husband doesn't pay my dowry, he cannot own the children we have (Participant 2)*

*A man cannot marry a woman in my community without paying her bride price because the culture says you must pay bride price before you can marry a lady. (Participant 21)*

### Choice of Religion in Marriage

On the choice of religion, the participants indicated that;

*The culture of Natinga does not allow us the married women to choose the religion of our choice, the elders in the community said we must join the religion of our husbands because that law has been there since the community existed. (Participant 1)*

*Hmm, before I got married, I was a Christian and after marriage, I became a Muslim because my husband is a Muslim. the culture of Natinga compels a woman to join the religion of her husband (participant 6)*

*My husband agreed that I can go to my church anytime I want but his father disagreed and said we don't do that here, whether I like it or not I must follow my husband's religious which is according to the culture of this community. (Participant 27)*

Based on the results, it could be concluded women are forced to join the religion of their husbands because it is a culture in the community.

### Research Question Two

What are the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women of Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question was intended to find out the views of married women on the cultural practices of Natinga that affects their marriage. The responses of the married women reveal their knowledge of the cultural practices that affect them in their marriage at Natinga. The theme that emerged from their responses are;



### Themes

1. Decision making
2. Ownership of properties in marriage
3. High Payment of dowry
4. Choice of religion in marriage
5. House chores for only women

### Decision-making in Marriage

The married women who participated in the study were interviewed about the cultural practices that affect their marriage. The responses given by 26 married women interviewed suggested that the culture does not allow married women to take part in decision-making in their marital homes. To support this assertion, quotations of verbatim responses of the married women are presented:

*Hmm, my husband doesn't involve me in decision-making in the marriage, whatever he says is final, whether I like it or not I have to accept his decision in the marriage. my husband controls me in the marriage, whatever he asks me to do I must do it.* **(Participant 4)**

**Another participant added that:** *I have contributions that can support decisions in my marriage but I am not allowed to, that is because of the cultural practice in the community* **(Participant 8)**

*The culture of Natinga does not allow women to take part in decision-making, this affects us a lot because we don't have*

*any say in the marriage. my husband doesn't allow me to suggest anything when he is making decisions. (Participant 9)*

*My husband bought a car without telling me, bought land without telling me and even sent my son to stay with his mother without telling me, when I ask him, he became annoyed and said, he is the only one who makes decisions in the marriage so I should keep quiet. (Participant 22)*

From the responses, it could be concluded that the culture of Natinga does not allow women to take part in decision-making in their marriage. This cultural practice affects their marital satisfaction.

### **Ownership of Property in Marriage**

The second theme identified was ownership of properties in marriage. The views of all the married women indicated that women do not own properties acquired during marriage, all the properties are owned by the men. Below are some of the verbatim responses of the married women:

*Our culture does not allow us to own any property in the marriage, any property that is acquired in the marriage is for the man which I think it is not the best because the man and the woman acquire the property together. (Participant 24)*

*In my previous marriage, I and my husband acquired some properties but when we divorced, he refuses to give me some of the properties which really affected me a lot because I contributed much for those properties. The chief and the elders should try and do something about it, hmmm women are dying slowly because of this. (Participant 13)*

*If I acquire a property, I keep it in my fathers' houses if not my husband family will claim ownership of it. (Participant 9)*

It could be concluded that the culture of Natinga does not allow women to own properties when married and all the properties acquired during marriage are for the men, this cultural practice affects the women negatively and hence affects their marital satisfaction.

### **High Payment of Dowry**

The third theme identified for research question two was the high payment of dowry. The views of all the 30 married women indicate that the payment of dowry in the Natinga community is high and therefore making the men treat their wives like slaves, the men think that they have bought the women. Below are some of the verbatim responses of the married women:

*Before my husband married me, he complained about the high cost of dowry adopted in the community, men spend a lot of money to be able to marry, especially me, my parents demanded a lot from my husband. This makes our husbands to be frustrated, hmm it is really affecting our marriages because, the man will spend all their money for the dowry and when you get to his house, he is not able to take proper care of you. (Participant 20)*

*The high cost of dowry in the community has made our husbands to treat us the way they want because they think they have bought us and can control us the way they want. (Participant 24)*

*Men in my community are finding it difficult to marry due to the high cost of dowry. We have many unmarried men in the community because they have to work hard to make money and pay for a dowry. (Participant 15)*

It could be concluded that the culture of Natinga makes men to spend much money for the payment of dowry. This has affected women a lot and some women have to marry men who can pay their bride price but not men they love. This also affects their marital satisfaction.

### **Choice of Religion in Marriage**

The fourth theme identified for research question two was the choice of religion in marriage. The views of the 30 married women indicate that the culture does not allow women to choose the religion they want, the culture force the women to join the religion of their husbands which affects their freedom of worship and hence their marital satisfaction. Below are some of the verbatim responses of the married women:

*The culture of Natinga does not allow women to choose the religion of their choice, this affects the women in this community. (Participant 13)*

*I cannot attend church service again because of marriage, my husband does not allow me to go to church, he said he is a tradition man and have to join him whether I like it or not. (Participant 18)*

*Hmm, it is serious ooo, I am a leader in my church but because of marriage I cannot fellowship again due to the culture of the community. (Participant 4)*

It could be concluded that the marital satisfaction of the married women is affected due to the inability to choose the religion they want, the culture force them to join the religion of their husbands which affects their freedom of worship.

### **House Chores for only Women**

The final theme identified for research question two was the execution of house chores for only women. The views of the 30 married women indicated that the culture does not allow men to take part in house chores because they believe it is for women only. This is one of the cultural practices that affect women in Natinga. it makes them work under stress. Below are some of the verbatim responses of the married women

*Women in this community are limited to the kitchen and taking care of children in their marital homes. (Participant 5)*

*Husbands are not allowed to take part in house chores, they say it is a taboo for a man to cook or fetch water. (Participant 23)*

*One day I went with my husband to fetch water and some of the community members were annoy and saying I am trying to control my husband and therefore the elders should talk to me. (Participant 8)*

It could be concluded that the culture of Natinga forbid a man taking part in house chores which affects the women marital satisfaction negatively.

### Research Question Three

What are the impacts of the cultural practices on the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question was to find out the opinions of the married women on the effects of the cultural practices on their marital satisfaction. The responses of the 30 married women revealed that the cultural practices on marriage in Natinga affects their marital satisfaction negatively. The themes that emerged from their responses are;

#### Themes

1. Lack of respect
2. Marital distress
3. Desire to divorce
4. Lack of security in marriage

#### Lack of Respect

The first theme that appeared from research question three was lack of respect. The responses of the 30 married women indicate that the women in Natinga are not respected by their husbands due to the cultural practices in the community. The bride price paid by the men makes them think that they have bought the women and therefore, treats them anyhow. To support this assertion, verbatim responses of the married women are presented below:

*My husband doesn't respect me in the marriage, he treats me like a slave and says he has paid my bride price and for that matter he can treat me the way he wants. (Participant 7)*

*Hmm, my husband does shout at me as if I am a child, he treats me like his child, talks to me anyhow and controls me the way he wants. (Participant 5)*

From the responses, it could be concluded that married women do not get respect from their husbands due to the bad cultural practices in marriage.

