

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS INFLUENCING MARRIAGE LONGEVITY AMONG  
COUPLES IN KWADASO MUNICIPALITY OF ASHANTI REGION,

GHANA



GRACE YEBOAH

2024

© 2024

Grace Yeboah

University of Cape Coast



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

FACTORS INFLUENCING MARRIAGE LONGEVITY AMONG  
COUPLES IN KWADASO MUNICIPALITY OF ASHANTI REGION,  
GHANA

BY

GRACE YEBOAH

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  
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

JUNE 2024

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

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

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

Name: .....

### Supervisors' Declaration

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

Principal Supervisor's Signature..... Date .....

Name: .....

Co-Supervisor's Signature.....Date .....

Name: .....

## ABSTRACT

Marriages are expected to last long; however, little is known about the factors that lead to lasting marriages in Ghanaian societies, especially within the Kwadaso Municipality in Ashanti Region. The mixed-method investigation examined factors influencing marriage longevity among 130 couples married for a minimum of ten years. The research employed a Likert scale questionnaire and an interview guide to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were analysed through Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), hierarchical multiple linear regression, and chain mediation analyses. Thematic analyses were used to analyse the qualitative data. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment across married men and women. Whereas factors such as intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction, and conflict management significantly determined marriage longevity, trust, religiosity, procreation, and counselling showed no significant influence. Intimacy and trust were identified as mediating factors, positively predicting marriage longevity through their influence on sexual satisfaction. Qualitative insights confirmed that love is a fundamental element because couples stay long in their respective marriages. It is recommended that counsellors also employ evidence-based ways to assist couples in developing and strengthening various areas of their relationship. Counsellors should also prioritise designing and assessing targeted relationship interventions for couples seeking lasting marriages.

## KEYWORDS

Double mediation analysis

Kwadaso District

Marital longevity

Factors

Thematic analysis

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my principal supervisor, Rev. Fr. Prof. Anthony K. Nkyi, for his invaluable guidance, support, and suggestions, which have been instrumental in completing my thesis. My profound appreciation goes to my co-supervisor, Rev. Prof. Kwasi Otopa Antiri, for his unwavering encouragement and insightful contributions, which significantly enriched my work. I am deeply grateful to Professor Godwin Awabil for his steadfast guidance and support throughout my postgraduate academic journey at the University of Cape Coast.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to all my lecturers, whose scholarly contributions have significantly aided in the completion of this programme, as well as to the staff of the Department of Guidance and Counselling. I am incredibly grateful to my husband, Dr. Anthony Yeboah, whose unwavering support and encouragement have been instrumental in my successful completion of this program. My profound gratitude extends to my daughters, Marian and Ella, and my siblings, Quirinio, Elfrida, and David, for their encouragement and support throughout this journey.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the married couples in Kwadaso Municipality who, despite their demanding schedules, dedicated time to respond to the research inquiries. I am also profoundly thankful to Dr. Frank Quansah, Mr. Pius Gammete, and all who supported me throughout this research endeavour, including my fellow PhD students in Guidance and Counselling, whose feedback and shared experiences have significantly enriched my academic development, as well as the authors whose works have informed this study.

## **DEDICATION**

To my parents



**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEYWORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	8
Purpose of the Study	13
Objectives of the Study	13
Research Questions	13
Hypotheses	13
Significance of the Study	14
Delimitations	16
Limitations	17
Definition of Terms	18
Organisation of the Study	19
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	20
Theoretical Framework	20

Conceptual Review	30
Meaning of Marriage	30
Meaning of Marital Longevity	32
Marital Adjustment	33
Love	34
Commitment in Marriage	35
Communication	37
Marital Preparations	38
Forms of Marriage in Ghana	38
Empirical Review	41
Demographics and Marriage Longevity	42
Contributions of Love, Counselling, Religiosity, Trust, Conflict	
Management, Procreation, Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy, Conflict	
Management and Commitment to Marital Longevity Among Couples	54
Pathway Connection Among Religiosity, Commitment, Conflict	
Management and Marriage Longevity	98
Chain Connection Between Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy, Trust and	
Marriage Longevity	101
Conceptual Framework	104
Chapter Summary	106
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS	
Introduction	109
Research Paradigm	109
Research Approach	110
Research Design	111

Study Area	113
Population	115
Sampling Procedures	116
Research Instruments	121
Pilot Test	127
Validity of the Instrument	128
Reliability of the Instrument	131
Data Collection Procedures	132
Data Management	136
Data Processing and Analysis	137
Quantitative Data Analyses	137
Qualitative Data Analyses	139
Ethical Considerations	141
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Quantitative Results	145
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	145
Research Question One	148
Assumptions	149
The outcome of the MANOVA test	151
Research Question Two	153
Qualitative Results	169
Participants Characteristic	170
Marriage Longevity Factors/ Contributing Factors	170
Managing Strategies for Marital Conflict	189
Non-Contributing Factors and Marriage Longevity	191

Discussion of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings	194
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	194
Gender (married men and women) differences that exist in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment.	197
Contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among spouses	199
Emerging Contributing Factors from the Interviews on Marriage Longevity	217
Connection between Religiosity, Commitment, Conflict Management and Marriage Longevity	220
The Connection Between Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy, Trust and Marriage Longevity	227
Observed Model for Determinants of Marriage Longevity	233
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Overview	237
Summary	237
Summary of Key Findings	239
Conclusion	242
Contribution to Knowledge	243
Implications for Counselling Practice	244
Recommendation	248
Suggestions for Further Research	249

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE	295
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE	304
APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE	306
APPENDIX D: INTRODUCTORY LETTER	307
APPENDIX E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE	308

**LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. The Fifteen Towns in the District	117
2. Distribution of Participants by Town in the Municipalities	118
3. Summary of Stages in the Sample Selection	121
4. Demographic Profile of the Respondents	146
5. Other Demographic Characteristics	148
6. Normality Diagnostics	149
7. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances	150
8. Descriptive Information for the MANOVA	151
9. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects	152
10. Correlation Matrix	156
11. Model Summary	157
12. Model Fit Indices	159
13. Regression Coefficient Parameters	160
14. Total Effect, Direct Effect and Indirect Effect of Religiosity on Marriage Longevity	162
15. Total Effect, Direct Effect and Indirect Effect of Sexual Satisfaction on Marriage Longevity	166
16. Themes and Sub-themes of Qualitative Data	170

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure	Page
1. Conceptual Framework	105
2. A Pictorial Depiction of a Sequential Explanatory Model	113
3. Map of Kwadaso Municipal Area	115
4. Normal Q-Q Plot	154
5. Standardised Residual Plot	154
6. Observed Conceptual Framework	234

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a fundamental institution in many cultures which plays role in the social, emotional, and cultural fabric of societies. In Ghana, marriage has traditionally been viewed as a cornerstone for social stability, the perpetuation of family lineages, and the maintenance of societal norms. However, the dynamics of marriage, particularly factors that contribute to its longevity, are important in the face of rising global divorce rates. This study focuses on understanding the factors influencing marital longevity among married couples in the Kwadaso Municipality of the Ashanti Region, Ghana, where divorce rates are notably lower compared to other regions.

This research builds upon previous studies conducted in different cultural contexts around the world and in Ghana. Earlier studies such as the one in Kenya (Odhiambo & Maito, 2013) and Sweden (Kaslow et al., 2014) have provided general insights into marital conflict and satisfaction. However, they have not comprehensively explored the factors contributing to marriage longevity in the Ghanaian context. This study will fill a gap in the existing literature by providing empirical evidence on marriage longevity in Ghana. Practically, it will serve as a resource for counsellors, social workers, and religious leaders to develop more effective counselling strategies.

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

Marriage is a significant milestone in one's life, characterised by communication, adjustment, and identification. It is a union of two individuals who embark on a journey to establish their own family (Eyo, 2018). Globally, marriage is regarded as a recognised and controlled human institution deeply



rooted in cultural, religious, and social practices (Tasew & Getahun, 2021; Olugbenga, 2018). It is a fundamental social institution that contributes to the continuity of society and plays a crucial role in both individual and societal well-being (Pauli & Van Dijk, 2016).

It is considered a relationship between a man and a woman, symbolising the legitimate union through which offspring are born and the family unit is perpetuated (Hayden, 2005). Gerber et al. (2017) view marriage as a socially and legally sanctioned union of a man and a woman, governed by societal laws, norms, beliefs, and attitudes. Within this partnership, effective communication and interaction form the bedrock of its long-term viability (Güven, 2017). The institution of marriage plays a crucial role in various aspects of society, serving as a fundamental human connection and a sacred relationship between two individuals (Jaggi et al., 2022; Olugbenga, 2018).

Ghana's Marriage Act of 1884–1985 (CAP127) defines marriage as a legally recognised, voluntarily entered union between a man and a woman. The document outlines the legal prerequisites and protocols for the solemnisation and registration of matrimonial unions. The preceding discussions view marriage as a means to establish a familial link, recognised legally, religiously, or socially, where the participating parties share conjugal rights and duties.

The ideology surrounding marriage has evolved significantly, with debates and controversies arising in modern society (Uecker & Stokes, 2008). Waite et al. (2002) highlight the controversial nature of marriage, originally defined as a union between a man and a woman but which has since expanded to include various forms such as same-sex, multiple, and arranged marriages. While acknowledging the diversity of marriage types, this study specifically

focuses on the traditional man-woman partnership, wherein couples leave their respective families to establish a new one.

Marriage longevity, defined as the duration of a marriage, is influenced by a complex interplay of cultural, societal, religious, economic, legal, and individual factors (Sassler & Lichter, 2020). In Ghana, marriage longevity refers to the period from the commencement of the marriage until the demise of one spouse, a legal separation, or the customary dissolution of the marriage (Tonah, 2022).

The investigation into marital longevity is deeply rooted in philosophical constructs and enriched by diverse theoretical frameworks such as Gottman's Theory, Social Exchange Theory, and Wallerstein and Blakeslee's Model. It finds resonance with Aristotelian philosophy and the concept of Eudaimonia, which emphasises human flourishing and underscores the enduring importance of this research domain (Ryan et al., 2008). Aristotle's belief that human beings are inherently social creatures implies that the quality of their relationships is integral to their well-being (Ryan et al., 2008). Consequently, as a central relationship in many individuals' lives, marriage significantly influences overall well-being. Thus, the study of marital longevity becomes crucial in understanding human flourishing, underscoring the necessity of exploring this area in this research.

Marital success, characterised by adaptation, adjustment, satisfaction, and permanence, is a central objective within any marital partnership (Davies, 2011). Achieving marital longevity and sustaining a fulfilling and enduring relationship depend on many factors. Although many marriages endure for decades, much of the research in marital psychology has focused on relatively

young couples and on marriages that end rather than remain intact (Levenson et al., 2013). As a result, our understanding of the factors contributing to marriage longevity is limited. The prevalence of divorce globally has prompted researchers to study the reasons behind marital breakups and divorce (Bachand & Caron, 2001). In the United States, the current divorce rate suggests that approximately 40–50% of marriages will end in divorce, making divorce a more common cause of marriage dissolution than mortality (Lopus & Frye, 2018).

Cohabitation without marriage is also becoming more prevalent in Western Europe (Perelli-Harris & Lyons-Amos, 2015). It led to declining marriage rates but not necessarily long-term relationship stability. Cultural factors, including more liberal attitudes towards divorce and alternative family forms, contribute to these trends (Lesthaeghe, 2020). In Western Europe, countries such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom have experienced relatively high divorce rates (Amato & James, 2010). However, there is a notable trend towards later marriages, which Wilson and Smallwood (2008) correlate with marriage longevity.

In African countries, marriage longevity is multifaceted and influenced by traditional, religious, and socioeconomic factors. In North Africa, for example, the divorce rate is lower because prevalent religious and cultural values discourage divorce (Sonbol, 1996). In contrast, West Africa displays more diverse trends. In Nigeria, for instance, the crude marital dissolution rate (CMDR) was 11.0 per 1000, the divorce rate (CDR) was 5.0, and the separation rate (CSR) was 6.0 per 1000 population (Ntoimo & Akokuwebe, 2014).

There has been a noticeable increase in divorce and separation rates among married couples in Ghana, indicating a significant societal shift.

Comparative data from Ghana's Population and Housing Censuses (PHC) revealed a dramatic change over the past decade. In 2010, approximately 250,000 individuals were divorced, and 200,000 were separated. By 2021, these figures had escalated to 553,065 divorced and 405,090 separated individuals. This marks a 121% increase in divorces and a 103% rise in separations over 11 years (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2010, 2021). Therefore, recognising the factors contributing to marital longevity is essential for promoting successful and enduring marriages, which fosters individual and societal well-being. Previous research has highlighted the significance of various factors, including counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment (Lee et al., 2020; Smith, 2019). Examining these factors becomes paramount. By delving into these intricate dynamics, researchers gain valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that shape marital partnerships and influence their longevity.

Some studies (Lavner & Bradbury, 2012) focused on factors influencing the stability and longevity of marriages. Researchers have identified positive communication patterns, higher levels of relationship commitment, and shared interests as variables that contribute to the longevity of heterosexual couples (Lavner & Bradbury, 2012). Additionally, demographic factors such as the presence of children in the home, age at marriage, past cohabitation, higher household income, and demographic similarities between partners have also been associated with long-lasting relationships (True, 2007).

Previous studies (Rauer et al., 2017; Hawkins & Booth, 2015; Bachand & Caron, 2001) have yielded inconsistent findings when examining the relationship between marital longevity and positive or negative aspects of

marital relationships, and they have also observed gender differences in marital longevity. Research has linked positive relationship dynamics to marital stability (Timothy-Springer & Johnson, 2018; Phillips et al., 2012; Bachand & Caron, 2001), while negative characteristics of marital relationships are more significantly associated with marriage longevity than couples' physical and psychological health (Rauer et al., 2017). Additionally, research has identified various protective factors associated with long-term marriages (Hawkins & Booth, 2015). However, some researchers suggest that both the advantages and disadvantages of a couple's relationship contribute to the longevity of their marriage (Hatch & Bulcroft, 2004; Gottman & Notarius, 2000).

Furthermore, some studies (Kaslow et al., 2014; Fenell, 2013) have identified specific characteristics prevalent among couples who have maintained a long-lasting marriage for at least 20 years. The characteristics comprise a steadfast devotion to solemn matrimony, unwavering allegiance to one's spouse, robust ethical principles, reverence for one's spouse as an intimate companion, assiduity in maintaining sexual chastity, aspiration to fulfil the role of a responsible parent, conviction in God and spiritual commitment, a wish to gratify and assist one's spouse, the capacity to be a good companion, and a readiness to forgive and receive forgiveness (Fenell, 2013). These findings highlight the importance of various factors in fostering marital longevity.

In addition to these characteristics, Goodman (1999) emphasised the role of intimacy as a significant determinant of marital longevity. In addition, Goodman (1999) and Blow et al. (2015) have also shown that couples who experience emotional closeness, vulnerability, and a deep connection tend to have more enduring and fulfilling marriages. Conversely, autonomy, or the need

for individual independence within the relationship, does not significantly influence marital longevity (Blow et al., 2015).

Research on the characteristics that contribute to long-lasting marriages, both quantitative and qualitative, has been scarce in Africa (Karimi et al., 2019). The existing literature on marital longevity has predominantly focused on Western societies, with limited attention given to African contexts (Eduah, 2019; Odhiambo & Maito, 2013). While these studies touched on aspects of marital dynamics, a focused investigation into the factors influencing marital longevity in the African context, particularly in Ghana, is notably limited. These research gaps highlight the need for a comprehensive investigation of the factors influencing marital longevity among Ghanaian couples. Building upon these previous findings, this study further explores the factors contributing to marital longevity, explicitly focusing on counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment.

The present study sheds light on the importance of understanding the factors contributing to enduring marriages. By examining the trajectories of marital longevity and considering individual characteristics, relationship dynamics, and external stressors, this study sheds light on the dynamics supporting long-lasting marriages. The results of this study have implications for individuals, couples, and society as a whole, as they aim to inform interventions and strategies that improve relationships and promote marital stability. By focusing on couples in the Kwadaso Municipality in Ashanti Region of Ghana, this study contributes to a greater understanding of the factors influencing marital longevity. It provides insights that can positively impact couples and the larger community. Upon this bedrock, the study investigates

factors contributing to marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality in Ashanti Region of Ghana.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Given the benefits of happy marriages and the potential consequences of marital distress and divorce, much research has focused on understanding factors contributing to satisfaction and stability (Mokhtari et al., 2020). A global perspective (Noor et al., 2019) revealed that marital longevity was a concern across cultures and countries. Understanding the factors contributing to enduring marriages has become even more critical in today's rapidly changing world, with increasing divorce rates worldwide.

Kaslow et al. (2014) examined 95 couples residing in Sweden who had been married for 20 years or more. The findings indicated that leisure time, shared interests, sexual intimacy, life philosophy, and a reduction in quarrels influenced marital longevity. Also, Sharlin (2016) investigated marital longevity among Israeli couples who had been married for 25–40 years. The study revealed no significant differences in the factors contributing to marital longevity between husbands' and wives' responses. The most significant factors contributing to marital longevity mentioned by these couples were mutual trust, support, appreciation, respect, loyalty, fidelity, love, decision-making, and reliability (Sharlin, 2016). Likewise, Rapkin (2010) adopted a qualitative approach to investigate the variables contributing to stability in long-term marriages among Quaker couples who had been married for at least 20 years. Rapkin's study found that internal and external factors contributed to marital longevity.

In Africa, Odhiambo and Maito (2013) examined the social dimensions of marital conflict in Kenya. The study selected married couples from the Anglican Diocese of Maseno North, Kenya. Interviews were used for data collection. Among other factors, the study found that destructive marital conflict was perceived to be related to a wide array of factors grouped into five interrelated categories: socio-economic factors, sociocultural factors, personal attributes of the spouse, domestic family life factors, and structural inequality factors. However, Odhiambo and Maito's study did not focus on marital longevity. Additionally, the study only selected married couples from a single church.

Ghana has conducted extensive research on marriage, but not all aspects receive equal attention. One such area is marriage longevity, where there have been alarming trends and obstacles to the stability of marital institutions. Only 1,617,844 (19.34%) of the 8,366,466 married individuals in Ghana are legally married ((GSS,2021). The data further indicated that divorced individuals comprise 553,065 (34.18%), and separated individuals comprise 405,090 (25%). Divorces involving marriages of four years or less account for the highest percentage (18.6%) of total divorces. Following this are marriages lasting 5-9 years (18.0%) and those lasting 30 years or more (16.8%). Despite this, the GSS (2021) report shows a remarkably low divorce rate of 2.7% in the Kwadaso Municipality, which is lower than rates in other municipalities, such as Oforikrom Municipal (2.9%) and Asokore Mampong Municipal (3.8%). This disparity raises important questions about the factors contributing to marital stability in Kwadaso and highlights the need to explore the factors that sustain marriages in the municipality. Investigating these dynamics could provide



valuable insights for promoting stronger, long-lasting unions in other areas facing higher divorce rates. This underscores the pressing necessity to examine the factors that impact marriage longevity, as the rising instability of marriages in Ghana has detrimental effects on families and society stability.

While previous studies (N-yelbi et al., 2024; Bentil, 2021; Nuhu, 2020; Eduah, 2019 & Owusu, 2018) have explored various aspects of Ghanaian marriages, there is noticeably limited research into the factors contributing to marriage longevity. Bentil's (2021) research used a concurrent design to investigate marital satisfaction among spouses in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages in the Kumasi Metropolis in Ashanti Region of Ghana. The results suggested that spouses in inter- and intra-ethnic marriages expressed dissatisfaction with the inheritance pattern for their children, and spouses aged 20–30 years reported significantly higher marital satisfaction levels than those aged 41–50 years.

Furthermore, Nuhu (2020) employed a concurrent mixed method to investigate the socio-economic consequences and determinants of divorce in the Kumasi Metropolitan Area from the perspective of divorced people. Infertility, infidelity, domestic violence, duration of marriage, alcohol and drug usage, sexual intimacy, and age at first marriage were the most prominent predictors of divorce in the Metropolis.

However, none of these studies explicitly examined the elements contributing to the length of marriages. N-yelbi et al. (2024) and Eduah (2019) conducted the closest study to this current research. N-yelbi et al.'s research utilised a quantitative method to investigate couples' level of education, marital longevity, and religion as determinants of marital stability among couples in the

Tamale Metropolis. Their findings revealed significant disparities based on educational attainment, duration of marriage, and religious affiliation, emphasising the need to consider these factors for healthy relationships among couples. Eduah (2019) employed a qualitative approach to investigate the factors contributing to marital longevity in the Agona West Municipality. He identified six critical factors: conflict resolution skills, financial stability, mutual respect, shared values and beliefs, and effective communication. These findings emphasise the importance of socioeconomic factors and interpersonal dynamics in maintaining long-term marriages.

This study shares similarities with Eduah's and N-yelbi,'s et al. works, focusing on understanding factors influencing marital longevity. However, it diverges by delving into different determinants of marriage longevity, employing a mixed-methods approach, shifting the geographical focus to the Ashanti Region, and using distinct estimation methods to provide deeper insights into marital dynamics. These research gaps highlight the need for a comprehensive investigation of the factors influencing marital longevity among Ghanaian couples.

While there has been limited work on marriage longevity, Ghana's studies primarily focused on marriage satisfaction and divorce. The study examines the impact of factors such as sexual satisfaction, counselling, religion, procreation, intimacy, commitment, trust, and procreation on marriage longevity among married couples in Kwadaso Municipality, aiming to comprehensively understand these factors.

Again, to investigate the determinants that impact the longevity of marriages, I drew upon my own life experiences. My parents had been married

for more than half a century prior to the demise of my mother. Having personally observed the intricacies and subtleties of their enduring union, this subject captivated my interest. In order to obtain comprehensive insights, my objective was to examine it using a mixed-methods approach by addressing the deficiencies and constraints in the current body of literature (N-yelbi et al., 2024; Eduah, 2019). This methodology facilitates a more comprehensive and intricate comprehension of the length of marriage.

Examining marriage longevity in Ghana's Kwadaso Municipality has significant cultural and sociological importance beyond academic investigation. Marriage is a fundamental pillar in Ghanaian culture, ensuring social stability, safeguarding cultural traditions, and meeting societal demands such as reproduction and family lineage perpetuation (Dery & Bawa, 2019).

Earlier Ghanaian studies on marriage longevity have focused on demographic factors that predict the length of marriages, neglecting other factors that might determine the length of marriages and the differences between genders about these predictors. The research focuses on Kwadaso Municipality, a cosmopolitan area with diverse tribal populations, to understand the factors affecting the duration of marriages among couples.

The present study sheds light on the importance of understanding the factors contributing to enduring marriages. By examining the trajectories of marital longevity and considering individual characteristics, relationship dynamics, and external stressors, this study sheds light on the dynamics supporting long-lasting marriages. Based on this foundation, the study investigates factors contributing to marital longevity among married couples in Kwadaso Municipality in Ashanti Region of Ghana.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of this research is to examine the factors influencing marital longevity among married couples residing in the Kwadaso Municipality of Ghana. The study aims to;

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. investigate cisgender differences in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment among married men and women.
2. explore the contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among married couples.
3. investigate whether commitment and conflict management significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among married couples.
4. investigate whether intimacy and trust significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among married couples.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What cisgender (married men and women) differences exist in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment?
2. What are the contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among married couples?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at a 0.05 significance level in line with the study.

1. **H<sub>01</sub>:** Commitment and conflict management will not, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among married couples

**H<sub>A1</sub>:** Commitment and conflict management will, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among married couples.

2. **H<sub>02</sub>:** Intimacy and trust will not, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among married couples

**H<sub>A2</sub>:** Intimacy and trust will, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among married couples.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this investigation have substantial implications for various stakeholders, including marriage counsellors, individuals, policymakers, researchers, and religious leaders who counsel couples experiencing marital difficulties. The research would provide counsellors, priests, imams, pastors, catechists, and other religious figures with empirical insights that would enable them to counsel couples in an informed and effective manner.

The research would be essential for counsellors and social workers involved in counselling couples, particularly premarital counselling. By comprehending the determinants of marital longevity, they could concentrate

on the most significant factors, such as commitment, intimacy, trust, conflict resolution strategies, and others. In addition, because the effects of divorce extend to children and the broader community, the study's findings would help counsellors develop more effective therapeutic interventions.

The findings of this study are significant for marriage counsellors and couples, particularly those on the verge of divorce due to conflicts. Understanding the conflict management strategies employed by married couples provides valuable insights that can inform counselling practices and intervention programs. By disseminating this knowledge through workshops and seminars would equip couples with practical ways to deal with problems in their marriage.

Also, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) specialising in marriage and family relationships would benefit from the study's findings, as they could use the information to create educational programmes for married couples and those intending to marry.

The study's findings would be significant academically because it would fill a gap in the literature on marriage counselling. The study would offer empirical insights to enhance the understanding of determinants of marital longevity among couples and provide a firm foundation for future research. In addition, the findings would be essential for academics in related fields, allowing them to expand the scope of their research.

The findings would serve as a vital resource for government agencies responsible for marriage issues to develop policies, create therapeutic interventions, and improve educational programmes tailored for those intending

to marry and married couples to the specific cultural context of the Kwadaso Municipality.

To conclude, the investigation has extensive societal implications. Given the central role that marriage plays in fostering individual and societal well-being, the results of this study would increase marital longevity, reduce divorce rates, and promote social harmony.

### **Delimitations**

The study focused exclusively on monogamous, legally recognised heterosexual relationships, which are marriages between a man and a woman. Therefore, I excluded cohabitation and other categories of couples from this study. Furthermore, the research specifically focused on married couples residing in the Kwadaso Municipality who possessed a minimum of ten years of union and a wealth of experience in matrimony. This was in line with the recommendation of Amato et al. (2007), who found that couples reaching this milestone were more likely to provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to their long-lasting marriages.

Many factors contribute to marriage longevity, but this study focuses on the following variables: sexual satisfaction, professional counselling, religion, intimacy, commitment, trust, conflict resolution strategies, and procreation.

I selected the Kwadaso Municipality as the area of investigation for this study due to its record of a low divorce rate. Comparably, Kwadaso Municipality has one of the lowest divorce rates compared to other municipalities in the Ashanti Region (GSS, 2021). In the Kwadaso Municipality, the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), in its 2021 Population and Housing Census Report, stated that 38,819 individuals were married, compared

to 3,449 divorced. The statistics brought to light that, in numerical terms, the number of married individuals exceeded the number of individuals who had divorced; (thus, the number of married persons jumped from 12,366 in 2010 to 38,619 in 2021, and the number of divorced individuals also jumped from 1061 in 2010 to 3449 in 2021(GSS, 2010, 2021). Therefore, this makes it a more appropriate study area for this research, which aims to obtain diverse perspectives in examining issues of marriage longevity and its associated determinants.

Additionally, I used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to gather extensive information and gain a deeper understanding of the research topic. The survey involved the communities in the Kwadaso Municipality.

### **Limitations**

Due to the sensitive nature of the investigation, it suffered from some limitations. During data collection, I noted that some participants hesitated to share complete and candid information, potentially impacting the comprehensiveness and trustworthiness of the findings. I clarified to the participants the connection between other variables of interest, the topic under study, and their potential impact on the substance of their marriage.

In pursuit of data collection, I visited participants at their respective places of worship, namely churches and mosques, immediately after their religious services. Notably, some participants showed signs of fatigue or appeared to be tired. Therefore, since the disposition of these individuals during their responses to the survey questions had a negative effect on their responses, possibly providing ununiformed responses in an attempt to complete the questionnaire, hence compromising the objectivity of the responses given, the



researcher asked them to have a 10 minutes break to stretch themselves before coming back to sit to answer the questions probed further by using interview sessions in order to get an unbiased response from participants.

Due to the many variables involved, a study on the factors influencing marriage longevity focused on the Kwadaso Municipality rather than all of Ghana. Due to Kwadaso Municipality's unique characteristics, the results' applicability is limited. However, Kwadaso Municipality has socio-cultural and demographic characteristics similar to those of other municipalities and hence serves as a prototype for such municipalities in Ghana.

### **Definition of Terms**

***Marriage:*** According to this study, marriage is a monogamous, legally recognised public and permanent union of man and woman as husband and wife.

***Marital Longevity:*** This refers to marriages that have been intact and successful for a minimum of ten years.

***Married Couples*** consist of a man and a woman who have entered into matrimony in Ghana through ordinance, religious or traditional customs.

***Intimacy*** is a close, familiar, and typically affectionate or adoring personal relationship with another individual. Various behaviours and emotions comprise intimacy, including physical contact, communication, exchanging personal experiences and thoughts, and demonstrating compassion and support.

***Cisgender:*** An individual whose gender identification aligns with the biological sex of the individual assigned at birth.

## **Organisation of the Study**

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one, the introductory chapter, covers the background, research problem, research questions, and hypotheses. The research's significance, delimitations, and limitations are additionally elaborated. The literature review in Chapter two encompasses theoretical Framework, conceptual, and empirical reviews.

Chapter three describes the research methods employed to obtain information for the study, which includes the research approach, research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection methods, and data analysis approach. Chapter four presents the study findings, followed by a discussion. Chapter five covers the summary, conclusions, implications for counselling, practices, recommendations, contribution to knowledge and suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

This section evaluates the literature on variables influencing marital longevity in the Kwadaso Municipality. The literature review was structured around three main categories: Theoretical, Conceptual, and Empirical reviews. Some Theories of Marriage were reviewed. The conceptual review examined the concept of marriage, marriage longevity, marital adjustment and others. The empirical review drew literature from various sources, including local and international viewpoints from books written by individuals and groups, journals, articles, other academic works and the internet.

#### Theoretical Framework

##### Gottman Theory

The Gottman Method addresses issues in verbal communication while fostering intimacy, respect, and affection. It aims to eliminate barriers that cause stagnation while fostering empathy and understanding within the relationship (Gottman, 2021).

Every couple has disagreements and negative interactions. Gottman contends that although couples believe their relationships are unique, conflicts exist. He posited that there are two categories of marital conflicts. They are resolvable and perpetual conflicts. The Gottman Institute (2021) reports that married couples' interactions remain stable over time, and Gottman characterises approximately 69% of partner problems as "perpetual problems" because personality differences prevent resolution. Gottman has posited that couples should construct a discussion rather than a resolution when problems

persist. Couples frequently become "gridlocked" when they cannot discuss these issues; as a result, each partner eventually becomes emotionally distant. Therefore, communication is essential to marital happiness and promotes marital longevity.

Gottman's theory asserts that positive interactions and a solid friendship are vital for marital satisfaction and predicting long-term relationship stability. He suggests that a positive-to-negative interaction ratio of 5:1 is crucial for maintaining a stable marriage. In other words, couples who endure together experience at least five positive interactions for each negative one during conflicts. According to the study, most of these conflicts faced by couples are perpetual; therefore, the purpose of their theory was to teach couples how to live with this type of conflict (Gottman, 2002). Gottman further discovered that how couples navigate through conflict and express their emotions will ultimately determine who stay together and who divorce (Gottman, 1994). Furthermore, Gottman elucidated that a stable marriage experiences happiness and remains unaffected by separation or divorce. His key finding was that only higher levels of positive effects could predict marital stability and happiness (Gottman, 1999).

The fundamental principle behind the Gottman theory is the Sound Relationship House Method. The house functions as a metaphorical representation of a stable marital union. Gottman delineates seven stages a couple might navigate to enhance their relationship and two crucial pillars supporting the maintenance of unity (Gottman, 2021). Gottman delineates the seven stages and two crucial pillars as follows:

- a. Build love maps: Couples become acquainted with one another's interior psychological realms on this level of the Sound Relationship House.
- b. Share fondness and admiration: Couples strengthen their bond by explicitly expressing gratitude and regard for one another on this floor.
- c. Turn towards, not away: This level entails attentively recognising and responding to one's partner's requests for solace, affection, and attention.
- d. The positive perspective: This floor facilitates the development of a positive perception of each other among partners, allowing them to view mistakes as situational occurrences rather than personal shortcomings.
- e. Couples on this floor learn to manage conflict through a three-step process. First, partners consider each other's feelings. Next, they discuss their problems. Finally, when partners feel overwhelmed during the conflict, they learn techniques to self-soothe and keep their cool.
- f. Make life dreams come true: The second-to-last floor focuses on encouraging and championing one's companion's aspirations and objectives.
- g. Create shared meaning: The uppermost level of the building parallels the ground level in terms of comprehending an internal realm. However, this instance pertains to the intimate world of the couple, necessitating the exploration of the customs and narratives that are of significant importance to them.
- h. Trust and commitment: The two weight-bearing walls of the Sound Relationship House help couples work through the seven floors. Trust is the foundation of any healthy relationship, and learning to build and maintain trust is essential to building a lasting bond. Trust lets couples

believe they can rely on one another and feel like a team. The theory also stresses that couples must show commitment in the relationship. Commitment, therefore, means couples have agreed to stick together and improve their relationship. Making a mutual commitment to each other and nurturing that commitment over time is the ultimate key to a lasting and fulfilling relationship.

According to Gottman's theory, couples go through a "sentiment override." As Gottman (1999) describes, the sentiment override concept may manifest as positive or negative. People with "chips on their shoulders" experience negative sentiment override. These partners are constantly alert for slights or physical aggression from their spouses. However, even the partner's criticism is considered educational rather than personal when positive sentiment overrides. A positive sentiment override cultivates an atmosphere of increased tolerance and acceptance between spouses. In contrast, a negative sentiment override leads to the anticipation of poor behaviour from one's partner. Studies indicate that the key factor is not the occurrences within the marriage but how spouses interpret and communicate those occurrences. According to various researchers (Bradbury, 1998; Fincham & Linfield, 1997; Gottman, 1999; Levenson et al., 1994; O'Leary & Smith, 1991), the significance of marriage lies not in the events that occur within it but in how the spouses interpret and articulate those events.

This study used Gottman's well-established Theory of Marriage as its theoretical basis. Gottman's theory, developed via an extensive longitudinal study spanning 25 years, is a fundamental framework for comprehending marital fulfilment and long-term success. Despite complaints about the

potential for overly broad divorce predictions without conducting cross-validation studies (Heyman & Smith-Slep, 2001), Gottman's paradigm remains widely respected in marital research.

Gottman's theory is important because it emphasises marital satisfaction rather than divorce prediction. This aligns with the study's goal of forecasting a marriage's duration through stability. Moreover, the study suggests that positive emotion override is widespread among couples in the Kwadaso Metropolis. These findings indicated that these couples see criticism from their partners as useful information rather than a personal attack, which promotes understanding and acceptance within the partnership. This positive attitude override is likely to decrease negative expectancies and have a favourable impact on the long-term success of the couple's marriage.

Gottman's theory was integrated into the research design as the foundation for understanding relationship dynamics, especially regarding emotions and conflict resolution. The theory influenced the development of research questions focused on intimacy and conflict management. The data collection method was an interview, which captured key behaviours emphasised in Gottman's work. The interpretation of results was guided by the theory, focusing on identifying relationship stability, emotional responsiveness, and conflict resolution patterns to understand their contribution to marriage longevity.

### **Social Exchange Theory (SET)**

Social Exchange Theory (SET) is a seminal framework that provides a rich context for understanding the complexities of social interactions, particularly within the construct of marriage. This review dissects the

complexities of SET introduced by George C. Homans in the 1950s, its implications for understanding marriage dynamics, and its relevance to marriage longevity.

Developed by Homans in 1950, SET lays the groundwork for interpreting social behaviour through the lens of 'exchange,' which looks much like an economic transaction (Molm, 2015). At the heart of this theory is the assumption that social interactions are driven by the intent to maximise benefits and minimise costs. This assumption forms the fundamental building block for decoding the structure of social relationships, particularly within the institution of marriage (Emerson, 1976).

In SET, rewards are the perceived benefits derived from a relationship. Within marriage, these rewards can range from emotional support and companionship to financial stability (Homans, 1958). Conversely, costs encapsulate the investments or sacrifices made in a relationship, such as commitment, time, emotional effort, and financial resources (Homans, 1958). This transactional perspective posits that the dynamic interplay between these rewards and costs influences relationship satisfaction and, by extension, the longevity of a marriage.

Homans introduced the concept of 'Comparison Level' (CL), which essentially acts as a personal benchmark individuals use to evaluate the relative attractiveness of rewards and costs in a relationship. Influenced by past relationships, societal norms, and individual expectations, CL is a crucial determinant of relationship satisfaction (Sprecher, 1998). A reward-cost ratio exceeding the CL signals marital satisfaction, which leads to marriage



longevity, while falling below this level can engender dissatisfaction and conflict.

Homans (1958) also presented the 'Comparison Level for Alternatives' (CLalt) alongside the CL. This SET facet entails assessing one's current relationship against potential alternatives. It could translate into evaluating the prospect of life with another partner or even singlehood in a marriage; if an individual perceives that an alternative yields superior rewards or lesser costs than their current marriage, a higher propensity exists for marital dissolution.

The commitment represents the magnitude of dependency an individual has on a relationship. In SET, commitment evolves as a function of the relationship's perceived rewards and costs, the individual's CL, and their CLalt (Rusbult, 1980). A high degree of commitment, where the individual perceives the benefits of the marriage to outweigh costs or alternatives, can be linked to a higher likelihood of marital longevity.

SET underscores the critical role of rewards, costs, CL, and CLalt in determining a marriage's longevity. Empirical studies substantiate that high reward levels effectively manage costs, and a high CL, combined with a low CLalt, tends to foster commitment and contribute to marriage longevity (Carr, 2004).

Applying the Social Exchange Theory (SET) provides an analytical lens for understanding the dynamics of marital relationships, particularly in Kwadaso Municipality. SET posits that social interactions function as transactions to maximise rewards and minimise costs. Through applying SET to marital relationships in Kwadaso Municipality, this study illuminates the intricate interplay of rewards and commitment in shaping satisfying, enduring

marriages. The maximisation of rewards, such as mutual sexual satisfaction and financial transparency, fosters robust commitment, a critical determinant of marital longevity (Rusbult, 1980). As a result, SET provides a robust framework for understanding marital dynamics, emphasising the critical role of reward maximisation and commitment in promoting marital longevity.

However, while SET presents a comprehensive framework for understanding marital dynamics, it lacks limitations. SET may overlook various external factors that affect marriage longevity, such as socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and life events (Amato, 2010).

Homans' Social Exchange Theory offers invaluable insights into the dynamics of marital relationships. The interplay of rewards, costs, comparison levels, commitment, and alternatives provide a robust foundation for predicting marital longevity. This theory not only elucidates the nuances of marital relationships but also offers practical implications for marital therapists and counsellors in their efforts to foster satisfying and enduring marriages.

### **Wallerstein and Blakeslee's (1995) Model**

Wallerstein and Blakeslee's (1995) model served as the theoretical foundation for examining the factors that lead to a long-lasting marriage. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) created a revolutionary approach titled "The Good Marriage," in which they identified and utilised nine developmental tasks and obstacles that long-term married couples face. This method went beyond merely describing or defining the relationship. Instead of viewing long-term marriages as a moment in time, this model emphasises the responsibilities a couple must fulfil to preserve their connection. It is crucial to acknowledge that marriage is a dynamic, ever-changing process (Wallerstein &

Blakeslee, 1995). As a result, Wallerstein and Blakeslee built a variety of activities that they found to be prominent in long-term marriages, and their model serves as the theoretical underpinning for the current study. Wallerstein's and Blakeslee's idea of marriage as a process instead of a moment is consistent with the current study's exploration of the factors contributing to marriage longevity among heterosexual couples in long-term marriages. Wallerstein and Blakeslee's model also helped determine if heterosexually married people were on the path to long-term marriages and how they approached and kept their partnerships going for long periods.

In light of the different types of marriages, the "nine developmental tasks of marriage" approach may be useful for identifying the specific factors that contribute to a happy, long-lasting union. According to Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995), a healthy marriage necessitates developing new coping strategies for life's challenges. So, experiences during hard times in a marriage can be broken down into eight developmental tasks, each of which is important for a healthy relationship: (a) separating from one's biological family; (b) developing togetherness, affection, and independence; (c) maintaining personal privacy while becoming a parent; (d) dealing with life's crises; (e) creating a safe space for conflict; (f) establishing and maintaining a fruitful sexual relationship; (g) maintaining a healthy relationship with one's partner; and (h) maintaining a healthy financial relationship (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). Alternatively, past studies have used the model to study the features of married couples and those whose marriages collapse (Jeanfreau et al., 2018; Timothy-Springer & Johnson, 2018). Individuals in a long-term marriage should be assessed based on their growth and the couple's progress. Several viewpoints

on marriage and divorce have been applied to Wallerstein and Blakeslee's (1995) model (Gnilka, 2007; Jeanfreau et al., 2018; Timothy-Springer & Johnson, 2018). The features of a relationship and the developmental characteristics of the people that comprise a long-lasting marriage must be considered.

In the present investigation, the researcher utilised the model of Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) to guide and emphasise a set of processes that promote long-lasting marriages and overcome the obstacles that couples in long-term marriages face. Using Wallerstein and Blakeslee's conceptual framework, the researcher sought to increase understanding of the factors contributing to long-lasting marriages in the Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana. This study examined and focused on the experiences of long-married couples by identifying (a) factors that contribute to marriage longevity and (b) mechanisms that aid in overcoming obstacles and increasing awareness of their existence.

A society with strong cultural ties should focus on the last phase of developing an enduring relationship. Couples who can maintain their fundamental values while navigating change will likely have a longer lifespan in the Kwadaso Municipality, where traditions and practices are subject to change. This adaptation may entail striking a balance between conventional wisdom and contemporary standards, underscoring the significance of cultural sensitivity in research on the durability of marriages.

Furthermore, the model developed by Wallerstein and Blakeslee emphasises the value of communication, emotional closeness, and joint meaning-making in maintaining marriages. In Kwadaso, where interpersonal

relationships are integral to the community, it is crucial to investigate how couples create and preserve emotional intimacy in the face of cultural norms. Viewing these elements leads to a more nuanced view of marital longevity. Cultural differences may impact effective communication and the development of shared meaning.

### **Conceptual Review**

The conceptual review of this study considered the main concepts in the area of study to arrive at a generalisation. It is based on things other researchers have seen, experienced, or believed concerning factors influencing marital longevity. Specifically, the conceptual review focused on the following;

- a. Concept of Marriage
- b. Concept of Marital Longevity
- c. Marital Adjustment
- d. Love
- e. Commitment to Marriage
- f. Communication
- g. Marital Preparations
- h. Forms of Marriage in Ghana

### **Meaning of Marriage**

Marriage is a complex social institution that regulates and governs various aspects of human life globally. It is a concept with multiple definitions and explanations. Westermarck defines marriage as a lasting bond between a male and a female that extends beyond reproduction, enduring until after the birth of offspring (Smith, 1891). Hoebel (2009) sees it as a set of social

standards defining relationships between a mated couple, their kin, offspring, and society. Robert Howie, as cited in Cherlin (2017), describes marriage as a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates.

Malinowski, as cited in Skalník (2013), interprets marriage as a contract for producing and maintaining children, while Baxter (2017) posits that it involves rules and regulations that dictate the rights, duties, and privileges of spouses towards each other. Haviland (1996) emphasises that marriage is a socially-recognised transaction and resulting contract where a woman and a man have a continuing claim to sexual access to one another, including the ability to produce children. Additionally, Haviland (2000) highlights that marriage is a connection between one or more individuals, recognised by society, granting them ongoing rights to sexual access.

Marriage is the legalisation of a unique relationship between a man and a woman, approved by society, and can only be dissolved with the state's consent (Braver & Lamp, 2013). It legally and socially binds spouses to each other and society. Marriage is a means to fulfil an individual's physical needs, particularly their sexual desires, in a legal, customary, culturally-defined, and socially-acceptable manner.

Yodanis et al. (2015) note that marital relationships often involve a contract, either written or based on tradition, outlining the rights and obligations of partners towards each other, their children, and relatives. Naue and Kroll (2009) propose that societal mechanisms shape the individual "me" and "you" into an "us" identity, which relationships maintain or modify.

One of marriage's key functions is to facilitate the formation of a family by uniting two individuals with distinct personalities, psychological

characteristics, and often different socioeconomic backgrounds (Adegoke & Esere, 2009; Bali et al., 2010). After marriage, there is typically an adjustment period during which both partners must compromise to ensure the relationship's longevity.

Flood (2011) highlights marriage's role in conceiving and nurturing children by involving both parents in a continuous union. Brake (2012) argues that marriage is justified as it protects loving relationships, and Hartley and Watson (2012) point out that it provides caregivers for children's upbringing. In Ghana, the traditional definition of marriage persists, emphasising it as a lifelong interpersonal connection defined by legal, customary, and religious norms between a man and a woman as husband and wife (Asadinik, 2010).

### **Meaning of Marital Longevity**

Marriage is a significant commitment, often seen as a lifelong contract sanctioned by the state. However, the definition of a long-term marriage varies among researchers. Some consider marriages lasting fifty years or more (Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Lauer et al., 1990; Roberts, 1980) or twenty-five years or more (Fenell, 1993; Kaslow & Robison, 1996) as long-term. There are even broader definitions, such as between sixty and eighty-five years (Spaniol et al., 2008) or when a couple has been married longer than when they were single.

Debates surround the length of long-term marriages, with some studies focusing on marriages of 20 to 55 years (Ade-Ridder, 2015) or 40 years or more, especially among older couples (Sporakowski & Axelson, 2014). Other studies also set a minimum number of years married, such as 10, 20, 25, or 30+ years (Glenn, 1998; Levenson et al., 1993).

Given the limited research on long-term marriages, particularly those lasting ten years or more, in Ghana, this study aims to explore the factors contributing to couples' enduring relationships, thereby contributing to the field's understanding of this topic.

### **Marital Adjustment**

The psychological state that happy couples exhibit when they are content with their matrimonial union is known as marital adjustment. Individuals must enter a fulfilling partnership marked by reciprocal regard, consideration, comprehension, and approval to achieve this. In some fashion, the goal of every marriage is to attain contentment, which can be accomplished through marital adjustment. Most couples enter into matrimony with certain expectations. While some expectations may seem practical, others will be deemed unattainable. This is due to the intricate nature of matrimony and the fact that every person is as unique as the universe.

Marital adjustment is when marriage partners attempt to re-enact specific relational systems or situations obtained in their earlier family groups (Albuquerque et al., 2016). It represents a partnership between husband and wife characterised by companionship, shared core values, emotional closeness, adaptability, joy, and possibly additional unidentified elements (Nadar, 2018).

Hence, marriage adjustment constitutes the collaborative endeavour of the partners to achieve a mutual understanding, accomplish a shared objective, and harmonise the unique circumstances of the matrimonial union (Frantz & Dagan, 2004). To maximise satisfaction, marriage adjustment entails modifying, adapting, and correcting the conduct and interactions of individuals and couples (Carr, 2012). For a marriage to be adjusted, both partners must be mature



enough to recognise the progression and evolution of their union. The marriage is doomed to dissolve unless this development is completely realised.

## **Love**

Love has been debated and analysed over the years, with various philosophers and theorists offering different perspectives on its nature and significance. According to Voltaire and Diderot, love is primarily driven by appreciating another person's sexuality. However, Jean-Jacques Rousseau had a contrasting view, emphasising love as a passion, purification, and a sense of community oneness (Singer, 1984).

Singer (1984) described that Kant viewed love as goodwill and affection, facilitating others' happiness and finding joy in their happiness. Marriage is often considered valid due to the presence of love (Westermarck, 1936), and couples recognise love as a crucial element influencing the quality and stability of their marriage (Riehl-Emde et al., 2003).

Love is fundamental to successful and long-lasting marriages, and studies by Roberts (1980) and Goedecke (1982) further emphasised love's importance in marriages of varying durations. Sternberg (1986) proposed a triangular theory of love consisting of three components: intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. The strength of these components determines the amount and type of love experienced. Sternberg (2004) identified eight distinct subsets of love's components, including Nonlove, Liking, Infatuated love, Empty love, Romantic love, Companionate love, Consummate love, and Fatuous love, each with unique qualities.

He further expressed that nonlove represents the absence of all three components, often found in casual relationships, and liking involves intimacy

without passion or commitment. Empty love exists in long-term partnerships devoid of emotional involvement and physical attraction (Sternberg, 2004). He further explained infatuated love as characterised by intense arousal without intimacy or commitment.

