UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST


MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED PEOPLE IN SUNYANI

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MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG MARRIED PEOPLE IN SUNYANI

MUNICIPALITY

BY

KYEREMEH TAWIAH DABONE

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# DECLARATION

**Candidates' 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: Kyeremeh Tawiah Dabone

**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:  Rev. Prof. J. K. Essuman

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

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# ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in order to ascertain the level of marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani Municipality of the Brong-Ahafo Region of Ghana. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Purposive and quota sampling techniques were used to sample 320 respondents for the study. The level of marital satisfaction was assessed with four variables; sex, religion, age and educational levels of respondents. Five research questions were formulated to keep the study in focus. Similarly, four hypotheses were deduced from the research questions along the four variables used for the study.

The Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) was used in collecting responses from the married people. The results of the findings showed that married people in the Sunyani Municipality were not satisfied with their marriages. The study also found that the higher educated married people were significantly more dissatisfied than those with lower levels of education. It further revealed that both young and old married people in the municipality were dissatisfied with their marriages. The younger ones were significantly more dissatisfied than the older ones. Also the study found that both husband and wives were not satisfied with their marriages. Christians and Muslims married people were also not satisfied in their marriages. There were no significant differences between them.

It was recommended that more programmes such as workshops, seminars and symposia be undertaken by counsellors and other stakeholders in marital issues to put married people on the pedestal of satisfied marriages.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# DEDICATION

To Mrs. Martha Dabone, my mother.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

The study of marital satisfaction has a long and well-documented history but the consistently high divorce rates illustrate that still too little is known about ways to achieve and maintain a sufficient level of marital satisfaction to assure marital success.

Today, divorce is a quick way out for people who feel trapped in an unhappy marriage. However, the people who really suffer from the divorce are not so much the parents but rather the children. Sometimes, it seems that the parents who try to use the route of divorce as the ultimate solution are really acting in a self-centered manner.

Riley (1991) cites that the first documented divorce took place in the USA in 1639. By 1880, one in every sixteen marriages ended in divorce. By 1928, one in every six marriages ended in divorce. By 1995, one in every two marriages ended in divorce. Amato (2000) seems to mimic the findings stated earlier. Of all the changes in family life during the 20th century, perhaps the most dramatic and the most far-reaching in its implications was the increase in the rate of divorce. Near the middle of the 19th century, only about 5% of first marriages ended in divorce. In contrast, Cherlin (1992) estimates that about half of first marriages

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initiated in recent years will be voluntarily dissolved. According to Hetherington (1998), there is a significant decline in the proportion of two parent families in the first marriages and the number increase in the single parent households and step families. He continues to say that almost one half of marriages end in divorce in the United States, and one million children experience their parents' divorce each year. It is projected that between 50% and 60% of children born in the 1990s will live, at some point, in a single parent family. From those who divorced, 75% of all men and 66% of women will remarry. However, this figure is substantially lower than the percentage of people who marry for the first time. Moreover, divorces are more frequent in remarriages and occur at a rate 10% higher than that in the first marriages. As a result of divorce marriages about half of all children whose parents divorce will have a stepfather within four years of parental separation, and 1 out of every 10 children will experience at least two divorces of their residential parent before turning 16 years of age Hetherington (1998).

The high rate of marital disruption, combined with an increase in births outside marriage, means that about half of all children will reside at least temporarily in single-parent households, usually with their mothers. Because of remarriage, about one in seven children currently lives with a parent and stepparent and about one in three children will live with a stepparent for some time prior to reaching age 19 (Bumpass, 2003). Observers have attributed this change to a number of factors, including the increasing economic independence of women, declining earnings among men without college degrees, rising expectations for personal fulfillment from marriage, and greater social acceptance

of divorce. Remarriage following divorce is common, and nearly one-half of current marriages involve a second (or higher order) marriage for one or both partners. Second (and higher order) marriages, however, have an even greater likelihood of dissolution than first marriages. As a result, about one out of every six adults endures two or more divorces. The shift from a dominant pattern of lifelong marriage to one of serial marriage punctuated by periods of being single represents a fundamental change in how adults meet their needs for intimacy over the life course (Cherlin, 1992).