### **Women are Highly Stressful**

The second theme that emerged from researcher question three was that women are highly stressed up. The responses of the 30 married women indicate that the women in Natinga are highly stressed due to the workload at the house. They explained that their husbands do not support them in the house chores, they do everything in the house which makes them stressed leading to illness. To support this assertion, verbatim responses of the married women are presented below:

*My husband has never helped me with the house chores since I got married to him, I do all the work in the house alone. (Participant 6)*

*Five years ago, I asked my husband to help me fetch water at a borehole and he told me it is taboo for him to help with house chores. If his colleagues see him, they will even laugh at him.*

*This is really affecting my marriage. (Participant 16)*

*Hmm, I am currently having a headache and waste pains because of too many house chores. I work through the day with only a little time to rest, in fact, am very stressed (participant 20)*

It could be concluded that women are very stressed in their marital home due to house chores. They work without rest which makes them get different forms of sickness such as headaches, burns, back pains, waist pains and high blood pressure. This affects the women's marital satisfaction.

### **Marital Distress**

The second theme that emerged from research question three was marital distress. The responses of 25 of the 30 married women indicate that the cultural practices on marriage make women to be distressed in their husbands' houses. Some of the verbatim responses are presented below:

*I receive beatings from my husband, my husband beats me anytime he is drunk, a proof is some of the wounds on my skin.*

*I can't talk because he is my husband, the culture made men to have more power than us women. (Participant 16)*

*Hmmm, I am always sick because of the way my husband treats me. He treats me bad which makes me always distressed.*

*(Participant 26)*

From the responses, it could be concluded that marital stress is one of the effects on Natinga women due to their cultural practices.

### **Desire to Divorce**

The third theme for research question three was the increase in divorce. The responses of the 30 married women indicate that the cultural practices in Natinga have caused many divorces. Women who cannot withstand the cultural practices and their husband's behaviours end up in a divorce. Some of the verbatim responses are below:



*I sometimes think of divorce oo, the culture in the community has made us women very inferior, we are not regarded in our marital home, and we are treated differently from other members of the house. (Participant 13)*

*My sister divorce because she is inferior in her husband house because the culture does not identify her as a full family member.(Participant 26)*

*Hmm, my husband family members treat me different from them, anytime I complained they will say my blood is different from them. Divorcing will be better for me but am still there because of my children (participant 12)*

From the responses, it can be concluded that the culture of Natinga on marriage has led to divorce in many marriages.

#### **Lack of Security in Marriage**

The final theme for research question three is lack of security in marriage. The married women explained that the cultural practices in Natinga have made them not to be secure in their marriage. They further explained that the way they are treated in their marital home cannot guarantee their security in the marriage. Some of their verbatim responses are below:

*Hmmm, I am worried about my security in my husband's house, the cultural practices have made my husband not to care about my welfare. He does not care whether I am comfortable or not. (Participant 8)*

*My husband and his family do not care much about me, today he will behave well towards me and the following day will differ. (Participant 11)*

It could be concluded that some of the cultural practices on marriage at Natinga made the married women unsecured in their marriage.

#### **Research Question Four**

What strategies are employed to manage the cultural practices that affect marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question was intended to find out the views of married women on the strategies used to manage the cultural practices that affect their marriage and the ways to improve their marital satisfaction. The responses of 28 married women reveal the strategies to manage negative cultural practices on marriage and the ways to enhance marital satisfaction. The following themes emerged from their responses.

#### **Themes**

1. Education
2. Marital counseling
3. Women's Involvement in Decision Making
4. Freedom of religion
5. Respect of partners
6. Support of partners

#### **Education**

The first theme identified was education. The narratives given by 25 out of 30 married women interviewed indicate that education could help the

chiefs and elders in Natinga to implement cultural practices that would not affect marriages negatively. They explained that when there is education, the leaders in the community will adopt cultural practices that will enhance the welfare of people and also improve marital satisfaction. It makes them love their husbands more and would not like to have sex outside their marriage. To support this assertion, verbatim responses of the married women are presented below:

*I think our chiefs and elders in the community should be given some education, this will help them to adopt and implement cultural practices that will help the people in the community.*

**(Participant 16)**

*I was shocked when I realized that some of my community members still practice female genital mutilation and this affects the sexual satisfaction of married women therefore when my chief and the elders go through education in culture, it will make them abolish the cultural practices that have a negative impact on marriage. **(Participant 20)***

*Most of the elders in the Natinga community are illiterate and they don't even know that some cultural practices affect marital satisfaction[pause], I think they should be educated on that. **(Participant 17)***

Based on the narratives given by the married women, it could be concluded that education in culture can help to avoid the adoption of negative cultural practices that affect marital satisfaction.

### **Marital Counselling**

The second theme identified was marital counselling. The views of 22 out of 30 married women interviewed indicate that marital counselling could help the couples in Natinga to avoid practicing a culture that affects marriage negatively. They explained that when couples undergo marital counselling, they would adopt good cultural practices that could enhance the welfare of people and also improve marital satisfaction. To support this assertion, verbatim responses of the married women are presented below:

*Hmm, my husband needs marital counselling, he treats me anyhow and doesn't value me in the marriage and this affects me in the marriage.* **(Participant 22)**

*My brother, marital counselling will help my marriage, it will make my husband to love me, value me more and also treat me well in the marriage.* **(Participant 18)**

From the responses of the married women, it could be concluded that when couples are given marital counseling, it could increase marital satisfaction.

### **Women's Involvement in Decision Making**

The third theme identified was women's connection in decision-making in marriage. The views of the 30 married women indicate that women's involvement in decision-making in marriage can help to improve marital satisfaction. They explained that when they are part of decision-making, it will make them feel that are they part of their husband's house. They believe their decision can impact their marriage positively therefore they need to be part of the decision-making. This will also improve marital

satisfaction. To support this assertion, some of the women's verbatim responses are presented below:

*Women should be involved in decision-making in marriage, at least it lets them feel that they are part of their husband's family (Participant 14)*

*hmmm, I want my husband to involve me in decision-making in the marriage, I will also provide suggestions that can help the marriage to be better. (Participant 17)*

It could be inferred from the responses of the married women that women's involvement in decisions is significant in marriage and it improves marital satisfaction.