Sternberg described romantic love as the combination of emotional connection and physical attraction. Companionate love results from the interplay of intimacy and decision/commitment and often occurs in long-term marriages (Sternberg, 2004). Further, he explained fatuous love as emerging when passion and commitment combine without intimacy and consummate love and as representing the ideal, where all three components work together harmoniously. This is often sought after in romantic relationships.

In summary, love is a multifaceted and complex emotion, with its nature and significance varying depending on individual perspectives and relationship dynamics. It plays a central role in the quality and longevity of marriages and can take on various forms, each with unique characteristics.

### **Commitment in Marriage**

Commitment is a fundamental aspect of marital longevity, encompassing a deep desire to remain in the marriage, even when faced with confusion and complex situations (Schoebi et al., 2012). A review of marriage literature suggests that commitment involves the intention to sustain a marriage due to devotion and satisfaction with one's partner, a belief in the sanctity of marriage as a sacred institution, and a personal obligation to honour marriage vows.

Moller (2005) emphasised that commitment involves looking ahead to a lifelong connection and a binding force that endures. It allows for the renegotiation of the relationship as changes occur (Davies, 2011). Commitment is considered one of the key factors contributing to marital longevity, as highlighted by Cheung (2005) and Kaslow and Robison (1996). It may also be driven by a desire to avoid potential financial or social penalties associated with divorce (Adams & Jones, 1997; Davies, 2011).

Couples with a strong commitment to marriage tend to view marital problems as solvable and believe they can work through challenges, fostering behavioural steps that enhance their relationship (Stanley et al., 2010). Committed couples develop a sense of togetherness, form an identity, and envision a shared future.

Stanley and Markman (1992) further identified two constructs of commitment: personal dedication and constraint commitment. Personal dedication involves maintaining the relationship for mutual benefit, thus contributing to its longevity. In contrast, constraint commitment is driven by external forces that compel individuals to remain in the relationship, regardless of their dedication.

Also, Cuber and Harroff (1965) differentiated between instrumental and intrinsic marriages. In instrumental marriage, individuals stay married for its advantages over being alone, reflecting a commitment to the institution. Intrinsic marriage is characterised by dedication to the other person as a unique individual, resulting in a stronger, less ambivalent bond.

Commitment inevitably enhances a relationship's security while constraining other close partnerships. It allows for genuine expressions of

emotions and simple ideas, fostering a deeper connection. Married couples with mutual commitment tend to have more intimate relationships, express more love, and effectively resolve problems, contributing to marital longevity.

Moreover, individuals whose commitment evolves to a higher devotion to their spouse as a person tend to express more love and encounter fewer marriage problems (Carr et al., 2014).

### **Communication**

An essential aspect of any successful relationship is good communication, which includes both sides freely and honestly expressing their thoughts and feelings and sincerely trying to understand the other's thoughts and feelings (Burns & Scott, 1989). This verbal interaction is most effective in a safe environment (Appleton & Bohm, 2001; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 1999), and it is most beneficial to share wants and emotions as they arise (Appleton & Bohm, 2001; Kaslow & Robison, 1996; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995).

To build solid relational foundations, people must talk at the risky and vulnerable gut level, sharing their core as individuals (Powell, 1969). Listening to emotions, reading between the lines, and observing the other person's approach to communicating are all critical aspects of effective communication which is essential in marriage. The subject of couples' communication, or the lack of it, has attracted much attention (Fowers, 2013). According to Fowers (2013), marriage communication serves two primary goals. The first kind of communication is self-expression, mutual understanding, and emotional connection. The second sort of communication is appropriately discussing the issues a couple will face.

## **Marital Preparations**

Couples often use the engagement period as a precursor to marriage to engage in discussions, make adjustments, and work on compromises within their relationship (Burgess & Wallin, 1953). Research indicates that premarital preparation conducted six to twelve months before marriage is more likely to yield positive results compared to programmes initiated just one month before the wedding. This more extended preparation period allows for potential re-evaluation of the relationship, as the likelihood of delaying or cancelling the wedding decreases as the wedding date approaches (Giblin, 1994).

Engaged individuals generally perceive marriage preparation programmes as beneficial, with specific areas of focus considered crucial for their learning. These areas include dealing with work-related stress, understanding the impact of children on marriage, sustaining romance within the marriage, handling anger and communication issues, resolving differences, and identifying potential signs of trouble in marriage (Williams, 1992).

## **Forms of Marriage in Ghana**

In Ghana, marriages fall into three categories: ordinance marriages, customary marriages, and Mohammedan marriages (Dzadey, 2015; Offei, 2007). Ordinance marriages can be monogamous, while the other two are polygamous. However, a growing trend of informal partnerships like cohabitation has become popular in Ghana (Obeng-Hinneah & Kpoor, 2022). This shift has implications for traditional marriage and may contribute to the rising divorce rates in Africa, including Ghana.

### *1. Marriage under Customary Law*

Before 1884, customary marriage was the only form of matrimony recognised in Ghana. Under customary law, marriages can be polygynous, allowing men to have multiple wives simultaneously (Offei, 2007). Typically, Ghanaian weddings start with a traditional ceremony before formalisation under the ordinance (Svanikier, 2007).

In customary marriages, the betrothed presents the bride's family with a bridal price of cash and alcoholic beverages. The bride's family must return the bride price in the event of a divorce, and the spouse at fault for the dissolution may be obligated to compensate the other spouse (Offei, 2007). For instance, if the husband's actions lead to a divorce, he must pay his wife afterwards. Conversely, if the wife's infidelity causes the divorce, she may have to compensate the husband. In customary marriages, there is no marital property division upon divorce, as couples are expected to acquire property independently (Takyi, 2012). While the Matrimonial Causes Act (MCA) in 1971 allows for the dissolution of customary marriages in court if desired, few couples married under customary law seek annulment through the legal system ((Wanitzek, 1991)).

### *2. Marriage under Mohammedan Marriage Regulation*

A Ghanaian Muslim marriage must be registered under the Mohammedan Ordinance to be considered legal in Islam (Gandedzie, 2016). Many Islamic weddings in Ghana are considered traditional and not recorded under the Mohammedan ordinance. Islamic marriages can be polygamous, as the Quran allows men to marry up to four women simultaneously (Shukri & Owoyemi, 2014). A marriage registered under the Mohammedan ordinance can

be dissolved by divorce if both parties agree (Offei, 2007). However, the wife cannot unilaterally divorce herself without her husband's consent unless a pre- or post-marital contract allows it. In some situations, she may obtain a divorce through a judicial decision (Offei, 2007). Conversely, the husband can divorce his wife anytime without reason.

No specific guidelines regarding property division upon divorce in marriages registered under the Mohammedan ordinance are readily available. However, Ghanaian jurists believe that if such cases were brought to court, property distribution would be at the judge's discretion, as specified by the MCA (1971), which applies to all marriage types (Wanitzek, 1991). It is worth noting that there is limited case law on property settlements in dissolved Islamic marriages, suggesting that property distribution, if any, is often done privately by the spouses themselves (ibid). As a result, it remains unclear whether women in Mohammedan Ordinance marriages receive a fair share of marital property in case of divorce.

### *3. Marriage by the marriage ordinance*

Marriages under the ordinance in Ghana are conducted and officially registered in a church or at a Marriage Registrar's office. Notably, polygyny is prohibited for those married under the Marriage Ordinance, unlike in customary and Islamic marriages, as stated in the Criminal Offences Act (1960) (Act 29), Sections 262 and 263(1) (Davis, 1962). If an ordinance marriage has irretrievably broken down, the courts have the authority to dissolve it, with the criteria for such dissolution outlined in Article 2 of the Matrimonial Causes Act (MCA). Furthermore, if both parties agree, property settlement can be addressed during the divorce proceedings. The diversity of marital forms in Ghana,

including customary, Islamic, and ordinance marriages, carries significant implications for the division of marital property. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) committee recommended that the Ghanaian government establish consistent laws regarding marriage and family, as emphasised in Article 16 of the CEDAW. This recommendation was prompted by Ghana's submission of combined third, fourth, and fifth periodic reports to the CEDAW committee concerning the implementation of CEDAW principles in Ghana (Quansah, 2011).

### **Empirical Review**

The empirical review literature was drawn from various sources, including local and international viewpoints from books written by individuals and groups, journals, articles, other academic works and the internet. This section would include the following strands:

1. Demographics and Marriage Longevity
2. Gender differences in the levels of trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment among married men and women.
3. Contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among couples.
4. Mediating roles of commitment and conflict management in the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity.
5. Mediating roles of intimacy and trust in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity.



## **Demographics and Marriage Longevity**

Numerous demographic factors influence marital longevity. These factors act as moderators of marital conflict and stability in first-married and remarried couples. Musick and Bumpass's (2012) study was distinctive in examining the durability of well-being changes throughout evolving (and potentially disintegrating) marriages and cohabitations. Research has established that the effects of marriage and cohabitation are comparable in terms of psychological well-being, health, and social connections, among other indicators. Marriage does not invariably exhibit a positive correlation with statistically significant disparities. Despite the increased volatility of cohabitation, differences are generally inconsequential and seem to diminish over time.

Kowal et al. (2021) conducted a global study using an international sample to validate the associations between marital stability and the number of offspring and their modifiers. The study utilised information from a published dataset comprising 7,178 married individuals from 33 countries and territories. Analysis revealed that marital stability was significantly and negatively correlated with the number of children. Furthermore, economic status and individual level of individualistic values did not interact with the number of children or marital stability. Finally, we found that sex, education, and religiosity interacted with marital stability.

Xu et al. (2015) used data from the first part of the Chinese Family Panel Study, conducted in 2010, to look into the link between the likelihood of divorce and four child-related factors in China: age, gender, and number of children born before marriage. The study found a statistically significant impact of all

four variables on the likelihood of divorce. More precisely, the following relationships can be identified: (1) marriages are more likely to experience divorce among couples who have premarital children; (2) marriage stability increases with the number of children; (3) younger children mitigate the risk of divorce to a greater extent than older children, and (4) marriages with sons have a lower likelihood of divorce. These results align with previous research and suggest that children significantly contribute to maintaining marital stability and resolving conflicts. Additionally, due to differences in cultural values and modernisation between rural and urban areas, the positive impact of children on marital stability, along with the significance of children's gender, is more pronounced in rural regions.

According to Fatima (2023), the study discovered a negative association between knowledge and marriage stability, showing that empowering local communities via education may be a useful strategy for reducing marriage dissolution. The study's findings have significant policy implications, and couples must prioritise initiatives to restore their marriages to protect their offspring.

Byrne and Barling (2017) examined the possible consequences of the marital connection when high-status women have higher occupational status roles than their husbands. The study's primary aim was to examine the impact of spouses' occupational statuses compared to their spouses on marital instability. There is a suggestion that this correlation is indirect and is mediated by adverse affective states and relationship dissatisfaction regarding their partners' diminished employment status (referred to as "wives' status leakage"). Secondly, the research investigated potential crossover effects between the job

status of the wives of husbands and their marital instability. We hypothesise that the husband's support as a spouse could alleviate the indirect correlation between the job status of the wives and marital instability. A sample of 53 matched husband-wife dyads of 209 women in high-level employment participated in the study three years later; 92 wives were requested to complete questionnaires. Complete longitudinal and cross-sectional support was provided for the indirect carryover effects of wives' occupational status on the marital instability of wives, as well as the direct crossover effects on the marital instability of husbands. In addition, instrumental support mitigated the indirect correlation between spouses' occupational status and marital instability.

In their study, Dakin and Wampler (2008) examined the attributes of 51 couples with extremely low income and 61 couples with moderate income who were undergoing treatments in a community clinic affiliated with a university. The clinic operated on a sliding fee structure. Significant disparities existed among the groups except for the number of children and the wife's ethnicity. Middle-income couples had higher levels of education, a greater likelihood of being employed full-time, a lower likelihood of belonging to a minority group, were older with longer-lasting relationships, and had a higher likelihood of experiencing family issues. Furthermore, middle-income couples exhibited significantly lower scores on the General Severity Index of the Brief Symptom Inventory while showing elevated scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The importance of these distinctions for clinicians is emphasised. This is because financial stress sometimes leads to marital discord, and the lower unemployment rate (among women 0.8% vs. men 3.1%) may contribute to marital stability in these couples (Dakin & Wampler, 2008).

Vaaler et al. (2009) studied religious participation and the likelihood of divorce in a countrywide sample of 2,979 first-time married couples. Two Nationwide Survey of Families and Households waves were analysed using multivariate proportional hazards modelling. While religious attendance was shown to have a slight correlation with marital breakup, the probability of divorce was reduced when both couples had conservative theological beliefs and were members of mainstream Protestant congregations. In contrast, the likelihood of divorce was higher when men attended religious services more often than their spouses and when wives had more conservative theological beliefs than their husbands. These results contradicted the effects of socio-demographic characteristics, marriage length, and marital quality that were taken into account. There is ongoing discussion on the potential areas for future study.

Balkanlioglu (2014) looked at the connection between religion and long-term marriages. The study, which included sixty participants (thirty Turkish married couples), aimed to investigate their perceptions of religion, religious practice, perspectives on the relationship between religion and marriage, and how they consider religion a solution to marital issues. Purposeful and snowball sampling methods were utilised. Face-to-face interviews, participant observation, a socio-demographic questionnaire, and survey approaches were used to collect data. The grounded theory approach and SPSS software were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed disparities in couples' marriage and religious practices, perceptions, and attitudes. In terms of religious practice, individuals in general and couples in particular demonstrated diversity. When it came to the impact of religious beliefs and practices on marriage, it became

evident that while some couples found religion ineffective in their relationships, the majority acknowledged its beneficial effects in resolving marital problems. Furthermore, most couples believed that religion could provide remedies for marital issues.

Nga and Yeoh (2021) examined the role of financial literacy in moderating the relationships between the previously mentioned key characteristics and financial planning for marriage. The study gathered data from 201 purposively selected respondents and analysed it using a bootstrapped partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) technique. The findings indicated that (i) financial literacy positively affects financial planning for marriage; (ii) attitudes towards money, financial goals, and social influence positively impact both financial literacy and financial planning for marriage; (iii) attitudes towards debt negatively affect financial planning for marriage, but do not influence financial literacy, and (iv) financial literacy serves a mediating role. The results highlight the importance of financial advice, education, and discipline in achieving successful and enduring marriages.

Furthermore, Fatima and Ajmal (2012) conducted semi-structured interviews to examine the characteristics contributing to lasting marriage. Married women were selected from a handy sample. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as a research method. According to the interview results, various aspects are vital for a healthier and longer-lasting marriage, such as religious sect similarities, happiness, compromise, love, attention, trust and understanding, communication, forgiveness, relationship with in-laws, and family structure. Though all of the qualities mentioned earlier are required for a good marital life, and their absence can cause significant

problems, how a person values these factors and how much significance he or she assigns to each differs depending on the culture to which the individual belongs.

### **Gender Differences in the Levels of Trust, Religion, Conflict Management, Procreation, Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy and Commitment**

Gender is only one of many variables that affect how complicated and multifaceted interpersonal interactions are. Understanding gender variations in different relationship facets is essential to increasing happiness and solving possible problems. Trust, conflict resolution, reproduction, sexual pleasure, intimacy, and commitment are the six main themes of this review.

Karimi et al. (2019) investigated the fundamental causes of gender variations in trust and trustworthiness. Are variances in social environment and gender norms the cause of gender differences in trust behaviour? Karimi, Bakhtiyari, and Arani investigated this issue by conducting trust tests on similar Indian patrilineal and matrilineal civilisations. The study's findings show that, despite significant gender variability, matrilineal respondents are more trusting than patrilineal ones. While males are not more trustworthy than women in a patrilineal culture, they are also not considerably more trustworthy than women in a matrilineal community. The findings suggest a fundamental link between social structure and the observed gender differences in trust and trustworthiness.

The empirical findings in experimental literature about gender disparities in trust and trustworthiness are, at most, inconclusive (Luchies et al., 2013; Haselhuhn et al., 2015). Within specific investigations, such as those by Awad and Ragowsky (2008), Research has shown that women exhibit a higher level of trust than males (Eckel & Wilson, 2004b; Cosentino, 2012; Leck &

Orser, 2013). Others show no differences between the sexes regarding trusting behaviour (Chaudhuri et al., 2013) or that the degree of the difference relies on variables like social distance and reward level (Cox & Deck, 2006). The gender difference in trustworthiness has a similar mixed trend (Schwieren & Sutter, 2008; Kumar et al., 2020); women are more reliable than males. Bellemare and Kröger (2007) argue that males exhibit more reliability than females, but Eckel and Wilson (2004b) contend that there are no discernible differences in trustworthiness across the genders. Consequently, there is little consensus in the scientific studies about the presence or absence of a gender disparity in trust and trustworthiness. By studying the fundamental mechanisms that underlie gender disparities in behaviour, this study adds to the corpus of knowledge. It examines how social environment, conventions, and gender roles affect how men and women behave differently.

Manjula et al. (2021) conducted a study in India to explore gender differences in commitment, closeness, trust, and conflict resolution in marital relationships. They used a longitudinal exploration strategy with a group of 155 married heterosexual adults clinically diagnosed with sexual dysfunction in one partner. The study employed various instruments, including the Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale, Marital Quality Scale, Marital Intimacy Questionnaire, and Sexual Interaction Inventory. The findings revealed common sexual dysfunctions, with hypoactive sexual drive disorder common in females and sexual dysfunction and early ejaculation in males. Most participants were relatively young, and a significant portion reported significant levels of marital distress. Mood disorders were the most frequently reported mental health issues.

Interestingly, there were no notable gender differences in marriage quality or closeness despite challenges in sexual encounters. However, men reported lower self-acceptance and more dissatisfaction with the frequency of sex compared to women. The study also highlighted significant correlations between marriage quality, sexual closeness, and sexual communication.

Rhoades et al. (2012) studied commitment and relationship quality in dating and cohabiting couples using a nationally representative sample of 1,294 individuals. Cohabiting couples showed higher commitment but lower happiness, more negative communication, and increased physical aggression compared to dating couples. These differences diminished when controlling for specific variables. In a subsequent study (Study 2), they found that as couples started living together, their relationship quality and commitment declined despite a brief increase in sexual activity. This research sheds light on commitment complexities and relationship dynamics in dating and cohabiting partnerships, emphasising the impact of cohabitation over time.

El-Kassem et al. (2023) looked at the direct and indirect impacts of leadership style and gender roles on managing family conflict (MFC) and how such conflict resolution affected divorce choices and overall marital satisfaction in Qatar. Five hundred and fifty married couples were given a questionnaire with 20 items, corresponding to 20 indications for six latent variables. Calculations were made for Bartlett's sphericity test and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample adequacy measure. Using structural equation modelling, the route analysis was measured. A successful MFC both favourably impacted marital satisfaction and decreased the propensity to file for divorce; it was discovered that the marriage methods used by couples positively influenced family conflict



resolution. In terms of family connections and dispute resolution, males were not judged to be visionary leaders. Leadership gender stereotypes did not affect how women were seen as competent (WC). The WC had no beneficial impact on how well family disputes were handled.

Gender differences in conflict resolution at home reveal that men tend to adopt competitive approaches, while women are more compromising. Both genders engage in collaboration and avoidance strategies, with men being less prone to accommodation and compromise in similar situations. Limited studies (Dildar & Amjad, 2017; Cramer, 2013; Chaudhry et al., 2008) suggest that men may employ accommodating and compromise tactics. Additionally, men tend to avoid conflicts, particularly when wives exhibit demanding behaviour and husbands withdraw their attention (Dildar et al., 2013; Cingöz-Ulu & Lalonde, 2007). These findings illuminate the gender dynamics in conflict resolution within domestic settings.

Marhenke and Imhoff (2020) conducted two studies (N = 445) to develop and validate a questionnaire assessing attitudes towards procreation. The first study, involving 157 participants, focused on English-language statements about emotional and motivational attitudes toward having children. A principal components analysis revealed three distinct attitudes. Study 2 aimed to validate a German translation of the same measure involving 288 participants. Confirmatory factor analysis supported the three-dimensional structure. The resulting Procreation Attitude Scales (PrAttS) consist of 13 items representing (1) unconditional optimism, (2) anticipating displeasure, and (3) dependent willingness. Gender differences were observed, with women displaying a significantly stronger emotional desire for children compared to men.

Kim and Jeon (2013) analysed the sexual lives of older Koreans (age 60 and above) to identify gender-related factors affecting sexual pleasure. They conducted a secondary analysis of data from the 2008 Korean National Survey on Older Adults, involving 15,146 participants. The study focused on 3,360 spouses who participated in face-to-face interviews regarding their sexual experiences. Male participants, with an average age of 67.34, found sexual frequency to be the primary factor influencing sexual pleasure, followed by marital satisfaction and cognitive function. These factors explained 21% of male participants' sexual pleasure. For female respondents, the most significant factor was marital satisfaction, followed by sexual activity frequency, absence of depressive symptoms, age, and duration of cohabitation with a spouse. Together, these factors accounted for 11% of their sexual pleasure. The study suggests that physical and sexual frequency factors influence older men's sexual satisfaction, while older women prioritise psychological and relational aspects.

Stephenson et al. (2011) investigated the association between a wide range of empirically determined sexual motives and satisfaction, examining potential gender differences in these connections. Their study analysed data from 544 undergraduate participants (93 men and 451 women). The findings revealed that specific sexual motives were predictors of sexual satisfaction for both genders. Notably, sexual motives played a more substantial role in predicting satisfaction for women compared to men, with a greater variety of motive types linked to satisfaction in women. Moreover, the study demonstrated that empirically derived motive categories were more effective in predicting satisfaction rating variations than theoretical categories. These results suggest that diverse sexual motives are linked to sexual satisfaction, with potential

gender moderation, and highlight the importance of classifying sexual motives based on individual manifestations.

The purpose of Marcinechová and Záhorcová's (2020) study was to explore the connections between religion, sexual attitudes, sexual satisfaction and the potential influence of sexual shame and shame propensity. They also examined how gender and marital status influence views on sexuality, sexual pleasure, shame, and religion. The study involved 411 participants aged 18 to 44 ( $M = 23.66$ ;  $SD = 4.17$ ). Data were collected using various scales, including the Swedish Religious Orientational Scale, Kyle Sexual Shame Inventory, Test of Self-Conscious Affect-3, Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale, and Sexual Satisfaction Scale. Regression and correlation analyses revealed that permissiveness was negatively related to intrinsic religiosity. Sexual pleasure was positively correlated with religion and negatively correlated with sexual shame. The most significant negative predictor was sexual shame, while intrinsic religiosity, shame propensity, and sexual shame together explained 19% of the variance in sexual pleasure.

Ubando (2016) explored the impact of emotional openness and intimacy on the perceived relationship satisfaction of undergraduate couples. The study involved college students aged 18 to 24 who voluntarily participated in a survey. The convenience sample included students in various romantic relationships, such as long-distance, committed, and casual partnerships. Contrary to the hypothesis, the analysis of survey responses from 103 participants revealed that men with high verbal and emotional expression reported lower relationship satisfaction. Additionally, the study found that, on average, men had a more positive view of their intimacy in relationships, while women had a more

negative perspective. Men reported higher verbal and nonverbal affection levels, while women reported higher supportiveness levels.

Research from Ghana suggests that doubts about adultery can lead to femicide and subsequent suicide by male spouses (Adinkrah, 2014). The study identified seven femicide-suicide cases, with a common trigger being women leaving home or requesting permission to do so, which led their husbands to suspect infidelity. Factors contributing to these incidents included women's text messages, phone calls, and pregnancies believed to be the result of adultery. Interestingly, in previous studies, particularly in Ghana, there is limited geographical attention on gender differences in the levels of the six variables of trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment, leaving a gap in the literature that this research aimed to address.

Manjula et al. (2021) conducted a cross-sectional study involving 155 married heterosexual individuals diagnosed with sexual dysfunction in one partner. They investigated sexual functioning, sexual interaction, sexual communication, and marital intimacy and quality using several instruments, including the Marital Quality Scale, Marital Intimacy Questionnaire, Dyadic Sexual Communication Scale, and Sexual Interaction Inventory. The study revealed challenges in overall sexual relations, with men reporting higher dissatisfaction with sex frequency and lower self-acceptance than women. Additionally, the research highlighted significant interrelationships between marriage quality, sexual intimacy, communication, and contact. This aligns with findings from Yoo and Joo's (2022) study, emphasising the importance of these factors in understanding and addressing sexual dysfunction in couples.

In a study investigating gender differences in conflict resolution strategies within marriage among Syrian refugees in a Jordanian refugee camp, Al-Krenawi and Bell (2023) employed culturally competent data collection methods. Using tools such as the Symptoms Checklist-SCL90, Self-esteem Scale, McMaster Family Assessment Device, Marital Satisfaction Scale, and Life Satisfaction Scale, the researchers explored mental health, self-esteem, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction in both male and female participants. The findings indicated significant gender disparities in marital resolution and life satisfaction, with women experiencing lower subjective well-being compared to men.

**Contributions of Love, Counselling, Religiosity, Trust, Conflict Management, Procreation, Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy, Conflict Management and Commitment to Marital Longevity Among Couples**

*Love and marriage longevity*

Although many marriages function, past research has primarily focused on younger couples and marriages that dissolve rather than marriages that continue (Levenson et al., 1993). Dhaliwal (2021) sought to shift this perspective and explore what sustains long-term marriages, aiming to enhance our understanding of successful marriages. The study revealed that love significantly preserved many marriages in the United States, especially during challenging times. Bachand and Caron (2001) aimed to gain insight into factors contributing to lasting marriages by conducting qualitative interviews with 15 heterosexual couples married for at least 35 years and reporting happiness in their marriages. Love emerged as a frequently cited factor that sustained marriages across various cultures.

Estrada (2009) investigated the evolving meaning of love in marriages lasting 35 years or more through qualitative interviews with five self-identified "happy" couples. The study highlighted shared beliefs, sustaining romance, persistence, consideration, appreciation, trust, patience, conflict management, and mutual respect as key components of positive marital experiences. Love remained a significant aspect in each partner's description of their lasting marriage.

Heim and Heim (2023) conducted a worldwide qualitative study, employing a cross-generational approach to identify factors affecting relationship longevity. Their research emphasised the role of love, commitment, altruism, shared ideals, strong communication, compromise, and perseverance in sustaining long-term relationships. Huston (2009) challenged conventional notions about love's role in courtship, early marriage, and divorce based on a 13-year longitudinal study in the United States. The study found that love was a driving force in courtship, predicting early marital experiences, and its decline in the early stages of marriage provided insight into a marriage's potential for survival.

*Socioeconomic factors contributing to marital longevity.*

The socioeconomic status of couples significantly influences their relationship dynamics, success, and longevity. A study by Bratter and Eschbach (2006) found that interracial relationships, particularly those involving Native American, Hispanic, and Caucasian individuals, led to increased psychological distress. This highlights the importance of considering individual socioeconomic backgrounds in understanding interracial relationships. This study explores the broader socioeconomic factors influencing relationship

longevity, including social support networks, spousal support dynamics, and financial stability. It seeks to offer valuable insights into the complex interplay of socioeconomic factors in modern relationships.

Drageset (2021) extensively investigates social support, highlighting its significance in preserving people's health and well-being. Social support, including emotional support, a sense of community, practical assistance, and advice, is essential for promoting health and well-being. Lawrence and Callan (2011) provide valuable insights into the impact of social support on marital happiness, particularly in the context of organisational change. Their research, which included 275 married couples in the United States, emphasises the significance of having sufficient support rather than just focusing on the number of people assisting. The husbands' assessment of the sufficiency of support is a significant indicator of marital happiness ( $\beta$  0.34,  $p < 0.001$ ), highlighting the connection between perceived support excellence and the relationship duration. This discovery highlights the need to prioritise the sufficiency of support and the many behaviours that are part of helpful interactions to improve theories related to support and relationship functioning.

Vogel et al. (2012) investigated the influence of perceived social support and feeling of coherence on the quality of life connected to health among primary care patients with multiple chronic conditions in Germany. Vogel et al.'s research demonstrates the significant impact of internal resources, namely a feeling of coherence, on improving health outcomes based on an extensive data analysis of 103 patients. There is a strong positive relationship between higher scores on a measure of coherence and better scores on a measure of health-related quality of life ( $\beta$  0.34,  $p < 0.001$ ). This emphasises the

significance of internal variables contributing to resilience in maintaining well-being. Perceived social support had an initial positive relationship with greater quality of life ( $\beta$  0.35,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, this relationship becomes less important when considering a feeling of coherence, highlighting the importance of internal resources for long-term gains in health-related quality of life. Dehle et al. (2001) study explores the concept of social support in marriage, focusing on assessing how spouses evaluate the sufficiency of the assistance they get. Dehle et al.'s research, which included 177 married persons, reveals that the perception of having sufficient support is directly related to the quality of the marriage. Additionally, it is inversely related to symptoms of depression and perceived stress. These results highlight the importance of feeling sufficiently supported within marital relationships, which contributes to establishing good and long-lasting partnerships.

The study by Brown et al. (2003) critically examines the relationship between receiving and providing support and the longevity of senior married adults. The Changing Lives of Older Couples sample examined the predictive efficacy of baseline indicators of support-giving and support-receiving behaviours about mortality over five years. The research analysed the impact of support provision and reception on mortality outcomes using logistic regression analyses. This analysis considered various factors, including demographic variables, personality characteristics, health indicators, mental health metrics, and marital relationship dynamics. The study's results indicated a notable decrease in mortality rates among older adults who received practical and psychological assistance. This underscores the substantial influence that social interactions have on the health and longevity of this population. The



implications of these findings for approaches to fostering healthy ageing and extended life spans are significant, as they highlight the advantages of social connection and support network provision.

In summary, social support contributes to the long-term success of marriages by facilitating emotional bonding, offering practical aid, strengthening coping mechanisms, cultivating a feeling of inclusion, and promoting overall welfare. Partners who experience support and connection are more inclined to handle problems successfully, fortify their connection, and maintain a satisfying and long-lasting relationship.

#### Spousal support

In their notable investigation, Brown et al. (2008) examined the potential mitigating effects of self-reported assisting behaviour on the helper's depression after spousal loss as part of a substantial study on coping with spousal loss. The research uncovered fascinating and thought-provoking results using archive data from the Changing Lives of Older Couples sample, which comprised 289 participants; for those who were grieving deeply after the death of their spouse, offering practical assistance to others was linked to a faster decrease in depression symptoms for the person giving aid. This effect was seen between 6 months and 18 months after the loss. The correlation between assisting and the process of overcoming depression was not influenced by the level of support received, as well as several aspects related to health, interpersonal relationships, and demographics. These results have significant implications for theoretical approaches to the examination of intimate relationships and overall happiness, emphasising the possibility of individuals reporting their acts of assistance in

reducing depression after the death of a spouse, hence promoting long-lasting marriages.

The study by Purdom et al. (2006), titled "Couple Type, Parental Status, and the Mediating Impact of Social Support," explored the challenges experienced by individuals in modern Western culture. The research examined the impact of different types of couples and parental status on marital happiness and well-being, specifically in relation to the support provided by spouses. The study included 98 couples where both partners were employed and 40 couples where only one partner was employed. This allowed for an examination of how support from a spouse affects the marital happiness and well-being of both types of couples. The research also investigated the impact of parental status on these characteristics.

The results demonstrated substantial impact of support from one's spouse on satisfaction within a marriage and the influence of becoming a parent on one's overall well-being. A comprehensive understanding of the significance of spousal support and its influence on marital happiness is essential for fostering the durability of marriages. In addition, considering the impact of parental status on well-being provides a more detailed comprehension of the elements that contribute to relationship satisfaction and general well-being in marriages. These results emphasise the importance of social support and effective coping mechanisms in navigating difficulties and fostering enduring, satisfying marital partnerships.

### Financial

The financial status of married couples is vital in terms of how well and happily they will live. For example, empirical studies in this area specify that

when a husband loses his job for over 12 years, there is an increased chance of divorce. Additionally, higher levels of education are related to higher incomes, lower levels of financial strain, greater marital happiness, and longer marriages. However, these studies did not operationalise a family's estimated financial status.

High levels of depressive symptoms, similar to distress, may be linked to interracial relationships, particularly in low socioeconomic conditions. Income influences not just marriage duration but also quality. Additional studies focusing on racial and ethnic minority couples, such as Mitchell and Lusardi (2015), investigated these couples when facing financial difficulties. The analysis assessed relationship quality, revealing that financial issues affect marital functioning. Implementing a relationship education program helped address the distress couples initially experienced, improving their adjustment afterwards. The authors demonstrate that couples dealing with financial stress often have lower relationship quality, suggesting that lower-income individuals may confront challenges in their marriages.

Conger et al. (1994) examine the impact of financial stress on family relationships and the well-being of teenagers. Their research, which involved 180 boys and 198 girls from intact homes in the rural Midwest, reveals a significant correlation between economic strain and parental conflict, as well as between parents and adolescents. The results suggest that financial stress contributes to heightened parental discord, characterised by manipulative interactions, pessimism, and animosity, which subsequently correlates with increased emotional and behavioural difficulties in teenagers. This longitudinal research highlights the adverse effects of financial stress on family dynamics

and the well-being of adolescents. It ultimately establishes a connection between economic strain and challenges faced in long-lasting marriages.

Killewald's (2016) research investigates significant ambiguities surrounding the determinants of marital stability. Killewald examines the distribution of work within families, the total financial assets, and the financial autonomy of wives in connection with the stability of marriages by analysing data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics from 1968 to 2013. The research demonstrates that financial criteria, such as a wife's financial independence or the combined family income, do not indicate divorce. Nevertheless, how couples allocate their time, especially in cases where the husband is not engaged in full-time employment, correlates with an increased likelihood of divorce for couples who were married after 1975. The results emphasise the changing nature of marital stability and the influence of economic considerations on relationship outcomes as time progresses. Baryła-Matejczuk et al. (2020) use the Family Stress Model (FSM) within the theoretical framework of the Couples and Finances Theory (CFT) to investigate the correlation between family finances, relationship quality, and life satisfaction among couples in Poland. Their research on a sample of 500 couples demonstrates that money management behaviours substantially influence relationship dynamics and subjective well-being. The results emphasise the psychological significance of successful financial management in enhancing the quality of relationships and general contentment with life, contributing to the long-term duration of marriages.

Dew's research (2007) explores the complex correlation between financial conditions and marital contentment. The study reveals that assets and

debt have separate impacts on marital dynamics. Assets indirectly positively impact marital happiness by alleviating financial stress, but debt is directly associated with heightened marital discord. These results underscore the intricate interaction between economic variables and the outcomes of relationships, emphasising the need for a sophisticated understanding of how financial stability affects the duration of marriages. These studies together reveal the complex impact of economic pressure, money management behaviours, and family dynamics on the stability of marriages and the quality of relationships. A comprehensive understanding of these dynamics is essential for effectively resolving obstacles within marital relationships, developing the ability to bounce back from difficulties, and nurturing enduring and satisfying partnerships.

#### *Sexual satisfaction's contribution to marital longevity*

There are various elements affecting a healthy family. Several elements, including sexual pleasure, significantly influence the duration of a marriage relationship. Ziaee et al. (2014) did research to investigate the correlation between sexual pleasure and the duration of marriage among women who are sexually active and employed. This research was an analytical descriptive study that included 140 married women who were employed in educational and medical facilities associated with the Golestan University of Medical Sciences. The data-gathering process included questionnaires, including the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire and a questionnaire created by the researchers to gather information on demographic parameters and sexual satisfaction. The data analysis included descriptive statistics, the  $\chi^2$  test, and the Spearman statistical test, with a significance threshold set at 0.05.

The results indicated that most participants (63.6%) reported a high level of satisfaction on the marital satisfaction scale, while none reported a significant level of dissatisfaction. Regarding sexual satisfaction, the majority of participants (56.4%) reported a high level of satisfaction, while just a small percentage (0.7%) indicated dissatisfaction with their sexual connection. The duration of a marriage was strongly linked to sexual pleasure ( $p < 0.001$ ). Consequently, when sexual happiness increased, there was a corresponding rise in marriage satisfaction and marital longevity. The results revealed a significant correlation between sexual pleasure and age ( $p = 0.086$ ). There was a significant association between the schooling degree and marital satisfaction ( $p = 0.038$ ). The impact of sexual pleasure on the duration of a marriage was influenced by the number of children and the amount of education (Malta et al., 2021; Villa Lever, 2020). The results have implications for enhancing the duration of couples' marriages by emphasising the need to be conscious of the quality of their sexual experiences. The results indicate that creating educational initiatives and providing pre-marriage therapy is vital. Ongoing education would be beneficial after marriage in meeting the distinct transitional requirements of couples in their married life.

Previous studies have shown that sexual activity within the context of marriage is crucial for the long-term duration of a married relationship. Research indicates that a greater level of sexual pleasure or frequency is linked to a longer duration of marriage (Edwards & Booth, 1994; Yeh et al., 2006). There has been less study on the connection between sexual activity and lifespan in cohabiting relationships. However, available studies indicate that sexual pleasure in married unions contributes to a longer lifespan (Sprecher, 2001).

Some studies (Carter, 2016) suggest that the more frequently a couple engages in sexual activity, the stronger their relationship may become over time. This viewpoint finds support in research spanning biological and social sciences. In particular, the social sciences typically delve into behavioural attachment models, while the biological sciences explore neuroendocrine models (Carter, 2016). Neuroendocrine theories of attachment highlight neurochemical systems' involvement in forming social connections. These models highlight how neurochemicals play a crucial role in developing social connections. Notable neurochemicals, which include oxytocin and vasopressin, are emitted during sexual activity and could contribute to strengthening social bonds (Carter, 2016). Even though these techniques have been firmly established in humans, research strongly indicates that the release of neurochemicals during sexual activity can promote social attachment, thereby potentially contributing to marital longevity (Insel, 1997).

Furthermore, sexual gratification, a comprehensive concept, is integrally connected to total satisfaction within a relationship (Edwards & Booth, 1994; Henderson-King & Veroff, 1994). Again, some studies have found that sexual satisfaction is positively associated with indicators of relationship quality, such as love (Aron & Henkemeyer, 1995), commitment (Sprecher, 1999), and stability (Sprecher, 1999). It is inversely related to the likelihood of divorce (Edwards & Booth, 1994; White & Keith, 1990). Sexual satisfaction is necessary for marital stability and is correlated with general happiness, mental health, and successful social communication (Petrican et al., 2011). In contrast, Blümel et al. (2004) concluded that a sexual relationship is unnecessary for a couple's stability. This study also noted that good mutual understanding is crucial to a

couple's sexual relationship and that sexual satisfaction arises in happy couples. Therefore, it could be deduced that for marital longevity to be achieved, sexual satisfaction is essential in the marriage relationship.

Again, Dzara (2010) conducted a study investigating the impact of marital sexuality on the likelihood of marital disruption. Using panel data from the Marriage Matters Panel Survey of Newlywed Couples, 1998-2004, which included 1310 couples from Louisiana, Dzara examined whether factors such as the frequency of sexual activity, satisfaction with sexual interaction, and agreement on marital sexual matters early in the marriage influenced the likelihood of experiencing a marital disruption. Surprisingly, the study found limited effects of marital sexuality on the likelihood of marital disruption. These results suggest that there may be other, more influential factors at play when it comes to the longevity of marriages, and the role of sexuality in this context may be less significant than previously thought.

Research was done in 2013 on 400 elderly individuals under the care of a health facility in Kashan County. The relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital longevity among the elderly was investigated. This cross-sectional study utilised a two-part questionnaire: the first part consisted of a researcher-made questionnaire about sexual relationships, and the second part included Enrich's marital satisfaction questionnaire. The study was conducted with SPSS software version 16. The findings revealed that elderly individuals with higher sexual satisfaction reported significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction compared to those with lower sexual satisfaction. This suggests that higher sexual satisfaction plays a role in fostering lasting marriages among the elderly. Interestingly, physical problems preventing sexual intercourse did not have a



significant impact on marital satisfaction ( $P > 0.05$ ). This highlights the importance of considering various aspects of marital satisfaction in the elderly population, particularly focusing on sexual matters.

Litzinger and Gordon (2005) explored the connections between couple communication, sexual satisfaction, and marital longevity within a sample of 387 married couples. Their findings revealed that both communication and sexual satisfaction independently influenced marital longevity. However, an interesting interaction effect emerged when couples engaged in constructive communication. Sexual satisfaction did not significantly impact marital longevity. On the contrary, in cases where couples faced communication challenges but had satisfying sexual relationships, they tended to experience greater marital longevity and satisfaction compared to those with less satisfying sexual interactions. This suggests that sexual satisfaction might partially offset the adverse effects of poor communication on marital longevity.

Kaslow and Robison's report (2007) represents the second phase of a study involving couples aged 25 to 46 in the United States. The responses from these 57 couples align closely with those from the original group of 20 couples, emphasising the key factors for a long-term, fulfilling marriage. The reliability of these findings is reinforced by similar recent studies conducted as part of an international research project in Sweden, Germany, and Israel. Across various demographic variables like religion, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geographic location, a consistent factor that emerges as crucial to marital satisfaction is sexual satisfaction.

Numerous studies emphasise the connection between sexual satisfaction and marital longevity, indicating a significant association between the two.

Increased sexual satisfaction corresponds to heightened marital satisfaction and, consequently, greater longevity. However, it is worth noting that some empirical studies have not adequately measured marital satisfaction.

*Professional counselling contribution to marital longevity*

Marital counselling, a form of psychotherapy, aids couples in resolving conflicts and enhancing their relationships. It addresses issues like domestic violence and single parenthood after divorce, promoting relationship stability. This interactive process entails a distinctive correlation between counsellors and couples, leading to behavioural change (Echebe, 2010). It has a long history across societies, but formal marriage counselling was introduced through religious institutions to increase marital longevity by reducing unhappiness and strengthening marital bonds (Echebe, 2010).

Marriage counselling can address various issues such as jealousy, lack of communication, betrayal, affairs, trust issues, family conflicts, differing sexual needs, lifestyle disparities, and divergent goals and values (Ward, 2016). Seeking therapy early when discontent arises is advisable. The success of marital counselling depends on each partner's motivation and dedication. It helps couples become better listeners and communicators, fostering support for each other. A suitable, private, and comfortable environment, often provided in the counsellor's office, is crucial for effective counselling sessions, with the counsellor determining the session's structure.

Marang'a (2021) conducted a comprehensive study on premarital counselling and its influence on marriage stability, acknowledging the global importance of marriage. The research delved into various aspects, including communication skills, spousal romance, and financial management, within

premarital counselling. The study employed a mixed methods approach, encompassing surveys, phenomenological analysis, and ex-post facto causal-comparative methods, with a participant pool of 416 married individuals from Nairobi County. To ensure the research's robustness, the instruments used were rigorously validated for content and reliability through expert assessment and pilot testing, consistently yielding a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeding 0.7. The researcher ensured the reliability of the qualitative instrument through expert review in marriage counselling. Quantitative data underwent analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data were thematically analysed and presented narratively. Key findings revealed that premarital counselling led to increased commitment, improved communication, harmonious coexistence, and greater couple cohesion, ultimately contributing to marriage stability and longevity (Marang'a, 2021).

The prevalence of cohabitation among young adults, particularly college students, is rising (Mustapha et al., 2017). They indicated that young individuals engage in cohabitation without necessarily contemplating the repercussions. Studies, particularly in Nigeria, hypothesise that cohabitation would affect the durability of marriages. However, it is worth noting that no empirical study is available on the actual effects of cohabitation. Mustapha et al. (2017) investigated the impact of premarital cohabitation on the stability and duration of marriage among educated married individuals in the Ilorin Metropolis. The research included a cohort of 300 literate married individuals. Therefore, a total of 300 questionnaire forms were sent to respondents chosen at random across the city. The acquired data underwent descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including calculations of percentages, mean scores, t-tests, and

Analysis of Variance. The results revealed the detrimental effect of premarital cohabitation on the durability of marriage. Furthermore, the study revealed that respondents' perspectives on the effect of premarital union on marriage stability were influenced not just by professional therapy but also by factors such as age, gender, and educational qualification. Thus, counsellors need to educate young individuals about the detrimental effects of premarital cohabitation on the long-term stability of future marriages.

This research examined the effects of Reality Therapy (RT) and Communication Skills Training (CST) in counselling on the duration of marriages among Christian couples in Lagos State. The study used a quasi-experimental research design. The sample size was 108 participants, divided into two experimental groups: Reality Therapy (RT), Communication Skills Training (CST), and one control group. Two research questions led the study, and two hypotheses were assessed at a significance level of 0.05.

Marital vulnerability often arises when personal boundaries are crossed, underscoring the necessity for partners to express affection, closeness, emotional connection, love, and proximity. These elements are fundamental to fostering ardour and dedication within a marital relationship. Marang'a et al. (2019) explored romantic behaviours in married individuals through the lenses of Bazizomenyi-Nagi's Contextual Family Therapy and Ellis's Rational Emotive Behaviour theories. Their study assessed the impact of premarital therapy on romantic relationships and its role in maintaining marital stability, focusing on the Langata and Dagoretti South Constituencies of Nairobi County, Kenya. The research utilised a sample of 416 married individuals, comprising men and women, drawn from a total population of 355,005 in the two

constituencies. Findings revealed that disparities in access to premarital therapy were being addressed through the involvement of qualified professionals, including counsellors, counselling psychologists, and clergy members. These efforts highlight the critical role of professional guidance in equipping couples with the tools to navigate marital challenges and sustain long-term stability.

Additionally, the research uncovered that the presence and sustenance of romance in marriage are facilitated by amicable and personal connections between the husband and wife, faithfulness and discretion, where there is a shared affection, transparency, and enduring dedication to the partnership. Almost everywhere, there was evidence confirming the impact of professional counselling on marital longevity. Furthermore, a significant study indicated that couples who went through premarital counselling experienced more commitment to their spouse, enhanced effective communication, cordial co-existence, couple cohesion, marriage stability and longevity. Therefore, trained counsellors, counselling psychologists and trained clergy are advised to help premarital couples with some form of professional counselling.

#### *Religion's contribution to marital longevity among couples*

Studies involving African Americans, Asians, and Hispanics indicate that spousal religiosity is linked to improved marital quality and longevity (Gregory, 2019; Perry, 2016). Nonetheless, religion, as a complex belief and behaviour system, is frequently disregarded as a coping resource during challenging periods or as a means to enhance relationship resilience. For instance, Millett et al. (2018) examined marriage and family dynamics in African American communities. They discovered that couples who are actively involved in their faith communities experience higher-quality relationships,

with religiosity influencing marital perceptions, particularly among men. Religious involvement is believed to contribute to cohesion in family and marital bonds.

Unintentionally, life contentment results from love and religion; it is personal and strengthens relationships. According to Carr et al. (2014), life satisfaction is a conditioned variable more responsive to conventional and durable life quality and well-being indicators. It fluctuates in happiness, sadness, success, failure, or disappointment periods. Creating a partnership in the marriage that results in enduring, lifelong relationships is the key to married longevity.

Religiosity seems to influence African Americans' views of marriage, and those actively involved in their religious communities are thought to report better quality relationships, which boost cohesion and lengthen marriages (Millett et al., 2018). Thus, it is impossible to discount the possibility of a positive relationship between religiosity and the length of marriage in African American marriages.

Previous academic research on the connection between marital unfaithfulness and divorce has typically had two constraints: a narrow focus on marriages involving young individuals and a failure to consider the impact of religious beliefs and practices. Tuttle and Davis (2015) addressed limitations by utilising panel research data on marital instability throughout the Life Course, involving 763 participants. They applied structural equation modelling and proportional hazards modelling to examine how religion affects marital infidelity and subsequent divorce in couples married for at least 12 years. The study found that religious beliefs decrease the chances of infidelity and reduce

marital breakdowns among couples. Nonetheless, the link between religiosity and divorce risk is intricate; religiosity might indirectly diminish divorce likelihood by enhancing marital satisfaction. There is no notable link between marital infidelity and either marital stability or divorce.

Call and Heaton (1997) state that Catholic Christian marriages are more stable because the church supports them. Lehrer and Chiswick (1993) indicated that the Muslim divorce rate is low due to the restrictions connected with divorce. This could imply that the religious factor significantly predicts marital longevity and that couples with strong religious convictions are likely to experience marriage permanence (Tuttle & Davis, 2015; Dollahite & Lambert, 2007). Robinson and Blanton (2013) determined that religious faith was essential to successful marriages leading to marriage longevity.