Historically, marriage researchers have studied the effects of marital characteristics, marital behaviours, effects of gender, and differences in marital satisfaction by life stage. While research has attempted to account for some of the influences on marital satisfaction, it is time to consider more complex models, to account for the interrelationships between a variety of influences on marital satisfaction. Perhaps someday it will be possible to determine exactly what goes into marital satisfaction.

Before proceeding, it is necessary to define the major concepts that are pertinent to the current study. In this study marital satisfaction refers to a global level of favourability (an approving, friendly or supportive attitude) that individual spouses report with their marital relationship (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981). Marital satisfaction is often viewed as an individual's interpretation of the overall quality of the marriage or the person's happiness with the marriage. This study does not measure the processes that are often associated

with levels of relationship satisfaction; rather the focus is on the overarching feelings of satisfaction.

Marital satisfaction means good feeling for marriage. Kaplan and Maddux (2002) stated that marital satisfaction is an individual experience in marriage which can only be evaluated by each person in response to the degree of marital pleasure. They believe that, it depends upon the individual's expectations, needs and desires in their marriage. Marital satisfaction refers to the degree of satisfaction between couples. This would mean the degree of satisfaction they feel with their relationship. This satisfaction could be addressed both from the perspective of wife toward the husband or the husband toward the wife.

Marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. The categories of how people express love to each other are potentially helpful. These expressions of affection suggest a framework for understanding how different people view positive moments.

Unfortunately, each spouse has a tendency to expect others to act, think, and desire things the way they do (Knapp & Vangelisti 1996). They focus on how they would like to receive affection. As a result, husbands and wives tend to express love to each other the way that they would like to receive it, thus neglecting to express love the way that the other person would feel the most

loved. Examples of this confusion include a wife who feels love through the reception of gifts and who, in turn, gives gifts to her spouse to express affection to him. But he most feels loved through words of affirmation and encouragement. What should have been a positive moment turns into a negative one when a fight ensues because "You don't sing me love songs" Consequently, spouses become dissatisfied and the relationship dissolves without either party really knowing what happened. Their main explanation is that they no longer feel loved.

Research suggests that a spouse who receives the type of love that he or she desires has higher levels of marital satisfaction than a spouse who does not (Keithley, 2000). Each person in the relationship can directly influence the level of satisfaction that the other person experiences. This has profound implications for a relationship. Knowing that a relational partner might not fully appreciate or feel loved by a certain action makes it clear that communication on this topic between spouses is essential. Likewise, it requires communication to know what positively increases a spouse's sense of satisfaction. If the two people in the relationship take the time to talk about the expressions of affection that the other spouse could perform to make them feel loved (i.e., increase their positive moments), they could specifically attempt to meet their spouse's needs in an informed and deliberate manner. This, of course, demands a certain degree of selfless behavior by both partners in the marriage. But doing so would increase each person's good moments, which, in turn, gives the relationship a greater degree of satisfaction.

In Iranian society, since women are economically dependent on their husbands, they are likely to stay with their husbands even if they are not satisfied with them. Moazami (2004) concludes that women keep living with their husbands in spite of being dissatisfied because of being economically dependent and fear of losing their children.