#### **Freedom of Religion**

The fourth theme identified in question four was freedom of religion/worship. The views of 20 out of the 30 married women indicate that women should be given the freedom to choose the religion of their choice and women should not be forced to join their husband's religion. To support this assertion, quotations of verbatim responses of the married women are presented below:

*In this community, women do not have a choice when it comes to religion. All women must join the religion of their husbands whether they like it or not. therefore, marital satisfaction can be enhanced if women are given the freedom to choose the religion of their choice. (Participant 11)*

*Hmm, I suggest that women who are Christians should not be forced to be Muslims because their husbands are Muslims and*

*women should not be forced to be Christians because their husbands are Christians. (Participant 29)*

*The chief and leaders should declare freedom of worship in marriage. (Participant 9)*

It could be concluded that freedom of worship can enhance the marital satisfaction of the women in Natinga. They want their husbands to allow them to choose the religion they want but not to be into a particular religion.

### **Respect for Partners in Marriage**

The fifth theme identified was the respect for partners in marriage. The views of the 24 married women indicate that respect in marriage can enhance marital satisfaction. They explained that if their husbands respect them, their husbands will not implement any cultural practices that will affect their marriage negatively. To support this assertion, some of the women's verbatim responses are presented below:

*Respect is very important in marriage so men should respect their wives, respects make all the partners feel important in the marriage. (Participant 8)*

*Couples should respect one another; this can improve their marital satisfaction. (Participant 13)*

It can be concluded that when couples respect each other, it can improve marital satisfaction. therefore, the women in Natinga want their husbands to respect them in the marriage.

## Support of Married Partners

The final theme identified in research question four was the support of partners in marriage. The views of 27 of the 30 married women indicate that the support of partners in a marriage can help avoid bad cultural practices and enhance marital satisfaction. To support this assertion, some of the women's verbatim responses are presented below:

*I want my husband to support me in everything I do in the marriage especially taking care of the children. am the one taking care of my children in terms of their education, clothing and anything they need. (Response of participant 7)*

*I need my husband's support in house chores to reduce stress at home, I cook, I fetch water, I wash clothes and utensils, bath my children etc., all these things I do make me sick regularly (Response of participant 13).*

From the responses of the married women, it could be concluded that the support of married partners could help to reduce bad cultural practices and stress and also enhance marital gratification.

## Discussions

### Research Question One

What are the cultural practices of the Natinga people on marriage in the Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question was intended to ascertain the views of married women on the cultural practices of the Natinga people on marriage in the Bawku West District of the Upper East. The responses of the married women constituted their understanding of the cultural practices of marriage at Natinga

in Bawku West District. The responses of the participants revealed the cultural practices of marriage in Natinga community.

Some of the cultural practices on marriage in Natinga are payment of dowry, how only men take decisions in the marriage, how properties acquired during a marriage are owned by the husband, how only women do house chores and women join their husband's religion when they marry.

*Everything marriage in my community is based on our culture, It is serious ooo, immediately after I got married, my father-in-law told me that decision-making in the house is for men only and for that matter my view or contribution to decision-making is not needed according their culture. (Participant 11)*

*One of the cultural practices in the Natinga community is the payment of dowry during the marriage. (Participant 10)*

The findings support the findings of Mkandawire and Daka (2018), who found that culture has a significant impact on how marriages are conducted in various societies. Every community has a culture and some of these cultural practices are made for marriage and most of them are in favour of men.

The findings are also in line with Myers, Madathil and Tingle (2005) who discovered that the requirements for a good marriage could be very different and depending on a certain set of culturally imposed norms, beliefs, and duties.

These results are consistent with the findings of Broman (2002), who found that cultural values have an impact on marital satisfaction for some ethnic groups but not for others. Cultural values typically take years to



integrate into a system of rules and guidelines for each individual and are therefore occasionally difficult to negotiate. Additionally, according to Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, and Tatla (2004), culturally determined norms, practices, and expectations greatly influence marital relationships. These findings revealed that good cultural practices enhance marital satisfaction while bad cultural practices lead to dissatisfaction in marriage.

The researcher is of the view that all culture practices are part of marriage and when the right cultural practices are adopted it will enhance marital satisfaction.

### **Research Question Two**

What are the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women of Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question was intended to find out the views of married women on the cultural practices of Natinga that affects their marriage. The responses of the married women reveal their knowledge of the cultural practices that affect them in their marriage at Natinga. The discussions on research question two are done base on the themes that emerged.

The findings revealed that the culture of Natinga does not allow married women to take part in decision-making in their marital homes. The findings indicate that women are not involved in decision-making in their husbands' house and the women of Natinga believe that, not taking part in decisions affects their marital satisfaction negatively. These are evidence from their verbatim responses;

*Hmm, my husband doesn't involve me in decision-making in the marriage, whatever he says is final, whether I like it or not I have to accept his decision in the marriage. my husband controls me in the marriage, whatever he asks me to do I must do it. (Participant 4)*

*I have contributions that can support decisions in my marriage but I am not allowed to, that is because of the cultural practice in the community (Participant 8)*

The results are consistent with those of Schandorf and Kwarfo (1990), who claimed that most traditional Ghanaian societies forbid women from participating in decision-making. The results are also consistent with those of Ali and Sultan (1999), who discovered that sociocultural factors, such as the influence of husbands, in-laws, and other family members, affect women's decision-making in their husband's home and make it challenging for them to make independent decisions or participate in family decisions.

The researcher is of the opinion that women decision making in marriage is very significant and can help the marriage to grow as well as increase marital satisfaction. When women are made to take part in decision making it make them feel they are important in the marriage.

The second theme for research question two was ownership of property in marriage. the findings revealed that the cultural practices in Natinga do not allow married women to own properties acquired during marriage, all the property are owned by the men. This is revealed in their verbatim responses;

*Our culture does not allow us to own any property in the marriage, any property that is acquired in the marriage is for*

*the man which I think it is not the best because the man and the woman acquire the property together. (Participant 24)*

*When i want to acquire a proper I give the money to my father to buy for me because if I do that my husband's house it will not be mine. (Participant 16)*

The results are consistent with those of Ouedraogo (1995), who found that although matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance are both common, women do not inherit property, particularly land, which is the primary source of income in the region. The researcher is of the view that if women should be given the opportunity, this will motivate them to acquire more properties to support the men.