Several studies on religion find that religion does improve marriage. Biasoli-Alves (2010) and Mackey and O'Brien (2005) remarked that religious views had no significant association with marriage. He stressed that although religion may reduce the likelihood of divorce, it does not improve marital happiness or reduce marital problems. Academics identified this issue as the disadvantage of religious weddings. Even though the relationship is not working well, the couple may stay together to satisfy their religious views (Biasoli-Alves, 2010).

Researchers often hypothesise a robust correlation between religiosity and the duration of a marriage. Mullins (2016) and Call and Heaton (1997) define religiosity comprehensively in their event-history models that examine the connection between religion and marital stability. The results are derived from panel data from the National Survey of Families and Households, with a

sample size of 4,587 married couples. Any single aspect of religiosity cannot fully capture the impact of religious experience on marital stability. However, among various dimensions, the frequency of religious attendance has the most notable and favourable influence on the lifespan of marriages. The couple's risk of divorce is significantly reduced when both spouses consistently participate in religious services. Discrepancies in religious participation between spouses heighten the likelihood of marital breakup. Once demographic data are considered, all notable effects of religious affiliation vanish. The wife's religious convictions regarding marital fidelity and extramarital sexual relations hold greater significance for the durability of the marriage compared to the husband's beliefs.

In a longitudinal study involving urban Black American and White American couples, Brown et. al.,(2008) investigated the effects of subjective and organisational religious participation on the durability of marriage across time. Their research revealed that the impact of religiosity on the duration of marriage differed depending on gender and ethnicity. Black spouses indicated a higher level of importance placed on religion and a greater frequency of attendance at religious services compared to White spouses. Wives who reported a higher level of service attendance were shown to have a lower likelihood of divorce. Interaction effects indicated that the impact was particularly pronounced among Caucasian spouses. Practitioners should consider the variations inside and between couples and the socio-historical circumstances that influence marriages.

The correlation between religion and marital duration has been consistently proven, although the limitations of theory and methodology impede



a comprehensive understanding of this association. Sullivan (2001) evaluated three explanatory models by examining two recently-married- couple groups. The results revealed a significant correlation between religiosity and views towards divorce, commitment, and help-seeking in a cross-sectional study. The longitudinal effects, on the other hand, were most in line with a moderating model, in which religion had a beneficial influence on the marital happiness of both husbands and wives in couples with husbands who had lower levels of neuroticism but had a negative influence on couples with husbands who had higher levels of neuroticism. In general, the influence of religiosity was limited throughout the initial four years of marriage. Theoretical assertions are proposed to guide future studies in identifying the types of marriages most influenced by religiosity.

Lambert and Dollahite (2006) reported on extensive interviews with 57 deeply religious, middle-aged married couples who belong to the major Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) and live in New England and Northern California. The study employs grounded theory methodologies to establish themes and construct a model elucidating the impact of religiosity on marital conflict. According to the couples, religiosity has an impact on the conflict in their marriage at three stages of the conflict process: (a) preventing problems, (b) resolving conflicts, and (c) reconciling the relationship. Practitioners can support religious couples facing marital difficulty by urging them to draw into their religious beliefs and practices to enhance the longevity of their marriage.

Studies have postulated a strong relationship between religiosity and longevity in marriage. Religiosity unquestionably decreases the probability of a

future divorce by enhancing marital satisfaction. In some cross-sectional studies, religion was associated with attitudes toward divorce and commitment. However, the type of religion and gender differences were less attended to.

*Intimacy contributes to marital longevity.*

Gottman et al. (2006) uncovered remarkably straightforward realities regarding long-term marriages in his research. Initially, they exhibit the qualities of amicable companionship, wherein their bond is marked by reverence, fondness, and understanding, and they approach disagreements with gentleness and optimism. Exhibiting the behaviour of good friends involves disregarding a partner's imperfections, concentrating on their lovable attributes, cultivating mutual acceptance, and expressing admiration through compliments (Clark et al., 2020; Peterman et al., 2015; Appleton & Bohm, 2001).

Friendship is also associated with nurturing a relationship that supports life together, which may be enhanced by marrying someone they like (Oliker, 1989). Likewise, learning to intimately know their spouse's world (Gottman & Silver, 2000) and building intimacy (Timothy-Springer & Johnson, 2018) is essential in making a relationship last. These elements include a warm, trustful sexual relationship and a rich, pleasurable physical relationship that leads to fulfilment (Fenell, 2013). So meaningful is a satisfying sexual relationship that Wallerstein (2019) believes sex helps keep marriages healthy by bringing couples closer emotionally and helping them to weather the inevitable strains of life with another person.

Close companions also exhibit facial expressions of happiness, make physical contact, and contemplate their positive and challenging experiences together (Clark et al., 2020; Horowitz et al., 2019). In addition, they love one

another (Kaslow & Robison, 2007), have developed respect for themselves and others (Fenell, 2013), and are loyal (Timothy-Springer & Johnson, 2018; Fenell, 2013), honest, and trusting (Fenell, 2013). In addition, close companions derive enjoyment from one another's company (Appleton & Bohm, 2001). They engage in shared leisure activities (Veroff et al., 1984) and have cultivated a mutual understanding of humour in their interactions (Fenell, 2013).

Various factors, such as intimacy and forgiveness, are crucial for a prosperous and enduring marital relationship. Pelucchi et al. (2017) identified these characteristics as contributing to increased length and satisfaction in marriage. The study found that forgiveness was crucial in fostering and sustaining enduring relationships among couples, with an average marital duration of 21 years. Consistent with these results, a study conducted by Goodman (2015) revealed a favourable association between intimacy and marital length, while a negative association was observed between aggressive control and marital lifespan among couples who had been together for over 25 years. The study also discovered that older couples reported higher levels of intimacy and contentment than middle-aged couples, supporting the curvilinear model. Intimacy and eliminating negative control were more significant than autonomy in this study. Contrary to the findings of Leavitt et al. (2024) and Kaslow (2019), who identified intimacy as less significant (22%) compared to love (82%), mutual trust (81%), and mutual respect (77%), this study contradicts their conclusions. In the survey, individuals ranked at least 11 other variables more frequently than closeness, despite considering it essential.

An alternative perspective considers marriage the most personal and compact form of a social network. Early evidence by Berkman and Syme (1979)

and House et al. (1982) demonstrated that socially isolated individuals experience higher mortality rates. The Tecumseh Community Health Study examined individuals aged 35–69 and their mortality rates in 1978/9, incorporating medical examinations, history, and factors such as age, smoking, alcohol intake, education, employment, and social networks. Social network measures, including close contacts, organisational participation, and leisure activities, were used to predict mortality through binary logit equations. The study found that retirement and smoking strongly predicted mortality among men, while participating in volunteer associations, events, and classes significantly decreased mortality ( $p < 0.05$ ). Marriage was protective for men but not statistically significant for women. Additionally, similar to the findings of the Waite and Lehrer (2003) study, they also confirmed that regularly attending church ( $p < 0.025$ ) is linked to a longer lifetime.

According to Arikewuyo et al. (2021) and Schaefer and Olson (1981), achieving intimacy is a gradual and ongoing process in marriage and family dynamics, which is never fully achieved or concluded. As the couple matures and evolves, both individuals transform. Failure to prioritise intimacy in their marriage will result in their gradual estrangement. Research indicates that marriage provides numerous advantages. Olson et al. (2008) research indicates that individuals who are married and share a high level of intimacy tend to experience better health, longer lifespans, greater wealth and economic resources, and more fulfilling sexual relationships compared to those who are single or cohabiting. Moreover, children typically experience enhanced emotional and academic outcomes when raised in households with both parents.

Mohammadi et al. (2013) researched to determine narrative therapy's effectiveness in enhancing coupling intimacy. The method is semi-experimental; a control group pre-test and post-test were employed. The statistical population involves couples referred to the Behshahr Rehabilitation Organization Counselling Centre because of marital problems. The statistical sample consists of randomly selected couples using the available sampling method. They were divided into experimental and control groups. A couples' intimacy questionnaire was used to collect the data. The group participated in eight-team narrative therapy sessions. Covariance analysis was used to compare both groups' pre-test and post-test scores. The results showed that team narrative therapy increases couple intimacy significantly and raises the average length of a married couple's life together.

Hajian and Mohammadi (2013) explored the impact of solution-focused couples therapy training on marital intimacy in Isfahan, Iran. This experimental study involved a control and case group, utilising pre-test and post-test assessments. Seven couples, chosen through convenience random sampling, formed both groups. The assessment tools comprised a 32-item questionnaire measuring eight dimensions of marital intimacy and a 44-item questionnaire assessing three dimensions of marital commitment. The data were analysed through ANCOVA (analysis of covariance). Although both groups underwent pre-test and post-test evaluations, the independent variable (solution-focused therapy) was only applied to the case group. Findings indicated that solution-focused couples therapy significantly influenced emotional intimacy, intellectual intimacy, physical intimacy, psychological intimacy, relationship intimacy, and sexual intimacy. In summary, this therapy fosters a positive

outlook on marriage and can benefit couples facing marital conflicts who struggle to achieve intimacy and long-term stability in their relationships.

Literature on marriage identifies intimacy and autonomy as crucial factors influencing marital longevity. However, the impact of their balance on the success of long-lasting marriages among older couples remains underexplored. Shahsiah et al. (2012) surveyed 88 men and 92 women in stable, long-term marriages to investigate how partner intimacy and autonomy affect marital satisfaction. Multiple regression analyses indicated that intimacy positively correlates with marital longevity, while negative control has a detrimental effect. Older participants rated their partners higher in intimacy compared to middle-aged individuals, and husbands were perceived to provide more autonomy than wives. For couples married for an extended period, intimacy and avoidance of negative control proved to be more significant than autonomy. Social workers can utilise various marital therapy techniques to enhance intimacy between couples.

Marital stability refers to how long a married couple stays together without separating or divorcing. It is also called marital longevity or the duration of a marriage. Priyadharshini and Gopalan (2020) explored the relationship between various psychosocial factors—such as marital adjustment, love, personal intimacy, personality, dyadic coping, and spirituality—and marital stability. They selected thirty married couples through stratified random sampling. The study utilised several measuring tools: the Locke-Wallace marital adjustment questionnaire for evaluating marital adjustment; the Love scale to measure love; the personal assessment of intimacy in a relationship for assessing intimacy; the Big Five inventory for personality traits; the Dyadic

Coping Inventory for dyadic coping; and the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale to quantify spirituality. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to test six null hypotheses, employing percentage, mean, standard deviation, and correlation metrics. The results revealed a notable and statistically significant negative correlation between sexual intimacy and marital stability, indicated by a correlation coefficient of  $-.44$  and a  $p$ -value of less than  $.01$ . Conversely, the other variables—marital adjustment, love, personal intimacy, personality, dyadic coping, and spirituality—did not show a significant effect on marital stability.

Research indicates that couples in long-term marriages often prioritise intimacy and minimise negative control over personal autonomy. Conversely, other findings suggest an inverse relationship between sexual intimacy and lasting marriages. As a result, couples facing marital challenges who struggle with intimacy and sustaining a long-term relationship might gain advantage from fostering a more hopeful perspective on achieving intimacy.

#### *Contribution of commitment to marital longevity*

Regardless of sex or marital satisfaction, a comprehensive examination of the existing body of literature indicates that complete commitment is a critical determinant in lasting matrimonial partnerships (Parker, 2002; Weigel & Ballard-Reisch, 1999; Kaslow & Robison, 1996; Lauer et al., 1990; Roberts, 1980; Harley, 1994; Fenell, 1993). As defined by Lauer and Lauer (1986), commitment is "the readiness and resolve to persevere in the face of adversity" (p. 57). The perceived quality of the partnership and the value placed on enduring commitment are cited by both contented and discontented spouses as

the main factors influencing their decision to remain in the union (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978).

Adams and Jones (1997) conducted an integrative analysis that identified three components that comprise the concept of marital commitment: "a moral-normative component, which is grounded in a sense of personal responsibility for the marriage's sustenance and the conviction that marriage is a significant social and religious institution; and a constraining component, which is motivated by apprehension regarding the social, financial, and emotional repercussions of the relationship." Additionally, Pillemer (2012), Kaslow and Robison (1996), Fenell (1993), and Rowe and Meredith (1982) propose a commitment to effective parenting and the children rather than solely to the spouse. Similarly, Huyck and Guttman (1992) argue for a commitment to the relationship rather than solely to the spouse.

Lewis (1960) captures the substance of commitment most aptly when he designates charity, the gift-love bestowed by grace, as the last of four distinct forms of love he enumerates. Charity acknowledges the marital worth of an individual. Instead of quarrelling over differences, Charity acknowledges each person for who they truly are. Acting for the other person, even when ill or exhausted, and providing reassurance are components of commitment (Canary et al., 2002; Parker, 2002). Furthermore, commitment necessitates diligent effort (Lauer & Lauer, 1986) and the preservation of an idealised romantic perspective on matrimony (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995) amidst periods of prosperity and hardship, intense emotions and moments of elation, as well as tranquil reflection and euphoria (Sporakowski & Hughston, 1978).



Nelson et al. (2011) examined the correlation between religious and spiritual values and moral dedication in marriage to provide marital and family counsellors with more insights into the characteristics of committed partnerships. Employing a qualitative research methodology, the researchers investigated individuals' subjective interpretations of moral dedication within their marital relationships and the impact of their religious and spiritual beliefs on these interpretations. An iterative technique examined the narrative text, comparing emergent themes. As a result, six distinct groups were identified, and the results revealed that moral commitment was related to marital health.

Rosenfeld (2014) generated the first nationally representative comparison of same-sex couple stability and heterosexual couple stability in the United States using a novel longitudinal data set, the How Couples Meet and Stay Together surveys (N = 3,009). For same-sex couples in the United States, he assessed the correlation between marriage (as defined by various academic sources) and couple longevity. The historical prevalence of same-sex couple marriage rates serve as a contributing factor to accounts of instability within such relationships. Following adjustments for marriage and commitments resembling marriage, the incidence of breakups among same-sex couples was found to be similar to that of heterosexual couples, without any statistically significant distinction. Unaffected by governmental recognition, the outcomes demonstrated that same-sex couples shared a commitment akin to a marriage-maintained stable union.

Long-term same-sex partnerships have endured despite a sociopolitical climate that has traditionally stigmatised and granted minimal or no legal acknowledgement for their union. Riggle et al. (2016) conducted an interview-

based qualitative study on relationships. The study sample comprised 31 same-sex couples who had been together for 22.6 years (range: 13–41 years) and were committed to one another. The viewpoints of the participants regarding the factors or benefits that contribute to the "success" or durability of their relationship were solicited by the researchers. Each couple was in a legally recognised union; twenty-one were married, while ten were in civil unions. The thematic analyses performed on the collected responses revealed six overarching themes that effectively summarised the partners' personal experiences and identified determinants of relationship longevity: external support, communication, value similarities and differences, complementary similarities and differences, experience sharing, and commitment to the relationship.

Juhari et al. (2019) and Givertz et al. (2016) examined the hypothesis that marital commitment and interdependence would positively correlate with an individual's and their partner's marital longevity and that longevity would be influenced by marital commitment and interdependence. Additionally, the study examined the hypothesis that increased marital interdependence between the spouse and individual would lead to a secondary impact of marital commitment on marital longevity. The predictions of 628 married couples were evaluated. In general, the outcomes corroborated the forecasts. The examination of actor-partner interdependence mediation models unveiled that there are explicit correlations between levels of marital commitment and satisfaction among spouses. Husbands' commitment was not substantially associated with wives' interdependence or longevity, whereas wives' commitment was directly associated with husbands' marital interdependence and longevity. Marital

interdependence was substantially correlated with marital satisfaction among both spouses.

Additionally, these assessments unveiled indirect consequences of marital commitment on the union's longevity by increasing the degree of interdependence between spouses. The increased marital interdependence of spouses also indirectly impacted the longevity of their husbands' marriages as a result of their commitment. The findings presented here align with the investment commitment model and the interdependence theory.

In their study, Schoebi et al. (2012) hypothesised that the former component would function similarly to satisfaction, whereas the latter would have its independent role in stabilising couple relationships. By analysing satisfaction and commitment data from 172 couples throughout the initial four years of marriage, the researchers establish that only behavioural tendencies to preserve the marriage are linked to observable marital interaction behaviours. According to Selic et al., (2011), the level of commitment and the probability of divorce rose when one spouse had a lesser propensity to sustain the relationship. The study revealed that commitment stabilises deteriorating intimate partnerships, particularly when it is understood as the desire to sustain the relationship.

Commitment to marriage is considered so essential that most adolescents still perceive marriage as a lifelong commitment (Rhoades et al., 2010; Martin, et al., 2003). Engaging in premarital education can positively affect couples, including their increased marital commitment and satisfaction, decreased conflict levels, and fewer chances of divorce (Stanley et al. 2006).

While commitment and relationship duration are logically separate, the two have a strong empirical correlation. By employing conventional definitions of commitment, we distinguish between the desire for a relationship to last and the behavioural inclination to sustain the connection. Empirical research proves that marital commitment indirectly influences marital duration by fostering greater interdependence among husbands and wives.

*Trust contribution to marital longevity*

Some researchers examined the factors and characteristics of couples who have been married for a long time. A few of these findings endeavoured to elucidate or systematise specific qualities or characteristics in several partnerships. As an illustration, Klagsbrun (1995) interviewed 87 married couples and identified eight characteristics: adaptability and flexibility, acceptance of the unalterable, belief in lastingness, trust, equilibrium in interdependence, mutual enjoyment, shared cherished history, and chance. Simpson (2007) and Lauer and Lauer (1986) replicated this study with a significantly larger sample size of 351 couples. This study successfully identified seven determinants of marital success: the spouse being the best friend, genuine liking for the spouse as an individual, perceiving marriage as a lifelong commitment, considering marriage as a sacred institution, alignment of aims and goals, continuous growth of mutual interest between spouses, and a strong desire to make the relationship work. Mackey and O'Brien (1995) conducted interviews with 60 couples. They established five essential characteristics crucial for maintaining a long-lasting marriage: conflict containment, collaborative decision-making, effective communication, shared values of trust and respect, and fulfilling sexual and psychological closeness.

Alford-Cooper (1998) collected data from more than 500 couples and requested them to identify eight attributes that contributed to their relationship's longevity. Based on these eight features, three distinct groups were formed. The initial cluster comprised the attributes most frequently mentioned by the couples, namely trust (82%), a loving relationship (81%), and a willingness to compromise (80%). The second group exhibited a prevalence of mutual regard (72%), a necessity for one another (70%), and compatibility (66%). The last category comprised children (57%) and effective communication (53%). Each pair assigned a higher priority or significance to a specific quality than others. Nevertheless, the results indicated that group one, consisting of trust, a loving relationship, and readiness to compromise, consistently scored higher and more frequently than any other necessary qualities for a lasting marriage.

Surabaya ranks fourth among East Java cities regarding the greatest divorce rate, with 4,938 couples entering into matrimony in 2016 (JPNN, 2017). In their study, Avanti and Setiawan (2022) examined the impact of forgiveness and trust on the longevity and intimacy of marriages among dual-earner spouses residing in Surabaya. The present study employed a quantitative methodology. Residents of Surabaya who were employed and in committed conjugal relationships with a working spouse (including part-time and freelance workers) comprised the population for this study. The research sample comprised 107 participants who were chosen through convenience sampling. The data was collected via an internet-based survey administered via Google Forms. The data were analysed using multiple linear regression tests and the JASP (Jeffreys's Amazing Statistics Programme) software. Trust and forgiveness were found to be significant determinants of marital duration and intimacy among dual-earner

spouses ( $F(2,104) = 48.46$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). In contrast to forgiveness, which did not have a significant impact on marital intimacy ( $t = 1.394$ ;  $p > 0.05$ ), trust was found to have a significant influence on both longevity and marital intimacy ( $t = 7.375$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

For the study, Korinek (2001) used the TSAS (Truth in Specific Areas Scale) which was developed by Sager (1981). The TSAS is an eleven-item scale to evaluate an individual's trustworthiness in eleven critical relationship domains. The council of experts assessed the content validity of the items, while preliminary support for the internal consistency of the TSAS was obtained through a pilot test. At the time of their participation, 44 of the 110 married individuals in the study population were engaged in therapy to address marital issues. Participants took an attachment style assessment, a marital satisfaction measure, a demographic questionnaire, and the TSAS. Varimax rotation principal component analysis unveiled two latent factors within the TSAS. Following the rotation process, seven scale items exhibited the highest loadings on the initial factor, denoted as "Trust with Self," while four loaded highest on the subsequent factor, designated as "Trust with Other Things." Utilising factor scores on the two factors, hypotheses about the research questions were tested. A positive and statistically significant correlation was found between the two specific domains of trust and marital satisfaction and longevity, according to the results of the data analysis.

Further, the two correlations exhibited substantial dissimilarities, bolstering the case for particular trust domains. In addition, a multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) identified noteworthy distinctions in the domains of trust between married individuals with secure attachment and those

with insecure attachment. Generalised trust has been considered an independent predictor of morbidity and mortality in public health research for over two decades. On the other hand, Giordano et al. (2019) examined the contextual and individual effects of generalised trust on all-cause mortality. We intend to examine these associations using aggregated, nationally representative US General Social Survey (GSS) data linked to the National Death Register (NDI). The United States combined GSS–NDI data comprises ninety contextual units. From 1972 to 2010, the sample comprised 25,270 respondents; as of 2014, 6,424 fatalities had been documented. They employed multilevel parametric Weibull survival models to generate 95% CIs (estimated confidence intervals for Bayesian analysis) and HRs. The exposures of interest were generalised trust at the individual and contextual levels; covariates comprised age, race, gender, marital status, education, and household income. They discovered that contextual and individual trust had a substantial effect on mortality. No discernible gender differences were observed.

Furthermore, no substantial cross-level interactions were detected. In summary, elevated levels of generalised trust at the individual and contextual levels protect against marriage mortality, even when numerous aggregated and individual socioeconomic conditions are considered. Its dual-level robustness suggests that psychosocial mechanisms and a reliable environment are crucial.

In Turkey, Pamuk and Durmuş (2015) examined couple exhaustion with spousal support, dyadic trust, demographic variables, and interpersonal cognitive distortions. The research sample comprises 482 married individuals residing in Elazığ, of which 271 are female and 211 are male. The research participants completed a personal information form, which the administration

of several assessments followed: the Dyadic Trust Scale (DTS), the Spouse Support Scale (SSS), and the Interpersonal Cognitive Distortions Scale (ICDS). Data analysis used correlation, t-test, ANOVA, and structural equation model (SEM). Significant differences were found between couple burnout and the following independent variables: number of children, education level, gender, categories of marriage, and consanguineous marriage. According to SEM results, a 44% variance in couple exhaustion was accounted for by spousal support, dyadic trust, and interpersonal cognitive distortions. The study results were discussed with the results of different studies; dyadic trust was found to be the main course of distractions among couples.

Research has shown that trust and intimacy are essential in determining a marriage's longevity. The authors have revealed a positive correlation between trust, marital satisfaction, and longevity. Similarly, other researchers have shown that a trustworthy environment encourages peace and predicts a long-lasting marriage. However, the study did not deal much with the factor that precedes trust in a marriage.

#### *Procreation contribution to marital longevity*

Childbearing importance refers to the functions that childbearing serves or the needs it fulfils for individuals, and it greatly influences adult couples' fertility awareness and behaviours (Settersten & Hagestad, 2015; Nauck, 2014; Bush & Peterson, 2013). Osa (2020) emphasised infertility as a factor that ultimately resulted in marriage breakdown, which can be traced back to primal feelings and technological advancement. For a marriage to remain stable, reproduction through childbirth is essential. The fertility factor is a significant component in the stability of a marriage. As a result, fertility is as vital in



marriage stability as any other connection. Thiombiano (2017) also interrogated the influence of infertility on marital instability, specifically in the case of women, and polygamy (marrying another wife) in the case of men. There was a demonstration of misunderstanding among women in the connection between infertility and marital instability. Infertility has a wide range of implications for marital instability for marriages.

Vennum et al. (2014) investigated whether the presence of children was a stabilising intervention in measuring the risk associated with non-marital relationship breakup versus marriage. The researcher analyses the likelihood of dissolution of marriage formed after the 1990s in 14 European nations by kind of union and the presence or absence of children, using retrospective data from the worldwide Generations and Gender survey. She explores both similarities and differences in marital behaviour throughout the countries studied. In Central and Eastern European countries, however, these connections appear to be more comparable, regardless of the presence of children. This is consistent with previous research findings, such as those by Hiekel et al. (2014), who found that Western European countries had a higher proportion of marriage-like cohabiting unions than Central and Eastern European countries.

Using data from the initial round of the Chinese Family Panel Study conducted in 2010, Xu et al. (2015) investigated the correlation between marital instability and four child-related attributes in China: the number, age, premarital birth count, and gender of children. The investigators ascertained that all four variables substantially influence the divorce risk. Four specific findings support the notion that (1) couples who have premarital children have a higher propensity for divorce; (2) marriage stability increases with the number of

children; (3) younger children have a more significant mitigating effect on the risk of divorce compared to older children; and (4) couples who have sons have a lower propensity for divorce. These results align with previous research and suggest that children significantly contribute to maintaining marital stability and resolving conflicts. Additionally, it was found that the positive impact of children on marital stability, along with the significance of children's gender, is more pronounced in rural regions due to differences in cultural values and levels of modernisation between rural and urban areas.

In their study, Guzzo and Hayford (2012) discovered that when couples disagreed about their objectives regarding having children, it led to more instability in marriages, compared to cohabiting partnerships. Nevertheless, the researchers did not delve deeper into examining if the identity of the spouse who did not intend to have children played a significant role in this association. Additionally, they did not offer a comprehensive explanation for the potential connection between dispute and instability. Through the identification of the parent (either the mother or father) who perceives the birth as unexpected, a gendered perspective aids in comprehending the reasons behind the escalation of marital instability when couples argue or encounter unplanned pregnancies. Marriages may experience greater instability when mothers have no intention of having children, as they prefer to devote more time to childrearing duties (Milkie et al., 2009). Even if the father intended to have the child (and would typically be expected to play an active and supportive co-parenting role), mothers who were not ready for parenthood may find the new responsibilities and stresses of raising a child (such as sleep deprivation and loss of personal

freedom) particularly difficult. Compared to moms who planned the birth, this increased burden may increase the chance of relationship collapse.

Based on Townsend's (2002) interviews, the existence of children can have both advantageous and disadvantageous effects on the durability of a marriage. Men perceive marriage and parenthood as closely connected; married men who lack the desire to have a child are unlikely to engage in fatherhood or fully participate as co-parents. According to this viewpoint, a married mother who desires the birth but believes her husband did not may receive less support from the father in childrearing, which may build anger and raise the risk of instability.

Wineberg (1992) also investigated the association between childbirth and second-marriage breakup among white women. The study utilised information from the 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households. Women who have children in their second marriage have a much lower chance of divorce. Childbearing before remarriage is related to a considerably increased probability of dissolution in the first 5 years of the second marriage; no association is detected afterwards. An analysis of the chronology of births prior to the second marriage reveals that having a preschool-age child or having an intermarital birth is unrelated to dissolution. The findings show that introducing school-age children into a new marriage increases the breakup probability.

This study aimed to examine and elucidate the importance of reproduction within the Chinese familial and societal context, as perceived by women unable to conceive. We employed a qualitative descriptive approach and conducted semi-structured interviews with female patients experiencing infertility. Subjects were enlisted in Tianjin, China, in a fertility clinic that

handles a large number of cases. Fifteen women experiencing infertility were interviewed for 60-90 minutes. The data was analysed using thematic analysis.

The concepts of childbearing as natural law and childbearing for relational harmony served to strengthen the significance of childbirth for Chinese women experiencing infertility. Childbirth as a natural law pertains to the inherent desires to have a child, which encompass the attainment of motherhood and womanhood, as well as the transformative process that involves childbirth as a significant milestone. Relational harmony consisted of three main elements: (i) preserving the quality of marriage by preventing marital breakdown and rejuvenating an unsatisfactory marital bond; (ii) satisfying both authoritative and reciprocal filial piety; and (iii) establishing a sense of normality within family and social connections.

Ultimately, infertility resulted in the deprivation of the experience of motherhood, femininity, and a smooth progression through various life stages. Moreover, it threatened the cohesion of marriages, families, and society. According to the survey, women view children as representations of a secure and contented marital relationship. Pregnancy was regarded as a means of amplifying a couple's love and affection, fortifying the marital bond and solidifying the connection between husbands and wives. Possessing children in a marriage has long been seen as a significant contribution to marital happiness. Several studies' findings support this argument. In the presence of children, the couple was happy and satisfied with family life. However, some types of motherhood are more related to depression than others. Conversely, there is a negative correlation between a woman's number of children and her longevity.

Christensen (1968) investigated how the presence of children affects family stability, concentrating on the link of quantity and spacing to marital success. Relevant research determines whether marital success is affected by the household's number and spacing of children. The research strongly implies that the number and spacing of children impact marital success but that the degree to which couples can adjust quantity and spacing according to their desires is even more critical.

Christensen (1968) studied how the presence of children impacts family stability, focusing on the relationship between number and spacing and marital success. Relevant research is used to ascertain the number and dispersal of children residing in the household that affect marriage success. The data strongly suggest that the number and spacing of children impact marital success, but couples' ability to modify quantity and spacing according to their choices is even more essential. Although the effects of a child's gender on marriage are still uncertain, ample data indicates that children with challenging temperaments can exert considerable stress on couples. The emotional nature of the marital bond before the arrival of a child and the many stressors and sources of support within and outside the household significantly determine how individual differences in children impact marriages (Bush & Peterson, 2013).

#### *Strategies for Managing Marital Conflict.*

Studies suggest that marital conflict is related to three aspects of communication: emotion, conflict behaviours, and conflict management, all of which influence the selection of conflict management solutions. Lawuo et al. (2015) investigated the issues and adaptive techniques employed by children residing in households experiencing marital conflicts in Tanga City, Tanzania.

Various research methods were employed to facilitate the study using an exploratory strategy. A group informed the study of one hundred social professionals, couples, class teachers, and school counsellors. The study used purposive, stratified, simple random, and snowball sampling strategies, survey questionnaires, and interviews to choose individuals and gather data.

Furthermore, the text delves into the issues that married couples encounter. The findings indicate that it is advisable for recently married couples and individuals considering marriage to seek marital therapy to establish robust familial connections that can alleviate tensions in family life. Additionally, attending family training programmes that enhance problem-solving abilities within marriage is recommended.

Work-to-family and family-to-work conflict and well-being (work engagement, job satisfaction, and family satisfaction) were examined in Rantanen et al. (2011) study on the moderating effect of coping strategies (problem, emotion, and avoidance-focused coping strategies). A sample of 527 Finnish employees comprised the research. According to multilevel moderated regression analyses, a significant level of family-to-work conflict was mitigated by emotion-focused coping. Those who utilised emotion-focused coping to a greater extent were less satisfied with their family lives when confronted with high levels of family-to-work conflict, which had a detrimental effect on family satisfaction in the same stressful situation. Those who utilised avoidance coping to a greater extent reported greater satisfaction with their family lives, which was advantageous in situations involving intense family-to-work conflict.

In the Durbete Municipality, Tasew and Getahun (2021) investigated the frequency, origins, outcomes, and adaptive measures associated with marital

discord. A cross-sectional descriptive survey research design was utilised in this mixed-methods investigation. Three hundred eighty-six couples (193 men and 193 women) participated as survey respondents, in addition to four interviewees, for a total of 390 participants. Proportional and stratified random sampling methods were utilised to survey selected participants. Elderly, Legal, and Women and Children's Affairs Divisions contributed four interviewees. Questionnaires, interviews, and documents were utilised to gather the data. Methods for quantitative data analysis included the one-sample t-test, weighted mean, and rank order. The qualitative information was analysed thematically using quotation, paraphrasing and narration. According to the findings, marital discord is extremely prevalent and exhibited an annual upward trend—economic, sociocultural, gender-related, and sexual factors predominated among the causes of disagreements in marriage.

The five significant consequences of marital conflict identified were stress, depression and grief, worry about what others say beyond the disturbance with their spouses, and despair and hopelessness. The frequently applied conflict coping strategies were competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, accommodating feelings, and third-party interference. Finally, it is concluded that marital conflict is one major social issue in the study area that needs the involvement of experts in social work, counselling and law to minimise the prevalence of marital conflicts.

This empirical review revealed many coping strategies couples employ to cope with the stress of marriage. Conscientiousness and agreeableness were found to be significantly used to manage dissatisfaction in marriage. Again, the review made it evident that accommodation, compromise, competition,

collaboration, and third-party interference were some strategies that were frequently used in managing marriage dissatisfaction.

As the studies mentioned earlier, Fatima and Ajmal (2012) investigated ways to resolve conflict among couples toward a happy marriage. Married women were selected from a convenient sample using a semi-structured interview guide. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. Based on the interview findings, married women confirmed that conflicts can be effectively addressed by displaying compromise, affection, concern, trust, empathy, communication, and forgiveness toward their partners. Furthermore, Aman et al. (2019), Langlais and Schwanz (2017), and Goodman et al. (2013) investigated the correlation between religion and the transformational nature of marriage commitment and coping. The study sample consisted of 184 married couples, totalling 368 individuals ( $N = 368$ ), which surpasses the typical size of in-depth, qualitative interview-based investigations. The study comprised individuals from the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim communities, with a deliberate overrepresentation of minority groups.

Vaaler et al. (2009) analysed several aspects of religious engagement and its correlation with divorce risk in a sample of 2,979 newlywed couples nationwide. Two National Survey of Families and Households waves were examined using multivariate proportional hazards models. The findings revealed that while the religious attendance of each partner had little impact on the likelihood of divorce, the probability of marital dissolution was reduced when husbands held conservative theological ideas and were exposed to teachings that provided them with strategies for managing problems within their marriage. Teachings from theological beliefs are embedded with practices of



forgiveness, love and communication, making it possible for husbands to relate well with their wives when conflicts emerge.

In exploring subjective marital experiences in resolving conflicts among Trinidadian couples who have lived for more than twenty years, Timothy-Springer and Johnson (2018) adopted the phenomenological approach to comprehend the phenomenon of satisfying and enduring marriages. The data was gathered through semi-structured, conversational interviews that were digitally recorded and transcribed word for word. The researcher conducted joint interviews with the spouses at their residences. The factors identified contributing to the satisfaction and longevity of conflict resolution in couples were friendship, commitment, religion, forgiveness, communication, children, role sharing, acceptance, and contentment.

### **Pathway Connection Among Religiosity, Commitment, Conflict Management and Marriage Longevity**

This validates similar findings from Latifa et al. (2021) and Moeti et al. (2017), who discovered that religiosity and marital commitment have a direct impact on marital stability, which in turn influences the longevity of marriages among female journalists in Indonesia, is yet to be specified. Furthermore, Day and Acock (2013) found that their relational virtue completely influenced the impact of religiousness on the well-being of a couple, but it did not have any association with relational inequity. Additionally, it was discovered that there is a correlation between relational inequality and conflict among women, conflict among men, and instability within marriages. The study did not discover a direct correlation between higher levels of religiousness and improved marriage outcomes. While these findings do not provide evidence for a direct link

between religious activities and stronger relationships, the data does indicate that religiousness can contribute to the expression of relational virtue, which in turn is connected with marital well-being. Latifa (2018) discovered that a strong dedication to religiosity, as measured by active involvement in religious activities and strong religious beliefs, particularly among Muslims, is a significant predictor of marital stability ( $R^2 = 0.487$ ). Participation in religious practices can foster resilience and enable individuals to navigate challenging circumstances in their marital lives, leading to a less inclination towards divorce.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Lambert and Dollahite (2006) demonstrates that personal religious devotion enhances the inclination to sustain a lasting partnership (i.e., influences marital dedication), hence assisting couples in effectively managing conflicts that arise. Contrary to previous research, Sullivan (2001) discovered that religiosity diminishes throughout the initial four years of marriage. When examined simultaneously, this arises from the correlation between religiosity and attitudes towards divorce, commitment, and help-seeking attitudes. The longitudinal results suggest that religion has a consistent impact on marital satisfaction for couples, but this impact varies depending on the level of neuroticism in the husband. Specifically, religiosity has a positive effect on marital satisfaction for couples with less neurotic husbands but has an adverse impact on couples with more neurotic husbands.

The conclusion of this study contradicts the findings of Mahoney (2005), which suggested that religion provides families with methods that can either help or impede the settlement of conflict once it occurs. The scarcity of empirical research on the influence of religion on the expression and settlement

of conflicts within marriages and between parents and children is emphasised. Recommendations are provided to promote further study and enhance clinical practice in this area. The study conducted by Chinitz and Brown (2001) aimed to test two main hypotheses. Firstly, they hypothesised that there would be a positive link between religious homogamy (the similarity of religious beliefs between partners) and marital stability. Secondly, they hypothesised that the level of marital conflict would play a mediating role in this relationship. In other words, marital stability is expected to diminish when there is an increase in marital conflict. These connections were anticipated to persist even when accounting for various denominations, both those of the same faith and those of different faiths.

A systematic review by Karimi et al. (2019) investigated the various components of marital stability by searching relevant publications from Embase, Web of Science, PubMed, Scopus, Science Direct, Magiran, and the Scientific Information Database from their inception through January 30, 2019. The findings indicate that certain elements of partnerships, such as commitment and effective conflict resolution, uphold the fundamental principles of marriage during crucial circumstances.

Additionally, they discovered a correlation between relational inequality and conflict among women, conflict among men, and instability in marriages. The study did not discover a direct correlation between a higher level of religiousness and improved marriage outcomes. While these findings do not provide evidence for a direct link between religious activities and stronger relationships, the data does indicate that religiousness can contribute to the expression of relational virtue, which is connected with marital stability. The

findings of the mediation analysis produce a more concrete foundation that commitment and conflict management serve as a potent pathway through which religious beliefs of couples could contribute to the lasting duration of marriages and, hence, have important implications for understanding the role of religiosity, commitment and conflict management to marriage longevity.

### **Chain Connection Between Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy, Trust and Marriage Longevity**

In two studies, Karimi et al. (2019) and Cohn (2013) comprehensively analysed the factors contributing to the stability of marriages lasting for a significant time globally. Their finding was that sexual relationship reinforces intimacy and result in long-lasting marriages. This review, albeit conducted on a worldwide scale, found that elements of marital stability consist of institutions that amplify a couple's identity and sense of unity. By identifying the factors of marital relationships that lead to marital stability, professionals and researchers can focus on specific types of marital interaction that can improve the satisfaction and duration of marriages, thereby minimising unnecessary divorces. Similarly, Arora and Shetgovekar (2021), Roshani et al. (2019), and Mark and Lasslo (2018) conducted a comparative analysis of marital satisfaction, marital intimacy, sexual satisfaction, and marital adjustment among married individuals with varying age disparities, while controlling for age and duration of marriage. The findings were enlightening, as they indicated that there is no notable disparity in marriage satisfaction, marital closeness, sexual pleasure, and marital adjustment among married individuals with different age gaps.

Moreover, the findings indicate no notable disparity in marital satisfaction, marital closeness, sexual satisfaction, and marital adjustment among married individuals (with varying age disparities) when accounting for age and duration of marriage. The relationship between marriage happiness, marital closeness, and marital adjustment among couples who had been together for a long time was not well established. Therefore, these variables had no mediating link (Cahill et al., 2018; Yabiku & Gager, 2009).

Studies (Duncan et al., 2015; Fincham & Beach, 2010; Sharlin et al., 2000) suggest that trust may not directly influence the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, indicating that trust may interact with other marital elements or function differently depending on other relationship factors. This aligns with the findings of the current study, as trust alone fails to have any role to play in connecting sexual satisfaction and lasting marriage. Thus, couples might attain sexual satisfaction; however, when trust is absent in such an adventure, marriages will still fold up. In an analogous study, Estrada (2009) delved into love and marital satisfaction in long-term marriages. The couples highlighted compromise, faith/religion, forgiveness, effective communication, quality time spent together, and shared interests as the critical factors contributing to their long-lasting marriages. Additional elements of a positive marital experience that were referenced, albeit less frequently, were alignment in values, sustenance of romance, perseverance, mutual consideration, expression of gratitude, trust, patience, minimising conflicts, and mutual respect. In essence, it was clear that trust could not connect sexual satisfaction and enduring marriages.

In establishing the chain connection between sexual satisfaction, intimacy, trust and lasting marriages, Hinchliff and Gott (2004), Gholamali et al. (2017), and Shakerian et al. (2014) investigated issues of intimacy, commitment and adaptation in sexual relationships within long-term marriages. In conclusion, elements of marriage, including sexual relationships, intimacy, and trust, fail to connect lasting marriage in the UK. However, the results suggest that sexual activity continued to be a significant aspect of enduring marriages, even in the presence of conditions that hindered or impeded sexual intercourse. Participants successfully adjusted to these obstacles and had minimal disruption, attributed to the harmonious environment fostered by their long-term marriages. Avanti and Setiawan (2022) and Laurenceau et al. (2013) examined the impact of trust and forgiveness on marital intimacy among dual-earner spouses in Surabaya, Indonesia. The findings indicated that trust and forgiveness notably impacted marital intimacy among husbands or wives who both work. The F-statistic is 2.104 with a corresponding p-value of 0.05, indicating statistical significance. In all these discussions, intimacy and trust act as buffers against the potential negative impacts of sexual dissatisfaction. When couples have strong emotional bonds and trust each other deeply, they are better equipped to navigate challenges related to sexual satisfaction. This can lead to greater relationship resilience and a higher likelihood of a lasting marriage.

Moreover, intimacy fosters open and effective communication. Couples who are emotionally close are more likely to discuss their sexual needs, desires and concerns openly. Trust in these conversations can lead to constructive problem-solving, thus helping couples find mutually satisfying solutions to sexual issues. Intimacy also provides emotional fulfilment and closeness

beyond the physical aspects of a relationship. When emotional intimacy is intense, partners may experience a more profound sense of connection and satisfaction in their marriage, which can compensate for occasional sexual dissatisfaction and contribute to a lasting bond. These findings are essential for strategies seeking to nurture healthy, enduring marriages. Emphasising the importance of fostering intimacy, maintaining sexual satisfaction, and recognising the role of trust can equip couples and marriage counsellors to build more sustainable marriages (Mukherjee, 2020; Horowitz et al., 2019; Sprecher, 2014; Yoo et al., 2011).

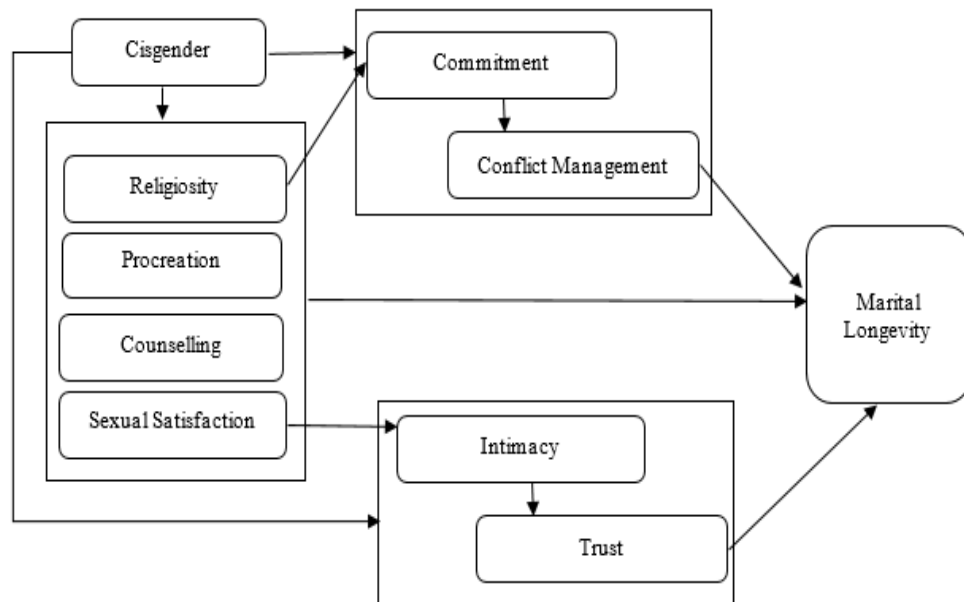
### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework was developed by drawing upon the concepts and assumptions of the examined theories. The framework addresses the specification of the research variables and their interconnections. According to McGaghie et al. (2001), a conceptual framework is a platform for introducing a specific research question as the basis for the entire study. Consequently, drawing from the literature examined, the study integrates the assessed concepts and discusses the variables.

The conceptual framework presented seeks to shed light on the intricate world of marriage by analysing the interrelationships between several significant factors. The study seeks to determine whether men and women perceive certain aspects of marriage differently. The study proposes that the gender of a couple directly affects trust, intimacy, conflict management strategies, procreation, sexual satisfaction and commitment levels that exist in the marriage. In this instance, the study envisions that the gender of a couple could result in differences in trust among couples, how they resolve conflicts,

the influence of having children in their marriage, their preferences and the extent to which a couple get satisfied sexually and their decision to stay committed to their marriage.

The next focus is on factors that may contribute to the longevity of marriages. Here, the study considers the impact of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment on marriage. These elements can be viewed as supporting and strengthening a marriage over time.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

Source: Author's construct (2023)

As illustrated in Figure 1, the framework investigates some intriguing connections. Religion directly contributes to marriage longevity. However, there are variables that, when they serve as mediators between religiosity and marriage longevity, strengthen the relationship between the two variables. The study's first hypothesis proposes that commitment and conflict management will



statistically significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity.

Similarly, sexual satisfaction will directly affect marriage longevity; however, certain variables, when they act as mediators between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, will strengthen the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. The second hypothesis of this study is that intimacy and trust will mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital longevity among couples.

In conclusion, this framework provides a clear and formal examination of marriage by analysing individual experiences, essential factors for enduring marriages, and the subtle ways in which some factors influence others.

### **Chapter Summary**

The review focused mainly on a theoretical, conceptual, and empirical review of the study to comprehend the dynamics at play when discussing the determinants of marriage longevity among Ghanaian couples residing in the Kwadaso Municipality. Initially, theories, including Gottman's theory, Family Systems Theory (FST), and Wallerstein and Blakeslee's Model, were examined. The theoretical review suggests that marriage is a process instead of a moment that consists of benefits and costs. The benefits range from emotional support and companionship to monetary security (Homans, 1958). In contrast, costs encompass the sacrifices or investments made in a relationship, including commitment, time, emotional effort, and financial resources (Kelley & Thibaud, 1978). Moreover, there can be gridlocks when couples cannot discuss disputes, making each couple emotionally distant. Therefore, communication is crucial for marital satisfaction, which promotes marital longevity.

In addition, the review defined all possible concepts and constructs. For instance, marriage longevity is a broad concept predominantly regarded in terms of years of existence. Some scholars consider marriages enduring between sixty and eighty-five years to be long-term (Spaniol et al., 2008), fifty years (Lauer et al., 1990; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Roberts, 1980), or twenty-five years (Kaslow & Robison, 1996).

Moreover, religiosity is a multifaceted concept encompassing the intensity of religious beliefs, practices, and engagement in religious activities. According to Brown and Lin (2012) and Amato (2010), religious affiliation contributes to the happiness of couples and supports and fosters healthy marriages. Tuttle and Davis (2015) and Vaaler et al. (2009) have found that religious couples have higher levels of happiness, more extraordinary life and marital satisfaction, and established boundaries that safeguard their relationships throughout conflicts.

Marital stability necessitates sexual fulfilment and is linked to overall contentment, psychological well-being, and successful social interaction (Petrican et al., 2011). Blümel et al. (2004) found that a sexual relationship is not essential for maintaining a couple's stability. This study additionally discovered that mutual understanding is crucial for the sexual dynamics inside a couple and that sexual satisfaction is a consequence of overall relationship contentment. The majority of empirical studies examined utilised quantitative methods. However, this study utilised quantitative and qualitative methods, including numerical data and respondent comments. However, most reviewed studies did not consider the mediating effect of variables such as commitment, conflict management, trust, and intimacy on the duration of marriages among

couples in the Kwadaso Municipality in Ashanti Region of Ghana. Most empirical studies focused on couples in developed and developing nations, with none of the evaluated works centred on Ghanaian couples. This gap in research has paved the way for conducting a study in the Ghanaian context.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the study. The discussion covers various aspects of the research, such as the research paradigm, approach and design of the study, target population, sampling methods, data collection tools, instrument validity and reliability, the trustworthiness of the interviews, analytical procedures, and ethical considerations.