The third theme identified for research question two was the high payment of dowry. The findings revealed that the payment of dowry in the Natinga community is high and therefore making the men treat their wives like slaves. This really affects their marital satisfaction. This can be found in the verbatim responses of the participants;

*Before my husband married me, he complained about the high cost of dowry adopted in the community, men spend a lot of money to be able to dowry, especially me, my parents demanded a lot from my husband. This makes our husbands to be frustrated, hmm it is really affecting our marriages because, the man will spend all their money for the dowry and when you get to his house, he is not able to take proper care of you. (Participant 20)*

*The high cost of dowry in the community has made our husbands to treat us the way they want because they think they have bought us and can control us the way they want.*

*(Participant 24)*

The results are consistent with those of Rogers (2004), who investigated the bride price and dehumanization of women in Uganda and found that the high bride price is associated to some violence against women that may cause marriages to become unstable. He clarified that bride price is not intended to dehumanize women as property to be owned, sold, or bought off in order to satisfy men's egos and selfish ambitions, but rather to serve as a sign or gesture of appreciation to the family of the girl to be married off (the bride).

The most typical type of marriage in Ghana is referred to as a customary marriage. This entails the bridegroom's family paying a bride price to the bride's family. Wreh and Kofitse, (1998) also revealed that the bride price in the northern Ghana, also includes cash, drinks and cola.

The researcher is of the view that, high bride price affects women a lot and therefore need to be abolish to enhance marital satisfaction.

The fourth theme identified for research question two was the choice of religion in marriage. The findings revealed that the culture of Natinga does not allow women to choose the religion they want. The culture forces the women to join the religion of their husbands which affects their marital satisfaction negatively. This is confirmed in the verbatim responses of the participants;

*The culture of Natinga does not allow women to choose the religion of their choice, this affects the women in this community. (Participant 13)*

*I cannot attend church service again because of marriage, my husband does not allow me to go to church, he said he is a tradition man and have to join him whether I like it or not. (Participant 18)*

The finding is contrary to the constitution of Ghana (1992) which indicated that there is freedom of association or worship. Therefore, couples should be given the chance to choose the religion of their choice. Women in Natinga believe that freedom of worship among couples improves marital satisfaction while couples who do not enjoy the freedom of worship gain marital dissatisfaction.

The researcher is of the view that women should be given the right to join any religion of their choice. The culture of their husbands should not prevent them from enjoying freedom of worship.

The final theme identified for research question two was house chores for only women. The findings revealed that the culture of Natinga does not allow men to take part in house chores because they believe it is for women only. This has made the women to be doing everything in the house. This information is an evident from their verbatim responses;

*Women in this community are limited to the kitchen and taking care of children in their marital homes. (Participant 5)*

*Husbands are not allowed to take part in house chores, they say it is a taboo for a man to cook or fetch water. (Participant 23)*

This finding is in line with the finding of Dzobo, (1975) who found that women have some particular roles they played in marriage, such as bathing their children, doing house chores and cooking for the family.

The results of this study are also consistent with Rasing's (2010) observation that men typically serve as the head of the household, demeaning the position of women who, for example, serve as housewives and are responsible for taking care of children while staying at home and doing household chores.

The researcher is of the view that house chores should not be done by on women, men should also ways support the women to prevent workload.

### **Research Question Three**

What are the effects of the cultural practices on the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

The purpose of this study topic was to learn what the married women thought about how cultural customs affected their marital pleasure. The results showed that married women's marital satisfaction is negatively impacted by Natinga cultural practices. Following are comments of the findings based on themes that emerged from the study question.

The first theme that emerged from researcher question three was lack of respect. The findings of this study revealed that women in Natinga are not respected by their husbands due to the cultural practices in the community. The bride price paid by the men makes them think that they have bought the

women and therefore, do not respect them. This information is evident in what a participants said:

*My husband doesn't respect me in the marriage, he treats me like a slave and says he has paid my bride price and for that matter he can treat me the way he wants. (Participant 7)*

*Hmm, my husband does shout at me as if I am a child, he treats me like his child, talks to me anyhow and controls me the way he wants. (Participant 5)*

The results are consistent with those of Bawah (2015), who discovered that paying a bride price causes males to view their wives as exchangeable goods, which frequently leads to domestic violence and divorce. The results are consistent with those of Armstrong (2010), who discovered that after the bride price has been paid, most African nations consider a woman to be a man's property.

The researcher is of the view that married women should be respected and treated well by their husbands to enhance marital satisfaction.

The second theme that emerged from researcher question three was that women are highly stressed. The findings from the study revealed that married women in Natinga are highly stressed due to the workload at their marital home. They explained that their husbands do not support them in the house chores, they do everything in the house which makes them stressed up, leading to illness. This information is evident in what a participants said:

*Hmm, I am currently having a headache and waste pains because of too many house chores. I work through the day with*

*only a little time to rest, in fact, am very stressed (Participant 20)*

*My husband has never helped me with the house chores since I got married to him, I do all the work in the house alone which makes me stressful. (Participant 6)*

These results are consistent with those of Akanle and Ejiade (2012), who found that because of the African patriarchy that favors men, men are usually viewed as being very domineering and never being involved in family assistance outside of providing for their financial needs. They argued that men are domestic/family warlords and gladiators who never participate in family life other than to serve their wives and children. This perpetuates the stereotype of women as housekeepers, homemakers, and tenders in the general public.

The researcher is of the view that when women do almost all the domestic work in the house, they are likely to experience health problems such as headache, backache, fatigue and body pains.

The third theme of the research question is marital distress. The findings revealed that the cultural practices which affect married women have led to marital distress in many marriages in Natinga. They explained that they are highly frustrated in their marriages, they are still married because of their children which makes them more distressed. This can be found in their verbatim responses;

*I receive beatings from my husband, my husband beats me anytime he is drunk, a proof is some of the wounds on my skin.*



*I can't talk because he is my husband, the culture made men to have more power than us women. (Participant 16)*

*Hmmm, I am always sick because of the way my husband treats me. He treats me bad which makes me always distressed.*

*(Participant 26)*

This result is consistent with Amuzu's (1998) observations that marital violence often results in permanent harm to women, such as damage to joints, partial loss of hearing or vision, scars from burns, knife wounds, and even death. Other marital violence injuries that women have experienced include cuts, broken bones, concussions, miscarriages, and partial loss of hearing or vision.

The results are consistent with those of Platteau and Gaspart (2007), who found that expensive brides make women feel alienated and turn them into slaves or commodities for their husbands. They relate the bride price to an expression of profound sorrow and ingrained grievances. Behind these sentiments is the worry that the financial strain brought on by high bride costs may drive the husband and his family to resent them.

The results are consistent with those of Mcvey (1990), who identified issues with finances, immaturity before to marriage, in-laws, housing issues, and sexual incompatibilities as contributing factors to marital dissatisfaction.

The researcher is of the view that when women are treated badly it may lead to marital distress and hence affect their marital satisfaction.