#### **Research Paradigm**

The pragmatic paradigm guided the study. "What works" is fundamental to pragmatism, a philosophical approach that prioritises practical issues in the real world rather than presumptions about the essence of knowing (Shannon-Baker, 2016; Creswell, 2014; Hall, 2013). Tashakkori and Teddlie (2015) observed that pragmatism challenges the notions of 'truth' and 'reality' and instead emphasises the effectiveness of the topics investigated in the research.

As demonstrated by several diverse mixed-methods research designs, pragmatism provides a methodological and philosophical middle ground using quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address research problems (Hathcoat & Meixner, 2017; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). Pragmatism is the most prevalent philosophical basis for the hybrid research strategy (Bishop, 2015). According to Biddle and Schafft (2015), a pragmatic researcher can conduct quantitative, qualitative, or mixed research based on the nature of their inquiry.

The pragmatic paradigm in this study allows me to choose quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data to address the research objectives. This approach balances subjectivity and objectivity throughout the research process (Bishop, 2015).

### **Research Approach**

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2015; Creswell, 2014), integrating quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis within a single research study. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by capturing the breadth and depth of the phenomenon under investigation.

The mixed-methods approach was selected to employ triangulation, which entailed the utilisation of numerous data sources to corroborate and fortify the research findings. The study utilised this methodology to investigate and gather data on various facets of the longevity of marriages. These facets encompassed disparities between married men and women in terms of procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, commitment, and trust, as well as conflict management.

In addition, the study examined how commitment and conflict management mediate the relationship between religion and the length of marriage. This study aims to enhance our understanding of the factors that affect marriage longevity and to shed light on the intricate relationship between many variables in the context of marriage. This was achieved by combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies.

## Research Design

In this study, the explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was selected based on the works of Teddlie and Tashakkori (2015) and Creswell and Plano Clark (2023), who emphasised the importance of integrating different research methods based on the relationship between qualitative and quantitative data and the existing literature on the topic. Given the limited research on the factors influencing marital longevity, previous studies primarily relied on quantitative or qualitative approaches.

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design has been selected because it permits a thorough exploration of the research problem (Creswell, 2014) and provides a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of marriage longevity than quantitative or qualitative methods alone. By integrating both approaches, this study seeks to provide a more robust and meaningful analysis of the factors contributing to marital longevity among couples.

I collected quantitative data first and then qualitative data second in this design. This decision was made to validate the quantitative measures with qualitative experiences and to provide a nuanced interpretation of the quantitative findings. Statistical analysis was used to determine whether the identified variables substantially affect the longevity of marriages in the quantitative portion of the study. On the other hand, the qualitative component enabled me to hear directly from the couples and obtain a deeper understanding of their experiences.

Quantitative and qualitative data integration occurred during the interpretation phase, where the findings from both strands were compared,

contrasted, synthesised, and used to inform the overall interpretation and draw meaningful inferences and conclusions. This data integration facilitated a more comprehensive and refined understanding of the research topic, leveraging the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This interconnected approach between the two data types was essential for preserving coherence and enhancing the overall comprehension of the research problem within the integrated framework.

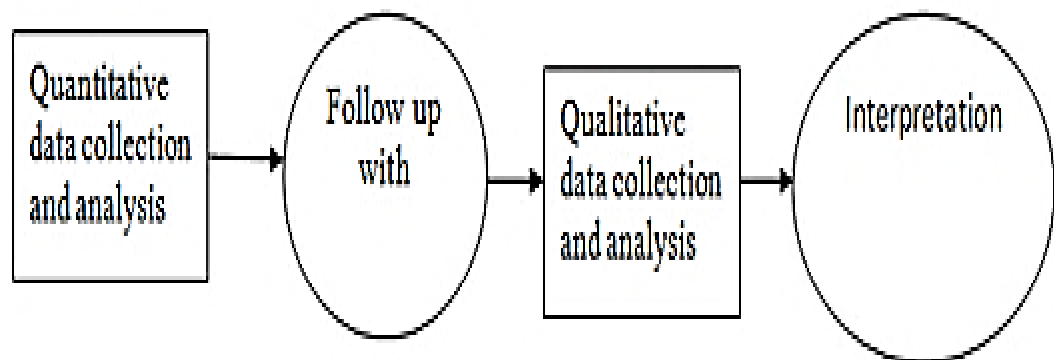
The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design offers several benefits, including the opportunity to examine quantitative results in greater depth and the flexibility to explore unexpected findings that may arise during the quantitative phase. Additionally, the design allows for a structured two-phase approach, where the results can inform the second phase of the first phase (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). However, it is important to acknowledge that implementing this design faced some limitations. I addressed this to ensure the validity and reliability of my study results. One key limitation was the time-consuming and resource-intensive nature of the two-phase data collection process. I carefully planned the data collection periods, allocated sufficient time for each phase, and employed efficient qualitative methods such as structured interviews with guiding questions to manage this.

Another challenge was integrating the quantitative and qualitative data, as they have different focuses—quantitative data aims for generalisability, while qualitative data emphasises context and depth. I developed a clear integration strategy to overcome this, ensuring that qualitative data explained or deepened the understanding of quantitative findings. I also used triangulation to confirm or contrast results, enhancing the study's credibility.

The method's sequential nature limited flexibility in the qualitative phase, which followed the quantitative analysis. To mitigate this, I remained open to adjustments during the qualitative phase, allowing emerging insights to inform the process. Triangulation and member checking were employed to ensure valid interpretations.

Sampling inconsistencies between the quantitative and qualitative phases were addressed by ensuring the qualitative sample was drawn from the same population as the quantitative sample. To manage potential data overload from large volumes of data, I adopted systematic data management strategies, prioritised relevant data, and utilised specialised software for analysis. Finally, I minimised potential delays in reporting by setting clear timelines for each phase and preparing interim reports. I ensured the study's validity and reliability by addressing these limitations, leading to meaningful insights and conclusions.

In summary, this study's mixed-method design integrates quantitative and qualitative data to comprehend the determinants of marriage longevity. This approach enabled a deeper understanding of the research topic, enhanced the validity of the findings, and provided a more nuanced interpretation of the results.



*Figure 2: A Pictorial Depiction of a Sequential Explanatory Model*

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2014)



The research was conducted in the Kwadaso Municipal Assembly in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The Kwadaso Municipal Assembly is one of Ghana's 260 Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs), a part of the 43 MMDAs in the Ashanti Region. The Kwadaso Municipal Assembly was established in 2018 as one of the 38 newly-formed and upgraded district assemblies created by the Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. The region's capital was designated as Kwadaso with the enactment of Legislative Instrument (LI) 2292. The municipality is situated in the middle Region of Ashanti, with coordinates ranging from 6.35°N to 6.40°S latitude and 1.30°W to 1.35°E longitude. Its areas of jurisdiction are Tanoso, Kwadaso, Asuoyeboah, Edwenase, Atwima-Amanfrom, Nzema, Kokode, Nwamase, Apire, Nyankyerenease, Apatrapa and Ohwimase. It shares boundaries with the Atwima Nwabiagya District to the northeast and northwest and the Atwima Kwanwoma District to the south and east with Kumasi Metropolis.

Kwadaso's strategic location renders it a pivotal destination for migrants from inside and outside the country. Due to its strategic location, it has been designated as the primary inland transport hub, playing a crucial part in the lucrative industry of distributing goods and services throughout Ghana. According to the Population and Housing Census report (2021), the population of Kwadaso Municipal in 2021 was 154,526, comprising 75,205 males and 79,321 females. The adult population totally 98,970, which comprised 47,951 males and 51,019 females. The population growth rate per annum of the municipality was 1.2%. The municipality had an average of about 2142 people per square km. The municipal was made up of thirty-six (36) communities with fifteen (15) electoral areas, which had been grouped into three (3) zonal areas.

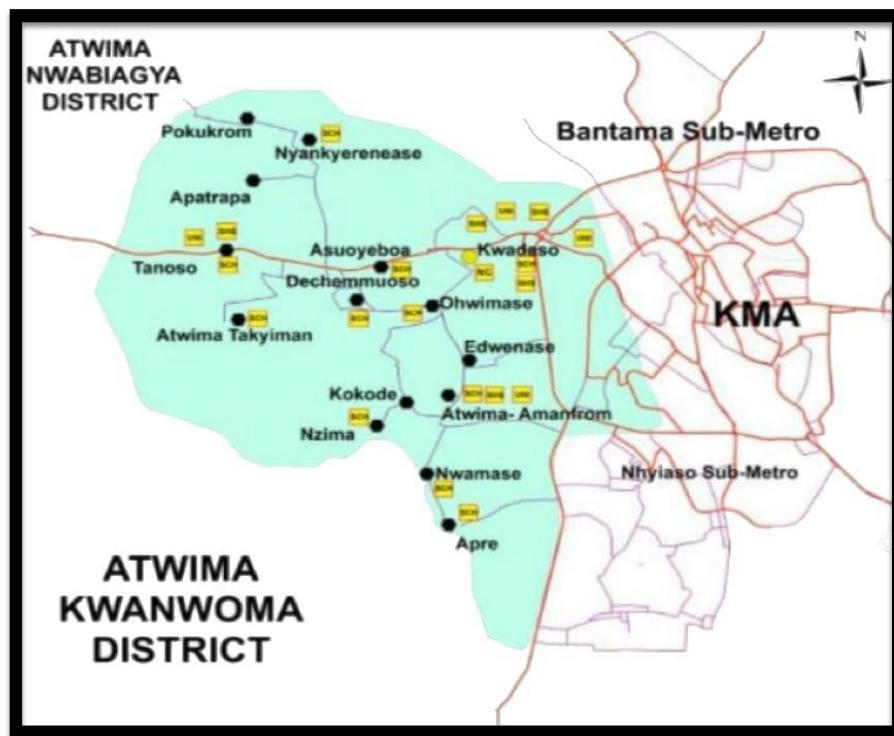


Figure 3: Map of Kwadaso Municipal Area

Source: Kwadaso Municipal Assembly (2022)

The Kwadaso Municipality is an ideal research location due to its high population of married couples, cultural diversity, proximity to facilities, and personal/professional connections, making it a suitable location to investigate the factors contributing to the longevity of heterosexual marriages.

### Population

Fraenkel et al., (2015) define a population as a specific set of individuals to whom researchers aim to generalise the findings of a study. The study focused on married couples residing in Kwadaso Municipality, Ashanti Region of Ghana, namely those who have been married for a lengthy period.

The population under consideration in this study was the married couples residing in the Kwadaso Municipality of the Ashanti Region in Ghana. Based on the 2021 Population and Housing Census, the targeted population

consisted of 38,619 married individuals, comprising 18,021 males and 20,538 females in Kwadaso Municipality. The possibility of having more females is primarily because polygamy practised in some parts of Ghana. Other factors can be attributed to the migration of husbands and widowhood. From this targeted population, the accessible population for this research was defined as heterosexual married couples whose marriage duration was ten years and beyond. The accessible population totalled 6,243.

The selection of a minimum marriage duration of 10 years was based on theoretical evidence, which suggests that this time-frame allows couples to experience and navigate various challenges, leading to a certain level of relationship maturity and stability (Connidis & Barnett, 2018; Amato & James, 2010). Empirical studies focusing on long-term marriages also support using a similar timeframe to capture the depth and richness of participants' experiences (Trotter et al., 2019).

This study investigated the factors contributing to the length of marriages within the Kwadaso Municipality by examining couples married for ten (10) years or more. This population selection permitted a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics and experiences associated with long-term marriages in the local context.

### **Sampling Procedures**

The multi-stage method of sampling was adopted. The sampling procedure for this study involved multiple phases, and it employed a combination of sampling techniques to ensure a representative and diverse sample. The choice of a multi-stage sampling technique was guided by considerations of practicability and feasibility (Dehghan et al., 2021). This

method allowed for a systematic progression from a general to a specific sample while also maximising the inclusion of respondents possessing specific desired characteristics related to marriage longevity; all fifteen towns are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: The Fifteen Towns in the District**

Serial No	Towns
1	Kwadaso
2	Apatrapa
3	Nyankyerenease
4	Asuoyeboah
5	Pokukurom
6	Tanoso
7	Edwenase
8	Atwima-Amanfrom
9	Kokode
10	Nzema
11	Ohwimase
12	Demkyemuoso
13	Takyiman
14	Apire
15	Nwamase

Source: Development Planning Unit, KdMA(2022)

In the first stage, the simple random approach, namely the lottery method, was used to pick one-third of the fifteen towns that constitute the municipality. This approach guarantees thorough representation (Chauvet, 2020). This procedure ensured that one-third of the towns were randomly selected, providing a representative sample that minimised bias. This method aligns with the rationale proposed by Amato and Previti (2003), which suggests that selecting one-third of the towns ensures a comprehensive and reliable

representation of the study. A comprehensive list of all towns was created, and each town was assigned a unique number from 1 to 15. The numbers were written on individual slips of paper, which were then folded and placed in a container. Five numbers representing 1, 4, 6, 7 and 14, corresponding to the towns selected for the study, were drawn randomly, and these towns were included in the study sample.

To account for the uncertain sample frame, the second stage of the study utilised a quota sampling technique to determine the proportional representation of each selected area (Zhang et al., 2020). The utilisation of the simple random sampling technique was motivated by its capacity to offer impartial and representative insights into the towns of the municipality. This approach considered each town's various attributes, viewpoints, and backgrounds, enhancing the credibility and dependability of the research results. The quota sampling method was used to overcome the difficulty of an unfamiliar sample frame, guaranteeing proportional representation. Table 2 displays the number of couple participants chosen from each Town.

**Table 2: Distribution of Participants by Town in the Municipalities**

Serial No	Towns	No. of Couples	Percentages
1	Kwadaso	23	16
2	Asuoyeboah	31	22
3	Tanoso	36	26
4	Demkyemuoso	24	17
5	Apire	26	19
<b>Total</b>		<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

During the third stage, the purposive sampling technique was employed to choose 140 couples who had been married for a minimum of ten years. The

chosen sample size was deemed sufficient for making significant generalisations (Frankel & Wallen, 2008) and adhered to the guideline that the ideal sample sizes for most behavioural investigations range from 30 to 500 individuals (Abranovic, 1997; Roscoe, 1975). The sample size was further substantiated by the rational depiction of community attributes (Marcoulides, 1993; Cronbach et al., 1972). Potential participants were identified via recommendations from religious institutions, community organisations, and personal connections. Purposive sampling facilitated the intentional selection of participants or responders who fulfilled the inclusion criteria, taking into account the inclusion of married couples with a lengthy duration of marriage within these towns and the inclusion of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

During the fourth stage, the snowball sampling method was employed to reach individuals who were difficult to access (O'Dwyer & Bernauer, 2013). This methodology entailed participants recommending individuals with comparable characteristics and circumstances to participate in the study. Through participant referrals, additional participants who met the inclusion criteria were identified.

A criterion sampling strategy guided the sample selection process to ensure selecting participants who met specific eligibility requirements. Couples married for 20 years or more were chosen, based on the mean duration of marriage (20.10 years), as this was considered sufficient to provide valuable insights into long-lasting marriages and align with the study's second research objective. This sampling method was chosen as it provided extensive interviews with the requisite expertise concerning marriage longevity (Creswell, 2014).

The initial stage involved inviting all eligible couples from the 130 couples who took part in the study. From this pool, five couples were selected based on their readiness and ability to provide comprehensive accounts of their experiences. Efforts were made to ensure diversity among participants regarding the duration of marriage, enabling the study to capture a wide range of perspectives. A sample size of five couples, comprising ten participants, was chosen as it was sufficient to achieve data saturation and allowed for in-depth qualitative analysis. This sample size facilitated a thorough exploration of experiences without compromising the depth and richness of the data collected (Varoquaux, 2018; Willis, 2004).

The research's inclusion criteria encompassed individuals who met the following conditions: monogamous legal heterosexual married couples with a minimum of ten years of marriage, residing in Kwadaso Municipality, and demonstrating a willingness and ability to provide informed consent and actively engage in the study. The research also included exclusion criteria encompassing individuals who were not legally married, had been married for less than ten years, did not reside within the Kwadaso Municipality, or were unwilling or unable to provide informed consent and engage in the study.

Stage	Sampling method	Justification
1	Simple Random	To address unbiased and representative insights into the study population
2	Quota	To address all challenges with unknown populations and give proportional representation.

3	Purposive	To select heterosexual couples married for ten years and above for quantitative and qualitative data
4	Snowball	To Select participants by relying on participant referrals to identify additional participants who met the inclusion criteria.
5	Criterion	To carefully select individuals who satisfy specific criteria pertinent to the research purpose. This methodology ensured that the participants had the requisite knowledge, experiences, and insights about lasting marriages and were prepared to disclose them.

---

**Table 3: Summary of Stages in the Sample Selection**

### **Research Instruments**

The data-gathering approach included using two instruments: a questionnaire and an interview guide. The questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data, while the interview guide was employed to gather qualitative data.

The quantitative section of the investigation comprised a compilation of adapted standardised instruments. The mentioned scales are the ENRICH Sexual Relationship (ESR) scale (Tuelo Masilo, 2019), ENRICH Religious Orientation (EROS) scale (Murtaza & Bashir, 2020), the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT) (Rahmawati et al., 2019), the Gottman Sound Relationship House Questionnaire (GSRHQ) - (Gottman, 1999), the Triangular Theory of Scale instrument (Sternberg, 1997), and the Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980).



These instruments were selected based on their established validity and reliability in assessing various aspects of marriage and relationship dynamics. The questionnaire collected quantitative data regarding the participants' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of the investigated variables.

The ESR-modified instrument scale had seven items and an estimated Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.71, indicating excellent internal consistency. This scale was designed to assess the participants' perceptions and experiences regarding sexual satisfaction in their marriages. Similarly, the ERO scale consisted of seven items, with an estimated Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.89, indicating excellent internal consistency. This modified instrument was designed to measure the contribution of sexual satisfaction and religion to the longevity of marriages.

Both the ESR and ERO scales utilised a four-point Likert scale for responses. Participants were asked to designate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement using the following grading scale: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3, and Strongly Agree=4. Notably, the scoring system was inverted for negatively worded items, with Strongly Disagree=4, Disagree=3, Agree=2, and Strongly Agree=1.

Using these modified scales and the associated scoring system, the researcher captured and quantified the participants' perceptions and attitudes regarding sexual satisfaction and the role of religion in marriage longevity. According to the estimated Cronbach's alpha coefficients, the established psychometric properties of the instruments support their reliability and validity for the objectives of this study.

The Marital Adjustment Test (MAT), developed initially as the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale or the Short Marital Adjustment Test (SMAT) by Locke and Wallace (1959), was adapted to assess the impact of conflict management strategies on the longevity of marriages. The modified instrument included ten questions designed to evaluate the conflict management strategies used by couples in their marital relationships. Participants were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each statement corresponding to particular symptoms. The 2-point Likert scale responses were scored as True = 1 and False = 2, enabling the quantification of the prevalence of distinct coping strategies employed by couples. The analysis of reliability, as measured by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielded a value of 0.80, indicating a high level of internal consistency within the MAT scale as modified. This reliability coefficient ensures the instrument's validity and consistency in measuring the conflict management strategies identified by couples to prolong their marriages.

The Gottman Sound Relationship House Questionnaire (GSRHQ) used in this research was developed by Drs. John and Julie Schwartz Gottman. This modified instrument aims to assess the impact of professional therapy and procreation on the lifespan of marriages. The GSRHQ consisted of six questions evaluated on a 5-point scale to measure the influence of professional counselling on the duration of a marriage. Additionally, four items were assessed on a 4-point scale to measure the effect of reproduction on the length of a marriage. The numerical values assigned to the different levels of agreement on the five-point Likert scale were as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, Strongly Agree = 4, and non-applicable = 5. The weights applied to the 4-point Likert scale were as follows: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree

= 3, and Strongly Agree = 4. The GSRHQ had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.98, suggesting a high internal consistency.

The Triangular Theory of Scale test, created by Sternberg in 1997, was utilised in this study to evaluate how intimacy and commitment affect marriage duration. This tool comprises two key dimensions: intimacy and commitment. Intimacy was assessed through thirteen questions on how closeness impacts marital length, using a 3-point Likert scale. The scale assigned weights: None = 1, Moderately = 2, and Extremely = 3. A nine-item measurement tool was used to evaluate the relationship between commitment and marital duration, with responses rated on a 4-point Likert scale. The values corresponding to the levels of agreement are: Strongly Disagree = 1, Disagree = 2, Agree = 3, and Strongly Agree = 4. The reliability of this instrument was measured with Cronbach's alpha coefficient, resulting in a strong value of 0.97, indicating robust internal consistency.

The Trust Scale (DTS) was created by Larzelere and Huston (1980) to evaluate the role of trust in the duration of a marriage. The DTS is a renowned tool for quantifying interpersonal trust within close relationships. Participants provided ratings on a 4-point scale to indicate their degree of agreement with each of the nine items. The Likert scale assigned weights of 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for agree, and 4 for strongly agree. The DTS's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, yielding a value of 0.97, indicating strong internal consistency. This instrument yielded valuable data on the impact of trust on the duration of marriages in the research.

The adapted questionnaire consisted of a total of 81 questions, which were divided into two separate parts. Part 'A' aimed to collect preliminary data

from participants and comprised ten questions addressing factors such as gender, age, educational level, duration of marriage, religious denomination, and income. Part 'B' delved into the core themes of the study, with 71 items addressing various dimensions of marital relationships. The questionnaire was adapted based on recognised scales and further refined to comply with the particular aims of this research, as described in Appendix A (pp. 293-301).

The 71 items specifically designed for married couples were categorised into eight categories, with each scale comprising four (4) to thirteen (13) items. The scales included a five-point Likert-type answer structure, enabling participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement, ranging from 'Not Applicable' (5) to 'Strongly Disagree' (1). Furthermore, specific sections utilised a four-point Likert scale ('Strongly Agree' (4) to 'Strongly Disagree' (1)), a three-point Likert scale ('Extremely' (3) to 'Not At All' (1)), and a two-point Likert scale ('True' (1) to 'False' (2)), customised to capture subtle responses across various aspects of marital dynamics. The nine sections of the instrument were as follows:

Section A: Demographic data (10 items)

Section B: Professional Counselling (eight items)

Section C: Religiosity/Spirituality (seven items)

Section D: Trust (nine items)

Section E: Conflict Managing Strategies (ten items))

Section F: Procreation (four items)

Section G: Sexual Satisfaction (seven items)

Section H: Intimacy (thirteen items).

Section I: Commitment (nine items).

## Interview Guide

The study employed a qualitative method to address the second research question, focusing on the influence of eight determinants of marriage longevity. This method utilised the principle of triangulation to ensure the reliability and credibility of findings by integrating insights from both quantitative and qualitative data. While quantitative methods identified patterns and trends, qualitative methods provided more profound insights into participants' emotions, ideas, and interpretations of their experiences. The objective of this technique was to gather comprehensive and relevant data crucial for the research analysis (Yin, 2014).

### *Interview Process*

The qualitative data collection relied on semi-structured interviews to investigate participants' perspectives (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). Semi-structured interviews balanced guided inquiry and open-ended responses, enabling participants to express their views comprehensively. The interviews were conducted in person, primarily in English. However, the local language was utilised to ensure the comfort and understanding of participants who were not comfortable using English. Audio recordings were made (with consent) to accurately capture responses, complemented by detailed field notes for further analysis. Given the mean marriage duration of 22.10 years, the research prioritised participants in marriages lasting 22 years or more. This decision ensured the inclusion of individuals who could provide rich and relevant insights into the complexities of long-lasting marriages.

### *Construction of the Interview Guide*

The interview guide was a critical tool for exploring participants' qualitative perspectives. It included nine open-ended questions designed to address research question two comprehensively. These questions focused on interpersonal relationships, societal influences, and personal experiences that contribute to marriage longevity.

### **Pilot Test**

A pilot test was conducted in the Oforikrom Municipality to collect preliminary data and evaluate the feasibility of the research instruments. The sample consisted of 25 married couples, totalling 50 participants, each with a minimum of 10 years of marriage experience. Married couples from various demographic backgrounds were recruited as participants within the municipality. The pilot test sought to gather preliminary data and assess the suitability of the study instruments in this particular situation. The Oforikrom Municipality was chosen for the pilot test because the characteristics of the participants closely matched those of the main research group. The pilot testing confirmed that the research instruments were suitable without requiring modifications.

The choice to include 50 participants in the pilot test adheres to recognised rules and recommendations for sample sizes in pilot studies (Perneger et al., 2015; Lancaster et al., 2004). This sample size guarantees a strong and reliable representation for assessing the practicality of research tools, particularly within a specific environment such as the Oforikrom Municipality. This enables thorough data gathering, evaluation of instrument appropriateness, and detection of any problems or necessary adjustments before conducting the

research. The pilot test participants exhibit the same characteristics as the primary study group, enhancing the results' relevance and usefulness for the broader research project.

### **Validity of the Instrument**

Validity was crucial in the Sequential Explanatory Method (SEM) study. It ensures the reliability and accuracy of the data collection instrument. Fielding and Gilbert (2006) noted that validity emphasises the precise measurement of indicators and the instrument's congruence with its intended use. For this study, content validity was established by two experts in counselling (my supervisors) and an expert in measurement and evaluation, who thoroughly reviewed the study questionnaires. Their feedback was carefully considered, and changes were made to eradicate problematic or intrusive queries that could compromise participants' responses. The content validity index was calculated, yielding an index of 0.86. The qualitative design emphasised the reliability of the data, including credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmation (Shufutinsky, 2020; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This research meticulously followed principles to improve the trustworthiness and reliability of its qualitative data to understand the many elements contributing to long-lasting marriages.

### *Credibility*

Two important criteria were considered when assessing the study's acceptability and trustworthiness: using different research methodologies and ensuring respondent validation. Employing various research methodologies guarantees the synergy of results, while respondent validation involves sharing research findings with participants to obtain their feedback. Participants are

allowed to either endorse or reject results, which enables alterations to more accurately portray the nature of the idea being investigated (Bryman, 2008). To establish the trustworthiness of this research, a deliberate use of triangulation was employed. Information was methodically gathered from couples at different phases of their married lives. The rigorous methodology used in this research ensured that the results accurately depicted the complex dynamics that impact the duration of marriages, including elements like trust, intimacy, and conflict management.

### *Transferability*

Ensuring transferability in qualitative analysis is consistent with the requirement of external validity. Quantitative research aims to generalise findings, while qualitative research provides in-depth explanations of particular situations and circumstances (Bryman, 2008). Due to the qualitative technique used in this research, the objective is not to make generalisations about the data but to provide a comprehensive understanding of the duration of marriage among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality. While these results may not represent married couples in other regions, they may provide significant insights into the specific circumstances of the local area. The study methodically employed purposive sampling to enhance the transferability of the results. The methodology identified individuals with distinctive perspectives on the enduring nature of marriages in Kwadaso. The study aimed to improve the practical applications of its research findings in counselling, therapy, and family policymaking by specifically selecting participants, thus boosting the relevance and usefulness of the study.



### *Dependability*

Dependability was essential for ensuring the trustworthiness and uniformity of the study's results. Dependability pertains to the degree of consistency and reliance on the study results. To achieve dependability in qualitative research, it is necessary to keep thorough records of study data and processes to assure transparency and replicability. By keeping comprehensive records, other researchers may reproduce the study using identical methods and participants, thereby confirming the adequacy of the data and ensuring that interpretations and results are consistent with the gathered data (Bryman, 2008). The research comprehensively described the procedures used, presented accurate data, and drew conclusions based on the acquired data. The meticulous methodology employed in this research strengthens the reliability of its results, establishing a strong basis for comprehending the factors that influence the duration of marriages.

### *Confirmability*

Retaining impartiality and reducing personal biases are crucial to guaranteeing the proper interpretation of the data obtained in qualitative analysis. This involves reflecting participants' voices in discussions and conclusions, as Bryman (2008) stated. To enhance objectivity and confirmability, the research utilised a variety of methodologies. A higher level of objectivity was achieved by delivering research results to participants before the final submission. This enabled participants to verify the findings and appropriately convey their viewpoints. In addition, implementing the audit trail strategy required comprehensive documentation of each stage of the research process, including data-gathering methodologies, analytical strategies, and

decision-making procedures. The meticulous documentation served as a precaution against biases and reinforced the credibility of the results, particularly regarding the lasting nature of marital partnerships.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability is associated with dependability and internal consistency (O'Leary & Smith, 2011). Internal consistency implies that data gathered, measured, or created will remain consistent between trials (Leung, 2015). The main study assessed the questionnaire's reliability (internal consistency) using Cronbach's coefficient alpha. According to Cronbach (cited in Ebel & Frisbie, 1972), coefficient alpha can provide a reliability estimate for a measure composed of items with varying point values, such as essays or attitude scales that respond with strongly agree or strongly disagree alongside intermediate response options.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was calculated using the data collected in the pilot test, with a reliability value of 0.7 or above, indicating that the questionnaire was reliable. This ensured that the research equipment used was dependable, even if the study was conducted elsewhere with different samples. The instrument recorded an overall Cronbach's Alpha reliability of 0.85 with 0.81, 0.95, 0.78, 0.83, 0.85, 0.86, 0.78, and 0.91 for sexual satisfaction (7 items), intimacy (13 items), procreation (4 items), professional counselling (6 items), commitment (9 items), religiosity (7 items), trust (9 items), and conflict management strategies (10 items) respectively, using SPSS software (IBM Corporation, 2011).

To confirm the reliability of qualitative data, I performed an inquiry audit to guarantee that the study's conclusions were products of the participants'

experiences and thoughts. The audit trail approach detailed a researcher's data collection, analysis, and interpretation and constituted an inquiry audit. The study report acknowledged the beliefs supporting the decisions and research methodologies.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The University of Cape Coast's Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved data collection, including obtaining authorisation from gatekeepers and participants. Initially, a letter of introduction from the Department of Guidance and Counselling was sent to the Municipality to inform them about the data collection exercise. Subsequently, the researcher engaged with the Kwadaso Municipality Coordinating Director, Ghana Statistical Service, Religious Leaders, the Head of the Marriage Registry, and the Head of District Planning at the research centre, providing an overview of the study's objectives and the intended use of the collected data. Approximately five stakeholders participated in the study, providing diverse perspectives on marriage longevity. Their contributions were crucial to understanding the factors influencing marriage longevity within the municipality. These stakeholders were strategically selected to ensure the study captured social and administrative dimensions. Below are the stakeholders' roles and how access to them was facilitated:

#### *Municipality Coordinating Director*

An introductory letter was sent to the Municipality Coordinating Director, who oversaw municipal operations. This role was pivotal since it facilitated access to relevant departments and officials. The Director's

involvement ensured that the study adhered to local policies and received the necessary administrative support for its successful execution.

#### *Role of the Statistical Service*

The Statistical Service of Ghana provided comprehensive data on census years and marriage rates at the national, regional, and district levels. This data was vital for understanding marriage and divorce trends, helping to contextualise the factors influencing marriage longevity within the study area.

#### *Head of the Marriage Registry*

The Head of the Marriage Registry provided critical insights into marriage trends and registration processes. The Registry holds vital data on marriages and divorces, which is integral to the study and allows for a deeper understanding of marriage patterns within the municipality.

#### *Head of District Planning*

To understand demographic trends and the composition of the municipality, I engaged the Head of District Planning. This office provided data on the various towns within the municipality and their respective demographic trends, which were essential for contextualising factors affecting marriage longevity in the area.

#### *Heads of Religious Groups*

Religious leaders were consulted, and they granted permission to collect data from their congregations. They helped identify individuals who had been married for ten years or more, facilitating access to participants for data collection from church and mosque communities. Their involvement provided valuable insights into the factors influencing marriage longevity.

The stakeholders scheduled the administration of the questionnaire, ensuring mutual understanding of the process. The participants were informed about the purpose of the data collection, and privacy and anonymity were guaranteed. When reporting the study's findings, measures were taken to protect respondents' identities, such as assigning codes to the interview data.

Data collection took place over a specified three-month period. I executed a rigorous procedure with three research assistants. This necessitated that every field assistant underwent thorough training and attest to the importance of confidentiality by signing consent forms. A customised token was presented to participants and respondents as an expression of appreciation for their diligent participation and substantial contributions.

#### Phase I: Quantitative Data Collection

Three weeks were designated for the quantitative data collection process. The three research assistants who collected the data had backgrounds in psychology and counselling. All three field assistants underwent comprehensive training and signed consent forms to ensure confidentiality and non-disclosure of the collected information. This rigorous approach, involving individuals with specialised knowledge and a commitment to ethical practices, enhances the reliability and credibility of the research findings.

Quantitative data collection for this study involved 130 married couples. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed throughout the data collection, ensuring participants' informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. A questionnaire was utilised as the primary data collection tool to maintain privacy. Respondents were residents of the Kwadaso Municipality in Ghana and had been married for at least ten years.

Clear instructions were provided to the participants regarding the completion of the questionnaires, and after one hour, the questionnaires were retrieved, resulting in a 92.6% return rate. Once the data collection phase was completed, the quantitative data underwent careful organisation and entry into a database or statistical software. This process included data cleansing to identify and correct any errors or inconsistencies. The meticulous approach to data collection ensured reliable and valid numerical data subjected to statistical analysis. The objective of analysing the quantitative data was to address the research questions and achieve the research objectives systematically and rigorously. Overall, the quantitative data collection process adhered to established methodologies and ethical guidelines, ensuring the quality and integrity of the data collected. The numerical data collected provided a foundation for statistical analysis. They enabled me to examine patterns, relationships, and trends in the data to draw meaningful conclusions and address the research objectives.

#### Phase II: Qualitative Data Collection

In this study's qualitative phase, the research adopted a phenomenological approach to attain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of married couples in the Kwadaso Municipality. A semi-structured interview protocol captured participants' perceptions and insights regarding their lived experiences (Kallio et al., 2016). Participants included couples residing in the Kwadaso Municipality who had been married for ten or more years.

Before the interviews, participants received a cover letter providing a comprehensive overview of the study's purpose, risks, and potential benefits. The letter emphasised the importance of confidentiality and voluntary

participation. Those who agreed to participate signed a letter of cooperation for the interview, indicating their informed consent.

The interview questions were carefully devised from an interview guide, aligning with the study's second research objective. Couples married for twenty-two years and beyond, who could offer valuable insights into long-lasting marriages, were selected. Five couples were chosen, thereby ensuring a broad representation of experiences. Consent was obtained from the participants to document the procedures. The interviews were recorded using a recording device, and notes were made during the sessions. Each interview lasted between one hour and thirty minutes to two hours. The research spanned eight weeks for data collection. The initial part was utilised to build rapport and create a conducive environment for open discussion. The research participants were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity regarding the information they provided and their identities. Interview recordings were provided to participants for confirmation, ensuring the accuracy and authenticity of their narratives. This practice upheld transparency and participant autonomy principles, fostering trust and rapport between participants and myself.

### **Data Management**

Before being analysed, the data collected in the field were subjected to stringent procedures to ensure accuracy and dependability. These procedures included transcribing recorded interviews, meticulously examining questionnaire instruments for completeness and consistency, classifying the data, entering it into computer software, and making any necessary modifications and corrections. Recognising the confidential nature of the collected data, I was personally accountable for managing the completed

questionnaire to prevent any accidental disclosure of respondent information. In addition, after the conclusion of data acquisition, all physical copies of the data were stored safely in a sealed cabinet to prevent unauthorised access.

Additional precautions were taken to ensure its protection and confidentiality upon entering the information into the computer. To protect the confidentiality of the data, a password was applied, restricting access to authorised analysts only. Clear instructions were provided to safeguard the respondents' anonymity and privacy. Respondents were not to write their identities on the questionnaires. Instead, a unique code number was assigned to each respondent and participant, allowing for identification without compromising confidentiality during the data analysis process.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analyses were performed separately. Quantitative data, consisting of numerical measurements and responses, were analysed statistically to identify patterns, trends, and associations. In contrast, qualitative data, consisting of textual or narrative information, were subjected to a rigorous thematic analysis to extract essential themes and meanings.

### **Quantitative Data Analyses**

In this study, the collected data underwent rigorous verification, editing, and coding to ensure data quality and accuracy. The data consisted of demographic information about the respondents, and descriptive statistics—specifically frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations—were used to analyse this information. Descriptive statistics were employed to show the spread or distribution of data involved in the study. This approach



comprehensively understood the respondents' characteristics and provided key insights into the sample's composition.

Addressing research question one, the data analysis involved a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). Specifically, gender was employed as the grouping variable, while trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment served as dependent variables. By conducting MANOVA, the study explored potential gender-based differences in these dependent variables and their overall relationship to the research question.

The investigation of research question two, which focused on the contributions of various factors to marital longevity among couples, used hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis. The factors, including counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment, were considered predictors, and marriage longevity was the criterion variable. This analysis allowed me to examine the unique contributions of these factors in determining the duration of marriages.

Hypothesis one aimed to test the mediating roles of commitment and conflict management in the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity. Chain mediation analysis was conducted using the Hayes PROCESS procedure, employing 5000 bootstrap samples to assess this mediation effect. This technique allowed for a robust examination of the indirect effects of religiosity on marriage longevity through commitment and conflict management.

Similarly, for hypothesis two, which focused on the mediating roles of intimacy and trust in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, double mediation analysis was employed. Using the Hayes PROCESS procedure with 5,000 bootstrap samples, this analysis explored the intermediary effects of intimacy and trust in the association between sexual satisfaction and marital longevity.

The quantitative data analyses utilised various statistical techniques, such as MANOVA, hierarchical multiple linear regression, and chain and double mediation analyses. By employing these methods, the study aimed to uncover meaningful patterns, relationships, and mediational mechanisms that contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the research topic—marital longevity and its underlying determinants. All the hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 significance level and a 95% confidence interval.

### **Qualitative Data Analyses**

The qualitative data analysis process involves several stages. Initially, raw data is transcribed and cleaned, and participant responses are colour-coded for easy correlation (Cohen et al., 2013; Bedu-Addo, 2010). Four layers of coding follow this:

**Open or Initial Coding:** In this phase, significant areas within the transcript are identified, emphasising data relevant to key concepts. Memos are created to capture emerging ideas, and each participant is assigned a unique colour for easy identification.

**Focused Coding and Category Development:** This stage involves gaining insights into the content of the data by building on the initial coding.

The question "What is this data saying?" guides the researcher in merging data from the initial coding level that describes similar concepts.

**Axial and Thematic Coding:** Here, the researcher delves deeper into the implications of second-level coding by linking codes to broader categories of shared meaning. This process involves connecting codes to context, effects, and causes, forming an axis around which multiple codes revolve.

**Development of Theoretical Concepts:** In the final analysis stage, the researcher derives theoretical concepts based on the axial and thematic coding implications. Pseudonyms are used when direct quotes are required, and the transcript includes grammatical nuances, idioms, and figures of speech deemed relevant to provide as much contextual data as possible, closely reflecting the recorded voice.

This systematic qualitative data analysis process allows for a thorough exploration of the data, ensuring that key themes and theoretical concepts are derived to enhance the understanding of the research subject. The general thematic focus was on contributing factors to marriage longevity, with specific sub-themes highlighting commitment, intimacy, procreation, love, trust, and socioeconomic factors. Another theme investigated strategies for managing marital conflicts, with sub-themes encompassing religious principles, faith in God, and religious belief. The third theme focused on non-contributing factors, with sub-themes encompassing procreation/children, education, and counselling.

To ensure the clarity and readability of participant responses, some verbatim quotations used in this study were lightly edited. These edits included the use of ellipses to indicate omitted words or phrases, and brackets to clarify

meaning where necessary. These alterations were made carefully to preserve the original intent and meaning of the participants' statements. This approach enhances the presentation of the data while maintaining the authenticity and integrity of the participants' voices.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical issues are of utmost importance in research that involves human subjects, as they ensure compliance with societal standards and protect the rights and well-being of all individuals involved (Cohen et al., 2013). This research comprehensively examined several ethical aspects, such as the protection of private rights, the requirement for voluntary involvement, the use of non-harmful methods, the preservation of anonymity and confidentiality, the avoidance of deceit, and the prevention of scientific misconduct.

Research ethics include understanding the possible outcomes of the researcher's intentions towards the study participants, as stated by Schnell and Heinritz (as cited in Flick, 2014). Procedures must be established to guarantee the safety of participants throughout the study process.

The management of moral quandaries is based on eight fundamental concepts outlined by Schnell and Heinritz, as expounded upon in the research conducted by Flick (2014). In line with the ethical standards upheld by academic institutions like the University of Cape Coast (UCC), these principles highlight the importance of researchers providing reasons for the importance of their studies, explaining the goals and methods of their research, evaluating the potential ethical implications for participants, and ensuring compliance with data security regulations. Ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of UCC was crucial. The study at UCC adhered to ethical rules and

regulations, ensuring that research ethics included understanding the possible outcomes of the researcher's intentions towards the study participants, as stated by Schnell and Heinritz (as cited in Flick, 2014).. The subjects gave informed consent, participated willingly, and were guaranteed anonymity. I obtained approval from the Kwadaso Municipality Assembly to initiate data collection, ensuring compliance with ethical guidelines and legal protections. Procedures must be established to guarantee the safety of participants throughout the study process.

Participant informed consent was carefully collected, ensuring that all participants were aware of the possible benefits and drawbacks of their participation. In addition, the relevant regulatory bodies, including offices, mosques, and churches in the research areas, granted permission to collect data on their premises.

The participants' privacy was protected by strictly following confidentiality and anonymity rules. Precautions were implemented, such as securing data storage, encrypting important information, and ensuring exclusive use of data for research purposes.

Interviews were conducted with the participants' consent, and the data were shared with them after being transcribed for confirmation before analysis. Rigorous protocols were implemented to securely keep data for a specific period and to guarantee its final eradication in compliance with ethical principles. The researcher adhered to impartiality, faithfully reported study findings, and used outcomes solely for academic objectives in accordance with UCC's research methodology. Ethical issues were continuously integrated throughout the study,

demonstrating a strong commitment to protecting all participants' rights, well-being, and privacy.

In conducting the study, I prioritised fairness and respect for all participants, irrespective of their educational backgrounds. Recognising the potential literacy barriers, I implemented specific measures to enhance inclusivity while maintaining the integrity of the data collection process. These measures included providing culturally-appropriate support and ensuring that participants fully understood their roles, rights, and the purpose of the study.

Additional steps were taken to accommodate respondents who lacked formal education to address potential ethical concerns and foster equitable participation. Demographic data revealed that some participants were not literate or comfortable reading an information sheet. To ensure their inclusion in the study, interviews were conducted in the local language to facilitate comprehension and meaningful engagement. Furthermore, I employed oral explanations of the study's purpose, procedures, and consent process for participants who could not read. This approach ensured that all participants could make informed decisions about their involvement.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter discussed the methodology and design used in this study examining the factors influencing the longevity of marriages. The study employed a mixed-method approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. The study's design is explained as an explanatory sequential mixed-method, where quantitative data was collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data collection to add depth and provide a richer interpretation of the quantitative results.

The quantitative data was statistically analyzed to explore variables such as trust, conflict management, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment, and how they impact marriage longevity. Qualitative data was obtained through interviews with married couples, allowing the researcher to delve into their personal experiences and better understand the findings from the quantitative data. The integration of these two strands occurred during the interpretation phase, comparing and contrasting findings to arrive at comprehensive conclusions. Challenges in implementing this methodology, such as managing large data sets and time constraints, are acknowledged and addressed with strategies like careful planning, triangulation, and ensuring consistency in sampling.

The chapter also outlines the study area, Kwadaso Municipality in Ghana, describing it as an ideal research location due to its diverse population and the high number of married couples. Data collection methods, data protection protocols, and reliability testing, such as the use of Cronbach's Alpha for measuring internal consistency, are also detailed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research examined the determinants of marriage longevity among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality of Ghana through a sequential explanatory mixed-methods approach. Quantitative and qualitative data were observed via questionnaire and interview guide after the couples consented to participate in the study. Only couples married for ten years or more could participate in the research. It must be emphasised that whereas most of the respondents participated in the survey phase of the research, a few others were interviewed as a follow-up to the results that emerged from the quantitative data.

This chapter presents the results and discusses the data obtained. Based on the analysis, two major sections were created: the quantitative and qualitative phases. First, the demographic characteristics were presented for each analysis phase, followed by the main results that reflected the research objectives. Regarding the response rate, ten married couples out of the 140 sampled married couples withdrew from the study for unexplained reasons after they were sampled, leaving 130 married couples.

#### **Quantitative Results**

##### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The study surveyed some demographic variables to paint a picture of the sampled couples. These demographic variables include sex, occupation, monthly earnings, education level, religion, denomination, age, number of children, and years in marriage.



**Table 4: Demographic Profile of the Respondents**

Variable	Levels	Husband		Wife		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Do you have a child	Yes	129	99.2	129	99.2	258	99.2
	No	1	.80	1	.80	2	.80
Occupation	Self-employed	46	35.4	67	51.5	113	43.5
	Government-employed	80	61.5	62	47.7	142	54.6
	Unemployed	4	3.1	1	.80	5	1.9
Monthly Earnings	Less than 1000	17	13.1	29	22.3	46	17.7
	1000-3000	66	50.8	73	56.2	139	53.5
	4000-7000	30	23.1	21	16.2	51	19.6
	>7000	17	13.1	7	5.4	24	9.2
Education Level	None	3	2.3	6	4.6	9	3.5
	Basic Education	24	18.5	30	23.1	54	20.8
	SSCE/WASSCE	2	1.5	2	1.5	4	1.5
	Diploma	24	18.5	24	18.5	48	18.5
	Degree	28	21.5	35	26.9	63	24.2
	Masters	36	27.7	31	23.8	67	25.8
	PhD	13	10.0	2	1.5	15	5.8
Religion	Christian	99	76.2	104	80.0	203	78.1
	Islam	31	23.8	26	20.0	57	21.9
Denomination	Catholic	27	20.8	23	17.7	50	19.2
	Protestant	29	22.3	32	24.6	61	23.5
	Pentecostal	21	16.2	22	16.9	43	16.5
	Charismatic	22	16.9	25	19.2	47	18.1
	Spiritual churches	--	--	2	1.5	2	.80
	Sunnis	22	16.9	17	13.1	39	15.0
	Ahmadiyya	8	6.2	7	5.4	15	5.8
	Shia	--	--	1	.80	1	.40
	Sufis	1	.80	1	.80	2	.80

Source: Field Survey (2023)

As presented in Table 4, almost all couples indicated they had a child (99.2%), with only one couple who did not have a child (0.80%). Generally, most couples were government-employed (54.6%); this observation appeared to differ for the men/husbands and women/wives. It was observed that whereas a greater proportion of the married men were working in the government sector (61.5%), most married women were self-employed.

Regarding the education level, a greater percentage of the couples had a diploma qualification or higher (up to the PhD level). In terms of gender distribution, a similar variation trend was found, only that there were more married men (10%) than women (1.5%) with a PhD qualification. Even though the sample was dominated by Christian couples (78.1%) against 21.9%, there was an uneven distribution in terms of the men and women; more married women (80.0%) compared to men (76.2%) identified themselves as Christians. This religious affiliation distribution suggests instances where the husband and wife belong to different religious beliefs. For each religious affiliation, different denominations were reported, with Protestants as the leading Christians (23.5%) and Sunnis (15%) as the predominant category for Islam.

Other key demographic variables were explored, including age, number of children, and years in marriage. The statistical details of these variables are displayed in Table 5.

**Table 5: Other Demographic Characteristics**

Variable	Indicators	Men	Women	Overall
Age	Mean	51.52	48.83	50.18
	SD	10.05	9.44	9.83
	Minimum	37	32	32
	Maximum	92	76	92
No. of children	Mean	3.30	3.12	3.21
	SD	1.50	1.29	1.40
	Minimum	1	1	1
	Maximum	12	12	12
Number of years in marriage	Mean	22.10	22.10	22.10
	SD	9.48	9.48	9.48
	Minimum	10	10	10
	Maximum	57	57	57

Source: Field Survey (2023)

As shown in Table 5, the youngest respondent is 32 years old (a woman), while the oldest is 92 years old (a man). The married men ( $M = 51.52$ ,  $SD = 10.05$ ) were older than the women ( $M = 48.83$ ,  $SD = 9.44$ ). The mean number of children the couples had was 3. A couple with the least number of children had 1, whereas some couples had 12 children. On average (i.e., mean), the couples had stayed in the marriage for 22 years, with the minimum number of years being 10 and the maximum number of years being 57.

### Research Question One

What cisgender (married men and women) differences exist in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment?

This research question sought to test whether married men and women differed in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to address this research question. Whereas gender was used as the

grouping variables, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment were used as dependent variables.