The fourth theme for research question three was the desire to divorce. The findings revealed that the cultural practices in Natinga have caused many women to have the desire to divorces due to the way they are treated in their

marital homes. Women who cannot withstand the cultural practices and their husband's behaviours may end up having the desire to divorce. This finding is confirmed in the verbatim responses of the participants;

*Hmm, my husband family members treat me different from them, anytime I complained they will say my blood is different from them. Divorcing will be better for me but am still there because of my children (Participant 12)*

*I sometimes think of divorce oo, the culture in the community has made us women very inferior, we are not regarded in our marital home, and we are treated differently from other members of the house. (Participant 13)*

This finding is consistent with Shanavas' (2014) research, "Till Divorce do us part," which found that family court counselors thought a variety of obvious factors, such as dowry harassment, domestic abuse, and alcoholism, as well as mental stress, emotional incompatibility, religious differences, and issues adjusting to in-laws, could be contributing to the rising trend of divorces.

The results are consistent with those of Leonard & Roberts (1998), who found that personality traits like antisocial behavior or persistently unpleasant emotions are responsible for divorce. According to the researcher, a man's behavior could make a woman want to file for divorce.

The final theme of research question three was the lack of security in marriage. The findings revealed that the women of Natinga are unsecured in their marriage. They complained that most of them are not secure because

nobody in their husbands' houses cares about their welfare. This information is evident in what a participants said:

*Hmmm, I am worried about my security in my husband's house, the cultural practices have made my husband not to care about my welfare. He does not care whether I am comfortable or not. (Participant 8)*

*My husband and his family do not care much about me, today he will behave well towards me and the following day will differ. (Participant 11)*

This finding is in line with the findings of Arabpoor, (2003) who revealed that women's insecurity is as a result of many types of conflicts, aggression, domestic violence, discrimination, stress, depression, anxiety, uncertainty, worry and oppression contexts for women in Iran.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Schafer, Caetano, and Clark (1998), who found that domestic violence had affected one-eighth of US couples at least once in the previous year due to women's insecurity. Women who have experienced this violence have suffered severe physical harm, physical death, and even more.

The researcher is of the view that security in marriage is very vital and a married partner who thinks he or she is not secured due to the behaviour of the other partner may not be comfortable in the marriage leading to marital dissatisfaction.

#### Research Question Four

What strategies are employed to manage the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region?

This research question was intended to find out the views of married women on the strategies to manage the cultural practices that affect their marriage and the ways to improve their marital satisfaction. The findings revealed the strategies to manage negative cultural practices in marriage and the ways to enhance marital satisfaction. The discussions on the findings are discussed below based on the themes that emerged in the research question.

The first theme identified was an education. The findings revealed that education in culture can help the chiefs and elders in Natinga to implement cultural practices that will not affect marriages negatively. They explained that when there is education, the leaders in the community will adopt cultural practices that will enhance the welfare of people and also improve marital satisfaction. The men will not treat their wives badly if there is education in cultural practices. This information is evident in what a participants said:

*I was shocked when I realized that some of my community members still practice female genital mutilation and this affects the sexual satisfaction of married women therefore when my chief and the elders go through education, it will make them abolish the cultural practices that have a negative impact on marriage. (Participant 20)*

*Most of the elders in the Natinga community are illiterate and they don't even know that some cultural practices affect marital*

*satisfaction[pause], I think they should be educated on that.* **(Participant 17)**

These results are consistent with information from the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), published in 2003, which stated that the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa requires state parties to take all necessary legislative and non-legislative steps to end all harmful practices that have an adverse effect on women's human rights, including all forms of female genital mutilation. The conclusions are also consistent with the provisions of the Ghanaian Constitution of 1992, which stated in Article 2(5) that state parties shall pledge to change the social and cultural behavior of women and men through public education in order to achieve the abolition of harmful cultural and traditional practices.

The researcher is of the view that people should be given enough education on culture which will help them to adopt good cultural practices in their community especially cultural practices on marriage.

The second theme was marriage counselling. The study revealed that marriage counselling can help reduce bad cultural practices in marriage and also improve marital satisfaction. This information is evident in what some participants said:

*Hmm, my husband needs marital counseling, he treats me anyhow and doesn't value me in the marriage and this affects me in the marriage.* **(Participant 22)**

*My brother, marital counseling will help my marriage, it will make my husband to love me, value me more and also treat me well in the marriage. (Participant 18)*

The result is consistent with Ntim's findings (2014). Who shown that couples can make intelligent decisions about mending their relationship with the aid of marriage counseling, which can assist couples of all kinds recognize and resolve difficulties and enhance their relationships.

The results are also consistent with Stanley's (2000) findings, who discovered that marriage counseling created a standardized program with the aim of assisting couples in better understanding what marital companionship entails and assisting them in avoiding some of the factors that contribute to marital problems.

The researcher is of the view that marital counselling plays an important role in marriage as it will help couples to know each other better and help them how to treat their partners in the marital home to enhance marital satisfaction.

The third theme was women's involvement in decision-making. The findings revealed that when women are involved in decision-making in their husbands' house, it will improve upon their marital satisfaction. This information is evident in what some participants said:

*Women should be involved in decision-making in marriage, at least it lets them feel that they are part of their husband's family (Participant 14)*

*hmmm, I want my husband to involve me in decision-making in the marriage, I will also provide suggestions that can help the marriage to be better. (Participant 17)*

This is in line with the findings of Makombe, Temba and Kihombo, (1999), who revealed in their study that there is an improvement in gender relations and poverty alleviation and there is increased women's involvement in decision-making, control over household resources and freedom which enhances marital satisfaction.

The finding is also in line with the finding of Godara, Poonia, and Jyani, (2014) who revealed that women's involvement in the decision-making process has been of great importance because women play an important role in every household activity and gives excellent performance most of the time.

The researcher is of the view that women involvement in decisions in their marital homes can help their husbands to take good decisions that will help the whole family. There the saying that "what man can do women can do better", therefore women are very important in decision making.

The fourth theme was freedom of worship. The findings revealed that freedom of worship in marriage would enhance marital satisfaction, especially for married women. This information is evident in what some participants said:

*Hmm, I suggest that women who are Christians should not be forced to be Muslims because their husbands are Muslims and women should not be forced to be Christians because their husbands are Christians. (Participant 29)*

*The chief and leaders should declare freedom of worship in marriage. (Participant 9)*

The finding is in line with the constitution of Ghana (1992) which indicated that there is freedom of association or worship. Therefore, people should be given the chance to choose the religion of they want.

According to Sherkat (2004), who holds a different perspective, intermarriages between people of different religions frequently have an impact on spousal disputes, domestic abuse, divorce, and marital fertility. This is because of internal pressure to find a shared religious identity and ground, as well as external pressure from friends and family to learn how a religious outsider might improve their loved one's life. Intermarriages, he found, "have substantial repercussions on people's family lives, which lead to reduced fertility, higher rates of female work, poorer levels of marital satisfaction, higher rates of divorce, and greater spousal conflict. According to Sherkat's research, for a relationship to coexist, both individuals will need to give up some of their religious identity.

The researcher is of the view that freedom of religion in marriage will give equal right to the couples to choose the religion of their choice. This will encourage people with different region to marry each other without fear.

The fifth theme was the respect of partners, the findings revealed that respect among couples will improve marital satisfaction in Natinga. The women are of the view that if their husbands respect them, they will not treat them badly which will enhance their marital satisfaction. This information is evident in what two participants said:



*Respect is very important in marriage so men should respect their wives, respects make all the partners feel important in the marriage. (Participant 8)*

*Couples should respect one another; this can improve their marital satisfaction. (Participant 13)*

The results are consistent with those of Gottman (1999), who found that when mutual respect is shown, it creates a vulnerability where each individual can be themselves without worrying that they will be unfairly assessed or given less value. He further explained that a lack of respect may lead to divorce.

The discovery is also in line with the finding at kikegist.blogspot.com (2017) which revealed that respect is reciprocal, husbands should respect their wives and not treat them like a piece of furniture or rag. Every woman wants to be loved, noticed, heard, and respected by her husband. Mutual respect, remains one of the most important pillars of any happy marriage. if you respect each other, you will find it very difficult to shout, fight, hold grudges, keep malice or hurt yourselves in any way.

The researcher is of the view that respect among couples makes couples to value and care for each other.

The final theme was the support of partners. The findings revealed that support from men is very necessary for marriage and women want their husbands to support them in all they do such as education, finance, house chores and caring for their children. This information is evident in what two participants said:

*I want my husband to support me in everything I do in the marriage especially taking care of the children. am the one taking care of my children in terms of their education, clothing and anything they need. (Participant 7)*

*I need my husband's support in house chores to reduce stress at home, I cook, I fetch water, I wash clothes and utensils, bath my children etc., all these things I do make me sick regularly (Participant 13).*

These results are in line with Lawrence, Bunde, Barry, Brock, Sullivan, Pasch, White, Dowd, and Adams' (2008) study of 275 married couples, which found that wives should try to give more support to their husbands without feeling pressured to do so, and vice versa, in order to improve marital satisfaction. According to Lawrence et al. (2008), although the support given by the husbands might predict the marital contentment of the wives and husbands, the wives' demand for support could predict the marital satisfaction of both parties.

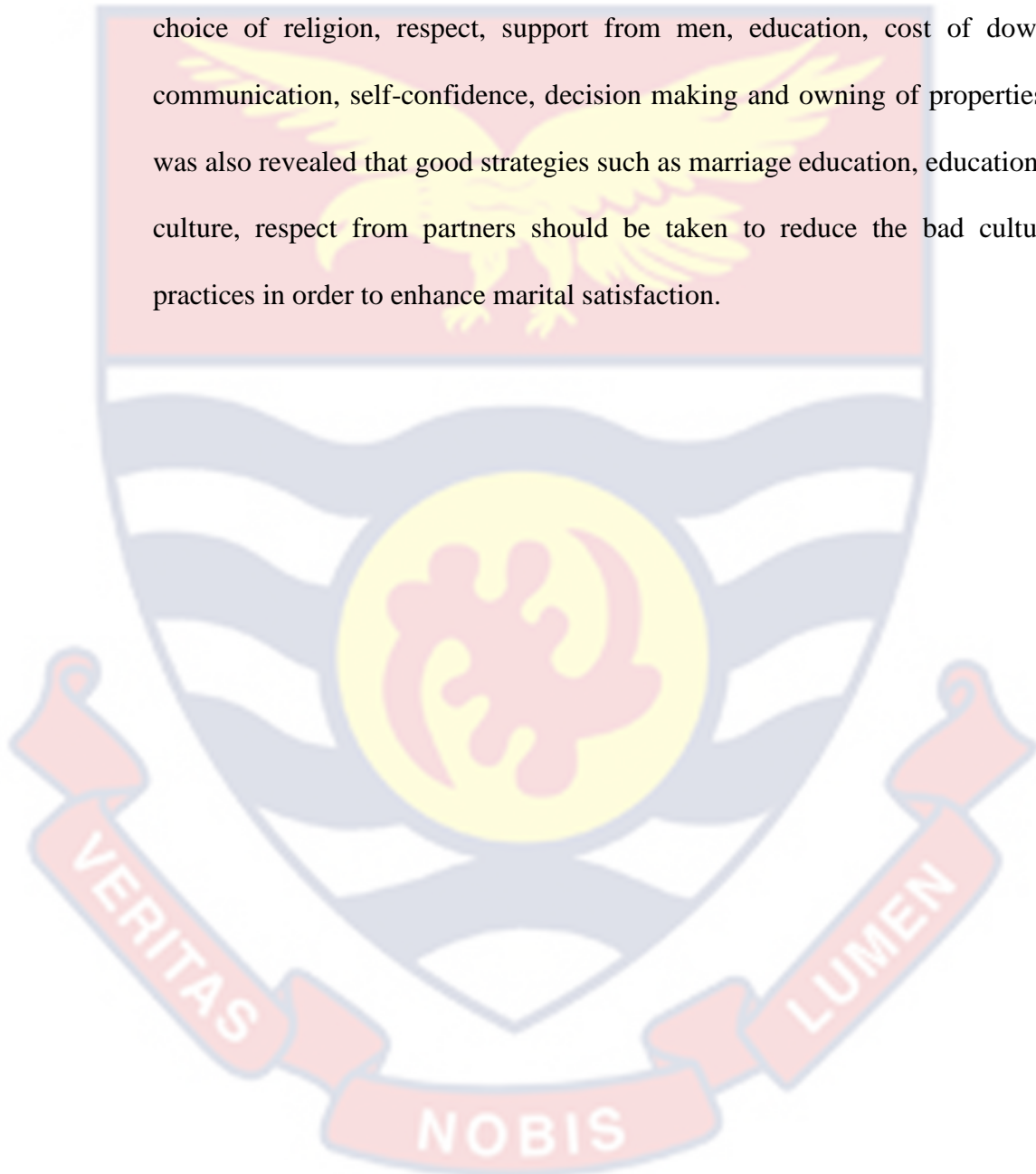
The researcher is of the view that marital satisfaction can be enhanced when couples support each other. Supports such as financial support, support in house chores, care for children and any other support that couples need from their partner to improve marital satisfaction.