### Assumptions

Two assumptions were tested: normality assumption and homogeneity of variance assumption. The skewness, kurtosis, mean, and median estimates were computed to assess whether the response distribution for these variables was normal (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Normality Diagnostics**

	Mean	Median	Skewness		Kurtosis	
			Value	Std. Err.	Value	Std. Err.
Trust	2.84	2.87	-.689	.151	1.085	0.301
Conflict management	1.11	1.10	1.210	.151	1.040	0.301
Procreation	2.64	2.65	-.521	.151	.436	0.301
Sexual satisfaction	2.86	2.87	-.343	.151	-.396	0.301
Intimacy	2.43	2.45	-.505	.151	-.379	0.301
Commitment	3.25	3.25	-1.167	.151	1.592	0.301

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The normality of these variables was established (Table 6). In more detail, the mean values were closer to the median values, and the skewness and kurtosis estimates were within the acceptable range of  $\pm 3$  and  $\pm 7$ , respectively, confirming that the data were normally distributed. Levene's equality of error variance test was performed to test the homogeneity of variance assumption (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances**

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Trust	Based on Mean	5.456	1	258	0.120
	Based on Median	5.381	1	258	0.121
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	5.381	1	228.776	0.121
Conflict	Based on Mean	.035	1	258	0.852
Management	Based on Median	.000	1	258	0.999
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.000	1	250.889	0.999
Procreation	Based on Mean	.933	1	258	0.335
	Based on Median	.868	1	258	0.352
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.868	1	255.630	0.352
Sexual	Based on Mean	1.188	1	258	0.277
Satisfaction	Based on Median	.705	1	258	0.402
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.705	1	257.098	0.402
Intimacy	Based on Mean	1.452	1	258	0.229
	Based on Median	1.748	1	258	0.187
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.748	1	251.010	0.187
Commitment	Based on Mean	1.981	1	258	0.160
	Based on Median	2.439	1	258	0.120
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.439	1	198.898	0.120

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The homogeneity of variance assumption was satisfied across all the variables' dimensions. Trust ( $p=.120$ ), conflict management ( $p=.852$ ), procreation ( $p=.335$ ), sexual satisfaction ( $p=.277$ ), intimacy ( $p=.229$ ), and

commitment ( $p=.160$ ) all had associated  $p$ -values greater than the 0.05 significance level.

### The outcome of the MANOVA test

Having satisfied the assumptions underlying the use of MANOVA, the main test was conducted. The outcome of the MANOVA analysis sought to examine whether married men and women differed in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment. The details of the results are shown in Tables 8 and 9.

**Table 8: Descriptive Information for the MANOVA**

	Men		Women		Overall	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Trust	2.81	.51	2.87	.35	2.83	.44
Conflict Management	9.25	1.25	9.19	1.27	9.22	1.26
Procreation	2.64	.64	2.63	.57	2.64	.60
Sexual satisfaction	2.83	.63	2.89	.59	2.86	.61
Intimacy	2.39	.48	2.48	.42	2.43	.45
Commitment	3.19	.61	3.31	.43	3.25	.53

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The mean values for the variables across genders (i.e., married men and women) show a similar pattern of behaviours demonstrated by both groups. For trust, a mean score of 2.81 was recorded for married men, whereas a mean score of .87 was found for married women. Again, for procreation, mean values 2.64 and 2.63 were reported for married men and women, respectively. This result was consistent for the other variables.

The multivariate test revealed no statistically significant difference in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and

commitment across married men and women,  $F(6, 253) = .936, p = .470$ . The univariate test results for the MANOVA analysis are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	Trust	.304	1	.304	1.590	0.208
	Conflict	.002	1	.002	.135	0.713
	management					
	Procreation	.019	1	.019	.053	0.818
	Sexual satisfaction	.312	1	.312	.824	0.365
	Intimacy	.540	1	.540	2.649	0.105
Intercept	Commitment	.985 <sup>f</sup>	1	.985	3.520	0.062
	Trust	2096.046	1	2096	10968	0.000
	Conflict	319.459	1	319	17540	0.000
	management					
	Procreation	1806.029	1	1806	4943	0.000
	Sexual satisfaction	2129.802	1	2129	5631	0.000
Sex	Intimacy	1539.988	1	1539	7557	0.000
	Commitment	2749.501	1	2749	9829	0.000
	Trust	.304	1	.304	1.590	0.208
	Conflict	.002	1	.002	.135	0.713
	management					
	Procreation	.019	1	.019	.053	0.818
Error	Sexual satisfaction	.312	1	.312	.824	0.365
	Intimacy	.540	1	.540	2.649	0.105
	Commitment	.985	1	.985	3.520	0.062
	Trust	49.304	258	.191		
	Conflict	4.699	258	.018		
	management					
Total	Procreation	94.264	258	.365		
	Sexual satisfaction	97.580	258	.378		
	Intimacy	52.573	258	.204		
	Commitment	72.171	258	.280		
	Trust	2145.654	260			
	Conflict	324.160	260			
	management					
	Procreation	1900.313	260			
	Sexual satisfaction	2227.694	260			
	Intimacy	1593.101	260			
	Commitment	2822.656	260			

Source: Field Survey (2023)

The univariate test results, shown in Table 9, revealed no statistically significant difference between married men and women in terms of trust [ $F(1, 258) = 1.590, p = .208$ ], conflict management [ $F(1, 258) = .135, p = .713$ ], procreation [ $F(1, 258) = .053, p = .818$ ], sexual satisfaction [ $F(1, 258) = .824, p = .365$ ], intimacy [ $F(1, 258) = .2649, p = .105$ ], and commitment [ $F(1, 258) = .3520, p = .062$ ]. In other words, married men and women in this study exhibited no significant difference in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment.

### **Research Question Two**

What are the contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among spouses?

This research question assessed the determinants of marriage longevity among spouses by focusing on the following factors: counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment. To address the research question, hierarchical, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using the set of factors as predictors and marriage longevity as criterion variables.

### **Assumptions**

Prior to performing the multiple regression analysis, some key assumptions were tested to set the tone for the study. These assumptions included normality, multicollinearity, linearity, homoscedasticity, and autocorrelation. The Q-Q plot was used to assess the normality assumption (Figure 4), the correlation matrix was inspected to judge concerns about the multicollinearity and linearity assumptions (Table 10), and the standardised



residual plots (Figure 5) provided information on the homoscedasticity. The Durbin-Watson  $d$  test was used to assess the autocorrelation assumption.

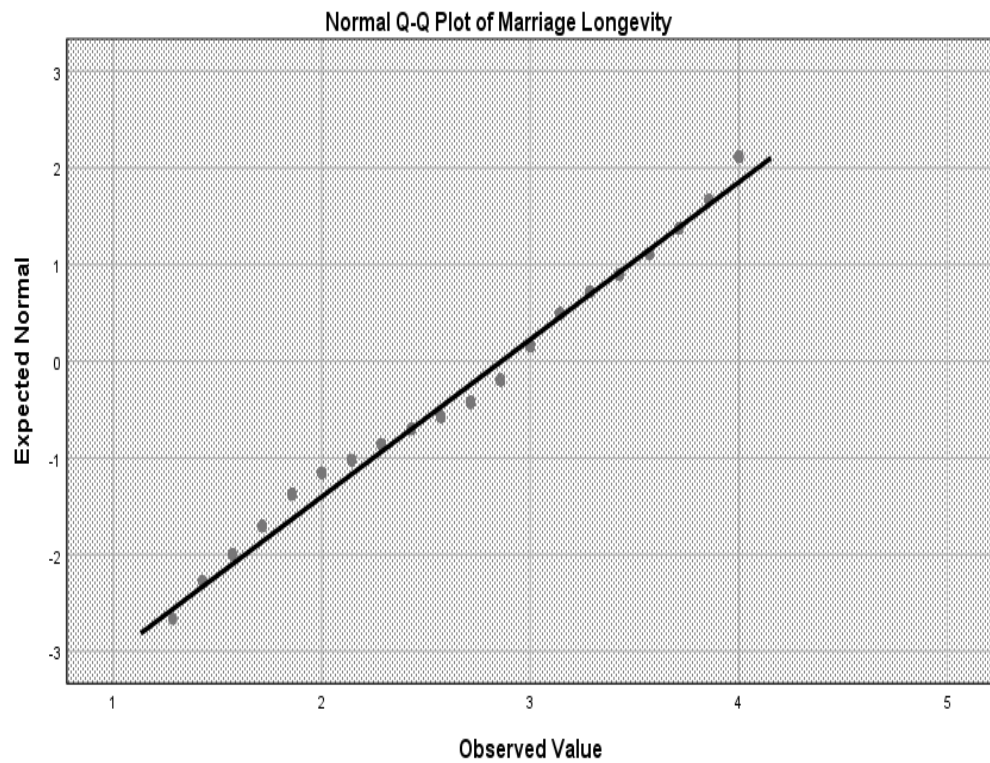
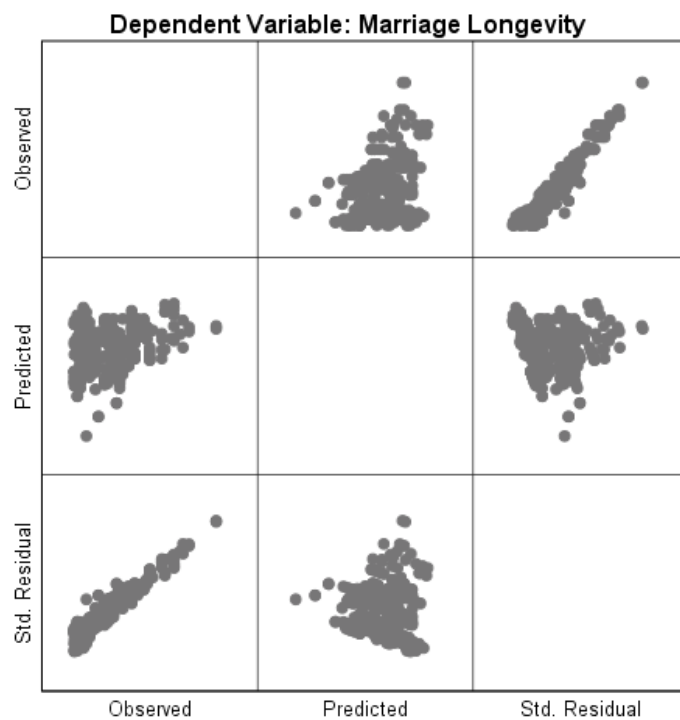


Figure 4: Normal Q-Q Plot



Model: Intercept + Counselling + Religiosity + Trust + Conf\_Man + Procreation + Sex\_Satis + Intimacy + Commitment

Figure 5: Standardised Residual Plot

The Q-Q plot in Figure 4 shows that the data points are closer to the regression line. This shows that the residuals for the variable marriage longevity are normally distributed; hence, the normality assumption was satisfied. Further, the standardised residual plot in Figure 5 shows that the homoscedasticity assumption has been satisfied.

The outcome of the correlation matrix (Table 10) reveals a low to moderate relationship among the predictors in this study. Thus, the correlation coefficient for each pair of predictor variables was lower than 0.80. The association details also suggest a linear relationship between each predictor and the criterion variable.

The Durbin-Watson  $d$  test yielded a value of 1.731, within the recommended range of 1.5 to 2.5. The outcome implies that the autocorrelation assumption has been satisfied.

**Table 10: Correlation Matrix**

No.	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Counselling	1							
2	Religiosity	0.346**	1						
3	Trust	0.210**	.465**	1					
4	Conflict Management	-0.090	.005	.282**	1				
5	Procreation	0.395**	.450**	.189**	.010	1			
6	Sexual satisfaction	0.109	.346**	.531**	.267**	.275**	1		
7	Intimacy	0.235**	.436**	.634**	.301**	.289**	.712**	1	
8	Commitment	0.272**	.441**	.635**	.087	.237**	.563**	.732**	1
9	Longevity	0.106	.293**	.415**	.266**	.185**	.565**	.622**	.568**

Source: Field Survey (2023)

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed);\*\*

Durbin-Watson *d* test= 1.731

*The outcome of the Hierarchical Regression*

The analysis was performed after satisfying the assumptions underlying the multiple linear regression analysis. Tables 11, 12, and 13 present information regarding the model summary, model-fit indicator, and coefficients associated with the predictors.

**Table 11: Model Summary**

Model	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
				F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.386	.384	.386	162.535	1	258	.000
2	.414	.410	.028	12.129	1	257	.001
3	.440	.433	.026	11.668	1	256	.001
4	.442	.433	.002	1.116	1	255	.292
5	.442	.431	.000	.009	1	254	.925
6	.456	.443	.014	7.724	1	253	.006
7	.457	.442	.001	.105	1	252	.746
8	.460	.443	.002	.713	1	251	.399

Source: Field Survey (2023)

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy
- b. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, Commitment
- c. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, Commitment, Sexual satisfaction
- d. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, Commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust
- e. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, Commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity
- f. Predictors: (Constant) Intimacy, Commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity, Conflict Management
- g. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, Commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity, Conflict Management, Procreation
- h. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, Commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity, Conflict Management, Procreation, Counselling
- i. Dependent Variable: Longevity

The analysis details, as displayed in Table 11, reveal the contribution of each predictor to the criterion (i.e., marriage longevity). It was found that intimacy significantly contributed about 38.6% of the variability in marriage longevity,  $F(1, 258) = 162.535, p < .001$ . Commitment was shown to be the next highest contributor to marriage longevity, with a change variation of 2.8%,  $F(1, 258) = 12.129, p = .001$ . Similarly, sexual satisfaction also contributed 2.6% of the variances in marriage longevity,  $F(1, 258) = 11.668, p = .001$ . With the least significant contribution, conflict management contributed 1.4% variability in marriage longevity,  $F(1, 258) = 7.724, p = .006$  (Table 8). Except for the four predictors (i.e., intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction and conflict management), other predictors (i.e., trust, religiosity, procreation, and counselling) did not have a significant individual contribution to the variations in marriage longevity. Overall, the eight predictors explained about 44.3% variations in marriage longevity.

The hierarchical regression resulted in eight models, and each model was tested. In terms of model fit, all eight models had significant fit indicators. For example, Model 1, which had intimacy as the predictor and marriage longevity as the criterion, yielded a significant model fit indicator,  $F(1, 258) = 162.535, p < .001$ . The statistical details of other models are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Model Fit Indices**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	121.745	1	121.745	162.535	0.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	193.252	258	.749		
	Total	314.996	259			
2	Regression	130.454	2	65.227	90.837	0.000 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	184.543	257	.718		
	Total	314.996	259			
3	Regression	138.498	3	46.166	66.961	0.000 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	176.498	256	.689		
	Total	314.996	259			
4	Regression	139.267	4	34.817	50.523	0.000 <sup>e</sup>
	Residual	175.729	255	.689		
	Total	314.996	259			
5	Regression	139.273	5	27.855	40.263	0.000 <sup>f</sup>
	Residual	175.723	254	.692		
	Total	314.996	259			
6	Regression	144.479	6	24.080	35.728	0.000 <sup>g</sup>
	Residual	170.517	253	.674		
	Total	314.996	259			
7	Regression	144.550	7	20.650	30.531	0.000 <sup>h</sup>
	Residual	170.446	252	.676		
	Total	314.996	259			
8	Regression	145.033	8	18.129	26.773	0.000 <sup>i</sup>
	Residual	169.963	251	.677		
	Total	314.996	259			

Source: Field Survey (2023)

a. Dependent Variable: Longevity

b. Predictors: (Constant), intimacy

c. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment

d. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment, Sexual satisfaction

e. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust

f. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity

g. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity, Conflict Management

h. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity, Conflict Management, Procreation

i. Predictors: (Constant), Intimacy, commitment, Sexual satisfaction, Trust, Religiosity, Conflict Management, Procreation, Counselling

**Table 13: Regression Coefficient Parameters**

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
1	(Constant)	.319	.294		1.086	.279
	Intimacy	1.514	.119	.622	12.749	.000
2	(Constant)	-.269	.334		-.806	.421
	Intimacy	1.080	.171	.443	6.330	.000
	Commitment	.506	.145	.244	3.483	.001
3	(Constant)	-.428	.330		-1.297	.196
	Intimacy	.720	.197	.296	3.649	.000
	Commitment	.463	.143	.223	3.240	.001
	Sexual satisfaction	.410	.120	.228	3.416	.001
4	(Constant)	-.264	.365		-.722	.471
	Intimacy	.767	.202	.315	3.792	.000
	Commitment	.513	.151	.247	3.409	.001
	Sexual satisfaction	.426	.121	.237	3.523	.001
	Trust	-.172	.162	-.068	-1.056	.292
5	(Constant)	-.254	.380		-.667	.505
	Intimacy	.768	.203	.316	3.778	.000
	Commitment	.515	.152	.248	3.389	.001
	Sexual satisfaction	.426	.121	.237	3.517	.001
	Trust	-.168	.167	-.067	-1.008	.315
	Religiosity	-.010	.110	-.005	-.094	.925
6	(Constant)	1.574	.757		2.078	.039
	Intimacy	.626	.207	.257	3.020	.003
	Commitment	.597	.153	.288	3.905	.000
	Sexual satisfaction	.328	.125	.183	2.630	.009
	Trust	-.218	.166	-.087	-1.316	.189
	Religiosity	.022	.109	.011	.199	.842
	Conflict management	1.278	.460	.156	2.779	.006
7	(Constant)	1.605	.765		2.099	.037
	Intimacy	.631	.208	.259	3.030	.003
	Commitment	.596	.153	.287	3.892	.000
	Sexual satisfaction	.332	.126	.185	2.644	.009
	Trust	-.224	.167	-.089	-1.341	.181
	Religiosity	.036	.118	.018	.308	.758
	Conflict management	1.275	.461	.156	2.767	.006
	Procreation	-.031	.097	-.017	-.324	.746
8	(Constant)	1.581	.766		2.064	.040
	Intimacy	.641	.209	.263	3.074	.002
	Commitment	.610	.154	.294	3.957	.000
	Sexual satisfaction	.318	.127	.178	2.514	.013
	Trust	-.220	.167	-.087	-1.315	.190
	Religiosity	.050	.119	.025	.416	.678
	Conflict management	1.252	.462	.153	2.712	.007
	Procreation	-.006	.101	-.003	-.060	.952
	Counselling	-.064	.076	-.045	-.844	.399

Source: Field Survey (2023)

a. Dependent Variable: Longevity

Table 13 revealed that intimacy ( $B = .641$ ,  $SE = .209$ ,  $t = 3.074$ ,  $p = .002$ ), commitment ( $B = .610$ ,  $SE = .154$ ,  $t = 3.957$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual satisfaction ( $B = .318$ ,  $SE = .127$ ,  $t = 2.514$ ,  $p = .013$ ) and conflict management ( $B = 1.252$ ,  $SE = .462$ ,  $t = 2.712$ ,  $p = .007$ ) were positively associated with marriage longevity. The result suggests that married couples with higher levels of intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction and a higher ability in conflict management are likely to stay in marriages for a longer period. On the other hand, trust, religiosity, procreation and counselling failed to predict marriage longevity directly.

### **Hypothesis One**

H<sub>0</sub>: Commitment and conflict management will not, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among couples.

H<sub>1</sub>: Commitment and conflict management will statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among couples.

This hypothesis tested the mediating roles of commitment and conflict management in the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity. In other words, the hypothesis sought to understand whether religiosity could influence marriage longevity through commitment and managing conflict. Given that the literature had established a strong relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity, this study further assesses whether religiosity predicts commitment and influences how conflicts are managed, which finally affects marriage longevity.



The predictor was religiosity, with two mediator variables (i.e., commitment and conflict management), while marriage longevity served as the outcome variable. Chain mediation analysis was carried out with 5000 bootstrap samples using the Hayes PROCESS procedure. The results of the total, direct, and indirect effects are presented in Table 14.

**Table 14: Total Effect, Direct Effect and Indirect Effect of Religiosity on Marriage Longevity**

		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Total effect of X on Y	Estimates	.590	.120	.354	.826
Direct effect of X on Y	Estimates	.093	.108	-.120	.306
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	TOTAL	.497	.116	.283	.740
	Ind1	.421	.108	.223	.643
	Ind2	.013	.039	-.060	.098
	Ind3	.063	.026	.020	.120
	(C1)	.407	.112	.191	.629
	(C2)	.358	.113	.160	.598
	(C3)	-.049	.052	-.157	.052
Partially standardised indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	TOTAL	.450	.098	.265	.649
	Ind1	.381	.091	.210	.566
	Ind2	.012	.036	-.054	.090
	Ind3	.057	.023	.019	.107
	(C1)	.369	.094	.180	.552
	(C2)	.325	.097	.147	.527
	(C3)	-.045	.047	-.140	.049

*Source: Field Survey (2023)*

*Variables:* Predictor (X) – Religiosity; Criterion (Y) – Marriage longevity; Mediators (M) – Commitment & Conflict management

*Indirect effect key:*

Ind1 Religiosity -> Commitment -> Marriage longevity

Ind2 Religiosity -> Conflict management -> Marriage longevity

Ind3 Religiosity -> Commitment -> Conflict management -> Marriage longevity

*Specific indirect effect contrast definition(s):*

(C1) Ind1 minus Ind2

(C2) Ind1 minus Ind3

(C3) Ind2 minus Ind3

In light of the acceptable p-value ( $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ), the result from Table 14 indicates that the mediation analysis revealed religiosity as not having a significant effect on marriage longevity. By implication, religiosity does not directly predict marriage longevity,  $B = .093$ ,  $BootSE = .108$ ,  $BootCI (-.120, .306)$ . However, when commitment and conflict management are employed as mediating variables, the study examines the effect of religiosity on each count on marriage longevity. In the case of commitment acting as a mediating variable independently, the effect of religiosity produces a significant effect on marriage longevity. At a 5% significance level, in the presence of commitment only, religiosity has a positive significant effect on marriage longevity,  $B = .421$ ,  $BootSE = .108$ ,  $BootCI (.223, .643)$ . Intuitively, when couples get more committed in addition to their religiosity, there is a preponderance that their marriage will last long. This is because when couples subscribe to their religious affiliation/ belief system, there is the expectation that their religious teachings equip them to commit to their relationship with their patterns. In situations where the couples share the same religious beliefs and practices, it can create a strong foundation for their relationship. These shared values can lead to a sense of unity and purpose in the marriage, enhancing commitment and culminating in lasting marriages.

Moreover, religious principles like fidelity, forgiveness, and empathy act as a basis for enhancing the duration of the marriage. Adhering to religious teachings can foster an environment of mutual respect and understanding, which are essential for a committed and lasting marriage. In the case of conflict management serving as a mediating variable, religiosity fails to have any significant effect on marriage longevity. Specifically, at a 5% significance level,

conflict management failed to mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity,  $B = .013$ ,  $BootSE = .039$ ,  $BootCI (-.060, .098)$ . When both commitment and conflict management are mediating variables, commitment and conflict management serve as pathways for religiosity to predict marriage longevity. At a 5% significance, commitment and conflict management significantly mediate between religiosity and marriage longevity,  $B = .063$ ,  $BootSE = .026$ ,  $BootCI (.020, .120)$ . Intuitively, in the presence of both commitment and conflict management, religiosity predicts marriage longevity. The stand-alone effect of religiosity suggests that religiosity has less potency to predict the duration of marriages. However, the mediating effect of commitment between religiosity and marriage longevity,  $B = .421$ ,  $BootSE = .108$ ,  $BootCI (.223, .643)$  is greater than the combined mediating effect of both commitment and conflict management between religiosity and marriage longevity,  $B = .063$ ,  $BootSE = .026$ ,  $BootCI (.020, .120)$ . This can be explained from the viewpoint that commitment underpins the need for a lasting marriage; hence, committed couples were expected to remain in their respective marriages.

On the contrary, conflict management has a diluting role as a mediating variable in the connection between religiosity and marriage longevity. Specifically, religious teachings often emphasise the sanctity of marriage and the duty to honour commitments. Highly religious individuals may feel a heightened sense of responsibility towards their marital vows, leading to a greater willingness to invest time and effort into resolving conflicts and maintaining the relationship. While effective conflict management is vital for healthy relationships, its direct influence on the link between religiosity and marriage longevity might be limited. Religious teachings often include guidance

on conflict resolution and interpersonal relationships. However, the influence of religiosity on marriage longevity goes beyond conflict management alone. Religiosity encompasses broader aspects such as shared values, moral principles, and a sense of purpose, contributing to commitment and longevity. In summary, the results of the combined mediating analysis emphasise the dual-chain roles of commitment and conflict management in enhancing the tendency for couples to stay long in their marriages. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis.

### **Hypothesis Two**

H<sub>0</sub>: Intimacy and trust will not, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among couples.

H<sub>1</sub>: Intimacy and trust will, statistically, significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among couples.

The study also tested the mediating roles of intimacy and trust in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. In other words, the hypothesis sought to understand whether sexual satisfaction could predict marriage longevity through intimacy and trust among the couples. The predictor variable was sexual satisfaction with two mediator variables (i.e., intimacy and trust), while marriage longevity was the outcome variable. The Hayes PROCESS procedure performed a Double mediation analysis with 5000 bootstrap samples. Table 15 presents the results of the total, direct, and indirect effects.

**Table 15: Total Effect, Direct Effect and Indirect Effect of Sexual Satisfaction on Marriage Longevity**

		Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI
Total effect of X on Y	Estimates	1.013	.092	.831	1.194
Direct effect of X on Y	Estimates	.443	.123	.201	.686
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	TOTAL	.569	.115	.344	.806
	Ind1	.568	.101	.376	.779
	Ind2	.000	.021	-.045	.044
	Ind3	.101	.046	.095	.088
	(C1)	.568	.105	.371	.782
	(C2)	.567	.115	.352	.804
	(C3)	.000	.029	-.061	.065
Partially standardised indirect effect(s) of X on Y:	TOTAL	.516	.097	.321	.708
	Ind1	.515	.085	.352	.688
	Ind2	.000	.019	-.042	.040
	Ind3	.001	.042	-.087	.079
	(C1)	.515	.090	.344	.698
	(C2)	.514	.101	.323	.720
	(C3)	.000	.027	-.055	.059

*Source: Field Survey (2023)*

*Variables:* Predictor (X) – Sexual satisfaction; Criterion (Y) – Marriage longevity; Mediators (M) – Intimacy & Trust

*Indirect effect key:*

Ind1 Sexual satisfaction -> Intimacy -> Marriage longevity

Ind2 Sexual satisfaction -> Trust -> Marriage longevity

Ind3 Sexual satisfaction -> Intimacy -> Trust -> Marriage longevity

*Specific indirect effect contrast definition(s):*

(C1) Ind1 minus Ind2

(C2) Ind1 minus Ind3

(C3) Ind2 minus Ind3

Table 15 shows that at a 5% significance level, sexual satisfaction significantly positively influences marriage longevity,  $B = .443$ ,  $BootSE = .123$ ,  $BootCI (.201, .686)$ . At 5% significance, when couples have additional sexual satisfaction, there is a corresponding 0.4 increase in the longevity of marriages. By implication, when couples are satisfied with their sexual activities, there is the expectation that their marriage will survive for a longer duration. This could be because, during sexual activities, there is some emotional closeness and intimacy between partners, reinforcing their connection and sense of togetherness that strengthens the marriage to survive for a longer period. Table 15 gives the resulting outcome of a test on the hypothesis of intimacy and trust acting as mediating variables. The mediating result shows that at a 5% significance level, intimacy produces a significant positive mediating effect between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity,  $B = .568$ ,  $BootSE = .101$ ,  $BootCI (.376, .779)$ . This implies that in discussions connecting sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, intimacy plays a significant role such that it brings an enhancing effect on the duration of marriages. When sexual satisfaction passes through intimacy, it fosters a deeper emotional bond between couples where they share intimate moments, which creates a unique form of connection that strengthens the overall relationship.

Moreover, the combined effect of sexual satisfaction and intimacy provides the opportunity for couples to explore and understand each other's bodies, desires and sexual needs. This exploration deepens the emotional intimacy within the marriage, culminating in lasting marriages. In comparison, it can, therefore, be concluded that intimacy produces a greater effect ( $B=.568$ )

on marriage longevity combined with sexual satisfaction than when sexual satisfaction ( $B=.443$ ) stands alone in affecting marriages.

When trust acts as the only mediating variable connecting both sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, sexual satisfaction produces an insignificant effect on marriage longevity. This could be explained by the fact that couples could get satisfied sexually; however, when there is a lack of trust between the couples, the marriage is bound to collapse within a short period. When intimacy and trust mediate between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, at a 5% significance level, sexual satisfaction produces a significant positive effect on marriage longevity,  $B = .101$ ,  $BootSE = .046$ ,  $BootCI (.095, .188)$ . Though the combined effect of intimacy and trust significantly mediate between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, the combined mediating effect produces a lesser effect ( $B = .001$ ) compared to intimacy alone, acting as the mediating variable ( $B = .568$ ). This could be attributed to trust diluting the effect of intimacy in connecting sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. Intimacy creates a deep emotional bond that extends beyond physical connection. When couples experience intimacy, they feel emotionally fulfilled and form a strong foundation of understanding and connection, which enhances overall relationship satisfaction and contributes to the longevity of the marriage. However, the absence of trust among couples is characterised by a lack of communication, emotional blackmail, and non-shared responsibilities, which contribute to the short lifespan of marriage. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the alternate hypothesis.

## Qualitative Results

The qualitative phase of the study was carried out to explain some quantitative findings based on research question 2. Hence, participants who consented to be part of the qualitative phase of the study were contacted and interviewed face-to-face. A total of five couples were interviewed, and audio voices were recorded. The interview data collected were then transcribed and edited to ensure that typographical errors were removed. The researcher read through the data collected from the field to familiarise herself with the data. The data was then uploaded into Max QDA Miner Lite software for coding and development of themes. Recurring ideas and patterns were identified and synthesised into themes that explain the "why" or "how" behind the quantitative results. Three major themes and eleven sub-themes emerged from the analysis. The themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 16.



**Table 16: Themes and Sub-themes of Qualitative Data**

Major Themes	Sub-themes
Marriage Longevity Factors /Contributing Factors	Commitment Intimacy Procreation Love Trust Socio-economic factors Faith in God and Religion
Managing Strategies for Marital Conflict	Religious Belief Communication
Non-Contributing Factors	Procreation/Children Education Counselling

Source: Field Data, 2023

Five couples, thus ten (10) individuals, were interviewed. Their ages ranged between 55 and 75. Only a couple were Muslims, and the remainder were Christians. All couples who participated in the interview had acquired formal education ranging from middle school level certificates to tertiary level certificates. Their marriages lasted between 26 and 39 years. All the couples had at least one child.

### **Marriage Longevity Factors/ Contributing Factors**

Marriage longevity was the key highlight of participants' interviews. The study sought to discover from participants' perspectives the main contributing factors accounting for the longevity of their marriages. Participants' explanations of their experiences in marriage revealed varied contributing factors, which have been categorised as major themes and sub-themes.

### Love

An adage in Ghana's cultural context says, “No one ever uses their hard-earned money to marry their enemy.” This adage emphasises that marriage involves individuals who are in love with each other. This suggests that if two individuals got married because they were in love, they would stay married if they were still in love. This was evident as love emerged as a contributing factor to a couple's marriage longevity. Some participants shared that their love for each other had contributed to their longer stay in their marriages. When a couple was asked to share their thoughts regarding factors that have contributed to their marriage longevity, some participants expressed the following:

*“...the love for each other and forgiveness. When one steps on the other toes [if one of us offends another], you [the one who is offended] have to forgive and forget so that you can move together. [Also,] I love the children we have gotten, so I would not give up [separate or divorce] because of the children. I love them so much, so I do not want the children to be disturbed that our parent has been separated. I do not want to hear that. So, because of them, [even though I might have reasons to opt for separation or divorce], I always try to forgive and continue [stay in the marriage]. (P2A)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

Similarly, a participant opined that love is the fundamental contributing factor explaining why they have been married for a long time. She said:

*“The basic thing is love; if you love your partner no matter what, even the Bible says that love one another, so if you love him, it will cover up many of his shortcomings.” (P3B)*

Another participant said this when asked why she had stayed in her marriage for a long time. She said:

*“I can say that my husband loves me, and I also love him.” (P5B)*

#### *Socio-economic Factors*

Marriage longevity, or the duration and stability of a marriage, is influenced by various socio-economic factors. These factors can play a significant role in determining the strength and resilience of a marital relationship; some socio-economic factors that emerged as predictors of marriage longevity during the interview are spousal support, social support and finance.

#### *Spousal Support*

Every individual needs support in different ways. This could be emotional, physical, or social. To some extent, an individual's health and happiness can be linked to the support the individual receives from others (Dehle et al., 2001). Likewise, the couples in this study received support from their partners. These couples attributed the longevity of their marriage to the support they received from their partners. They explained that they would not have been able to stay in the marriage for a long time if they had not received support from each other. The study participants acknowledged that the economic, financial, domestic, educational, and career support they received contributed significantly to the longevity of their marriage. A spouse narrated

how her husband supported her in her educational and professional pursuit in the following words:

*“So, I married at a time I only had a Diploma in Business Administration, and after my National Service, I had not even secured a job when I got married, and through his [referring to her husband] inspiration and support, he saw me through 1st Degree and Master’s Degree, Professional Programme and he always wishes I should go up. Even with the writings of my memos and proposals for promotion, he has been very supportive....” (P3B)*

The participant added that her spouse also supported her in domestic and economic activities. She said:

*In all spheres of life, not academics alone but helping in the house. I have many businesses that I try to manage. This man will never rest at home, doing one thing after another; you see him helping in everything. Being a lecturer and an academician [a social status highly respected in most Ghanaian communities], you will see him supporting me to tie this charcoal for sale, corn dough for sale, and my salon there, and you usually see him getting water for me to use [something most men with that social status would not do because that is seen as a woman's work]. (P3B)*

Another participant explained how they had been supportive of each other. He said:

*“... there was a day it rained heavily at the market and flooded. Her [referring to his wife] things got soaked at the market, so I went to help, and some people thought I was her worker because of how I was working. Whenever she is in trouble, I go the extra mile than even how I will temper with mine....(P4A)*

#### *Social support*

It was evident from the study that participants attributed their extended stay in their marriages to the support they received from their social networks (extended family) and the support they provided for their extended families. Participants indicated that the extended family's support contributed immensely to their marriage. A participant said:

*“...both extended families accepted us, and we did not struggle to impress or defend, but both parents were very supportive [during our marriage]. When you have your extended family against you [if the extended family is not supportive of your marriage], especially in Africa [where marriage is between families and not only the couple], you will not have the joy of your marriage. It will be apart [you will get divorced] .... (P1A)*

He added:

*“...when we were in the early stages of the marriage, and we were struggling with our children, my mother came in to help, my wife's mother came in to help, and my siblings also came in to help. The support from the extended family is good in*

*times of challenges [helped to sustain their marriage even in challenging times that could have affected the continuity of their marriage]” (P1A)*

Regarding support from the extended family, a couple said:

*“...if we have, we share; if we don’t have, they [the extended family] know that we don’t have, we would not be able to give. We support them [the extended family] in times of need....” (P1A)*

Another couple also shared how their support for their extended family had contributed to the sustenance of their marriage. First, the wife said:

*“My husband has been a pillar behind my own family, and he has even assisted in sponsoring my siblings throughout their education and others. He is very supportive of my family, and I do the same for his family. Because of that, we get on very well and are still going forward” (P3B)*

The husband expressed:

*“...this is somebody [his wife] who really worries [cares] about the family [the husband’s family]. She makes my family happy [supports his family, so she prevents complaints from family members that could negatively influence their marriage and its continuity], and I also make her family happy [supports the wife’s family financially]. (P3A)*

### *Finance*

The majority of the couples surveyed in the study believed that financial wealth does not guarantee the endurance of their marriages. They believed that while

money is beneficial for sustaining their families, it is not the primary reason for their enduring commitment to marriage. Several participants articulated:

*No, because we started with nothing. I quite remember when we got married, we were not having even a television. The one we bought was my brother who used his pay slip to buy it on credit for us, and so he was deducted, and then we paid him. And so the point is we started with nothing and so we lived with what we had. (P5B)*

*That one, I will say no personally, I will say no. I don't think so (I: is it because of education that you have stayed on to this marriage, that she's married, you married an educated person who will also play a role). Well, if it's educated, that is why I will say all these commitments, trust comes into play. So perhaps I don't see the other factor, education fine yes it can be a factor though, it can be a factor, it can be a factor yeah (P3A)*

*With that, it can be yes and no. Let's take the No aspect. Some time ago, things were a little difficult; at first, money was there, but sometime later, it was not all good. When it got to some point, she decided that she will go and sell water and other stuff to help. This helped us to manage the house. Things became better, and we got back to our old selves. By this, it means that marriage doesn't depend on finances even though, it helps to make things flexible in marriage. (P4A)*

*No, no. Marriage does not depend entirely on money or the adequacy of funds because somebody may have enough, but it wouldn't have an impact; you wouldn't even see the little that we are able to earn we share together. We do things together and we mostly think about them before embarking on anything that we will do. And the trust is also there because he trusted me that I will, even though I own my own my bank accounts and a signature to my bank but my husband says I shouldn't go into it and if I need anything, he will provide. and because I also have side businesses. Apart from the bank, I also get revenues which can help me and the family. This really makes me understood him. And because of the support he also gives to me in the businesses, it makes us earn from those businesses as well so we don't depend solely on our income. If he wasn't helping, this will make me go wild, my money will be sitting at the bank and I will be gnashing, no. So, it is the understanding. (P3B)*

On the other hand, he thought that the availability of money helped make life comfortable.

*Let's say I have not gotten money and have not given her some; she tries hard to take care of the house. When I get money, I give her more money to add to her business. So, for now, she has more money than me, and I am the one who gives her money and she has managed to get to that extent, so it helps, so any time if she needs anything, I give to her. Even, when her own people come to visits and they are going, when*



*I give them money, she becomes very happy. So it helps to some extent but when it got to the time that we were having less, it did not disturb our marriage. (P4A)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

### *Commitment*

The study participants indicated that commitment to each other and their marriage vows had contributed to their long-lasting marriages. They explained that they were committed to ensuring their marriage lasts long, so they provided support when needed. This, they believed, had helped them to live together this long.

A couple illustrated how they have shown commitment to each other and how it has contributed to their marriage. The husband said:

*The truth is, I am committed to her; when she is ill, I take her to the hospital. When she needs money and any other thing, I give it to her. We do things together since we are committed to each other. We have stayed in the marriage for over 35 years and are still going on. If we were not committed, maybe we would have stopped [divorced], but we are still in the process [married], which shows that we are committed to each other. (P2A)*

The wife explained:

*“If the commitment is not there, [if they were not committed] it will be challenging to have intimacy. It is the commitment that helps intimacy. How can you stay together when you are not committed to*

*each other [questioning the interviewer]? We are committed to each other, which has made us close." (P2B)*

Another couple expressed:

*"I am committed to it [the marriage], and I am not ready to reverse the earlier decisions that I have made. And so, I am committed to our vows and to whatever agreement. Marriage is an agreement, so whatever agreement you have with another person, you will fulfill it." (P5A)*

*"My husband is so committed to our welfare and everything concerning the marriage. Let me say he is very committed to every aspect of human life." (P5B)*

Some couples indicated that:

*We are very committed to the marriage. Because of the commitment in this relationship, it does not make you think that there should be a break at all. We are committed because Allah says we should do it, and we are doing it; then we are supposed to do it and do it well so that it will please God. (P4A)*

A spouse expressed how the husband and her had been committed to their marriage. She said:

*"... it [marriage] is a covenant, so we must play our role. We should be committed to the roles that we play to make this marriage work; for that one, I will say that we have been helping and committed to each other. In fact, even in our old age, if I cannot wake up early every morning, he puts water for tea on the fire. On days I am not able to sleep early, and he sees I am not awake, Daddy will also get*

*up, go to the kitchen and make sure he puts water on the fire, maybe for lemon juice. Then he will come and ask what I will take [for breakfast], lemon juice or besab, and that is how we live our lives....” (P1A)*

She added:

*“...and I know as a woman and as a wife, the management of the home is my sole responsibility, and I have been committed to that and then even his dressing, since day one up till this time, I choose what he wears whenever he is going out, and I am committed to that .... (P1A)*

### *Intimacy*

According to some couples involved in this study, companionship had contributed to the longevity of their marriages. Participants explained that they enjoyed spending time with each other and shared fun moments and jokes. The couples believed that had contributed to bonding them, increasing their level of intimacy, liking for each other, and, in turn, their desire to stay married for all these years. Another couple shared their experience;

*“In fact, the quality of our presence, being present to each other. You know [asking the interviewer] when you marry, you [husband and wife] eventually become true friends, brother and sister. For me, to come from work and have somebody with whom I can share my challenges and struggles. This is something that I value and appreciate a lot. A gift of each other has contributed a lot to this marriage, and we will like even to discourage distant marriages because you will need to enjoy the presence of one another. Ever*

*since we married, we have never entertained separation of any kind. We have not even allowed work to separate us to the point where even mommy [my wife] had to break service [stop working outside the home] to have quality time for the home. Even though we struggled, we opted for that. We decided on that because we could not compromise on the quality time we experienced in the marriage; that is time for each other.” (P1A)*

The wife added:

*“My husband has been my brother. When we married, I told him I don’t have an uncle or a brother, so you are my head of the family, my father, and since then, he has been my brother. He has been my everything. I don’t share with my sisters. Never even with my parents before they died. I never ever took my issues to them. So, he is the one I confide in, sharing my fears, challenges, and unforgiveness. I must say he has really been of much help.” (P1B)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

Another couple had this to say:

*“Now, when you come, if you are not part of us and you hear some of my utterances, you may feel we are fighting, but I see it as a joke; she also takes it [because she knows it is a joke]. [For instance] she says something, and I give an answer which might be cheeky to outsiders. [But] no, she will be laughing the other way around. We share ideas and problems, and we plan together.” (P3A)*

She added:

*“Very close because he is my friend. I don’t have friends around me, so when we are at home, we have our own conversations, we crack our jokes, and even in a car when we move. I am very, very, very fond of him.” (P3B)*

When a couple was asked whether intimacy had contributed towards their stay together, the man said:

*“If there is no intimacy between two people, they can’t stay on [implying that if they were not intimate, they would not have been able to stay together].” (P5A)*

The wife explained and said:

*“We are very close to each other. We talk to each other and joke. Even yesterday, a song was being played on the television, and we danced together. And so, we are very close to each other. We share every emotion together and don’t keep secrets from each other.” (P5B)*

### *Trust*

Trust is critical in every intimate relationship (Cosentino, 2012). It was not surprising that almost all couples involved in this study indicated that trust contributed to the long stay in marriage. A couple explained:

*“Trust is one of the major factors because I cannot live with a person for that long if I don’t trust the person. That doesn’t mean that my spouse is perfect. But when we talk about trust, it is also even a percentage. It is a measure. So, when you say you trust a*

*person, you can predict whatever you want from her up to a large extent. (P5A)*

The wife had this to say when asked whether trust had contributed to the longevity of their marriage.

*I trust him with his leadership roles in paying our children's school fees and projects and keeping our money. For the relationship we have built, if he is here, I know, and if I am there, he also knows. And so, we have been working towards that, and the trust is 100% because of the transparency that we started with. For example, if I travel outside the country, he knows I will be faithful, and I trust him too. I also trust in his decisions on behalf of the family. (P5B)*

Similarly, another couple said:

*“Without trust [if my husband and I don’t trust ourselves], the marriage cannot move on [we cannot sustain this marriage]” (P2B)*

The interviewer questioned the wife to indicate the relevance of trust in their relationship. She said:

*“If you don’t trust the person [your partner], how can you live on [be married and live together], move on with the person [continue to be married to the person] even without money [when the couple is in financial difficulty?]”* She then added: *“so, trust is the key.” (P2B)*

Another couple expressed:

*“I trust him, for my husband does not like lies. So he will tell you the truth and whatever. So, whatever he says, I think it is the truth, I don’t know him to be telling lies, so I trust him. I know he doesn’t*

*have if he says he doesn't. If he says he has, he will let you know he has because I don't think there will be intimacy and commitment in marriage without trust. So, I believe trust is the basis.” (P3B)*

The husband added,

*“Trust is a very crucial factor [it is a key factor that has contributed to the sustainability of their marriage]” (P3A).*

#### Faith in God and Religion

All the couples who participated in the study believed in God and had a religious affiliation. The participants attributed their extended stay in their marriages to God. In that, they wanted to please God because God disapproved of divorce. In addition, their religious associations did not support divorce, thus contributing to their marriage longevity.

*“My long stay in the marriage is based on the word of God and prayers, sometimes, I may be distressed one way or the other, and madam [my wife] will tell me to wake up about 2 O'clock in the night and pray. Because I have prayed, God intervenes. So, with that, the problem will come to an end. So, prayers and the word have been our backbone in this marriage; that has helped us and is our strategy.” (P2A)*

His wife added:

*“First is God, and then love and patience” (P2B)*

A husband said:

*“Yes, because I see marriage as God's own project. Returning to Genesis, we see how God climaxed creation with marriage and how*

*even Jesus protected marriage. So, the God factor is very, very crucial. So, in response to the question, I cannot imagine marriage without God. The role of God was critical for us, and because of the challenges that we think one will have to face in marriage, it would be very difficult if God were not to be part of the process. Human beings do not have what it takes for a lasting relationship because the love that you need, the joy that you need, comes from the Lord. So, if there's one thing, I recommend to anybody, I will say that God has helped and sustained us." (PIA)*

His wife said;

*"Christ has been the foundation of our marriage from the word go and our youthful years. So, in a nutshell, I will say Christ has been the focus, foundation, strength, and rock. We wouldn't have been able to make it up till this time, but Christ has been very faithful in sustaining and keeping us together, bonding us together in all challenges." (PIB)*

Another couple acknowledged that their faith in God and religion had contributed to their extended stay in marriage, although they had different views regarding how it had contributed. The woman said:

*"The Bible says God hates divorce, so we always ensure the marriage will work. When we got married, we had a problem with childbearing. That one did not bother us; even for him, he waited until God's appointed time he blessed us with children." (P3B)*



The man said:

*[If I am to rate the factors that have contributed to our long stay in marriage], religion will come somewhere around 5, not 1. If religion is the cause, why are most Christian marriages breaking? They are on the increase. So, it is not a religion and God in total. But something more than that. That is why the Bible says heaven helps those who help themselves [sic; this saying is not in the Bible as the participant claims]. If you don't help yourself, what will you do? God will not come from heaven and try to make things work for you; it doesn't work that way.*

Another couple explained how religion had helped in keeping their marriage;

*"Yeah, some time ago, there was some misunderstanding, and my wife said she is going to divorce me, but she remembered that the word of God says, we should not divorce, so she has to give up, and then she forgives me and we continued and I also have to forgive her." (P2A)*

### *Sexual Satisfaction*

In most Ghanaian communities, sexual relationship is mostly approved within the context of marriage. Also, marriage is seen as a sexual relationship. Hence, this study sought to find out whether sexual satisfaction had contributed to marriage longevity among the couples involved in the study. When a couple was asked whether sexual intercourse would be said to have contributed to their long-lasting marriage, the man enthusiastically responded:

*Yes, it has! In fact, personally, I see my wife as the mirror to all women, and she has never refused my advances even though aging*

*is affecting our sex life, but because I know nobody, she knows nobody we can have an affair with no struggle at all. I thank God for that opportunity because I don't struggle to have an affair, and even at times, the desire may not be there, but we don't worry knowing that we have lived all these years, and it will not be a problem. (P1A)*

He continued:

*Oh yes! Because if in the whole world, you don't have any other man or woman, she is only one or he is only one, it means you can't joke, downrate, or downplay with your spouse.*

Another couple said:

*"It is also part because the condition for marriage, sex, is also part. In Islam, sex is part of that, Islam, if you marry someone and the person is impotent, the religion helps the woman to divorce the marriage. That is, if the man is impotent, the woman will divorce you. And anytime doctors tell you that you are impotent, do not go and get married because sex is part of the marriage [ The reason is that because she won't deny me or I will deny her, the moment we are all interested, we must satisfy other,] so with us, it is part of marriage." (P4A)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

The wife continued:

*“[If he could not satisfy me sexually,] I would not have continued the marriage because I will say, after all, he is impotent, then with that, I will go [divorced] ...” P4B)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

#### *Procreation*

Few couples expressed that they had stayed in their marriages for a long time because of their children. They explained that they did not want their children to be affected by their divorce or separation.