### **Chapter Summary**

The study's answers and analyses are showed in this section. The answers of 30 married women in Natinga's Bawku West region were used to determine the results. The study found that poor cultural marital customs in

Natinga are to blame for the majority of married women there not being happy in their marriages.

The study revealed that these cultural practices have impacted negatively on the marital gratification of the married women in terms of choice of religion, respect, support from men, education, cost of dowry, communication, self-confidence, decision making and owning of properties. It was also revealed that good strategies such as marriage education, education in culture, respect from partners should be taken to reduce the bad cultural practices in order to enhance marital satisfaction.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter includes an overview of the major conclusions, recommendations, and ideas for additional study.

#### Summary of the Study

The study's aim was to investigate how cultural practices affected married Natinga women in the Upper East's Bawku West district in terms of marital satisfaction. The study's particular objectives are to:

1. Identify the cultural practices of Natinga people on marriage in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.
2. Examine the cultural practices that affect the marital satisfaction of Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.
3. To assess the effects of the identified cultural practices on marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.
4. To identify strategies that will control the cultural practices that affect marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in Bawku West District of the Upper East region.

The study's conceptual framework, empirical findings, and related hypotheses were all reviewed by the researcher. Additionally, the study's qualitative methodology and phenomenological research design were employed by the researcher. The study was made up of married women at Natinga in the Bawku West District and then 30 married women were sampled

for the study. The researcher used an interview guide for the collection and a thematic approach was used for the analysis of the data.

### Key Findings

The main findings of the study are that:

1. Marriage involves cultural practices and the cultural practices on marriage in the Natinga include payment of dowry, men only taking decisions in marriage, properties acquired during marriage are owned by the husband, only women do house chores and women join their husband's religion when they marry.
2. Cultural practices in Natinga that affects marital satisfaction. The study revealed that in Natinga women are not allowed to take part in decision making in their marital home and this affects their marital satisfaction because they feel neglected and unimportant in their husband house.
3. The finding also revealed that property acquire during marriage are for the husband even if the woman contributed towards the acquisition of that property. Whether the property is acquired by the man or the woman during marriage, only the husband can claim ownership of such property based on the culture of Natinga. This practice discourages women from acquiring property which affects their marital satisfaction.
4. The study also revealed high payment of dowry in the Natinga community. Women are treated badly due to the high cost of dowry in the community.
5. The study revealed that women in Natinga cannot choose their own religion. This decision is the reserve of their husbands.

6. The findings revealed that married women are not respected in their marital homes due to the bride price paid by men. This makes the men think that they have bought the women and therefore, treats them anyhow without respect.
7. The findings also revealed that married women are highly stressful in their marital homes because they do not get support from their husbands in terms of chores. They explained that the workload in the house made them to have headache, waist pains, back pain, high blood pressure and sleepless nights.
8. The findings further revealed that married women in Natinga are distressed in their marriage and currently have the desire to divorce. The participants explained that most of them are beaten and insulted by their husbands almost every day making them uncomfortable in the marriage and are willing to divorce.
9. Another finding revealed is that there is lack of security in marriage among Natinga community. The married women believed that they are not secured in their marriage because of the way they are treated by their husbands.
10. The findings revealed that education would help reduce negative cultural practices in the Natinga community. When people in the community are giving education on the negative impact of the culture, they could change and adopt good cultural practices to enhance marital satisfaction.
11. The finding also revealed that marital counselling could help to change the way men treat their wives. They explained that when couples

undergo marital counseling, they would adopt good cultural practices that could enhance their marital satisfaction.

12. The findings further revealed that involvement of women in decision making in their marital homes could increase their marital satisfaction.

### **Conclusions**

The study concluded that;

People get into marriage with expectations of companionship, affection and security, only to be let down and not receive the fulfillment they anticipate. Married Natinga women in the Bawku West section of the Upper East region have experienced this.

Generally, it can be concluded that married women in Natinga were not satisfied with their marriages because of bad cultural practices used in the community. It was realized that married women were not respected, they are forced to join the religion of their husbands, not involved in decision making, lack security in marriage and highly stressed up.

It can also be concluded that married women who are frustrated due to the negative cultural practices by their husbands now have the desire to divorce which may affect the care of children.

According to the researcher, everyone should pay attention to this issue in order to ensure appropriate cultural traditions and improve marriage satisfaction among couples in Natinga.

### **Implications for counselling**

The study has affirmed a number of findings which has a number of implications such as:

It is a very worrisome issue to know that married women in the Natinga at Bawku West district were not satisfied in their marriage. The implication is that some things are either not done right by their husband or the stakeholders (counsellors, religious leaders, media, etc.) issues on marriage.

Another implication from the study is that counsellors should know that although formal education is important, it is not a panacea to marital problems and other life problems. To be satisfied in one's marriage couples need a whole area of education different from what is learned in the classroom or lecture rooms.

Lastly, the finding of the study implies that counsellors have a lot more to do in terms of premarital counselling.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings of this study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

The ministry of chieftaincy and religious affairs and Non-Governmental Organisations should educate chiefs, opinion leaders and elders in Bawku West district to adopt good cultural practices that will protect married women and hence improve marital satisfaction.

Focus should be placed on the factors that make a woman happy in a marriage by counselors, religious leaders, elders, chiefs, and researchers who are interested in marriage issues. Both the expectations of a man to make his marriage successful and the expectations of a man to make his wife happy in marriage should be hammered home.

The study revealed that most married women are treated like slaves in their husbands' house, it is recommended that the Ministry of Gender, Children and

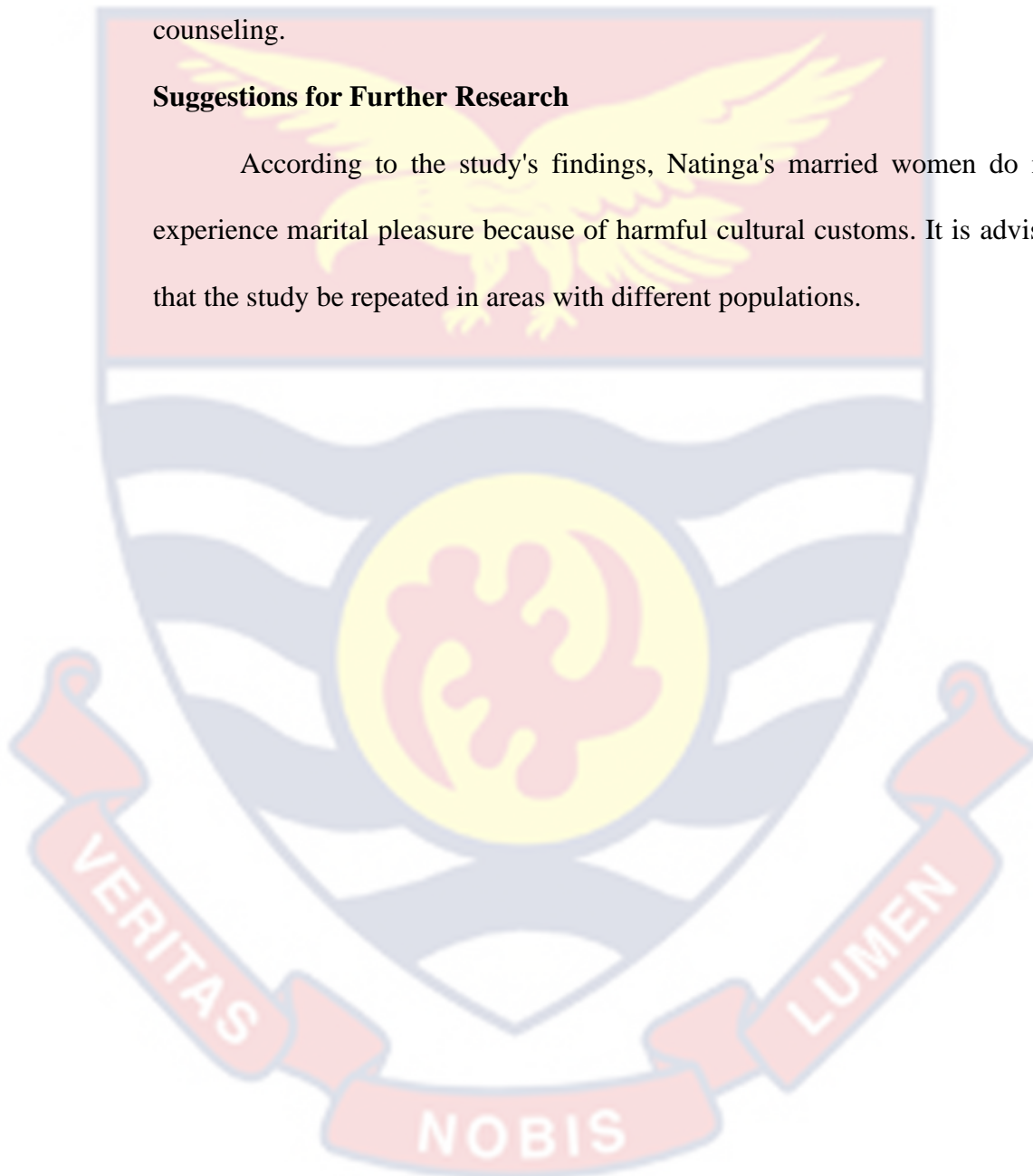


Social Protection affairs should enact laws that will protect women in their husbands' house and men who abuse their wives should be punished.

Additionally, counselors must work harder in the area of premarital counseling. They ought to urge more youthful individuals to attend premarital counseling.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

According to the study's findings, Natinga's married women do not experience marital pleasure because of harmful cultural customs. It is advised that the study be repeated in areas with different populations.



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APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A**

**INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR NATINGA MARRIED WOMEN**

I am Jameidu Mbawini Sadat, an M.Phil. student of University of Cape Coast and I am conducting research on **the effects of cultural practices on marital satisfaction among Natinga married women in the Bawku West District of the Upper East region.** This study is for academic purpose only. Your candid opinions will be highly appreciated. You are assured that your responses will be held confidentially.

**Background Information of Respondent**

- a) How old are you? .....
- b) What is your level of education? .....
- c) How long have you been married?.....

**Cultural Practices in Natinga**

Please what are the cultural practices among Natinga people in your marriage?

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**Cultural Practices affecting Marital Satisfaction**

1. Do you take part in decision making in the family? Tell me what you do.  
.....
2. Do your community still Practice Female genital mutilation?.....  
.....
3. Are you treated like a slave in your husbands' house and any proof of that?  
Or how? .....
4. Are you allowed to continue your education after marrying? if no, why  
not? .....
5. What does your husband do when he wants to marry another  
woman?.....
6. Has your husband given you a separate room in the marriage? If no, why  
not? .....
7. Are you allowed to join any religion of your choice when married? If no,  
why not?.....
8. What cultural practices do you think does not make you enjoy your  
marriage?.....

**Effects of Bad Cultural Practices on Marital Satisfaction**

1. Do you become inferior in your marital home? How? .....
2. Do you communicate freely with your husband? If no, why not?  
.....
3. Have you regretted marrying? If yes, why?  
.....

4. Do you lose your self-confidence because of marriage? who?

.....

5. Do your husband care about your welfare as a wife? How?

.....

6. Does your husband respect you in the marriage? If no, why?

.....

7. Are you enjoying your marriage? if yes, how? If no, why?

.....

**Strategies to manage the effects of cultural practices on marital satisfaction**

1. Please what strategies can be used to reduce the bad cultural practices among the Natinga culture for you to have a satisfied marriage?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What do you think could be done for you to become satisfied in your marriage?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*THANK YOU*

APPENDIX B

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA



Our Ref: CES-ERB/ucc.edu/16/22-33

Date: 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2022

Your Ref: .....

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB  
Prof. J. A. Omotosho  
jomotoso@ucc.edu.gh  
0243784739

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB  
Prof. K. Edjah  
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh  
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB  
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde  
lforde@ucc.edu.gh  
0244786680

The bearer, Jambie du Mbawini, Sadat, Reg. No. EF/ECT/21/0002 is  
M.Phil. / Ph.D. student in the Department of ... Guidance ...  
and Counselling ... in the College of Education Studie.  
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to  
undertake a research study on the topic:

Impact of cultural practices on marital satisfaction  
of Nafuga married women in the Bawku West  
District of the Upper West Region of Ghana

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies  
(CES) has assessed his/her proposal and confirm that the proposal  
satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the  
study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval  
to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would  
give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said  
research.

Thank you.  
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde  
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

**DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

Telephone: 0332091854

E-mail: [dgc@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:dgc@ucc.edu.gh)



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref:

Your Ref: DGC/L.2/VOL.1/181

30<sup>th</sup> March, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

We introduce to you, Jambeidu Mbawini Sadat a student pursuing an M.Phil. Programme in Guidance and Counselling at the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast. As a requirement, he is to submit a Thesis on the topic: *"Effects of Cultural Practices among Women in Zebilla of Upper East Region"*. We are by this letter affirming that, the information he will obtain from your Institution will be solely used for academic purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could provide him the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

Dr. Stephen Doh Fia  
**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**