*I love the children we have gotten, so I would not give up [separate or divorce] because of the children. I love them so much, so I don't want the children to be disturbed that our parent has been separated. I do not want to hear that. So, because of them, [even though I might have reasons to opt for separation or divorce], I always try to forgive and continue [stay in the marriage]. (P2B)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

The wife added:

*“...I wouldn't like to leave the marriage, go and continue somewhere and get different children with another man. So, to some extent, I will say they have contributed to my stay in the marriage...” (P2A)*

Another couple believed that the presence of the children had contributed to the longevity of their marriage. However, that was not the primary reason for staying married for a long time. They explained:

*“...the children are not the main contributory factor, but it is part of it [reasons why we have stayed together for a relatively long time] because the presence of children brings happiness.” (P5A)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

### **Managing Strategies for Marital Conflict**

Every marriage is bound to face some challenges. This study sought to determine married couples' strategies for their challenges. It was evident that the couples employed varied strategies, including forgiveness, communication, and religious activities such as prayer and reading or applying the word of God.

#### *Religious activity*

Most couples resort to religious activities such as praying and trusting in God that the challenge or difficulty they face would be solved. The couples also explained that they applied the word of God. They compared their situation to the word of God to seek answers and solutions or to learn how to manage it based on the direction of the word of God. A couple had this to say when they were asked about how they dealt with their challenges:

*“When we have some problem, we go to the word [of God]. What does the word [of God] say about this problem? We take that as our counselling, yeah then we follow what the word says. So, prayers and the word have been our backbone in this marriage. That has helped us, and that is our strategy in this marriage. The Bible is our*

*counsellor; everything is the word of God, so when you study the word of God, you will know what to do. As a woman, you will know your responsibilities; as a husband, you know your responsibilities.” (P2B)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

*“I always pray and commit whatever goes on in the marriage to God. Sometimes, it is difficult to swallow [compromise or deal] with certain things [some difficulties], but with God, if you pray, you will see that you will be able to go through...” (P2A)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*

Similarly, a couple said:

*“As I have told you, we have been using all the things that are in the Bible.” (P5B)*

Another couple said

*“...God is against divorce, and because of that, I have to stand on his word [apply the word of God] and make it work. When we read Galatians 5 [which speaks about the fruits of the spirit], I believe that if every married couple has those fruits of the spirit, it helps.” (P1A)*

*Note: Portions of this quotation have been edited for clarity and brevity without altering the original meaning.*  
*Communication*

Some participants indicated that communication was one of the coping strategies they used in dealing with challenges. They explained that they

communicated their grievances to each other and found a solution to it. A couple said,

*“It is understanding. This means that when there are problems, we sit down and talk about it. We communicate and also use other forms of communication. The second one is calmness. I think the word of God has also helped.” (P5B)*

However, the husband was of the view that he usually ignored certain things:

*“There are certain things I don’t even talk about them. I just brush it off. You know, for we men, things that doesn’t have effects on me, I normally don’t border so much, and so I don’t hold on to things.” (P5A)*

Another couple said:

*“...when things are not going well, especially during the day, and something crawls up when we, our meetings for prayer in the evening, I will bring it up. I tell him, my lord, in fact, today, the way you spoke about this and that I wasn’t happy, I was hurt, and then we resolved. So, in fact, I will thank God for that; as for our communications, it’s very, very has been very effective and helpful.” (P1B)*

### **Non-Contributing Factors and Marriage Longevity**

On the other hand, some couples indicated that factors such as procreation, education and counselling had not contributed to their extended stay in their marriages.

*Procreation/Children*

Some couples indicated that children had not contributed to the longevity of their marriages. The couples admitted that although having children was good, the presence of children or their absence had not contributed to the longevity of their marriages. A couple had this to say when they were asked whether children are a contributing factor to their long stay in marriage:

*“I told you that the centre of the marriage is God, so children are gifts, so if they are or are not there, it would not affect the relationship much”. (P1A)*

The wife added:

*Procreation? You know, is not the focus. I’ve grown to believe in my faith as a Christian that children are gifts from God, they are gifts from God, and it’s very good to have children, but it shouldn’t be the pivot or the reason why your marriage should go on. When you have children, fine, but I’ve concluded that children should never be the focus since they would leave you two one day. (P1A)*

Another couple said:

*“Me, I have never seen it that way. I even tell people that the children, if you say that because of children so you will not leave, I don’t have a problem, mind you, those children you are living with they will also leave. I know these children will go to a point in my lifetime. As soon as your child starts SHS or goes to the boarding house, so be it. From SHS to the university to the working world, marriage....” (P3A)*

The husband said:

*“I don’t see children to be a contributing factor, yeah” (P3A)*

#### *Education*

This study also asked the participants whether educational attainment contributed to their marriage stability. The findings show that education did not contribute to their marriage stability. A couple had this to say:

*Education is not a factor because, like me, I completed tertiary and I have taught for many years, but with her, she liked business, so she completed middle school. So, with her because she is business-oriented, she pushes to that end to achieve a goal in her vocation. For me, when I wake up, I go to teach and do other stuff. Education does not have any business in our marriage. (P5A)*

The wife added:

*“Same applies to me, it does not contribute anything... I don’t have any formal education, but he married me.” (P5B).*

#### *Counselling*

Some couples believed that counselling had not contributed to their long stay in marriage because they either did not go for premarital counselling or stayed apart when they got married. Also, others indicated that they had never had post-marital counselling, so they would not attribute their longer stay in the marriage to counselling:

*“No, that one, no, because we were not staying together. My husband was at Tech, and I was at Koforidua, so even though we married in Kumasi, I had to go back to Koforidua because he was a TA at the time. So, after the marriage, I had employment at Akim*



*Oda, and I started my life there while he was here, so where are we going to meet? We didn't get that, but the basic start had helped us (I: and even up till this time) yeah" (P3B).*

Another couple was of the view that counselling lacked practicability in real-life situations.

*"No, no, the counselling is just a short time (I: a short time) now you just go 2 or 3 times" (P3A).*

*"Sometimes these counselling, when it comes to the practical aspect, they don't sometimes work" (P2A).*

### **Discussion of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings**

The study results were discussed in line with existing concepts and theories. The discussions were also done on the specific objectives of the study.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The study's quantitative data unearthed fascinating insights about the interplay of childbearing and employment within marital longevity. First, it was discovered that the majority of couples, 99.2%, reported having at least one child, thereby making childbearing a common attribute among the studied couples. The high percentage of couples having children suggests that family structures may influence marriage longevity. Literature supports that couples with children are less likely to divorce than childless couples, suggesting longer-lasting marriages (Kowal et al., 2021). This correlation aligns with existing research that underscores the significant role of procreation in many marriages (Xu et al., 2015).

Examining the dimension of employment, the study highlighted intriguing gendered patterns. A higher proportion of married men were engaged

in the public sector (61.5%) compared to married women, who exhibited a stronger inclination towards self-employment. This finding mirrors the gender employment gap frequently observed in many developing nations, where women are typically more involved in the informal sector (Malta et al., 2021). A notable point is the higher unemployment rate among married men (3.1%) as compared to women (0.8%), underscoring the pervasive gender inequalities that exist within the labour market. Research suggests that financial stability, associated with steady employment, contributes to marriage longevity (Nga & Yeoh, 2021; Byrne & Barling, 2017). Also, the lower unemployment rate among women (0.8% vs men's 3.1%) might contribute to stability in these marriages since financial stress often leads to marital discord (Dakin & Wampler, 2008). These findings point towards several possible implications in the context of marriage longevity. First, the prevalence of childbearing among the vast majority of the studied couples may suggest that shared parenthood could contribute to marriage longevity, resonating with Musick and Bumpass's (2012) assertion of the significant role of children in many marriages. On the other hand, the gendered employment patterns could reflect distinct strategies couples adopt to balance work-life demands, which may subsequently impact the duration of their marriages.

The study indicates that most couples boast of a diploma or higher education. Notably, a greater fraction of men held a PhD degree than women. This trend aligns with current literature, which delineates a gender disparity in attaining advanced degrees, with women typically lagging behind men (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2021). Furthermore, differences in career opportunities, income potential, and socioeconomic status, known to

influence marital stability, could result from this educational disparity, potentially impacting the longevity of marriages.

Religious affiliation presents another intriguing facet of the findings, with an uneven distribution between men and women. The dominance of Christian couples (78.1%) might also be noteworthy since regular religious participation has been linked to lower divorce rates (Vaaler et al., 2009). This pattern, reminiscent of existing research, reflects the traditionally higher propensity of women towards religious affiliation than men (Balkanlioğlu, 2014). The role of shared religious beliefs or disparity therein could profoundly impact marriage longevity, as it can affect a couple's alignment on critical life decisions and the resolution of potential conflicts.

Diving into the demographic attributes, the study revealed a broad age range among the respondents, from 32 to 92 years, with married men generally older than their female counterparts. This pattern echoes prior research, signifying that women usually marry at younger ages compared to men (Frye et al., 2020). Furthermore, the average number of children was three, ranging from one to twelve per couple. Interestingly, the sampled marriages' longevity averaged 22 years, extending from a decade to nearly six decades. These demographic variables significantly impact marriage longevity, as factors such as age disparity, family size, and marriage duration can profoundly affect the dynamics and stability of the marital relationship.

Overall, these findings offer valuable insights into the demographic, educational, and religious patterns amongst married couples in the studied sample and suggest that these factors might play a significant role in predicting marriage longevity. These data, aligning with broader trends, accentuate the

complexities surrounding the dynamics of marriage and family life, ultimately offering intriguing paths for a deeper examination of the determinants of marriage longevity.

**Gender (married men and women) differences that exist in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment.**

Findings from the quantitative phase of the study reveal that trust, with mean scores of 2.81 for men and 2.87 for women, emerged as a cornerstone in marital relationships. Studies like Luchies et al. (2013) corroborate this finding, arguing that trust plays a critical role in nurturing healthy and long-lasting marital relationships. Promoting open communication, empathy, and mutual understanding accomplishes this, thereby fostering a supportive environment conducive to marital longevity. Timothy-Springer and Johnson (2018) also contended that trust, a critical element in maintaining and enhancing the quality of romantic relationships, does not display a clear gender bias. Instead, their research showed that married men and women tend to exhibit similar levels of trust in their relationships.

On the other hand, the absence of a significant gender difference in conflict management might seem surprising, considering some stereotypes often suggest that women are more adept at managing interpersonal conflicts than men. However, research by Cramer (2013) further supports this finding by showing no substantial gender differences in using constructive conflict resolution strategies. This study contradicts recent findings in Jordan by Al-Krenawi and Bell (2023), who posited that marital resolution and life satisfaction significantly differed between males and females.

Furthermore, in procreation, men's and women's mean scores were almost identical, reflecting a shared understanding and agreement in this aspect of marriage. This aligns with Settersten and Hagestad's (2015) discussion on the unifying role of procreation in marriages. Also, Al-Krenawi and Bell's research found no significant gender difference in the desire for procreation, aligning with my findings.

As for sexual satisfaction, a systematic review by Mark and Lasslo (2018) reported no significant gender difference, reinforcing that men and women can equally contribute to and derive satisfaction from their sexual relationships. This is in line with this study, which also found that there is no significant difference in sexual satisfaction in terms of gender. Additionally, regarding intimacy, research by Laurenceau et al. (2013) indicated no significant gender difference in intimate experiences within romantic relationships. Again, this finding aligns with research by Manjula et al. (2021), who found no significant gender differences in key aspects of marital relationships, including trust, intimacy, and sexual satisfaction. All the studies mentioned contend that men and women can be equally invested and capable in this area, contributing to a balanced and satisfying relationship.

Furthermore, Stanley et al. (2010) study in the United States found no gender difference in commitment levels, affirming that married men and women can exhibit similar commitment levels. Similarly, Yoo and Joo (2022) also found no significant gender differences in commitment levels in their study. They proposed that commitment is a universal feature of long-lasting marriages, regardless of gender. Other crucial elements, such as emotional intimacy, effective communication, conflict resolution strategies, and shared values,

significantly influence marriage longevity. This perspective is supported by research conducted by Mukherjee (2020) in Ireland, who emphasises the need for a comprehensive understanding of various factors to effectively predict and enhance marital longevity.

The findings further indicated that the multivariate test result shows no statistically significant difference in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment levels between married men and women ( $F(6, 253) = .936, p = .470$ ). This suggests that both genders, on average, report similar attitudes and behaviours in these domains within the context of their marriages.

In conclusion, the univariate test results indicated that married men and women within this study's sample displayed similar levels of trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment. Such findings emphasised the universal nature of these factors, which transcended gender differences and were central to understanding the intricacies of marital relationships. This understanding would contribute to more effective marriage counselling and intervention programs by underscoring the importance of these factors in marital longevity.

### **Contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among spouses**

The following section of the study utilised a sequential explanatory design with mixed methods to address research question 2, which investigated the factors contributing to marriage longevity. At the outset, a quantitative analysis was undertaken, followed by a qualitative phase to imbue the

quantitative data collected with greater significance. During this stage, the researcher devoted considerable attention to integrating the research outcomes, an essential procedure advocated by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2015) and Creswell and Creswell (2018). Integrating qualitative insights and statistical analysis was crucial to understanding the factors that influence the longevity of marriages. The integration of these methodologies was intended to augment the investigation's richness and expand its reach, thereby enhancing the examination of this intricate issue.

### *Intimacy*

The quantitative data analysis showed that intimacy best predicts marriage longevity. Intimacy was widely recognised as a crucial contributing factor to the longevity of marriages. One of the primary reasons why intimacy supported marriage longevity was the establishment of a profound emotional connection between partners. This emotional intimacy facilitated a heightened understanding and empathy within the marital relationship and served as a buffer against the strains and challenges that marriages inevitably encountered. The analysis highlighted that intimacy was the most influential factor, explaining 38.6% of the variability in marriage longevity. A closer look at these results reveals a clear trend: marriages imbued with higher levels of intimacy were more likely to stand the test of time. This supports Peterman et al. (2015) studies conducted in 30 developing countries. Their study also reported that intimacy was a significant factor in marital longevity.

Qualitative findings further indicated that marriage intimacy, which is also viewed in some circles as companionship, has been cited as one of the reasons why individuals marry (Horowitz et al., 2019; Parker, 2002). The

Australian Institute of Family Studies found that intimacy (companionship) and commitment were the major themes that emerged from a qualitative study of 30 married couples in Australia, which focused on the meaning of marriage (Parker, 2002). Hence, it is unsurprising that in this study, intimacy was one of the reasons cited by the study participants as a contributing factor toward their marriage longevity. This finding is in congruence with previous studies that identified friendship as one of the most critical ingredients for marriage longevity (Fenell, 1993; Lauer et al., 1990; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Roberts, 1980). However, in Heim and Heim's (2023) cross-generational study, companionship was not included in the top seven secrets or ingredients to relationship longevity; nevertheless, it emerged as one of the themes (ingredients) to marriage longevity.

Quantitative and qualitative data results created a fascinating narrative around the role of intimacy in marital relationships. They painted a picture where closeness, understanding, and mutual vulnerability were not mere optional extras but vital elements for a marriage's thriving and survival. With this insight, it became apparent that couples must prioritise and cultivate intimacy as a fundamental building block of their relationship.

### *Commitment*

The findings derived from quantitative data revealed commitment as the next highest predictor of marriage longevity. A deep emotional bond and love for one's partner were fundamental drivers of commitment. When couples had a strong emotional connection, they were more inclined to commit to the marriage and work through challenges. This higher level of commitment within a marital relationship not only fostered resilience in the face of difficulties but



also significantly contributed to the enduring success of the partnership. Such an inference is consistent with the findings of previous studies (Rhoades et al., 2010; Stanley & Markman, 1992), further underscoring the role of commitment as an anchor for marital stability. These findings concur with those of Selic et al. (2011), who reported using twenty respondents who indicated that commitment keeps couples together in Slovenia. Again, in the United States, a study by Rhoades et al. (2010) examined the role of commitment in predicting relationship satisfaction and stability over time. Their findings indicated that higher levels of commitment were associated with greater relationship satisfaction and a lower likelihood of dissolution. This supports the current analysis, which found that higher levels of commitment contributed to increased marriage longevity.

Another relevant study in line with this was by Juhari et al. (2019) in North Carolina. They explored the concept of commitment and its impact on relationship maintenance. They found that individuals who reported higher levels of commitment were more likely to engage in relationship-maintaining behaviours, such as forgiveness, accommodation, and problem-solving. These behaviours, in turn, contributed to relationship satisfaction and longevity.

The qualitative phase provided further nuance to the quantitative findings. This finding indicated that couples were committed to sustaining their marriages and committed to their spouses. Studies (Pillemer, 2012; Lauer & Lauer, 1986; Rowe & Meredith, 1982; Roberts, 1980) that have investigated the main reason why couples have stayed in marriage for a long time have found commitment to be one of the critical elements to long-lasting marriages. Similarly, a recent cross-generational discourse study by Heim and Heim (2023)

explored questions of individuals who have been in marriage relationships for three to forty years (3-40 years). The findings revealed across the globe that among the several questions asked by these individuals, 70% of 137 asked about the secret to staying together. When this question was asked during an interview with married couples, it was found that commitment was among the top seven secrets to a long-lasting marriage. Also, a literature review conducted by Parker (2002) on why marriages last found that commitment was the second key feature among happy and unhappy couples married for 15 years and above. The study revealed that couples were committed to the marriage or their partners. The findings of this current study did not differ from those of previous studies as the findings showed that couples were committed to sustaining their marriages and being committed to their spouses.

Integrating quantitative and qualitative data, this research argued that commitment was an essential bond in romantic relationships and the foundation for successful relationships. It instilled a sense of safety, confidence, and steadfast commitment, crucial for long-lasting partnerships. Marriage is a measure of lifespan and a symbol of dedication, giving it lasting strength and significance. This dedication was evident throughout the marital journey, showcasing the power of steadfast love.

#### *Sexual satisfaction*

The quantitative findings of sexual satisfaction are consistent with the broader theme of investigating the factors that contribute to the longevity of marriage, particularly sexual satisfaction. The study's emphasis on identifying determinants of marriage longevity is supported by the finding that sexual satisfaction is the third-strongest predictor and can potentially affect overall

relationship satisfaction, leading to marriage longevity. This finding suggests that a satisfying erotic life indirectly contributes to the longevity of marriage by influencing the overall satisfaction of the relationship.

The reference to Cahil et al. (2018) introduces a critical perspective. It highlights the importance of emotional closeness and intimacy in addition to sexual satisfaction, thereby complicating the role of sexual satisfaction as the sole determinant of marriage longevity. This detailed stance suggests that sexual satisfaction alone may not be sufficient to determine the longevity of a marriage, highlighting the intricate interplay between emotional and relational factors in long-lasting relationships.

In contrast, the findings of Yabiku and Gager (2009) challenge the notion that a sexual relationship is necessary for the stability of a couple. This study highlights the significance of mutual comprehension in a couple's sexual relationship and suggests that sexual satisfaction may develop in joyful relationships. Consequently, it may not be the sole factor that determines the longevity of a marriage, although sexual satisfaction remains a vital aspect of marital relationships. Other factors, such as mutual comprehension and overall marital satisfaction, play a crucial role in determining the course of a marriage.

*Qualitative findings of sexual satisfaction.*

Sexuality has been identified as a key element affecting both men's and women's mental health (Gholamali et al., 2017). The findings of this current study found that sexual satisfaction contributed to the longevity of some couple's marriages. This finding is in line with that of Shakerian et al. (2014), who found that a high level of sexual satisfaction results in high marriage satisfaction, decreasing marital instability and divorce. Similar to the findings

of this study is a study that assessed the effect of marital sexuality on marital disruption (Dzara, 2010). Dzara's study found that a husband's early experience with continuous sexual satisfaction in marriage positively impacts the couple experiencing marital stability.

In conclusion, this study's comprehensive approach, which combined quantitative and qualitative research within a sequential explanatory design, highlighted the significance of investigating determinants of marriage longevity. Sexual satisfaction's prominence as a determinant highlighted its potential influence on overall relationship satisfaction and the strength of marital bonds.

#### *Conflict Management*

The research underscores the pivotal role of conflict management in marriage longevity. While quantitative analysis may designate it as the least predictive factor, a deeper examination reveals its crucial significance. Conflict, a natural aspect of relationships, is not the issue. What truly matters is how couples navigate and resolve these conflicts. The qualitative phase unveils that effective conflict management is a key determinant of marital success. These findings underscore the importance of communication and problem-solving skills in fostering enduring and harmonious marriages. This suggests that the journey to a long-lasting marriage is shaped by the presence of conflicts and the ability to address and manage them constructively.

Lawuo et al. (2015) study in Tanga City explicitly addresses the role of conflict management in marriage longevity. They indirectly support those preventative measures, such as marriage counselling, essential for fostering healthy family relationships (Lawuo et al., 2015). This information equips the

audience with the knowledge of proactive measures that can reduce family-related tensions, thereby positively affecting the longevity of marriages. In addition, as suggested by the study, participation in family training programmes can equip individuals with essential marital problem-solving skills, further emphasising the significance of proactive conflict management measures.

In addition, the Durbete study conducted by Tasew and Getahun in 2021 provides insightful information regarding marital conflict. While it does not explicitly address the predictive role of conflict management in a marriage's longevity, it enriches the researcher's understanding of the multidimensional nature of marital conflicts and the various strategies couples employ. This complexity of conflict resolution within marriages challenges the audience's understanding and highlights the need for individualised strategies.

In conclusion, while the quantitative analysis identifies conflict management as a challenging predictor of marriage longevity, insights from related studies, such as those by Lawuo et al. (2015) and Tasew and Getahun (2021), indirectly highlight the significance of proactive measures like marital counselling and family training in resolving conflicts within marriages. Conflict management is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour and should be approached with a comprehensive understanding of the unique relationship dynamics at play, as demonstrated by these studies.

The qualitative phase provided further nuance to the quantitative findings. Challenges are bound to occur in most marital relationships. The application of appropriate conflict management strategies does predict marriage longevity. Challenges could be due to factors such as, but not limited to, finances, differences in values and religious beliefs among couples, in-laws,

infertility, and infidelity (Fatima & Ajmal, 2012)). How couples cope with these challenges is significant in determining the stability and longevity of their marriages. Hence, the study sought to find out the coping strategies used by these couples who have stayed married for a relatively long time. It is evident from the study that most couples used communication and religious activities to resolve their challenges. These findings align with Goodman et al. (2013) assertion that religiosity is linked with marital stability, commitment, and positive coping among couples. Likewise, Vaaler et al. (2009) reported that couples with similar religious beliefs stay married for a long time. In addition, the findings of this study are consistent with that of Timothy-Springer and Johnson (2018), who found that religion and communication were some of the major themes (in addition to “Attitude”, “Action”, “Children”, and “Approach to Challenges”) identified as strategies used by couples to maintain their marriages.

In conclusion, supported by a research design incorporating both quantitative and qualitative phases, this study emphasises the significance of effective conflict management as a key predictor of marital success. While the quantitative phase rated it as a determinant of marriage longevity, the qualitative data provided additional insight into the practical strategies employed by couples to overcome obstacles. These findings revealed that many married couples rely on communication and religious activities to resolve marital conflicts. Combining quantitative analysis with qualitative findings highlights the multidimensional character of conflict management in marital contexts. It emphasises that nurturing effective communication and employing relevant

strategies, such as religious activities, can contribute substantially to the success and longevity of marriages.

### *Trust*

Examining the quantitative data reveals that the findings regarding trust do not correlate directly with the study's determinant of marriage longevity. These variables have indirect or mediated effects on marital longevity.

The study's findings on trust indicate that it does not directly predict marriage longevity. Despite its undeniable importance in a healthy marriage, its direct predictive role in marital longevity may need further clarification. Due to its intricate interplay with other crucial factors such as commitment, conflict resolution, and shared objectives, trust may not be a reliable predictor of the longevity of marriage despite its importance. In contrast to the findings of Alford-Cooper's (1998) study, which identified trust as a significant predictor of marriage longevity, the results of this study indicate that trust does not explicitly predict marriage longevity.

Alford-Cooper's comprehensive study involving over 500 couples highlighted trust, affectionate relationships, and willingness to compromise as the most frequently cited and highly ranked characteristics for sustaining long-term marriages. This finding aligns more with Avanti and Setiawan (2022), who conducted research in Surabaya, East Java, and discovered that trust significantly impacted the intimacy and longevity of marriages, especially among couples with dual incomes. This suggests that trust plays a significant role in determining a marriage's longevity, especially when considering cultural or contextual factors.

Overall, the literature cited here provides contradictory perspectives on the role of trust in predicting a marriage's longevity, suggesting that various contextual and cultural factors may influence it.

Unlike the quantitative data, qualitative findings indicate Trust as an essential prerequisite for all forms of relationships. It is acknowledged by Leavitt et al. (2024) that trust is a critical element that shapes an individual's ability to engage in a relationship because it provides comfort for individuals to count on each other. Likewise, Simpson (2007) argues that trust could be the most relevant ingredient to developing and maintaining a happy and well-functioning relationship. The finding of this study shows that couples continue to stay married because they can count on each other. Also, it could be said that these couples were satisfied with their marriages because trust has been found to predict marital satisfaction among married couples from different parts of the world (Atta et al., 2013). On the other hand, a lack of trust predicts problems in romantic relationships; as Arikewuyo et al. (2021) found among 329 married couples, a lack of trust significantly predicted relationship problems, such as emotional instability, conflict and intention to break up.

These disparate research findings shed light on the complex dynamics within marriages, specifically the multifaceted role of trust. Contradictory findings from this study and others necessitate additional investigation into the complex relationship of factors determining marital longevity.

These insights on the quantitative and qualitative findings show that, while trust does not explicitly predict the length of a marriage, it is a crucial prerequisite for all forms of relationships. The findings indicate that trust alone may not determine the longevity of a marriage, but its presence is necessary for



establishing mutual reliance and confidence. Likely, trust interacts with other factors, such as commitment, conflict resolution, and shared objectives, to affect the duration of a marriage. The study underscores the multifaceted nature of factors contributing to marital longevity and the complex interplay of variables influencing marital success over time.

### *Religiosity*

The quantitative findings about religiosity did not directly predict marriage longevity. The quantitative analysis revealed that the influence of religiosity on marital outcomes is complex and varies depending on the religious context and degree of adherence to faith in the lives of many couples. Religious traditions emphasise various facets of marital relationships, and individuals interpret and practice their faith differently. These variations make it challenging to influence marriage longevity based solely on religiosity. Therefore, religiosity should be considered within marital dynamics rather than as a direct and universal predictor. The conclusion of this study that religiosity does not predict the longevity of marriage is consistent with the findings of Tuttle and Davis (2015), who found that religiosity decreased the likelihood of marital infidelity and divorce among couples married for at least 12 years. In their study, however, increased marital satisfaction had an indirect effect on subsequent divorce, suggesting that the relationship between religiosity and marriage outcomes is complex.

In contrast, Call and Heaton's (1997) research indicated that religious attendance considerably positively influences marital longevity, mainly when couples attend church regularly. This emphasises the significance of shared religiosity in marital stability and supports considering the religious context and

degree of adherence as factors influencing the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity.

In addition, the study by Brown et al. (2008) highlighted gender and racial differences in the effect of religiosity on marital longevity. This diversity highlights the complexity of the relationship between religiosity and marriage outcomes, which is consistent with this study's perspective that the influence of religiosity on the longevity of marriage can vary according to individual, contextual, and cultural factors.

In the qualitative findings, the religious nature of Ghanaians was evident in this study, as all the participants, both Muslims and Christians, attributed their longer stay in their marriages to the grace of God and their participation in religious activities, such as praying and applying their religious teachings in their marriages. The participants attributed the longevity of their marriages to their religious organisations' disapproval of divorce. Furthermore, the participants perceived marriage as a religious sacrament that is meant not to be broken for any reason or by anyone. Similar to this study's findings is a study conducted in Pakistan to investigate the relationship between religious commitment, religious practice, and marital satisfaction among Muslim couples (Aman et al., 2019). The authors reported a positive relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction among the couples involved in the study.

Similarly, a study on dating individuals reported that religiosity influences relationship satisfaction (Langlais & Schwanz, 2017). This implies that religious couples would be happier and have a more stable marriage compared to couples who are not religious. Likewise, Latifa et al. (2021) found that religiosity and marital commitment significantly and positively affect

marital stability. This finding suggests that the higher the levels of religiosity and marital commitment, the more stable the marriage.

Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings provides a nuanced understanding of the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity. While the quantitative analysis did not explicitly predict marriage longevity based on religiosity, the qualitative findings illuminated the significant impact of religious beliefs and practices on the marital experiences of the participants. From various religious backgrounds, the participants emphasised the importance of religious activities, devotion, and adherence to religious doctrines in maintaining their marriages. In addition, their belief in marriage as a sacred and permanent bond, which was bolstered by religious organisations' disapproval of divorce, highlighted the influence of religiosity on their commitment to marital longevity. This synthesis underscores the multifaceted nature of religiosity's influence on marriage, encompassing individual beliefs and societal norms, as disclosed through quantitative data and qualitative narratives.

### *Procreation*

Despite its significant role in marriages, procreation did not directly predict marriage longevity in the quantitative analysis. This may be attributed to its complex nature, influenced by individual intentions, timing, and external factors. The decision to have children is multifaceted, and its impact on marriage varies based on timing and individual differences. Couples who become parents early may face unique challenges, while those delaying parenthood may have more established marital dynamics. Individual attitudes toward parenting further contribute to this complexity.

This study delved into the diverse perspectives on procreation within the context of marriage, as revealed by qualitative and previous research findings. Qualitative insights highlighted that, for some couples, procreation significantly contributes to the longevity of their marriages, as they remain committed to their relationships primarily for the sake of their children. These couples prioritise providing a stable family environment and do not wish their children to experience broken homes, aligning with the societal expectations in Ghana, where children are significant. This viewpoint resonates with research findings by Xu et al. (2015), suggesting that a higher number of children can enhance marital stability and that younger children can reduce the risk of divorce, underscoring the impact of procreation on marital longevity.

Conversely, other couples in the interviews diverge from this perspective, asserting that procreation or childbearing does not directly contribute to the longevity of their marriages. They believe that if they were inclined to divorce, their children would not be a reason to stay in the marriages because, eventually, their children would grow and establish their own families. This counterpoint contrasts with the findings of Townsend (2002) and Guzzo and Hayford (2012), who found that the presence of children, regardless of their birth timing, influences marital stability. However, the direction of influence was not specified. Additionally, Christensen (1968) observed gender differences in factors contributing to marriage longevity, with women emphasising love, sex, and children, while men cited communication, trust, friendship, and compatibility.

These diverse viewpoints underscore the complexity of procreation's role within marriages and the multifaceted factors that can impact marriage

longevity. While some couples emphasise their children as a stabilising force, others prioritise different aspects of their relationships. This nuanced understanding contributes to the broader discussion of procreation's influence on marriage longevity, considering cultural and individual perspectives variations.

Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings regarding procreation and its effect on marriage longevity provides a narrative with multiple facets. The quantitative analysis failed to identify procreation as a direct predictor, highlighting the complexity of this factor within marriages.

Nonetheless, the qualitative insights probe deeply into this complexity. Some couples demonstrated a significant correlation between procreation and the durability of their marriages, emphasising their commitment to one another as a result of their parental responsibilities. For these couples, the well-being and security of their children became a primary motivation for maintaining their marriages.

In contrast, however, different voices arose from the qualitative interviews. These couples refuted the idea that procreation directly affects their marital longevity. Their perspective, which is based on the belief that children growing up and establishing their own lives would not bind them to a marriage if they were inclined towards divorce, challenges the conventional view of procreation as an enduring bond.

This integration highlights the complex connection between procreation and marriage. Some couples find profound purpose and commitment in parenthood, whereas others view procreation as a temporary factor, emphasising the dynamic nature of relationships as they evolve. Given these

diverse perspectives, considering the varied motivations and contexts of various couples' lives, a comprehensive understanding of procreation's role in marital longevity is necessary.

### *Counselling*

In the quantitative analysis, counselling did not emerge as a direct predictor of marriage longevity, and this outcome can be attributed to several unique factors associated with premarital counselling. While it is a common practice for some couples before marriage, its impact on marriage longevity is not uniform for various reasons. The effectiveness of premarital counselling depends on factors such as the quality and content of the counselling, the willingness of the couple to engage with the process, and the specific issues addressed during counselling. Premarital counselling is typically viewed as a preventive measure aimed at addressing potential challenges before, they manifest in the marriage, making its direct influence on longevity less immediate. In summary, premarital counselling, as a variable, may not directly predict marriage longevity due to its multifaceted nature and the varied ways in which couples engage with it within the broader context of marital dynamics. It is important to note that the findings of this study are not in complete alignment with those of the study conducted by Marang'a (2021) in Nairobi, which reported positive outcomes of premarital counselling, including increased commitment, improved communication, and greater marital cohesion, ultimately contributing to marriage stability and longevity. The divergence in findings underscores the complexity of counselling's impact and its dependency on various contextual factors.

Additionally, the qualitative data revealed that some couples had not received any form of counselling but had been able to live together for a long time. This could be because the couples involved in this study are religiously affiliated, and their religious principles and teachings about marriage (including indirect counselling and family life education) might have positively influenced their marriages. Those who received counselling did not attribute their marriage longevity to it, as the counselling was for only a short period and lacked practicality. Marriage counselling services are provided for would-be and married couples to expose them to some of the inevitable challenges they may face (Schofield et al., 2012). The authors add that counselling is aimed at helping couples minimise marital discord and improve marital satisfaction. Likewise, Moeti et al. (2017) believe that marriage counselling helps couples adjust, which aids them in maintaining and ensuring the stability of the marriage. Overall, this study highlights the multifaceted nature of counselling's role in marital dynamics and the diverse factors contributing to marriage longevity.

To conclude, the quantitative analysis revealed that counselling, particularly premarital counselling, does not directly predict marriage longevity. This result may stem from the diverse factors associated with premarital counselling, which may not affect all marriages uniformly. After examining the qualitative data in greater depth, a nuanced picture emerged. Although the quantitative analysis did not identify counselling as a direct predictor, the qualitative investigation revealed an additional layer of understanding. Despite lacking formal counselling, some couples have been able to maintain their relationships for extended periods. This disparity between

the quantitative and qualitative findings highlights the complexity of marital relationships. Individual couples navigate their journeys in various ways, depending on numerous factors in addition to formal counselling. This integration of quantitative and qualitative findings emphasises the need for a holistic perspective when understanding the complex dynamics of marriage longevity.

### **Emerging Contributing Factors from the Interviews on Marriage Longevity**

Other factors that evolved during the interview with the participants and which contributed to their marriage longevity were love and socio-economic factors such as spousal support, social support, and finances.

#### *Love*

Globally, love, an affectionate attachment, is the predominant rationale cited by individuals who intend to marry and those who are married (Heim & Heim, 2023; Horowitz et al., 2019; Cohn, 2013). For instance, Cohn found that most Americans (93%) cited love as the foundation of marriage and that they would marry because of love. A previous survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2010 also found that married couples (93%) said they would marry and stay married because of love, compared to having children as their reason to get married (Pew Research Center, 2010). In Heim and Heim's cross-generational study, participants cited love as one of the ingredients of a long-lasting marriage. Like these previous studies, this study's findings have all established love as the basis for marriage and as a component for marriage longevity. This study's findings align with a cross-cultural study by Sharlin et al. (2000) regarding long-lasting marriages in the United States, Canada, Israel,



Chile, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and South Africa. Among the contributing factors to long-lasting marriages identified by the authors in all the cultures were love, mutuality and sharing, trust, respect, support and give-and-take, religion, commitment, and philosophies.

#### *Socio-economic Factors*

Marriage longevity, or the duration and stability of a marriage, is influenced by various socio-economic factors. These factors can play a significant role in determining the strength and resilience of a marital relationship. Some socio-economic factors that emerged as predictors of marriage longevity during the interview are spousal support, social support and finance.

#### *Spousal Support*

A study by Purdom et al. (2006) revealed that spouses who received high spousal support were more satisfied than those who reported receiving low support. Hence, they concluded that spousal support increases marital satisfaction. Similarly, Lawrence et al. (2008) found that the perception of support adequacy predicted marital satisfaction among couples in the United States. It could then be inferred that the couples involved in this study were satisfied with their marriages because they received support from their partners, hence their stay in the marriage.

#### *Social support*

The relevance of social support to individuals can not be underestimated. Studies (Drageset, 2021; Vogel et al., 2012; Dehle et al., 2001) have shown that social support provided by an individual's social network contributes significantly to their well-being. Married couples require support

from their social relations to survive the inevitable challenges they would experience on their marriage journey. The findings of this study show that the support couples received from their social relations contributed to the longevity of their marriage. This finding aligns with Brown et al. (2003), who found that marital instability is reduced among couples who receive instrumental support from their social networks, such as friends, relatives, neighbours, and support from their spouse.

### *Finance*

Numerous investigations have delved into how various financial dynamics within marriage impact the experiences of married couples, as evidenced by the works of researchers like Conger et al. (1994) and Dew (2006). A specific line of inquiry within this body of research highlights how financial strain can escalate marital discord, with a study by Dew (2007) underscoring the correlation between economic pressures and increased marital tension. Furthermore, there is a consensus in the literature that financial issues are essential in initiating and sustaining marital relationships. This highlights the critical role that finances play in marriages.

The findings from the present study add a nuanced layer to this discussion by revealing that although participants recognise the significance of financial considerations in marriage, they did not consider financial stability as the primary reason for the longevity of their marital unions. This perspective aligns with Killewald's (2016) research, which suggests that the total income of a household does not directly influence the likelihood of divorce. However, contrasting with the notion that financial stability might not directly predict marital longevity, evidence suggests that the day-to-day management of

finances, encompassing savings, investments, and credit usage, plays a significant role in overall marital satisfaction. Baryła-Matejczuk and colleagues (2020) contribute to this dialogue by indicating that couples' methodologies in handling their financial affairs can affect their marital happiness. This body of work collectively illustrates the complex and multifaceted ways financial factors intersect with marital dynamics, influencing the formation and quality of marital relationships and their sustainability and satisfaction levels.

### **Connection between Religiosity, Commitment, Conflict Management and Marriage Longevity**

From the result, it was revealed that religiosity independently does not predict marriage longevity. This finding is consistent with the result reported by Mackey and O'Brien (2005), in which individual partners deliberate on religion's significance or lack thereof in their matrimonial unions and the potential impact it had on their connections. Recent trends in the significance of religion are examined through the lens of demographic and interpersonal factors. The themes concerning the significance of religion in these marriages, as perceived by each spouse, were subsequently identified through a second depth of analysis. At the end of the analysis, the study discovered mixed to no significance of religion on marriage. In an analogous study, Mullins (2016) disagreed with the outcome of this finding that religiosity does not affect marriage.

In the case of Mullins (2016), older couples experienced adverse effects on marriage as a result of religious experiences that clashed with their cultural norms regarding long-lasting matrimonial unions. In order to amplify sacred connotations within religious and cultural repertoires, social contexts must

augment the older couples' perceptions of their marriages as sacred by publicly and formally acknowledging their matrimonial longevity, extolling their marriage longevity as a divine blessing to be replicated, advocating for religious interpretations of familism, and attributing sacred significance to favourable marital outcomes. Gregory (2019) also concluded that the relationship between marital longevity and religiosity, measured by proximity to God, is not linear. As mentioned earlier, the result was derived from a quantitative study investigating the linear correlation between two dependent variables—marital satisfaction and longevity—and two independent variables—religiousness and proximity to God—among married individuals selected from a sample of 280 White and 65 African American participants. The interaction between marital satisfaction and longevity, as well as closeness to God and religiosity, was evaluated through an analysis of covariance. The scores for this analysis were obtained from the Religious Commitment Inventory and a one-question adaptation of the Religiosity Salience-Cognition Scale utilised to assess closeness to God and religiosity in African Americans and Whites, respectively. It can be inferred from the above studies that the potency of religiosity's effect on marriage longevity hinged much on the kind of couples involved in the marriage and their religious beliefs and practices.

When commitment was introduced as the mediating variable between religiosity and marriage longevity, religiosity had a significant positive effect, establishing that commitment was significantly mediated between the two variables. It is noteworthy that religiosity often involves a profound commitment to religious principles, values, and doctrines. Those deeply religious tend to display a strong commitment not only to their faith but also to

associated institutions and practices, including marriage. This forces couples to extend such commitment to their marriages against the backdrop that when both partners are committed, they are more inclined to invest time and effort into nurturing the marriage, resolving conflicts and sustaining the emotional connection over the long term. Thus, commitment is a mediator between religiosity and the longevity of a marriage. The implication is that professionals in marriage counselling and education should consider the influence of religiosity when working with couples prior to marriage. Understanding each partner's religious beliefs and values can help tailor counselling and educational programmes to emphasise the significance of commitment within their faith.

Moreover, religious communities can offer valuable support and resources to married couples. Encouraging active involvement in religious activities and fostering a sense of belonging within the faith community can reinforce commitment to marriage and contribute to its longevity. This validates similar findings from Latifa et al. (2021), who discovered that religiosity and marital commitment directly affect marital stability, which ultimately contributes to the life span of marriages among female journalists in Indonesia. Furthermore, Day and Acock (2013) discovered that the relationship between religiousness and the happiness of a couple was entirely mediated by relational virtue but unrelated to relational inequality. Additionally, they discovered that relational inequality was linked to marital instability, conflict among men and women, and men's conflict. It was not determined that increased religiosity has a direct positive impact on marital outcomes. While the data does not provide direct evidence to support the notion that religious activities foster stronger relationships, it does indicate that religiousness may positively influence the

manifestation of relational virtue, positively correlated with the overall well-being of marriages.

Latifa (2018) also revealed that particularly for Muslims, religious commitment (as measured by religious participation and religious belief) predicts marital stability significantly ( $R^2 = 0.487$ ). Engaging in religious activities may inspire spouses to persevere and solve challenges head-on, reducing the likelihood of a desire for separation. Additionally, Lambert and Dollahite (2006) conducted research which indicates that personal religiosity influences marital commitment by strengthening the desire to maintain a permanent relationship; this, in turn, assists couples in resolving conflicts. An opposing study by Sullivan (2001) discovered that religiosity declines during the initial four years of matrimony. This phenomenon can be attributed to the cross-sectional association between religiosity and attitudes regarding divorce, commitment, and seeking assistance. However, a moderating model provides the most consistent explanation of longitudinal effects: Wives' marital satisfaction is positively influenced by religiosity in couples with less neurotic husbands, whereas couples with more neurotic husbands would experience a negative impact.

The result further indicates that conflict management independently does not significantly mediate between religiosity and marriage longevity. This could happen when religious bodies do not focus their teachings on maintaining peace and resolving conflicts among married couples. This happens when emphasis is placed on living together without aiding couples in handling any conflict that may emerge from such a relationship. Since conflict management does not significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage

longevity, it is essential to focus on other potential factors that might explain the connection between religiosity and lasting marriages. This could include shared values, social support networks within religious communities or personal commitment. The conclusion of this finding contradicts Mahoney's (2005) assertion that religion provides families with strategies that can either aid or impede the resolution of post-conflict issues. This paper emphasises the scarcity of empirical research concerning the influence of religion on the emergence and resolution of marital and parent-child conflict.

Additionally, it provides recommendations for furthering research and clinical practice in this area. The primary hypotheses examined in a study by Chinitz and Brown (2001) were that there would be a positive correlation between religious homogamy and marital stability and that this correlation would be mediated by the degree of marital conflict. That is to say, marital stability ought to decline in tandem with marital conflict. These correlations were anticipated to persist even after accounting for religious denominations (both interfaith and same-faith).

When the number of mediating variables is extended to include commitment and conflict management, it was concluded that the dual mediating variables produced a positive significant mediating effect between religiosity and marriage longevity. By intuition, highly religious couples often commit to their faith and various aspects of life guided by their religious beliefs, including marriage. The connection here is that religiosity instils a deep commitment to the marital relationship. Moreover, many religious teachings emphasise forgiveness, empathy, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It is reasonable to assume that religiosity may positively influence couples' approaches to

conflict management within their marriages, leading to more effective and constructive resolution of issues. In a similar situation, committed couples are closely tied to work through challenges and conflicts in a relationship. When individuals are deeply committed to their marriages due to their religious beliefs, they may be more motivated to engage in positive conflict management strategies rather than resorting to harmful behaviours or avoidance, thereby culminating in a lasting marriage.

In a systematic review by Karimi et al. (2019), they investigated the various components of marital stability through a search of relevant publications from Embase, Web of Science, PubMed, Scopus, Science Direct, Magiran, and Scientific Information Database from their inception through January 30, 2019. The findings indicate that some aspects of partnerships, including dedication and effective settlement of disagreements, uphold the fundamental principles of marriage throughout crucial circumstances. Day and Acock (2013) conducted a study using data from a 3-year longitudinal community sample of 354 married couples. They discovered that the connection between religiousness and a couple's mental health was entirely influenced by relational virtue, specifically commitment. However, religiousness was not associated with relational inequity. Additionally, they discovered a correlation between relational inequality and conflict among women, conflict among men, and instability in marriages. The study did not discover a direct correlation between higher levels of religiousness and improved marriage outcomes. While these findings do not provide evidence for a direct link between religious activities and stronger relationships, the data indicates that religiousness would contribute to expressing relational virtue, which is connected with marital stability. The



findings of the mediation analysis produce a more concrete foundation that commitment and conflict management serve as a potent pathway through which religious beliefs of couples could contribute to the lasting duration of marriages and hence have important implications for understanding the role of religiosity, commitment and conflict management to marriage longevity. The result that religiosity does not directly determine marriage longevity suggests that simply being religious or having high levels of religiosity may not be sufficient to promote long-lasting marriages. This challenges the notion that religiosity alone strongly determines marriage longevity.

However, the finding that religiosity becomes positively associated with marriage longevity in the presence of commitment and conflict management highlights the importance of these factors in mediating the relationship. It suggests that couples with high levels of religiosity also demonstrate a strong commitment to their marriage and effective conflict management skills and are more likely to experience longer-lasting marriages. This finding further emphasises the dual-chain roles of commitment and conflict management in enhancing the tendency for couples to stay long in their marriages. It suggests that promoting commitment may facilitate religiosity, influencing conflict management strategies. This indicates that the combination of religiosity, commitment, and conflict management is crucial for promoting marriage longevity. These findings imply that religious individuals who wish to foster long-lasting marriages should not solely rely on their religiosity but actively cultivate a commitment to their relationship and develop practical conflict management skills. It emphasises the significance of considering multiple factors and their interplay in understanding marriage longevity.

These findings have practical implications for couples, therapists, and relationship educators. They suggest that interventions and programmes to promote marriage longevity should focus not only on religious beliefs and practices but also on enhancing commitment levels and providing tools for effective conflict management. By addressing these multiple dimensions, interventions can strengthen marriages and increase marital satisfaction and longevity. In conclusion, this study's findings underscore the complex interplay between religiosity, commitment, conflict management, and marriage longevity. They emphasise the need to consider the combined effects of these factors in understanding and promoting successful and enduring marriages.

### **The Connection Between Sexual Satisfaction, Intimacy, Trust and Marriage Longevity**

The analysis of the hypothesis regarding the mediating roles of intimacy and trust in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity yielded interesting findings. The direct effect of sexual satisfaction on marriage longevity was significant, indicating that higher levels of sexual satisfaction are associated with increased chances of a longer-lasting marriage. The findings have implications for improving couples' marital satisfaction and, by extension, the duration of marriages by highlighting the need to create awareness about the need for couples to be sexually satisfied for a guaranteed long duration of their marriage. In the same vein, based on the findings, it seems that the development of sexual educational programmes and pre-marriage counselling materials that explore various sexual details are necessary ingredients for strengthening marriages that may lack sexual elements. Continuous education would be helpful after marriage in addressing couples' unique transitional needs in marital

life. The aforementioned finding is similar to the conclusion of Ziaee et al. (2014) that sexual satisfaction has a direct effect on lasting marriages in Iran. The majority of participants (56.4%) reported a high level of sexual satisfaction, whereas only a small percentage (0.7%) indicated dissatisfaction with their sexual connection. There was a strong correlation between marital contentment and sexual satisfaction ( $p < 0.005$ ). Consequently, as sexual happiness increased, marital contentment also increased. The results revealed a notable correlation between sexual satisfaction and age ( $p = 0.086$ ).

In a similar outcome, Shakerian et al. (2014) also discovered that sexual satisfaction has a strong negative impact on marital issues, with a correlation coefficient of -0.35 and a significance level of  $P < 0.01$ . The strong inverse correlation between the listed factors indicates that persons who report lower sexual pleasure experience higher levels of marital issues, ultimately leading to marital dissolution. According to the study, women who initiate divorce and have low sexual satisfaction also tend to have higher ratings in marital issues. Sexual satisfaction may serve as an indicator of reduced marital difficulties in couples. Dzara (2010) focused on male sexual satisfaction and concluded that when males are satisfied physically with their sexual intimacy in early marriage, there is a high preponderance that their marriage would not experience marital disruption. This finding was derived from the analysis of panel data obtained from the Marriage Matters Panel Survey of Newlywed Couples, conducted between 1998 and 2004. The study utilised three indicators, namely frequency, satisfaction, and agreement. Nevertheless, the findings offer proof that the impact of sexual activity within a marriage on the likelihood of a marital breakdown is restricted.

Intimacy has a mediating effect on the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. Thus, once couples get sexually active and become intimate, there is a high possibility that their marriage would survive through all the tough times. Therefore, sexual satisfaction offers some bonding and intimacy that strengthens the foundation of the marriage, culminating in marriage stability. This finding also indicates that sexual satisfaction alone is not enough to ensure a lasting marriage; instead, the presence of intimacy is essential. Interestingly, this study went further to reveal the substantial mediating role of intimacy in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. It is intuitively plausible that sexual satisfaction and intimacy are closely related within a marital context. Sexual satisfaction often hinges on emotional and physical intimacy between partners. When couples experience sexual satisfaction, it may foster a deeper emotional connection and bond, which are components of intimacy.

Intimacy, both emotional and physical, plays a vital role in the health and longevity of a marriage. Couples who share a strong emotional connection and engage in open communication and affectionate behaviours tend to experience greater marital satisfaction and may be more likely to stay together over the long term. Karimi et al. (2019) systematically reviewed global protective factors of marital stability in long-term marriages. Their finding was that sexual relationship reinforces intimacy and result in long-lasting marriages. Based on a global assessment, this review identified that elements of marital stability encompass systems that augment a couple's identity and foster a sense of unity. By identifying the factors of marital relationships that lead to marital stability, professionals and researchers can focus on specific types of marital

interaction that can improve the satisfaction and durability of partnerships, thus minimising unnecessary divorces.

In the same way, Roshani et al. (2019) compared marital satisfaction, sexual satisfaction, marital intimacy, and marital adjustment among married individuals of different age groups while controlling for the effects of age and duration of marriage. The outcome was enlightening, as it demonstrated that there is no notable disparity in marital satisfaction, marital closeness, sexual pleasure, and marital adjustment among married individuals with different age gaps. Moreover, the findings indicate no notable disparity in marital satisfaction, marital closeness, sexual satisfaction, and marital adjustment among married individuals (with varying age disparities) when accounting for age and duration of marriage. The correlation between marriage satisfaction, marital closeness, and marital adjustment among couples in long-term relationships was weak. Consequently, there was no evidence of a mediating relationship among these variables, which contradicted the findings of this study.

On the contrary, trust as a mediating factor failed to have a significant effect on the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. The analysis showed that trust did not significantly explain the association between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. Different individuals and couples prioritise different aspects of their relationships. While trust is essential for many, some individuals may prioritise sexual satisfaction more highly, and their perception of marriage longevity may be more closely tied to their sexual satisfaction rather than trust alone. Furthermore, sexual satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted aspect of a relationship. It involves not just trust but also

physical, emotional and psychological factors. If there are issues or dissatisfaction in any of these areas, trust alone may not be sufficient to mitigate the impact on sexual satisfaction and, subsequently, on marriage longevity. This deviates from the research of Arora and Shetgovekar (2021), which advocated that trust is a fundamental element in romantic relationships and produces a significant difference between trust and marital fulfilment. Hence, the results of this study, in contrast to Fincham and Beach (2010), suggest that the role of trust may not directly influence the connection between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, indicating that trust may interact with other marital elements or function differently depending on other relationship factors. This aligns with the findings of the current study, as trust alone failed to have any role to play in connecting sexual satisfaction and lasting marriage. Thus, couples might attain sexual satisfaction; however, when trust is absent in such an adventure, then marriages would still fold up.

In an analogous study, Estrada (2009) examined the dynamics of love and the level of satisfaction in marriages that had lasted for a significant period. The couples selected compromise, faith/religion, forgiveness, effective communication, quality time spent together, and shared interests as the essential elements for maintaining their long-lasting marriages. Additional elements of a favourable marital encounter that were referenced, while less frequently, encompassed alignment in ideals, sustaining romance, demonstrating perseverance, exhibiting thoughtfulness toward one another, expressing gratitude, fostering trust and patience, minimising conflicts or disagreements, and displaying mutual respect. In essence, it was clear that trust could not connect sexual satisfaction and long-term marriages. These findings accentuate

the complex interplay of factors contributing to marriage longevity. They underscore that while sexual satisfaction directly contributes to marriage longevity, trust did not emerge as a significant mediator in such a connection in the context of this study.

In the pathway analysis using both intimacy and trust as mediating variables, it was discovered that sexual satisfaction predicts marriage longevity through the two mediating variables. To establish the chain connection between sexual satisfaction, intimacy, trust and lasting marriages, Hinchliff and Gott (2004) investigated issues of intimacy, commitment and adaptation in sexual relationships within long-term marriages. They concluded that elements of marriage, including sexual relationships, intimacy, and trust, fail to connect lasting marriage in the UK. However, the results suggest that sexual activity remained a significant aspect of long-term marriage, regardless of the presence of conditions that hindered or impeded sexual intercourse. Participants successfully adjusted to these obstacles and had minimal disruption, attributed to the harmonious environment fostered by their long-term marriages.

Avanti and Setiawan (2022) examined the impact of trust and forgiveness on marital intimacy among dual-earner spouses in Surabaya, Indonesia. The findings indicated that trust and forgiveness notably impacted marital intimacy among husbands or wives who both work. The statistical test yielded an F-value of 2.104, with a corresponding p-value of 0.05, indicating a significant result. In all these discussions, intimacy and trust act as buffers against the potential negative impacts of sexual dissatisfaction. When couples have strong emotional bonds and trust each other deeply, they are better

equipped to navigate challenges related to sexual satisfaction. This can lead to greater relationship resilience and a higher likelihood of a lasting marriage.

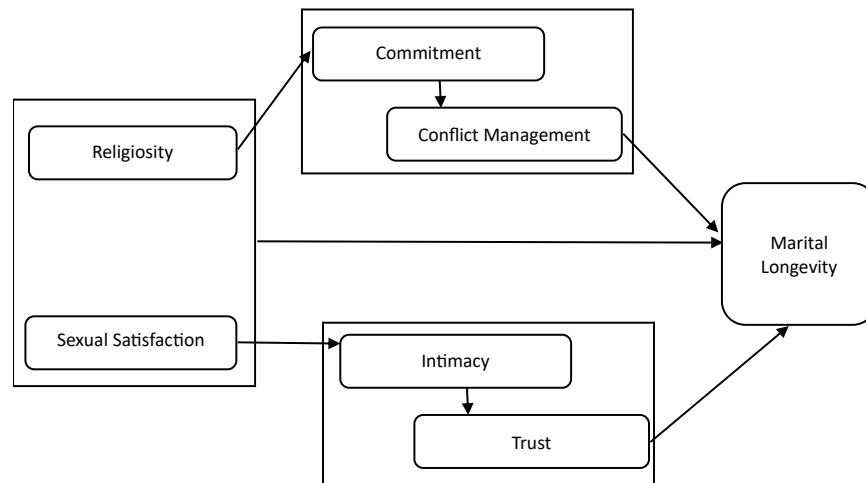
Moreover, intimacy fosters open and effective communication. Couples who are emotionally close are more likely to discuss their sexual needs, desires and concerns openly. Trust in these conversations can lead to constructive problem-solving, helping couples find mutually satisfying solutions to any sexual issues that may arise. Intimacy also provides emotional fulfilment and closeness beyond the physical aspects of a relationship. When emotional intimacy is strong, partners may experience a more profound sense of connection and satisfaction in their union, which can compensate for occasional sexual dissatisfaction and contribute to a lasting bond. These findings are important for strategies seeking to nurture healthy, enduring marriages. Emphasising the importance of fostering intimacy, maintaining sexual satisfaction, and recognising the role of trust can equip couples and marriage counsellors to build more sustainable marriages (Karimi et al., 2019; Duncan et al., 2015). Understanding the interplay between sexual satisfaction, intimacy, trust, and marriage longevity can provide valuable insights for couples and practitioners seeking to promote healthy and fulfilling marriages. By recognising the significance of intimacy in enhancing the longevity of a marriage, interventions and strategies can be developed to strengthen and nurture the emotional and physical connection between partners, ultimately contributing to the sustainability of the relationship.

### **Observed Model for Determinants of Marriage Longevity**

The observed model was derived from the tested hypotheses presented in Figure 6. Figure 6 also presents the variables in the current study and how



they are related to give meaning to the investigation. The independent variables are religiosity, trust, procreation, sexual satisfaction, and counselling. The mediating variables are commitment, conflict management, intimacy, and trust, while the dependent variable is marriage longevity.



*Figure 6: Observed Conceptual Framework*

(Researcher's Own Construct).

Research question 2 looked at factors that influence marital longevity. From analysis, four (4) out of eight (8) perceived factors influenced marriage longevity since the significant value of these four (4) factors is less than a p-value of 0.05. Among these four (4) factors, intimacy contributed the most to marriage longevity, followed by commitment.

The study hypothesised that commitment and conflict management mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among couples. Also, the second hypothesis was that intimacy and trust mediated the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among couples. However, commitment and conflict management significantly mediate between religiosity and marriage longevity. Also, intimacy alone mediated the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity. Moreover,

intimacy and trust serve as potent mediating variables between sexual satisfaction and marriages longevity. This explains that religious couples must be committed and adopt conflict management strategies to sustain their marriage for a long time. Similarly, when couples are sexually satisfied by being intimate and trusting each other, this results in marriages that would last long.

The observed model reflects key variables that align closely with the principles of the three theories reviewed. The observed model aligns closely with Gottman's Theory of Marital Stability, emphasising emotional connection, commitment, conflict management, and trust as critical factors in sustaining marriage. Intimacy emerges as a central element, enabling couples to navigate conflicts effectively and maintain strong commitment, significantly contributing to marital longevity. Commitment is the second most critical factor influencing marriage longevity, with elements like intimacy and commitment mediating relationships between religiosity, sexual satisfaction, and marriage longevity. The model also aligns with Social Exchange Theory, demonstrating how couples maximise relational rewards, such as intimacy, trust, and sexual satisfaction, while minimising costs like conflict and discord. The emphasis on intimacy, commitment, trust, and conflict management reflects the core constructs of this theory, providing insights into how these elements collectively sustain long-lasting marriages. Finally, the observed model reflects Wallerstein and Blakeslee's components of marital success, highlighting intimacy, commitment, trust, and conflict management as essential for marriage longevity. These factors offer a comprehensive framework for understanding how couples maintain stable and fulfilling relationships over time. The observed model and the three theories underscore the interconnected roles of intimacy,

trust, conflict management, and commitment as foundational to marriage longevity. These alignments reinforce the significance of these elements in fostering enduring and fulfilling relationships.

This model will serve as a basis for future researchers interested in the study. The model brings definiteness to the propositions held by the researcher before this study. I intend to publish the findings of this study to engage couples within the Kwadaso District in lasting marriages based on the observed model. These answers will be beneficial to counsellors and couples who wish to improve marriages and family life.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Overview

The final chapter overviews the research methodology and presents the elements contributing to long-lasting marriages among couples residing in the Kwadaso Municipality in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The major findings are used to conclude, informing appropriate recommendations and proposals for further research. The summary is divided into two sections: the first provides an overview of the research procedure, and the second highlights the study's important findings.

#### Summary

The study was supported by the idea of pragmatics and employed a mixed-method approach. The explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed to investigate predictors of marital longevity among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality of Ghana. The questions and hypotheses addressed were categorised into four (4) main parts as follows:

1. What cisgender (married men and women) differences exist in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy and commitment?
2. What are the contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among couples?
3. Commitment and conflict management do not significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality of Ghana.

4. Intimacy and trust do not significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality of Ghana.

A questionnaire was crafted, incorporating Likert scales ranging from two to five points. The design of the questionnaire was influenced by established psychological assessments, such as the ENRICH Sexual Relationship (ESR) scale, ENRICH Religious Orientation (EROS) scales, the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT), the Gottman Sound Relationship House Questionnaire (GSRHQ), the Triangular Theory of Love Scale Instrument, and the Dyadic Trust Scale. This method was employed to gather quantitative data pertinent to the study systematically. An interview guide was also used to sample the views of the study's participants. Moreover, the explanatory sequential mixed method was used for the study. The multi-stage sampling technique (i.e., census, purposive, and snowball) involved all the couples in the Kwadaso Municipality. A total of 140 couples were targeted; however, 130 participants responded to be part of the study, which was suitable for inclusion in the analysis.

The participants' demographic features were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, mean, and standard deviations. Research question one was analysed using multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Moreover, hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was employed to analyse research question two, examining the contributions of counselling, religiosity, trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment to marital longevity among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality. Additionally, chain and double mediation analyses were employed to analyse the study's two hypotheses. The first hypothesis aimed to

determine whether commitment and conflict management significantly mediate the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity among couples in the Kwadaso Municipality. Furthermore, the double mediation analysis assessed whether intimacy and trust significantly mediate the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality.

### Summary of Key Findings

The main findings that emerged from the study were the following:

1. The study found that both univariate and multivariate test results revealed no statistically significant difference in trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment across married men and women. The univariate test revealed the following: in terms of trust [ $F(1, 258) = 1.590, p = .208$ ], conflict management [ $F(1, 258) = .135, p = .713$ ], procreation [ $F(1, 258) = .053, p = .818$ ], sexual satisfaction [ $F(1, 258) = .824, p = .365$ ], intimacy [ $F(1, 258) = .2649, p = .105$ ], and commitment [ $F(1, 258) = .3520, p = .062$ ]. Also, the multivariate test produced results that  $F(6, 253) = .936, p = .470$ . All the findings substantiated that there was no difference in the levels of trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment across married men and women.
2. The study also found that except for four predictors (i.e., intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction, and conflict management), other predictors (i.e., trust, religiosity, procreation, and counselling) did not have a significant individual contribution to the variations in marriage

longevity. Overall, the eight predictors explained approximately 44.3% of the variations in marriage longevity. Specifically, intimacy significantly contributed about 38.6% of the variability in marriage longevity,  $F(1, 258) = 162.535$ ,  $p < .001$ . Furthermore, commitment was the next highest contributor to marriage longevity with a change variation of 2.8%,  $F(1, 258) = 12.129$ ,  $p = .001$ . Similarly, sexual satisfaction also contributed 2.6% of the variances in marriage longevity,  $F(1, 258) = 11.668$ ,  $p = .001$ . With the least significant contribution, conflict management contributed 1.4% of the variability in marriage longevity,  $F(1, 258) = 7.724$ ,  $p = .006$ .

3. Further, the study found that married couples with higher levels of intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction and a greater ability in conflict management are likely to stay in marriages for a longer period. Specifically, the results revealed that intimacy ( $B = .641$ ,  $SE = .209$ ,  $t = 3.074$ ,  $p = .002$ ), commitment ( $B = .610$ ,  $SE = .154$ ,  $t = 3.957$ ,  $p < .001$ ), sexual satisfaction ( $B = .318$ ,  $SE = .127$ ,  $t = 2.514$ ,  $p = .013$ ) and conflict management ( $B = 1.252$ ,  $SE = .462$ ,  $t = 2.712$ ,  $p = .007$ ) were positively associated with marriage longevity. On the other hand, trust, religiosity, procreation and counselling failed to predict marriage longevity directly.
4. The study found that commitment significantly mediated the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity ( $B = .421$ ,  $BootSE = .108$ ,  $BootCI (.223, .643)$ ). On the contrary, conflict management failed to mediate the influence of religiosity on marriage

longevity ( $B = .013$ ,  $\text{BootSE} = .039$ ,  $\text{BootCI} (-.060, .098)$ ). At a 5% significance level, commitment and conflict management were significant mediators ( $B = .063$ ,  $\text{BootSE} = .026$ ,  $\text{BootCI} (.020, .120)$ ), thereby serving as potent pathways for religiosity to predict marriage longevity.

5. The study found that when intimacy acts as a stand-alone mediating variable, it produces a significant positive mediating effect between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity,  $B = .568$ ,  $\text{BootSE} = .101$ ,  $\text{BootCI} (.376, .779)$ . Also, when trust acts as the only mediating variable, sexual satisfaction produces an insignificant effect on marriage longevity. In addition, intimacy and trust mediate sexual satisfaction to positively predict marriage longevity ( $B = .101$ ,  $\text{BootSE} = .046$ ,  $\text{BootCI} (.095, .188)$ ). Though the combined effect of intimacy and trust significantly mediates between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, the combined mediating effect produces a lesser effect ( $B = .001$ ) compared to intimacy alone, acting as the mediating variable ( $B = .568$ ).
6. Though not one of the main variables of interest, responses from the qualitative session confirmed that love is a fundamental ingredient explaining why couples stay together for long in their respective marriages.
7. It was identified that couples resort to communication as a way to address their grievances regarding many challenges, including finances, differences in values and religious beliefs, in-laws, infertility, and infidelity.



8. The study discovered that procreation, counselling, and educational status of couples did not contribute to the duration of marriages. Most couples mentioned that children are gifts from their creator and hence are not the preoccupation of couples, such that the presence or absence of children does not influence their decision to stay in the marriage. The counselling received before marriage does not contribute to their decision to remain in a marriage.
9. From the qualitative responses, it was evident that couples employ various conflict management strategies, including resorting to forgiveness, communication, and religious activities such as prayer and reading or applying the word of God to settle their differences when disagreements arise.
10. The qualitative aspect of the work further revealed three key socio-economic factors influencing marriage longevity: spousal support, social support, and finance. Participants attributed their enduring marriages to significant support from partners and extended family networks, emphasising trust, mutual understanding, and effective communication as crucial for marital stability, irrespective of financial status.

## **Conclusion**

The research results provide valuable insights into the many aspects contributing to marriage's long-lasting nature. The findings highlight the numerous expectations and wishes people bring into their marital relationships, regardless of their background. Intimacy, commitment, sexual pleasure, and successful conflict resolution are crucial factors that contribute significantly to

the longevity of marriages. Although the direct effect of religion on the longevity of marriage may be minimal, its influence via intermediary elements like commitment and conflict management is significant. Although love was not a variable in the quantitative phase, the qualitative findings revealed its significant role in marriage longevity. Love emerged as a unifying force, transcending cultural boundaries and fostering deep emotional connections that support married couples throughout their relationship. Key criteria for successfully managing conflicts and maintaining marital relationships include effective communication, forgiveness, and prioritising internal dynamics above external ones like fertility or schooling. These findings emphasise the intricate nature of marital longevity, highlighting the utmost significance of shared understanding, emotional bonding, and communication strategies in fostering enduring and meaningful marriages.

### **Contribution to Knowledge**

The fundamental purpose of research is to generate information in various critical domains, as delineated by Silverman (2016): formulating a hypothesis, enhancing methods, expanding upon prior studies, and remaining receptive to altering trajectories. This study can be seen as building on previous studies to enhance the comprehension of the institution of marriage.

Prior to this investigation, there was a significant gap in academic research in Ghanaian literature focusing on the determinants of marriages that have lasted for ten years and beyond. This study addresses this scarcity by elucidating the fundamental components crucial for successful and enduring matrimonial unions. The contribution extends to the broader body of knowledge

on establishing long-lasting marriages, clarifying the elements that promote marriage longevity in Ghanaian settings.

This study significantly adds to the existing body of knowledge in marital research by deviating from the conventional approach. While most studies in Ghana have traditionally focused on exploring marriage satisfaction and divorce using established scales, this research takes a distinctive path by examining predictors of marriages lasting in a newly carved-out district from a commercial-oriented area in a developing country like Ghana.

This contribution's distinctiveness lies in recognising the factors influencing marriage duration. Unlike conventional studies, which often stop at understanding satisfaction and divorce rates, this research emphasises the critical aspect of predictors. By focusing on these predictors and advocating for their integration into marriages, the study proposes a proactive approach to fostering enduring unions.

### **Implications for Counselling Practice**

These findings carry significant implications for counsellors. The researcher derived the following implications that counselling practice can draw on:

1. The results revealed no differences in the levels of trust, conflict management, procreation, sexual satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment between married men and women. This implies that when interacting with married couples, counsellors should address each individual's specific needs and circumstances within the context of their background. The lack of significant gender differences in these areas emphasises the necessity for tailored counselling sessions.

2. Considering that trust, religiosity, procreation, and counselling did not separately contribute significantly to variations in marriage longevity in this study, counsellors should provide counselling resources such as relationship enhancement and intimacy-building through workshops to address and improve intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction, and conflict management skills within couples. Although these elements (trust, religiosity, procreation, and counselling) were not found to be key determinants of marriage longevity in this study, they can play important roles in the lives of married couples and should not be overlooked.
3. The study found that married couples who have better degrees of intimacy, commitment, sexual pleasure, and conflict resolution skills are more likely to stay in their marriages for a longer time. Therefore, future relationship counselling research should focus on creating and evaluating interventions that primarily target intimacy, commitment, sexual satisfaction, and conflict resolution. Understanding how these interventions affect the duration of marriages can lead to more successful counselling approaches for establishing long-term relationships.
4. Based on the conclusion, commitment and conflict management have a positive mediating effect on religiosity and marriage longevity. The practical implication is that counsellors should address these issues during pre-marital counselling. This would help couples understand how religious views influence commitment and conflict management in their marriages. Counsellors should further assist couples during post-marital counselling in developing strategies that foster stronger relationships,

potentially leading to longer, happier marriages.

5. In light of the positive mediating influence of trust and intimacy in the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marriage longevity, counsellors should encourage couples to seek educational materials emphasising the importance of trust and intimacy-building strategies, providing them with the necessary tools and skills to strengthen their relationship. By doing so, couples can improve sexual pleasure, leading to a longer-lasting and more meaningful relationship marriage.
6. Love is a unifying force that cuts across cultural boundaries. Couples should prioritise the growth of love in their relationships and recognise that cultural differences should not impede the creation and cultivation of deep affection for one another. Counsellors should encourage couples to actively invest in their emotional connection, communicate openly, and collaborate to sustain their love over time.
7. A strong and long-lasting marriage is built on effective communication. Counsellors should encourage couples to prioritise open and honest discussions about finances, children, in-law dynamics, job ambitions, and family life. Couples can enhance their bond and navigate life's obstacles by actively engaging in communication and working together to discover solutions. A marriage founded on open communication is more resilient and better equipped to weather the storms that come with time.
8. Couples should be aware that having children, the type of pre-marital counselling received, and educational levels are not key drivers of marriage longevity in this research environment. Counsellors should

guide couples to focus on understanding and addressing the key aspects and behaviours crucial to the success of their relationship. This includes communication, mutual respect, emotional connection, shared values, and navigating life's challenges together. While these factors may not apply universally to all relationships, counsellors can help couples recognise the importance of considering the unique dynamics of their relationship and working to strengthen the components that contribute to a successful and lasting marriage.

9. The findings on managing conflicts imply that disputes are unavoidable in every relationship, including marriage. Counsellors should help married couples understand that disagreement is an inevitable part of their journey together. To manage these challenges effectively, counsellors can guide couples to embrace forgiveness, foster open communication, and engage in religious activities, such as reading the Bible, which promotes conflict resolution as an essential aspect of Christian couples' lives. By encouraging couples to adopt these practices, counsellors can help strengthen their bond, increase understanding, and cultivate a peaceful and long-lasting partnership.
10. The study's findings highlight the role of socioeconomic factors in determining marriage longevity. It emphasises the importance of spousal support, which includes emotional, physical, social, economic, and career-related aspects. Counsellors should use counselling sessions and workshops to enhance social and spousal support, while fostering transparent communication and mutual understanding. Counsellors should also focus on developing financial management skills,

establishing shared goals, and fostering trust. By addressing these interconnected factors, counselling would help couples navigate socioeconomic challenges and cultivate enduring marriages.

### **Recommendation**

Counsellors and religious leaders must recognise the absence of gender-based disparities in marital dynamics and shift their focus towards fostering holistic strategies that strengthen marital relationships. These strategies should promote mutual understanding, effective communication, and shared responsibility between partners. By prioritising these foundational aspects, counsellors and religious leaders can create supportive environments that encourage equitable partnerships, reduce conflict, and enhance the overall quality of marital interactions. Such efforts will contribute significantly to developing healthier, more resilient relationships, benefiting both couples and society.

Counsellors and religious leaders should design and implement targeted programmes to enhance marital well-being by addressing critical aspects of relationship dynamics. These programmes should focus on nurturing intimacy and commitment, fostering sexual satisfaction, and equipping couples with effective conflict management skills. Such programmes would equip both married and prospective couples with the necessary tools and knowledge to navigate the complexities of marital life and foster stability within families and the wider community.

Counsellors, social workers, and religious leaders should actively promote and organise workshops for married couples on healthy conflict management skills. These workshops should emphasise the importance of

forgiveness, effective communication, and spirituality as essential tools for resolving conflicts. By fostering these principles, they can help couples build stronger relationships while addressing challenges constructively and harmoniously.

Government agencies such as the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), Social Welfare, and the Marriage Registry Department should support research initiatives aimed at understanding and promoting the determinants of healthy and sustainable relationships. These agencies can contribute to evidence-based interventions and policies that strengthen marriages and address challenges affecting couples and families by investing in these research efforts.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Considering the study's results and conclusions, some recommendations are made to stimulate additional research activities.

One of the areas for future research could be how factors contributing to marital longevity may vary across different cultural contexts within Ghana. By this, the study should investigate whether cultural norms and values significantly affect marital longevity.

Future studies interested in the topic should conduct a comparative study on the determinants based on marriage classifications; that is, single and multiple marriages and years of marriage, to identify differences and similarities.

Another area for future research could be whether the mediating effects identified in this study (e.g., commitment and conflict management mediating



the relationship between religiosity and marriage longevity) hold in different cultural or regional contexts.

Future studies could also examine the perceptions of unmarried individuals regarding factors that contribute to marriage longevity.

A further possible area for future research is investigating how socioeconomic factors, such as income, education, and employment, interact with trust, conflict management, and other variables to influence marital longevity.

Future studies should conduct longitudinal studies by tracking couples to assess the effectiveness of marital interventions for promoting marital longevity.

## REFERENCES

- Abranovic, W. A. (1997). *Statistical thinking and data analysis methods for managers*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Adams, J. M., & Jones, W. H. (1997). The conceptualization of marital commitment: An integrative analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 72(5), 1177–1186.
- Adegoke, A. A. & Esere, M. O. (2009). Sources of stress and coping strategies among divorcees in Ilorin Metropolis. *The Counsellor*, 16(1), 227–233.
- Ade-Ridder, L. (2015). Quality of marriage: A comparison between golden wedding couples and couples married less than fifty years—lifestyles: A *Journal of Changing Patterns*, 7, 224–237.
- Adinkrah, M. (2014). Intimate partner femicide–suicides in Ghana: Victims, offenders, and incident characteristics. *Violence Against Women*, 20(9), 1078–1096.
- Albuquerque, S., Pereira, M., & Narciso, I. (2016). Couple’s relationship after the death of a child: A systematic review. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 25, 30–53.
- Alford-Cooper, F. (1998). *For Keeps: Marriages that Last a Lifetime*. M.E. Sharpe.
- Al-Krenawi, A., & Bell, M. M. (2023). Gender differences in Syrian refugees in Jordan: Psychological, self-esteem, family function, marital satisfaction, and life satisfaction. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 69(3), 714–723.
- Aman, J., Abbas, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019). The relationship of religiosity and marital satisfaction: The role of religious commitment

- and practices on marital satisfaction among Pakistani respondents. *Behavioral Sciences*, 9(3), 30–43.
- Amato, P. R. (2010a). A new instrument (scale) for measuring marital satisfaction: Preliminary study. *Indian J. Comm. Med.*, 34(4), 111–114.
- Amato, P. R. (2010b). Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of marriage and family*, 72(3), 650–666.
- Amato, P. R., & James, S. (2010). Divorce in Europe and the United States: Commonalities and differences across nations. *Family Science*, 1(1), 2–13.
- Amato, P. R., & Previti, D. (2003). People's reasons for divorcing: Gender, social class, the life course, and adjustment. *Journal of family issues*, 24(5), 602–626.
- Amato, P. R., Booth, A., Johnson, D. R., & Rogers, S. J. (2007). *Alone together: How marriage in America is changing*. Harvard University Press.
- Appleton, C., & Bohm, E. (2001). Partners in passage: The experience of marriage in midlife. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 32(1), 41–70.
- Arikewuyo, A. O., Eluwole, K. K., & Özad, B. (2021). Influence of lack of trust on romantic relationship problems: The mediating role of partner cell phone snooping. *Psychological Reports*, 124(1), 348–365.
- Aron, A., & Henkemeyer, L. (1995). Marital satisfaction and passionate love. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 12(1), 139–146.
- Arora, S., & Shetgovekar, S. (2021). Trust and Marital Satisfaction among Love and Arrange Married Couples. *IAHRW International Journal of Social Sciences Review*, 9(4), 324–328.

- Asadinik, S. D. (2010). *Differentiation of self, marital adjustment, and parental involvement among Iranian-Americans* (Publication No. 3428758) [Doctoral dissertation, Alliant International University, San Diego]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global. (759852732)
- Atta, M., Adil, A., Shujja, S., & Shakir, S. (2013). Role of trust in marital satisfaction among single and dual-career couples. *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology*, 2(4), 53–62.
- Avanti, F. T., & Setiawan, J. L. (2022). The Role of Trust and Forgiveness in Marital Intimacy on Husbands or Wives of Dual-Earner Couples in Surabaya. *Journal Ilmu Keluarga & Konsumen*, 15(2), 117–126.
- Awad, N. F., & Ragowsky, A. (2008). Establishing trust in electronic commerce through online word of mouth: An examination across genders. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 24(4), 101–121.
- Bachand, L. L., & Caron, S. L. (2001). Ties that bind: A qualitative study of happy long-term marriages. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 23, 105–121.
- Bali, A., Dhingra, R., & Baru, A. (2010). Marital adjustment of childless couples. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 24(1), 73–76.
- Balkanlioğlu, M. A. (2014). Questioning the relationship between religion and marriage: Does religion affect long-lasting marriage? Turkish couples' practice of, perception of, and attitudes towards religion and marriage. *Journal of International Social Research*, 7(31), 617–629.
- Baryła-Matejczuk, M., Skvarciany, V., Cwynar, A., Poleszak, W., & Cwynar, W. (2020). Link between financial management behaviours and quality of relationship and overall life satisfaction among married and

- cohabiting couples: Insights from application of artificial neural networks. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(1190), 1–16.
- Baxter, T. D. (2017). Marriage on our own terms. *NYU Review of Law & Social Change*, 41(1), 3–9.
- Bedu-Addo, P. K. A. (2010). *Work-family interference among Ghanaian professional women in higher status occupations* [Doctoral dissertation, University of Nottingham]. University of Nottingham Repository.
- Bellemare, C., & Kröger, S. (2007). On representative social capital. *European Economic Review*, 51(1), 183–202.
- Bentil, J. A. (2021). *Marital satisfaction among spouses in inter-and intra ethnic marriages in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Coast).
- Berkman, L. F., & Syme, S. L. (1979). Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow-up study of Alameda County residents. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 109(2), 186–204.
- Biasoli-Alves, G. (2010). Leisure activity patterns and marital satisfaction over the marital career. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 37, 91–102.
- Biddle, C., & Schafft, K. A. (2015). Axiology and anomaly in the practice of mixed methods work: Pragmatism, valuation, and the transformative paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 9, 320–334.
- Bishop, F. L. (2015). Using mixed methods research designs in health psychology: An illustrated discussion from a pragmatist perspective. *British journal of health psychology*, 20(1), 5 –20.

- Blow, A. J., Curtis, A. F., Wittenborn, A. K., & Gorman, L. (2015). Relationship problems and military-related PTSD: The case for using emotionally focused therapy for couples. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 37(3), 261–270.
- Blümel, J. E., Castelo-Branco, C., Cancelo, M. J., Romero, H., Aprikian, D., & Sarrá, S. (2004). Impairment of sexual activity in middle-aged women in Chile. *Menopause*, 11(1), 78 – 81.
- Bradbury, T. N. (Ed.). (1998). *The developmental course of marital dysfunction*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brake, E. (2012). *Factors contributing to marriage satisfaction*. Oxford University Press.
- Bratter, J. L., & Eschbach, K. (2006). ‘What about the couple? ‘Interracial marriage and psychological distress. *Social Science Research*, 35(4), 1025–1047.
- Brown, S. L., Nesse, R. M., Vinokur, A. D., & Smith, D. M. (2003). Providing social support may be more beneficial than receiving it: Results from a prospective study of mortality. *Psychological Science*, 14(4), 320–327.
- Brown, E., Orbuch, T. L., & Bauermeister, J. A. (2008). Religiosity and marital stability among Black American and White American couples. *Family Relations*, 57(2), 186–197.
- Brown, S. L., & Lin, I. F. (2012). The gray divorce revolution: Rising divorce among middle-aged and older adults, 1990–2010. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, 67(6), 731–741.

- Braver, S. L., & Lamb, M. E. (2013). Marital dissolution. In G. W. Peterson & K. R. Bush (Eds.), *Handbook of marriage and the family* (pp. 487–516). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3987-5\\_21](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3987-5_21).
- Bryman, A. (2008). Paradigm peace and the implications for quality. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 9(2), 111–126.
- Burgess, E. W., & Wallin, P. (1953). Engagement and marriage (Vol. 10). Lippincott.
- Burns, A., & Scott, C. (1989). Attitudes To Marriage Among Young Tertiary–Educated Women. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 24(2), 96–111.
- Bush, K. R. & Peterson, G. W. (2013). Parent-child relationship in diverse contexts. In G. W. Peterson & K. R. Bush (Eds.), *Handbook of marriage and the family* (pp. 275–295). Springer.
- Byrne, A., & Barling, J. (2017). When she brings home the job status: Wives' job status, status leakage, and marital instability. *Organization Science*, 28(2), 177–192.
- Cahill, N., Sonneveldt, E., Stover, J., Weinberger, M., Williamson, J., Wei, C., & Alkema, L. (2018). Modern contraceptive use, unmet need, and demand satisfied among women of reproductive age who are married or in a union in the focus countries of the Family Planning 2020 initiative: A systematic analysis using the Family Planning Estimation Tool. *The Lancet*, 391(10123), 870–882. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(17\)33104-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(17)33104-3)
- Call, V. R., & Heaton, T. B. (1997). Religious influence on marital stability. *Journal for the scientific study of religion*, 36 (3)382–392.

- Canary, D. J., Stafford, L., & Semic, B. A. (2002). A panel study of the associations between maintenance strategies and relational characteristics. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64(2), 395–406.
- Carr, A. (2012). *Family therapy: Concepts, process and practice*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Carr, D. (2004). The desire to date and remarry among older widows and widowers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 66(4), 1051–1068.
- Carr, D., Freedman, V. A., Cornman, J. C., & Schwarz, N. (2014). Happy marriage, happy life? Marital quality and subjective well-being in later life. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(5), 930–948.
- Carter, Z. A. (2016). Married and previously married men and women's perceptions of communication on Facebook with the opposite sex: How communicating through Facebook can be damaging to marriages. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 57(1), 36–55.
- Charmaz, K., & Belgrave, L. (2012). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti, & K. D. McKinney (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (2nd ed., pp. 347–365). SAGE.
- Chaudhry, T. B., Shami, P. A., Saif, I., & Ahmad, M. (2008). Gender differentials in styles of organisational conflict management. *International Review of Business Research Papers*, 4(4), 342–357.
- Chaudhuri, A., Paichayontvijit, T., & Shen, L. (2013). Gender differences in trust and trustworthiness: Individuals, single-sex and mixed-sex groups. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 34, 181–194.



- Chauvet, G. (2020). Introduction to sampling techniques. In F. Ros & S. Guillaume (Eds.), *Sampling techniques for supervised or unsupervised tasks* (pp. 1–21). Springer.
- Cherlin, A. J. (2017). Introduction to the special collection on separation, divorce, re-partnering, and remarriage around the world. *Demographic Research*, 37, 1275–1296.
- Cheung, M. (2005). A cross-cultural comparison of gender factors contributing to long-term marital satisfaction: A narrative analysis. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 4(1), 51–78.
- Chinitz, J. G., & Brown, R. A. (2001). Religious homogamy, marital conflict, and stability in same-faith and interfaith Jewish marriages. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 40(4), 723–733.
- Christensen, H. T. (1968). Children in the family: Relationship of number and spacing to marital success. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 30, 283–289.
- Cingöz-Ulu, B., & Lalonde, R. N. (2007). The role of culture and relational context in interpersonal conflict: Do Turks and Canadians use different conflict management strategies? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(4), 443–458.
- Clark, L., Canary, H. E., McDougale, K., Perkins, R., Tadesse, R., & Holton, A. E. (2020). Family sense-making after a Down syndrome diagnosis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 30(12), 1783–1797.
- Cohen L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2013). *Research methods in education* (8th ed.). Routledge Falmer.

- Cohn, D. (2013, February 13). *Love and marriage*. Pew Research Center.  
<https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/02/13/love-and-marriage/>
- Cronbach, L. J., Gleser, G., Nanda, H., & Rajaratnam, N. (1972). *The dependability of behavioral measurements: Theory of generalisability for scores and profiles*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Conger, R. D., Ge, X., Elder Jr, G. H., Lorenz, F. O., & Simons, R. L. (1994). Economic stress, coercive family process, and developmental problems of adolescents. *Child development*, 65(2), 541–561.
- Connidis, I. A., & Barnett, A. E. (2018). *Family Ties and Aging*. Sage Publications.
- Cosentino, C. (2012). *Trust in relationships: A study to determine the importance of trust* (Undergraduate thesis, Eastern Illinois University). Retrieved from [https://thekeep.eiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=honors\\_theses](https://thekeep.eiu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=honors_theses)
- Cox, J. C., & Deck, C. A. (2006). When are women more generous than men? *Economic Inquiry*, 44(4), 587–598.
- Cramer, P. (2013). *Artikel 146 Grundgesetz zwischen offener Staatlichkeit und Identitätsbewahrung* (pp. 1–319). Duncker & Humblot.
- Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2023). Revisiting mixed methods, research designs twenty years later. *Handbook of mixed methods research designs*, 21–36. SAGE Publications.

- Cuber, J. F., & Harroff, P. B. (1965). *Five kinds of relationships. Sourcebook in marriage and the family (4th ed.)*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Davies, S. G. (1962). Ghana: The Criminal Procedure Code, 1960. *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, 588–594.
- Dakin, J., & Wampler, R. (2008). Money doesn't buy happiness, but it helps: Marital satisfaction, psychological distress, and demographic differences between low-and middle-income clinic couples. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 36(4), 300–311.
- Davies, J. C. (2011). Preserving the “us identity” through marriage commitment while living with early-stage dementia. *Dementia*, 10(2), 217–234.
- Day, R. D., & Acock, A. (2013). Marital well-being and religiousness as mediated by relational virtue and equality. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 75(1), 164–177.
- Dehghan, F., Karami, J., & Yazdanbakhsh, K. (2021). Predicting environmental behaviour by relying on water consumption behaviour based on environmental awareness, attitude and concern. *Journal of Applied Research in Water and Wastewater*, 8(2), 113–117.
- Dehle, C., Larsen, D., & Landers, J. E. (2001). Social support in marriage. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 29(4), 307–324.
- Dery, I., & Bawa, S. (2019). Agency, social status and performing marriage in postcolonial societies. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 54(7), 980–994.

- Dew, J. P. (2007a). Two sides of the same coin? The differing roles of assets and consumer debt in marriage. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 28, 89–104.
- Dew, J. P. (2006). Financial issues and marital distress during the retirement transition. Paper presented at the annual conference of the National Council of Family Relations, Minneapolis, MN, United States. Retrieved from [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fchd\\_facpub/102/](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/fchd_facpub/102/)
- Dhaliwal, J. (2021). *What are the factors contributing to long-lasting marriages?* (Doctoral dissertation, Alliant International University). Retrieved from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.
- Dildar, S., & Amjad, N. (2017). Gender differences in conflict resolution styles (CRS) in different roles: A systematic review. *Pakistan Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 15(2), 37–41.
- Dildar, S., Sitwat, A., & Yasin, S. (2013). Intimate enemies: Marital conflicts and conflict resolution styles in dissatisfied married couples. *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, 15(10), 1433–1439.
- Dollahite, D. C., & Lambert, N. M. (2007). Forsaking all others: How religious involvement promotes marital fidelity in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim couples. *Review of Religious Research*, 48(3), 290–307.
- Drageset, J. (2021). Social support. In G. Haugan & M. Eriksson (Eds.), *Health promotion in health care: Vital theories and research* (pp. 137–144). Springer.
- Duncan, D., Prestage, G., & Grierson, J. (2015). ‘I’d much rather have sexual intimacy as opposed to sex’: Young Australian gay men, sex, relationships and monogamy. *Sexualities*, 18(7), 798–816.

- Dzadey, G. A. (2015). *Psychosocial factors of marital satisfaction: A study in selected congregations of the Ho East Presbytery of EP Church, Ghana* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Ghana).
- Dzara, K. (2010). Assessing the effect of marital sexuality on marital disruption. *Social Science Research*, 39(5), 715–724.
- Ebel, R. L., & Frisbie, D. A. (1972). *Essentials of educational measurement*. Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.
- Echebe, P. I. (2010). *Family psychology*. University of Port Harcourt Press Ltd.
- Eckel, C. C., & Wilson, R. K. (2004). Is trust a risky decision? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 55(4), 447–465.
- Eduah, A. M. (2019). *Factors contributing to marital longevity in the Agona West Municipality, Ghana: Counselling implications* (Unpublished Master of Philosophy thesis). University of Education, Winneba.
- Edwards, J. N., & Booth, A. (1994). Sexuality, marriage, and well-being: The middle years. In A. S. Rossi (Ed.), *Sexuality across the life course* (pp. 233–259). University of Chicago Press.
- El-Kassem, R. C., Lari, N., Al Naimi, M., Al-Thani, M. F., Al Khulaifi, B., & Al-Thani, N. K. (2023). Impact of leadership gender stereotyping on managing familial conflict, matrimonial strategies, divorce decisions and marital satisfaction in Qatar. *Journal of Family Business Management*, 13(2), 300–313
- Emerson, T. I. (1976). Legal foundations of the right to know. *Washington University Law Quarterly*, 1976(1), 1–24.

- Estrada, R. I. (2009). *An examination of love and marital satisfaction in long-term marriages* (Doctoral dissertation, Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Eyo, U. E. (2018). Divorce: Causes and effects on children. *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies* 6(5), 172–177
- Fatima, M., & Ajmal, M. A. (2012). Happy marriage: A qualitative study. *Pakistan journal of social and clinical psychology*, 9(2), 37–42.
- Fatima, S. (2023). Rural development and education: critical strategies for ending child marriages. *Fatima, S. Rural Development and Education: Critical Strategies for Ending Child Marriages. Archives of the Social Sciences: A Journal of Collaborative Memory*, 1(1), 1–15.
- Fenell, D. L. (1993). Characteristics of long-term first marriages. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 15(4), 446–460.
- Fenell, J. M. (2013). The influence of age and gender on affect, physiology, and their interrelations: A study of long-term marriages. *Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 56–68.
- Fielding, J.L. & Gilbert, G.N. (2006). *Understanding social statistics*. Sage Publication.
- Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. (2010). Of memes and marriage: Toward a positive relationship science. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 2(1), 4–24.
- Fincham, F. D., & Linfield, K. J. (1997). A new look at marital quality: Can spouses feel positive and negative about their marriage? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 11(4), 489.
- Flick, U. (2014) *An introduction to qualitative research*. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Sage.

- Flood, S. (2011). *Psychological effects of marital conflict*. Retrieved January 3, 2021 from: [www.ehow.com/list\\_6184875\\_](http://www.ehow.com/list_6184875_)
- Fowers, D. L. (2013). Characteristics of long-term first marriages. *Journal of Mental Health Counselling, 15*, 446–460.
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2015) *How to design and evaluate research in education*. McGraw Hill Education.
- Frankel, J.P. & Wallen N. E. 2008. *How to design and evaluate: Research in Education*. McGraw-Hill.
- Frantz, C. J., & Dagan, H. (2004). Properties of marriage. *Columbia Law Review, 104*(1), 75–91.
- Frye, N., Ganong, L., Jensen, T., & Coleman, M. (2020). A dyadic analysis of emotion regulation as a moderator of associations between marital conflict and marital satisfaction among first-married and remarried couples. *Journal of Family Issues, 41*(12), 2328–2355.
- Gandedzie, P. (2016). Mohammedan ordinance marriage. *Women and Law in West Africa, 4*(3), 11–20.
- Gerber, P., Tay, K., & Sifris, A. (2017). Marriage: A human right for all? In *Marital rights* (pp. 21–46). Routledge.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2021). *2021 population and housing census (PHC) general report*. Ghana Statistical Services.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2010). *2010 population and housing census (PHC) national analytical report*. Ghana Statistical Services.
- Gholamali, Z. P., Rahmati, A., & Nasab, S. H. M. (2017). Examination of a Causal Model of Relationship Beliefs and Sexual Satisfaction with the

- Mediating Role of Marital Conflicts. *International Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, 10(4), 14–18.
- Giblin, P. (1994). Anger in Marriage and the Family. *The Family Journal*, 2(3), 241–245.
- Giordano, G. N., Mewes, J., & Miething, A. (2019). Trust and all-cause mortality: a multilevel study of US General Social Survey data (1978–2010). *J Epidemiol Community Health*, 73(1), 50–55.
- Givertz, M., Segrin, C., & Woszidlo, A. (2016). Direct and indirect effects of commitment on interdependence and satisfaction in married couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(2), 214–220.
- Glenn, N. D. (1998). The course of marital success and failure in five American 10-year marriage cohorts. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60(3), 569–576.
- Gnilka, A. S. (2007). *A study of the development of long-term marriages lasting 25 years or more* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville). ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Goedecke, G. (1982). *Enduring marriages of the fifties* (Doctoral dissertation, Texas Woman's University). Available from ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
- Goodman, C. (2015). Intimacy and autonomy in long term marriage. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 32(1), 83–97.
- Goodman, M. A., Dollahite, D. C., Marks, L. D., & Layton, E. (2013). Religious faith and transformational processes in marriage. *Family Relations*, 62(5), 808–823.



- Goodman, R. (1999). The extended version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire as a guide to child psychiatric caseness and consequent burden. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 40(5), 791–799.
- Gottman J. M. (1994). *What predicts divorce?* Erlbaum.
- Gottman J.M. (2002). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. Crown Publishing Group.
- Gottman, J. M. (1999). *The marriage clinic: A scientifically based marital therapy*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Gottman, J. M. (2021). Research overview. *The Gottman Institute*. Retrieved from <https://www.gottman.com/about/research/>
- Gottman, J. M., & Notarius, C. I. (2000). Decade review: Observing marital interaction. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), 927–947.
- Gottman, J. M., & Silver, N. (2000). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. Orion.
- Gottman, J. M., Gottman, J. S., & DeClaire, J. (2006). *Ten lessons to transform your marriage: America's love lab experts share their strategies for strengthening your relationship*. Crown Publishers.
- Gregory, K. A. (2019). *Sustainable African American marriages: Evaluating the impact of closeness to God and religiosity on marital satisfaction and longevity* (Doctoral dissertation, Liberty University). Liberty University Institutional Repository.
- Güven, N. (2017). Analysis of the theses about marital adjustment (2006-2016). *International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies*, 4(2), 54–63.

- Guzzo, K. B., & Hayford, S. R. (2012). Unintended fertility and the stability of coresidential relationships. *Social Science Research*, 41(5), 1138–1151.
- Hajian, A., & Mohammadi, S. (2013). The effect of training solution-focused couples therapy on dimensions of marital intimacy. *Pak J Med Sci*, 29. (1) 321–324
- Hall, R. F. (2013). Mixed methods: In search of a paradigm. In T. Le, & Q. Le (Eds.), *Conducting research in a changing and challenging world*. Nova Science Publishers Inc.
- Harley, W. F. (1994). My approach to marriage counselling. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 13(2), 110–118.
- Hartley, C., & Watson, L. (2012). Political liberalism, marriage and family. *Law and Philosophy*, 31(2), 185–212.
- Haselhuhn, M. P., Kennedy, J. A., Kray, L. J., Van Zant, A. B., & Schweitzer, M. E. (2015). Gender differences in trust dynamics: Women trust more than men following a trust violation. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 56, 104–109.
- Hatch, L. R., & Bulcroft, K. (2004). Does long-term marriage bring less frequent disagreements? Five explanatory frameworks. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25(4), 465–495.
- Hathcoat, J. D., & Meixner, C. (2017). Pragmatism, factor analysis, and the conditional incompatibility thesis in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 11, 433–449.
- Haviland, J. B. (1996). "We want to borrow your mouth": Tzotzil marital squabbles. In D. Tannen, D. Schiff-Myers, & C. J. S. B. (Eds.),

*Disorderly discourse: Narrative, conflict, and inequality* (pp. 158–203).

Oxford University Press.

Haviland, J. B. (2000). Pointing, gesture spaces, and mental maps. In D. McNeill (Ed.), *Language and gesture* (Vol. 2, pp. 13–46). Cambridge University Press.

Hawkins, K., & Booth, G. (2015). Determinants of satisfaction with marital discussions: An exploration of husband-wife differences. *Behavioural Assessment, 13*, 67–82.

Hayden, C. P. (2005). Gender, genetics, and generation: Reformulating biology in lesbian kinship. In J. Robertson (Ed.), *Same-sex cultures and sexualities: An anthropological reader* (pp. 116–137). Blackwell Publishing.

Heim, C., & Heim, C. (2023). “How did you stay together so long?” Relationship longevity, a cross-generational qualitative study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 49*(4), 781–801.

Henderson-King, D. H., & Veroff, J. (1994). Sexual satisfaction and marital well-being in the first years of marriage. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 11*(4), 509–534

Heyman, K., & Smith-Slep, P. (2001). *Systems theory: A primer*. University Press of America.

Hiekel, N., Liefbroer, A. C., & Poortman, A. R. (2014). Understanding diversity in the meaning of cohabitation across Europe. *European Journal of Population, 30*(4), 391–410.

- Hinchliff, S., & Gott, M. (2004). Intimacy, commitment, and adaptation: Sexual relationships within long-term marriages. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21(5), 595–609.
- Hoebel, E. A. (2009). *The Law of primitive man: A study in comparative legal dynamics*. Harvard University Press.
- Homans, G. (1950), *The Human Group*. Jovanovich.
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology*, 63(6), 597–606.
- Horowitz, J. M., Graf, N., & Livingston, G. (2019). *Marriage and cohabitation in the US*. Pew Research Center.
- House, J. S., Robbins, C., & Metzner, H. L. (1982). The association of social relationships and activities with mortality: Prospective evidence from the Tecumseh Community Health Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 116(1), 123–140.
- Huston, T. L. (2009). What's love got to do with it? Why some marriages succeed and others fail. *Personal Relationships*, 16(3), 301–327.
- Huyck, M. H., & Gutmann, D. L. (1992). Thirtysomething years of marriage: Understanding husbands and wives in enduring relationships. *Family Perspective*, 26(2), 249–265.
- IBM Corporation (2011). *IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version X.X*. Armonk. IBM Corp
- Insel, T. R. (1997). A neurobiological basis of social attachment. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 154(6), 726–735.

- Jaggi, P., Gupta, V., Razdan, A., & Rawat, G. (2022). Is Cohabitation an Alternative to Marriage? *International Journal of Social Science*, 11(2), 91–101.
- Jeanfreau, M., Noguchi, K., Mong, M. D., & Stadthagen, H. (2018). Financial infidelity in couple relationships. *Journal of Financial Therapy*, 9(1), 1–22.
- JPNN. (2017). 4.938 kasus perceraian, perempuan karier paling sering gugat. Retrieved from <https://m.jpnn.com/news/4938-kasus-perceraian-perempuan-karier-paling-sering-gugat>
- Juhari, R., Yaacob, S. N., Mohd Arif, N. A., & Sabri, M. F. (2019). Marital commitment as a function of marital satisfaction, marital investment, and marital alternatives among working women in Malaysia. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 27(1), 211–228.
- Kallio, H., Pietilä, A. M., Johnson, M., & Kangasniemi, M. (2016). Systematic methodological review: developing a framework for a qualitative semi-structured interview guide. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 72(12), 2954–2965.
- Karimi, R., Bakhtiyari, M., & Masjedi Arani, A. (2019). Protective factors of marital stability in long-term marriage globally: A systematic review. *Epidemiology and Health*, 41, 1–10.
- Kaslow, F. W. (2019). Countertransference in couples' therapy. *Encyclopedia of Couple and Family Therapy*, 609–618.
- Kaslow, F., & Robison, J. A. (1996). *Long-term satisfying marriages: Perceptions of marriage: A phenomenological study* (Doctoral

- dissertation, Liberty University). Liberty University Institutional Repository.
- Kaslow, F., & Robison, J. A. (2007). Long-term satisfying marriages: Perceptions of contributing factors. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 24(2), 153–170.
- Kaslow, F., Hansson, L. & Lundblad, B. (2014). Long-term satisfying marriages: Perceptions of contributing factors. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 24(2), 153–168.
- Kelley, H. H. & John W. T. (1978). *Interpersonal relations: a theory of interdependence*. Wiley.
- Killewald, A. (2016). Money, work, and marital stability: Assessing change in the gendered determinants of divorce. *American Sociological Review*, 81(4), 696–719.
- Kim, O., & Jeon, H. O. (2013). Gender differences in factors influencing sexual satisfaction in Korean older adults. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 56(2), 321–326.
- Klagsbrun, F. (1995). Changing roles of Jewish women. In E. Krausz & G. Tulea (Eds.), *Crisis and continuity: The Jewish family in the 21st century* (pp. 53–68). Ktav Publishing House.
- Korinek, A. W. (2001). *A new perspective on trust in marital relationships: How trust in specific areas of the relationship relates to marital satisfaction and attachment style* (Master's thesis, Texas Tech University). Texas Tech University Institutional Repository.
- Kowal, M., Groyecka-Bernard, A., Kochan-Wójcik, M., & Sorokowski, P. (2021). When and how does the number of children affect marital

- satisfaction? An international survey. *PLoS ONE*, 16(4), e0249516–e0249526. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0249516>
- Kumar, A., Capraro, V., & Perc, M. (2020). The evolution of trust and trustworthiness. *Journal of the Royal Society Interface*, 17(169), 1–10.
- Lambert, N. M., & Dollahite, D. C. (2006). How religiosity helps couples prevent, resolve, and overcome marital conflict. *Family Relations*, 55(4), 439–449.
- Langlais, M., & Schwanz, S. (2017). Religiosity and relationship quality of dating relationships: Examining relationship religiosity as a mediator. *latifaReligions*, 8(9), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel8090187>
- Lancaster, G. A., Dodd, S., & Williamson, P. R. (2004). Design and analysis of pilot studies: Recommendations for good practice. *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*, 10(2), 307–312.
- Larzelere, R. E., & Huston, T. L. (1980). The dyadic trust scale: Toward understanding interpersonal trust in close relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 42(3), 595–604.
- Latifa, R. (2018). How commitment to Islamic values maintain marital stability. *Hamdard Islamicus*, 41, 1–2.
- Latifa, R., Salsabila, S., & Yulianto, H. (2021). Understanding the relationship between religiosity and marital commitment to marital stability: An investigation on Indonesian female journalists. *Religions*, 12(4), 242–262 <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12040242>
- Lauer, R. H., & Lauer, J. C. (1986). Factors in long-term marriages. *Journal of Family Issues*, 7(4), 382–390.

- Lauer, R. H., Lauer, J. C., & Kerr, S. T. (1990). The long-term marriage: Perceptions of stability and satisfaction. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 31(3), 189–195.
- Laurenceau, J. P., Stanley, S. M., Olmos-Gallo, A., Baucom, B., & Markman, H. J. (2013). Community-based prevention of marital dysfunction: Multilevel modeling of a random effectiveness study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 72(6), 933–943.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.72.6.933>
- Lavner, J. A., & Bradbury, T. N. (2012). Why do even satisfied newlyweds eventually go on to divorce? *Journal of Family Psychology*, 26(1), 1–10.
- Lawrence, E., Bunde, M. A. L. I., Barry, R. A., Brock, R. L., Sullivan, K. T., Pasch, L. A., & Adams, E. E. (2008). Partner support and marital satisfaction: Support amount, adequacy, provision, and solicitation. *Personal Relationships*, 15(4), 445–463.
- Lawrence, S. A., & Callan, V. J. (2011). The role of social support in coping during the anticipatory stage of organisational change: A test of an integrative model. *British Journal of Management*, 22(4), 567–585.
- Lawuo, E. A., Machumu, H. J., & Kimaro, A. R. (2015). Uncovered Coping Strategies Adopted by Children Living in Homes with Marital Conflicts for Their Own Survival. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(18), 114–128.
- Leavitt, C. E., Hendricks, J. J., Clarke, R. W., Marks, L. D., Dollahite, D. C., & Rose, A. H. (2024). Integrity and fidelity in highly religious marriages. *Family Relations*, 73(3), 2134–2151.



- Leck, J., & Orser, B. (2013). Fostering trust in mentoring relationships: An exploratory study. *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An international Journal*, 32(4), 410–425.
- Lee, S. H., Lee, J., & Choi, I. (2020). Life satisfaction in later life: The interplay of marital condition and income among elderly Koreans. *Sustainability*, 12(8), 3483–3493.
- Lehrer, E. L., & Chiswick, C. U. (1993). Religion as a determinant of marital stability. *Demography*, 30(3), 385–404.
- Lesthaeghe, R. J. (2020). The second demographic transition: Cohabitation. In W. Kim Halford, Fons van de Vijver, *Cross-Cultural Family Research and Practice*. (pp.103–141). Academic Press.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-815493-9.00004-1>
- Leung, L. (2015). Validity, reliability, and generalizability in qualitative research. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 4(3), 324–327.  
<https://doi.org/10.4103/2249-4863.161306>
- Levenson, R. W., Carstensen, L. L., & Gottman, J. M. (1993). Long-term marriage: Age, gender, and satisfaction. *Psychology and Aging*, 8(2), 301–313. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0882-7974.8.2.301>.
- Levenson, R. W., Carstensen, L. L., & Gottman, J. M. (1994). Influence of age and gender on affect, physiology, and their interrelations: A study of long-term marriages. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67(1), 56–68. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.67.1.56>
- Levenson, R. W., Carstensen, L. L., & Gottman, J. M. (2013). Long-term marriage: Age, gender, and satisfaction. *Psychology and Aging*, 8(2), 301–313.

- Lewis, C. S. (1960). *The four loves*. U.S.A. Harcourt Brace.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- Litzinger, S., & Gordon, K. C. (2005). Exploring relationships among communication, sexual satisfaction, and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 31(5), 409–424.
- Locke, H. J., & Wallace, K. M. (1959). Short marital-adjustment and prediction tests: Their reliability and validity. *Marriage and Family Living*, 21(3), 251–255.
- Lopus, S., & Frye, M. (2018, April). Educational access and African marriage markets. In *PAA 2018 Annual Meeting* (pp. 1-21). Population Association of America.  
[https://paa.confex.com/paa/2018/mediafile/ExtendedAbstract/Paper23288/Lopus%20and%20Frye\\_2017\\_PAA4.pdf](https://paa.confex.com/paa/2018/mediafile/ExtendedAbstract/Paper23288/Lopus%20and%20Frye_2017_PAA4.pdf)
- Mackey, R. A., & O'Brien, B. A. (2005). The significance of religion in lasting marriages. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 18(1), 35–63.
- Mackey, R., & O'Brien, B. (1995). *Lasting marriages: Men and women growing together*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Mahoney, A. (2005). Religion and conflict in marital and parent-child relationships. *Journal of social issues*, 61(4), 689–706.
- Malta, V., Kolovich, L., Leyva, A. M., & Tavares, M. M. (2021). The close relationship between informality and gender gaps in Sub-Saharan Africa. In *The Global Informal Workforce* (pp. 188–210).
- Manjula, V., Munivenkatappa, M., Navaneetham, J., & Philip, M. (2021). Quality of marital relationship and sexual interaction in couples with

sexual dysfunction: An exploratory study from India. *Journal of Psychosexual Health*, 3(4), 332–341.

Marang'a, L. W. (2021). *Premarital counselling interventions in sustaining marital stability among couples in Langata and Dagoretti South Constituences, of Nairobi county, Kenya* (Doctoral dissertation, Mount Kenya University).

Marcinechová, D., & Záhorcová, L. (2020). Sexual satisfaction, sexual attitudes, and shame in relation to religiosity. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(6), 1913–1928.

Marcoulides, G.A. (1993). Maximizing power in generalizability studies under budget constraints. *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, 18(2), 197–206.

Marhenke, T., & Imhoff, R. (2020). Different Facets of Attitudes Towards Having Children: The Procreation Attitude Scale (PrAttS). *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, 14(1), 69–83.

Mark, K. P., & Lasslo, J. A. (2018). Maintaining sexual desire in long-term relationships: A systematic review and conceptual model. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 55(4-5), 563–581.

Martin, P. D., Specter, G., Martin, D., & Martin, M. (2003). Expressed attitudes of adolescents toward marriage and family life. *Adolescence*, 38(150), 359–367.

McGaghie, W. C., Bordage, G., & Shea, J. A. (2001). Problem statement, conceptual framework, and research question. *Academic Medicine*, 76(9), 923–924.

- Milkie, M. A., Raley, S. B., & Bianchi, S. M. (2009). Taking on the second shift: Time allocations and time pressures of US parents with preschoolers. *Social Forces*, 88(2), 487–517.
- Millett, M. A., Cook, L. E., Skipper, A. D., Chaney, C. D., Marks, L. D., & Dollahite, D. C. (2018). Weathering the storm: The shelter of faith for Black American Christian families. *Marriage & Family Review*, 54(7), 662–676.
- Mitchell, O. S., & Lusardi, A. (2015). Financial literacy and economic outcomes: Evidence and policy implications. *The journal of retirement*, 3(1), 107–114.
- Moeti, B., Koloi-Keaikitse, S., & Mokgolodi, H. L. (2017). Married women's lived experiences on the value of traditional premarital counselling "Go Laya" on marital stability in Botswana. *The Family Journal*, 25(3), 247–259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1066480717710653>
- Mohammadi, A., Sohrabi, R., & Aghdam, G. A. (2013). Effect of narrative therapy on enhancing couples' intimacy. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 84(1), 1770–1772.
- Mokhtari, M., Pollock, E., & Ashtari, M. (2020). Implications of unstable trends in marriage, birth, and divorce. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 61(1), 22–40.
- Moller, D. (2005). The marriage commitment—reply to Landau. *Philosophy*, 80(2), 279–284.
- Molm, L. D. (2015). Homans's vision of social exchange. In A. J. Trevino (Ed.), *George C. Homans: History, Theory and Methods*. (pp. 135–156). Routledge.

- Mukherjee, S. (2020). What Drives Gender Differences in Trust and Trustworthiness? *Public Finance Review*, 48(6), 778–805.
- Mullins, D. F. (2016). The effects of religion on enduring marriages. *Social Sciences*, 5(2), 24.
- Murtaza, F., & Bashir, Z. (2020). Religiosity, spirituality, emotional well-being and contentment among Muslim religious scholars. *Journal of Religious Studies (UOCHJRS)*, 3(2), 1–15.
- Mustapha, M. L., Odebode, A. A., & Adegboyega, L. O. (2017). Impact of Premarital Cohabitation on Marital Stability as Expressed by Married Adults in Ilorin, Nigeria. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 5(1), 112–121.
- Musick, K., & Bumpass, L. (2012). Reexamining the case for marriage: Union formation and changes in well-being. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 74(1), 1–18.
- Nadar, N. (2018). Effect of Workplace Stress on Marital Adjustment and Marital Satisfaction among females across Mumbai. *Indian Journal of Mental Health*, 5 (4). 463–473.
- Nauck, B. (2014). Value of children and the social production of welfare. *Demographic Research*, 30, 1793–1824.
- Naue, U., & Kroll, T. (2009). ‘The demented other’: identity and difference in dementia. *Nursing Philosophy*, 10(1), 26–33.
- Nelson, J. A., Kirk, A. M., Ane, P., & Serres, S. A. (2011). Religious and spiritual values and moral commitment in marriage: Untapped resources in couples counselling? *Counselling and Values*, 55(2), 228–246.

- Nga, J. K. H., & Yeoh, K. K. (2021). Factors influencing financial planning for marriage amongst young Malaysian couples. *International Journal of Business and Society*, 22(1), 33–54.
- Noor, N. M., Mahdzir, A. M., Nor, A. M., & Abdullah, R. (2019). Marital wellbeing indicators amongst Malay Muslim couple in Malaysia: A preliminary study. *Malaysian Journal of Medicine and Health Sciences*, 15(101), 114–119.
- Ntoimo, L. F. C., & Akokuwebe, M. E. (2014). Prevalence and patterns of marital dissolution in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 12(2), 2–14.
- Nuhu, B. (2020) *Socio-economic cost and predictors of divorce in Kumasi Metropolis in Ashanti Region of Ghana*. (Doctoral Thesis, University of Cape Coast).
- N-yelbi, J., Acquah, S., Dzakadzie, Y., & Eshun, P. (2024). Level of Education, Marital Longevity and Religion as Determinants of Marital Stability among Couples in Tamale Metropolis, Ghana. *Advances in Research*, 25(3), 137–147.
- Obeng-Hinne, R., & Kpoor, A. (2022). Cohabitation and its consequences in Ghana. *Journal of Family Issues*, 43(2), 283–305.
- Odhiambo, E. O. S., & Maito, T. L. (2013). Social dimensions of marital conflict in Kenya. *Journal of Power, Politics & Governance*, 1(1), 34–45.
- O'Dwyer, L. M., & Bernauer, J. A. (2013). *Quantitative research for the qualitative researcher*. SAGE Publications.
- Offei, W. E. (2007). *Family law in Ghana* (3rd ed.). Kwadwoan Publications.

- O'Leary, K. D., & Smith, D. A. (2011). Marital interactions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 42, 191–212.
- Oliker, S. J. (1989). *Best friends and marriage: Exchange among women*. University of California Press.
- Olson, D. H., Olson-Sigg, A., & Larson, P. J. (2008). *The couple checkup: Find your relationship strengths*. Thomas Nelson.
- Olugbenga, A. J. (2018). Patterns and causes of marital conflict among staff of selected universities in Southwest Nigeria. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 5(8), 306–320.
- Osa, G. I. (2020). The effect of infertility on marital instability in organizational societies. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research*, 6 (3), 150–154.
- Owusu, P. M. A. K. (2018). *Exploring marital satisfaction among couples in the New Takoradi Emmanuel Methodist Society in the Western Region of Ghana*. Unpublished Master of Philosophy thesis.
- Pamuk, M., & Durmuş, E. (2015). Investigation of burnout in marriage. *Journal of Human Sciences*, 12(1), 162–177.
- Parker, R. (2002). Why marriages last. *Aust. Inst. Fam. Stud*, 26, 2–17.
- Pauli, J., & Van Dijk, R. (2016). Marriage as an end or the end of marriage? Change and continuity in Southern African marriages. *Anthropology Southern Africa*, 39(4), 257–266.
- Pelucchi, S., Regalia, C., Paleari, F.G., Fincham, F.D. (2017). Self-Forgiveness Within Couple Transgressions. In: Woodyatt, L., Worthington, Jr., E., Wenzel, M., Griffin, B. (eds) *Handbook of the Psychology of Self-*

*Forgiveness*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60573-9\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-60573-9_9)

Perelli-Harris, B., & Lyons-Amos, M. (2015). Changes in partnership patterns the life course: An examination of 14 countries in Europe and the United States. *Demographic Research*, 33(6), 145–178.

Perneger, T. V., Courvoisier, D. S., Hudelson, P. M., & Gayet-Ageron, A. (2015). Sample size for pre-tests of questionnaires. *Quality of life Research*, 24, 147-151. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-014-0752-2>

Perry, S. L. (2016). Perceived spousal religiosity and marital quality across racial and ethnic groups. *Family Relations*, 65(2), 327–341.

Peterman, A., Bleck, J., & Palermo, T. (2015). Age and intimate partner violence: an analysis of global trends among women experiencing victimization in 30 developing countries. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 57(6), 624–630.

Petrican, R., Burris, C. T., Bielak, T., Schimmack, U., & Moscovitch, M. (2011). For my eyes only: Gaze control, enmeshment, and relationship quality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100(6), 1111–1123. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021714>

Pew Research Center. (2010, November 18). *The decline of marriage and rise of new families*. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2010/11/18/the-decline-of-marriage-and-rise-of-new-families/>

Phillips, T. M., Wilmoth, J. D., & Marks, L. D. (2012). Challenges and conflicts... strengths and supports: a study of enduring African American marriages. *Journal of Black Studies*, 43(8), 936–952.



- Pillemer, K. (2012). *30 lessons for living: tried and true advice from the wisest Americans*. Penguin.
- Powell, G. H. (1969). Theory of nonlinear elastic structures. *Journal of the Structural Division*, 95(12), 2687–2702.  
<https://doi.org/10.1061/JSDEAG.0002431>
- Pillemer, K. (2012). *30 lessons for living: tried and true advice from the wisest Americans*. Penguin.
- Powell, G. H. (1969). Theory of nonlinear elastic structures. *Journal of the Structural Division*, 95(12), 2687–2702.  
<https://doi.org/10.1061/JSDEAG.0002431>
- Priyadharshini, S., & Gopalan, R. T. (2020). Marital adjustment, love, personal intimacy, personality, dyadic coping, and spirituality on marital stability. *Asian Journal of Advanced Research and Reports*, 7(4), 1–16.
- Purdom, C. L., Lucas, J. L., & Miller, K. S. (2006). Couple type, parental status, and the mediating impact of social support. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 8(1), 1–12.
- Quansah, A. (2011). Marital satisfaction and work life balance: A viewpoint indispensable to mitigating fertility decline. *Educational Journal*, 2(1), 153–154.
- Rahmawati, V. Y., Rachmawati, I. N., & Budiati, T. (2019). Childbirth self-efficacy and childbirth expectation of adolescent mothers in Indonesia. *Comprehensive child and adolescent nursing*, 42(sup1), 208–21
- Rantanen, M., Mauno, S., Kinnunen, U., & Rantanen, J. (2011). Do individual coping strategies help or harm in the work–family conflict situation? Examining coping as a moderator between work–family conflict and

well-being. *International Journal of Stress Management*, 18(1), 24–41.

<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022049>

Rapkin, K. (2010). Factors contributing to marital longevity: Implications for counselling. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1(2), 139–140.

Rauer, A., Williams, L., & Jensen, J. (2017). Finer distinctions: variability in satisfied older couples' problem-solving behaviours. *Family Process*, 56(2), 501–517.

Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2010). Should I stay or should I go? Predicting dating relationship stability from four aspects of commitment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 24(5), 543.

Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2012). A longitudinal investigation of commitment dynamics in cohabiting relationships. *Journal of Family Issues*, 33(3), 369–390.

Riehl-Emde, A., Thomas, V., & Willi, J. (2003). Love: An important dimension in marital research and therapy. *Family Process*, 42(2), 253–267.

Riggle, E. D., Rothblum, E. D., Rostosky, S. S., Clark, J. B., & Balsam, K. F. (2016). “The secret of our success”: Long-term same-sex couples' perceptions of their relationship longevity. *Journal of GLBT Family Studies*, 12(4), 319–334.

Roberts, W. L. (1980). Significant elements in the relationship of long-married couples. *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 10(3), 265–272.

Robinson, F. L., & Blanton, G. (2013). Marital interaction in middle and old age: A predictor of marital satisfaction? *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, 65(4), 20–42

- Roscoe, J. T. (1975). *Fundamental research statistics for the behavioral sciences*. Rinehart and Winston.
- Rosenfeld, M. J. (2014). Couple longevity in the era of same-sex marriage in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 76(5), 905–918.
- Roshani, N., Gholamzadeh Jofreh, M., & Salehi, S. (2019). Comparison of marital satisfaction, marital intimacy, sexual satisfaction and marital adjustment of married persons (various age differences) with age and duration of marriage control. *Journal of Research and Health*, 9(7), 648–654.
- Rowe, G. P., & Meredith, W. H. (1982). Quality in marital relationships after twenty-five years. *Family Perspective*, 16(4), 107–113.
- Rusbult, C. E. (1980). Commitment and satisfaction in romantic associations: A test of the investment model. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 16(2), 172–186.
- Ryan, R. M., Huta, V., & Deci, E. L. (2008). Living well: A self-determination theory perspective on eudaimonia. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9, 139–170.
- Sager, L. G. (1981). Constitutional triage. *Columbia Law Review*, 81(4), 707–744. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1122307>
- Sassler, S., & Lichter, D. T. (2020). Cohabitation and marriage: Complexity and diversity in union-formation patterns. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 82(1), 35–61.
- Schaefer, M. T., & Olson, D. H. (1981). Assessing intimacy: The PAIR inventory. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 7(1), 47–60.

- Schoebi, D., Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (2012). Stability and change in the first 10 years of marriage: Does commitment confer benefits beyond the effects of satisfaction? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 102(4), 729–742.
- Schofield, M. J., Mumford, N., Jurkovic, D., Jurkovic, I., & Bickerdike, A. (2012). Short and long-term effectiveness of couple counselling: a study protocol. *BMC public health*, 12(1), 1–11.
- Schwieren, C., & Sutter, M. (2008). Trust in cooperation or ability? An experimental study on gender differences. *Economics Letters*, 99(3), 494–497.
- Selic, P., Pesjak, K., & Kersnik, J. (2011). The prevalence of exposure to domestic violence and the factors associated with co-occurrence of psychological and physical violence exposure: a sample from primary care patients. *BMC Public Health*, 11(1), 1–10.
- Settersten, R. A., & Hagestad, G. O. (2015). Subjective aging and new complexities of the life course. *Annual review of gerontology and geriatrics*, 35(1), 29–53.
- Shahsiah, M., Bahrami, F., Mohebi, S., & Tabarraei, Y. (2012). Correlation between mental wellbeing and marital life quality of couples. *Qom University of Medical Sciences Journal*, 5(4), 61–67.
- Shakerian, A., Nazari, A. M., Masoomi, M., Ebrahimi, P., & Danai, S. (2014). Inspecting the relationship between sexual satisfaction and marital problems of divorce-asking women in Sanandaj City family courts. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 114, 327–333.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.706>

- Shannon-Baker, P. (2016). Making paradigms meaningful in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 10, 319–334.
- Sharlin, S. A. (2016). Long-term successful marriages in Israel. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 18(2), 225–242.
- Sharlin, S. A., Kaslow, F. W., & Hammerschmidt, H. (2000). *Together through thick and thin: A multinational picture of long-term marriages*. The Haworth Clinical Practice Press.
- Shufutinsky, A. (2020). Employing use of self for transparency, rigor, trustworthiness, and credibility in qualitative organizational research methods. *Organization Development Review*, 52(1), 50–58.
- Shukri, A. M., & Owoyemi, M. Y. (2014). Sisters in islam's quest for the reinterpretation of the qur'an and hadith: an analysis of their views on equality, women judges, and polygamy. *Kajian Malaysia: Journal of Malaysian Studies*, 32(1), 55–80.
- Silverman, D. (2016). Introducing qualitative research. *Qualitative research*, 3(3), 14–25.
- Simpson, J. A. (2007). Psychological foundations of trust. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(5), 264–268.
- Singer, B. (1984). Conceptualizing sexual arousal and attraction. *Journal of Sex Research*, 20(3), 230–240.
- Skalník, P. (2013). Malinowski and philosophy. In *Philosophy and anthropology: Border Crossing and Transformations* (pp. 167–188).
- Smith, G. (1891). *Canada and the Canadian question* (Vol. 1). Macmillan.

- Smith, T. W. (2019). Relationships matter: Progress and challenges in research on the health effects of intimate relationships. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 81(1), 2–6.
- Sonbol, A. E. A. (Ed.). (1996). *Women, the family, and divorce laws in Islamic history*. Syracuse University Press.
- Spaniol, J., Voss, A., & Grady, C. L. (2008). Aging and emotional memory: cognitive mechanisms underlying the positivity effect. *Psychology and Aging*, 23(4), 859–872.
- Sporakowski, M. & Axelson, L. (2014). Long-term marriages: A critical review of lifestyles. *A Journal of Changing Patterns*, 7, 76–93.
- Sporakowski, M. J., & Hughston, G. A. (1978). Prescriptions for happy marriage: Adjustments and satisfactions of couples married for 50 or more years. *Family Coordinator*, 27(4), 321–327.
- Sprecher, S. (2014). Initial interactions online-text, online-audio, online-video, or face-to-face: Effects of modality on liking, closeness, and other interpersonal outcomes. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 31, 190–197.
- Sprecher, S. (2001). Equity and social exchange in dating couples: Associations with satisfaction, commitment, and stability. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63(3), 599–613.
- Sprecher S. (1999). “I love you more today than yesterday”: Romantic partners’ perceptions of changes in love and related affect over time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 76(1), 46–53.
- Sprecher, S. (1998). Social exchange theories and sexuality. *Journal of Sex Research*, 35(1), 32–43.

- Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (1992). Assessing commitment in personal relationships. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54(3), 595–608.
- Stanley, S. M., Amato, P. R., Johnson, C. A., & Markman, H. J. (2006). Premarital education, marital quality, and marital stability: Findings from a large, random household survey. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20(1), 117–126.
- Stanley, S. M., Rhoades, G. K., & Whitton, S. W. (2010). Commitment: Functions, formation, and the securing of romantic attachment. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 2(4), 243–257.
- Stephenson, K. R., Ahrold, T. K., & Meston, C. M. (2011). The association between sexual motives and sexual satisfaction: Gender differences and categorical comparisons. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 40, 607–618.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1986). A triangular theory of love. *Psychological Review*, 93(2), 119–135.
- Sternberg, R. J. (1997). Construct validation of a triangular love scale. *European journal of social psychology*, 27(3), 313–335.
- Sternberg, R. J. (2004). Culture and intelligence. *American Psychologist*, 59(5), 325–338.
- Sullivan, K. T. (2001). Understanding the relationship between religiosity and marriage: An investigation of the immediate and longitudinal effects of religiosity on newlywed couples. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 15(4), 610 – 626.
- Svanikier, J. O. (2007). *Women's rights and the law in Ghana: Incorporating the CEDAW into the domestic laws of Ghana*. Ghana University Press.

- Takyi, P. (2012). Women and family law in Ghana: Women in Ghana. In National Council on Women and Development (Ed.), *Background papers to the seminar on Ghanaian women in development* (pp. 316–328).
- Tasew, A. S., & Getahun, K. K. (2021). Marital conflict among couples: The case of Durbete town, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. *Cogent Psychology*, 8(1), 2–17.
- Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2015). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative and approaches in the social and behavioural sciences*. Sage Publications.
- Thiombiano, B. G. (2017). Union breakdown in West African cities: The cases of Ouagadougou and Lomé. *Demographic Research*, 37, 101–128. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26332192>
- Timothy-Springer, R., & Johnson, E. J. (2018). Qualitative study on the experiences of married couples. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 28(7), 889–902.
- Tonah, S. (Ed.). (2022). *Marriage and family in contemporary Ghana: New perspectives*. Woeli Publishing Services.
- Townsend, N. W. (2002). *The package deal: Marriage, work, and fatherhood in men's lives*. Temple University Press.
- Trotter, P. B., Orbuch, T. L., & Shrout, M. R. (2019). Spouses' perceptions of network interference in the early years of marriage. *Interpersona: An International Journal on Personal Relationships*, 13(2), 220–236.
- True, S. M. (2007). *“Living lavender”: Life in a women's community* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Miami University.



- Tuelo Masilo, D. (2019). Exploring extramarital sexual relationships as a precursor to psycho-social problems: a concern for social work practice. *Gender and Behaviour*, 17(2), 12791–12800.
- Tuttle, J. D., & Davis, S. N. (2015). Religion, infidelity, and divorce: Reexamining the effect of religious behavior on divorce among long-married couples. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, 56(6), 475–489.
- Ubando, M. (2016). Gender differences in intimacy, emotional expressivity, and relationship satisfaction. *Pepperdine Journal of Communication Research*, 4(1), 13–24.
- Uecker, J. E., & Stokes, C. E. (2008). Early marriage in the United States. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70(4), 835–846.
- Sonbol, A. E. A. (Ed.). (1996). *Women, the family, and divorce laws in Islamic history*. Syracuse University Press.
- Vaaler, M. L., Ellison, C. G., & Powers, D. A. (2009). Religious influences on the risk of marital dissolution. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(4), 917–934.
- Varoquaux, G. (2018). Cross-validation failure: Small sample sizes lead to large error bars. *Neuroimage*, 180, 68–77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2017.06.061>
- Veroff, J., Reuman, D., & Feld, S. (1984). Motives in American men and women across the adult life span. *Developmental Psychology*, 20(6), 1142–1158.
- Vennum, A., Lindstrom, R., Monk, J. K., & Adams, R. (2014). “It’s complicated” The continuity and correlates of cycling in cohabiting and

- marital relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31(3), 410–430.
- Villa Lever, L. (2020). University spaces, gender and position of social origin: intersection of inequalities. *Gender and Education*, 32(4), 518–536.
- Vogel, I., Miksch, A., Goetz, K., Ose, D., Szecsenyi, J., & Freund, T. (2012). The impact of perceived social support and sense of coherence on health-related quality of life in multimorbid primary care patients. *Chronic illness*, 8(4), 296–307.
- Waite, L. J., Browning, D., Doherty, W. J., Gallagher, M., Luo, Y., & Stanley, S. M. (2002). Does divorce make people happy. *Findings from a Study of Unhappy Marriages*, 32, 495–503.
- Waite L. J., & Lehrer E. L. (2003). The benefits from marriage and religion in the United States: A comparative analysis. *Population and Development Review*, 29, 255–275.
- Wallerstein , J. S., & Blakeslee, S. (1995). *The good marriage. How and why love lasts*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Wallerstein, J. (2019). *The good marriage: How and why love lasts*. Plunkett Lake Press.
- Wanitzek, U. (1991). Integration of personal laws and the situation of women in Ghana: The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1971 and its application by the courts. *Third World Legal Studies*, 10, 75–92.
- Ward, T. (2016). Routes into the profession of counselling, counselling psychology and psychotherapy in the United Kingdom. *The Trainee Handbook: A Guide for Counselling & Psychotherapy Trainees*, 16, 504–513.

- Weigel, D. J., & Ballard-Reisch, D. S. (1999). How couples maintain marriages: A closer look at self and spouse influences upon the use of maintenance behaviors in marriages. *Family Relations*, 48(3), 263–269.
- Westermarck, E. (1936). On Primitive Marriage: A Rejoinder to Mr. VF Calverton. *American Journal of Sociology*, 41(5), 565–584.
- White, L., & Keith, B. (1990). The effect of shift work on the quality and stability of marital relations. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 52(2), 453–462.
- Williams, K. R. (1992). Social sources of marital violence and deterrence: Testing an integrated theory of assaults between partners. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54(3), 620–629.
- Willis, G. B. (2004). *Cognitive interviewing: A tool for improving questionnaire design*. Sage Publications.
- Wilson, B., & Smallwood, S. (2008). Age differences in marriage and divorce. *Population Trends*, (132), 17–25.
- Wineberg, H. (1992). Childbearing and dissolution of the second marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 54(4), 879–887.
- Xu, Q., Yu, J., & Qiu, Z. (2015). The impact of children on divorce risk. *The Journal of Chinese Sociology*, 2(1), 1–20.
- Yabiku, S. T., & Gager, C. T. (2009). Sexual frequency and the stability of marital and cohabiting unions. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(4), 983–1000.
- Yeh, H. C., Lorenz, F. O., Wickrama, K. A. S., Conger, R. D., & Elder Jr, G. H. (2006). Relationships among sexual satisfaction, marital quality, and

- marital instability at midlife. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 20(2), 339–343. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.20.2.339>
- Yin, Y. K. (2014). *Qualitative research from start to finish: Design and methods*. (5th ed.). The Guilford Press.
- Yodanis, C., Schramm, M., & Czekajlo, C. (2015). All Our Stuff: Families and Consumption. *Sociology Compass*, 9(10), 910–919.
- Yoo, G., & Joo, S. (2022). Love for a marriage story: the association between love and marital satisfaction in middle adulthood. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 31(6), 1570–1581.
- Yoo, J., Kim, S., Lee, H., & Park, J. (2011). The impact of intimacy on marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 25(3), 300–315.
- Zhang, B., Mildenerger, M., Howe, P. D., Marlon, J., Rosenthal, S. A., & Leiserowitz, A. (2020). Quota sampling using Facebook advertisements. *Political Science Research and Methods*, 8(3), 558–564.
- Ziaee, T., Jannati, Y., Mobasheri, E., Taghavi, T., Abdollahi, H., Modanloo, M., & Behnampour, N. (2014). The relationship between marital and sexual satisfaction among married women employees at Golestan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*, 8(2), 44–51.

## APPENDICES



5. Monthly Earning: Less than Gh¢1000 [ ] Gh¢1000-3000 [ ] Gh¢4000-7000 [ ] Above Gh¢7000 [ ]
6. Educational level: None [ ] Basic Education [ ] SSCE/WASSCE [ ] Diploma [ ] Degree [ ] Masters [ ] PhD [ ]

## SECTION B: SEXUAL SATISFACTION'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARITAL LONGEVITY

Below are items on couples' opinions on sexual satisfaction contribution to marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree**

S/N	As a spouse with experience in marriage, I feel that....	1	2	3	4
1	my partner enjoys our sex life, and that is why we have lived for this long time.				
2	our sex life is very exciting				
3	sex is fun for my partner and me				
4	sex with my partner has become a chore for me				
5	our sex is dirty and disgusting				
6	our sex life is monotonous				
7	when we have sex, it is too rushed and hurriedly completed				
8	my sex life is lacking in quality and does not make my partner enjoy it				
9	my partner is sexually very exciting, and that has kept my relationship				
10	I enjoy the sex techniques that my partner uses, and this makes me love him/her				

11	my partner wants too much sex from me, and giving it has made our marriage stable				
12	I have a wonderful sex experience with my partner				
13	I satisfy my partner's sexual needs				
14	my partner is a wonderful sex mate				
15	my partner satisfies my sexual needs				

### SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL COUNSELLING'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARITAL LONGEVITY

Below are items on couples' opinions on professional counselling's contribution to marital longevity in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana.

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly Agree**

S/N	As a spouse with experience in marriage, I believe that...	1	2	3	4
1	pre-marital counselling sessions prepare me for marriage				
2	it gives me a solid foundation to start my marriage				
3	professional counselling helps me to understand myself better so that I manage challenges in my marriage, and this has kept us together in marriage.				
4s	I frequently seek professional help for my marital problems.				
5	the knowledge acquired in consulting professional counsellors has helped me to sustain my marriage				
6	I became well informed about marriage life through counselling sessions I attend				



## SECTION D: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMITMENT AND MARITAL LONGEVITY

Below are items on couples' opinions on commitment contribution to marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree**

**3= Agree 4=Strongly Agree**

S/N	As a spouse with experience in marriage, I feel that....	1	2	3	4
1	I care about my partner.				
2	I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner till death do us part.				
3	I would not let other people come between us to destroy our relationship.				
4	I have confidence in the stability of my relationship with my partner.				
5	I should not let anything get in the way of my commitment to my partner.				
6	my love for my partner must last for the rest of my life.				
7	I have a strong responsibility for my partner				
8	my commitment to my partner is a solid one				
9	I cannot imagine ending my relationship with my partner				
10	I am certain of my love for my partner				
11	my relationship with my partner is permanent				
12	my relationship with my partner was a good decision				
13	I feel a sense of responsibility toward my partner				
14	I remain committed to our relationship				
15	Keeping the marriage together is more important than to destroy our relationship.				

16	I am highly committed to my relationship				
17	My partner and I are likely to be together forever				

### SECTION E: RELIGIOSITY/SPIRITUALITY'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARITAL LONGEVITY

Below are items on couples' opinions on religious contribution to marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree**

**3= Agree 4=Strongly Agree**

S/N	As a spouse with experience in marriage, I believe that	1	2	3	4
1	religious beliefs play a role in maintaining the stability of our marriage				
2	we do not criticise each other because of our religious beliefs			✓	
3	because of our religious beliefs, when we get upset by the other partner, we do not retaliate				
4	religious beliefs play an important role in reducing tensions between couple				
5	religious involvement makes one continue with the marital relationship no matter the challenges he/she goes through				
6	marriages that have differences in religious beliefs among couples do not last				
7	individual's religion can influence his/her marital longevity				

**SECTION F: TRUST'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARITAL LONGEVITY**

Below are items on couples' opinions on trust contribution to marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3= Agree 4=Strongly Agree**

S/N	As a spouse with experience in marriage, I feel that...	1	2	3	4
1	my partner is primarily interested in his (her) own welfare				
2	my partner cannot be trusted and therefore, I fear to live with him forever				
3	my partner is perfectly honest and truthful with me				
4	I can trust my partner completely.				
5	my partner is truly sincere in his (her) promises				
6	my partner does not show me enough consideration				
7	my partner treats me fairly and justly				
8	my partner can be counted on to help me				
10	We can both freely share our ideas, feelings, and hopes.				
11	We share the same interests and concerns. We have the same attitude and values (religion, politics, sense of humour)				
12	We love one another and care more for each other than for ourselves.				
13	He or she meets my needs.				
14	When we need someone, we have each other.				
15	My partner has been faithful to me since we married.				

## SECTION G: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES' CONTRIBUTION TO MARITAL LONGEVITY

Below are items on couples' opinions on managing strategies couples adopt to enhance marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=True 2=False**

S/N	As a spouse with experience in marriage, I believe that	True	False
1	When I apologise, it usually gets accepted by my partner.		
2	I can say that I am wrong and ask forgiveness for the relationship to keep on going		
3	I am pretty good at calming myself down		
4	even when arguing, we can maintain a sense of humour		
5	when my partner says we should talk to each other differently, it usually makes a lot of sense		
6	we are pretty good listeners even when we have different positions on things		
7	If things get heated, we can usually pull out of it and change things		
8	we can resolve most issues between us without a third party		
9	when I comment on how we could communicate better my partner listens to me		
10	even if things get hard at times, I know we can get past our differences		
11	we can start all over again and improve our discussions when we need to		
12	when emotions run hot, expressing how upset I feel makes a real difference		
13	even when there are big differences between us, we can discuss these		
14	when our decisions are often made by both of us compromising.		
15	we are good at resolving our differences.		
16	I can give in when I need to, and often do.		

17	I can be stubborn in an argument, but I'm not opposed to compromising.		
18	I don't believe one person is usually right and the other wrong on most issues		
19	we both believe in meeting each other halfway when we disagree.		

## SECTION H: INTIMACY'S CONTRIBUTION TO MARITAL LONGEVITY

Below are items on couples' opinions on **intimacy** to marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

**Instruction:** Please indicate your opinion by ticking (✓) the most appropriate as it pertains to you using the following keys: **1=True 2=False**

S/N	As a spouse with some experience in marriage, I feel that	1	2
1	I am actively supportive of my partner's well being		
2	I have a warm relationship with my partner		
3	I can count on my partners in times of need.		
4	My partner can count on me in times of need		
5	I am willing to share myself and my possessions with my husband/wife		
8	I communicate well with my partner.		
9	I value my partner <sup>2</sup> greatly in my life		
10	I feel close to my husband/wife		
11	I have a comfortable relationship with my partner		
12	I feel that I understand my partner very well		
13	I feel that I can trust my partner.		
14	I feel that my partner understands me		
15	I share deeply personal information about myself with my husband/wife		
16	I cannot imagine life without my partner		
17	Just seeing my partner excites me		
18	I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does		
19	I cannot imagine another person making me as happy as my partner does		
20	For me, my partner is the perfect romantic partner		
21	I feel that I can confide in my partner about virtually anything		
22	Our relationship is strong		

23	My relationship with my partner makes me happy		
24	If I had my life to live over, I would marry (or live with/date) the same person		
25	I still feel a strong connection with my partner		
26	I have a warm and comfortable relationship with my partner		
27	I can't imagine ending my relationship with my partner		
28	my partner and I always talk about ourselves		
29	my partner knows everything about me since I share it with him or her		

**APPENDIX B****INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARTICIPANTS (MARRIED COUPLES)****UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST****COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES****FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS****DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

**Dear Sir/Madam**

My name is GRACE YEBOAH, and I am researching the above topic: **FACTORS INFLUENCING MARITAL LONGEVITY AMONG COUPLES IN KWADASO MUNICIPALITY OF ASHANTI REGION, GHANA**. This interview is meant to gather information for research on the above topic. You have been selected as one of the key participants. I would be most grateful if you could take some time to respond to the interview questions. Information obtained from this interview will be treated with utmost confidentiality. I appreciate your cooperation in taking part in the study. **PART A**

1. Age
2. Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
3. Education: BECE [ ] SSSCE [ ] Diploma [ ] Degree [ ] and above [ ]
4. Length of marriage: .....
5. Religion .....
6. Religious denomination.....
7. Whom do you mostly talk to about your marital challenges?  
Counsellor [ ] Pastor [ ] Relatives [ ] Friends [ ] No one [ ]  
Any other specify.....

**Part B**

1. How has professional counselling contributed to your marriage longevity?
2. How has religion contributed to your marriage longevity?
3. How does sexual satisfaction contribute to marital longevity among couples?
4. How has conflict management strategies contributed to marital longevity among couples?
5. How has trust contributed to your marriage longevity?
6. How has commitment contributed to your marriage longevity?
7. How has intimacy contributed to your marital longevity?
8. What has procreation contributed to your marriage longevity?
9. What other factors have contributed to your stay in the marriage for this long period of time?



APPENDIX C

ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR GRACE YEBOAH

Department of Guidance and Counselling

University of Cape Coast,

19<sup>th</sup> December 2022

The Chairman

Institutional Review Board

University of Cape Coast

Dear Sir,

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE FOR GRACE YEBOAH (ED/GRC/20/0011)**

I write to inform you that Grace Yeboah, ED/GRC/20/0011, is a PhD student at the Department of Guidance and Counselling and has completed her PhD proposal Defense. I am the principal supervisor. Her topic is **Marital longevity among couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana.** She will need ethical clearance to enable her collect data and continue her research work.

Counting on your usual cooperation



Fr. Dr. Anthony K Nkyi

## APPENDIX D

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Telephone: 0332091854  
Email: [dgc@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:dgc@ucc.edu.gh)



UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

13<sup>th</sup> December, 2022

The Chairman  
Institutional Review Board  
U. C. C.  
Cape Coast

## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Grace Yeboah a student from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Cape Coast. She is pursuing Ph.D in Guidance and Counselling.

As part of her requirement, she is expected to work on a thesis titled:

Marital Longevity Among Couples in Kwadasu  
Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana

She has successfully defended her proposal and is seeking for ethical clearance to collect data for the study.

We would be most grateful if you could provide her the necessary assistance for ethical clearance for his/her study.

Thank you.

DR. STEPHEN DOH FIA  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

## APPENDIX E

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

## INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309

E-MAIL: [irb@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:irb@ucc.edu.gh)

OUR REF: IRB/C3/Vol.1/0320

YOUR REF:

OMB NO: 0990-0279

IORG #: IORG0011497

28<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2023

Ms Grace Yeboah

Department of Guidance and Counselling

University of Cape Coast

Dear Ms Yeboah

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CES/2023/11)**

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research **Marital Longevity Among Couples in Kwadaso Municipality of Ashanti Region, Ghana**. This approval is valid from **28<sup>th</sup> August, 2023** to **27<sup>th</sup> August, 2024**. You may apply for an extension of ethical approval if the study lasts for more than 12 months.

Please note that any modification to the project must first receive renewal clearance from the UCCIRB before its implementation. You are required to submit a periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kofi F. Amuquandoh'.

Kofi F. Amuquandoh  
Ag. Administrator