Marriage has been documented in every known culture (Brown, 1991). More than 90% of the world's population will marry at least once (Epstein & Guttman, 1984). Most societies also have instituted divorce procedures (Brown, 1991). The ubiquity of marriage and divorce suggests the potential utility of an evolutionary perspective for understanding marital satisfaction. From an evolutionary perspective (Buss, 1989, 1999), marital satisfaction can be viewed as a psychological state regulated by mechanisms that monitor the benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The costs and benefits are gauged psychologically, but the mechanisms that gauge them have been forged over the vast expanse of evolutionary time. At an ultimate level, therefore, these mechanisms monitor what would have been costs and benefits in ancestral times. Infidelity, therefore, can be expected to lower the partner's marital satisfaction because marital satisfaction monitors costs of this sort. Marital dissatisfaction might function to motivate the individual to attempt to change the existing relationship, or to seek another one that may be more beneficial (Buss, 1989).

This researcher wishes to place emphasis on the reasons for divorce (i.e. non-satisfaction of the marriage) rather than the numbers or percentages of divorces. This stance generates questions of its own. Are the same people getting

divorced a number of times for the same reasons? How have these reasons changed or been eliminated in a subsequent successful marriage? Why are people who have chosen not to remarry not taking a second chance at the privilege of this institution?

When one looks at the incredibly high numbers and percentages of failed marriages in this Bulguim it is hard to see why such a high percentage of people, around 92% for both males and females between 1970-1988 choose to marry according to Schoen & Weinick (1993). Additionally, the average duration of a marriage between the years of 1970 and 1988 has averaged only 29 years for males and 25 years for females, an insignificant amount of time when compared to a complete lifespan, but the average duration of divorced individuals (i.e. number of years spent between marriages) is only 5.5 years for males and 11 years for females. Regardless of, it seems, the statistical significance of the failed marriage, individuals still seem to see marriage as a positive situation worth getting involved in and seemingly re-involved in.

The impact of the rising number of divorces has dire effects for the couples involved, including poorer health and increases in accidents. There are strong negative consequences to separation and divorce on the mental and physical health of both spouses, including increased risk for psychopathology, increased rates of automobile accidents, and increased incidence of physical illness, suicide, violence, homicide, significant immunosuppression, and increased mortality from diseases (Gottman, 1998). Divorce not only involves the couple but most devastatingly, their children. "In children, marital distress, conflict, and

disruption are associated with depression, withdrawal, poor social competence, health problems, poor academic performance, and a variety of conduct-related difficulties" (p. 169). "Divorce pushes many families into poverty…children of divorce are less likely to graduate from high school, and they are more likely to get pregnant as teenagers; they are more prone to depression and even joblessness" (Talbot, 1997, p. 32).

If divorce is so devastating for both the couple and others involved with them, and a basic human drive is to have a happy, successful marriage, why then has very little been done to curb the current trends of the dissolved marriage? There are two questions that need to be addressed when discussing the current divorce problem. What makes a successful marriage and what can be done to teach future couples how to succeed in their marriages? Unfortunately, marital research is only in its infancy. Only since the 1970's has this important topic been investigated scientifically. "Psychology was a latecomer to the study of marriage, sociologists had been studying marriages for 35 years before psychologists became interested in the topic" (Gottman, 1998, p. 170). Marriage itself must first be dissected into its varying parts and fully understood before we can ever hope to teach the future generations of couples how to succeed in their marriages.

Healthy relationships, overall, tend to last longer, are generally happier, and tend to give each individual a meaningful, rich life that all tend to want. Marriage is an intrinsic part of our contemporary conception of a meaningful, rich life (Flowers, 1998, p. 531). Marital happiness is still the largest contributor to overall happiness for married individuals and is strongly associated with physical

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and psychological well-being (Reynolds, Remer, & Johnson, 1995, p. 156). The unhealthy relationships that either lack these aspects or possess deficits in certain parts are typically the ones that end in divorce because they don't fulfill the happy, long lasting, meaningful criteria for a rich life.

It should not be inferred by these statements that healthy relationships last for a lifetime. The researcher realizes which relationships, marital or otherwise, can end peaceably, and without the devastating consequences discussed here. These types of relationship breaks, unfortunately, seem to be more the exception than the rule.

For older individuals happy marriages seem to be a defining point in their lives, even when it comes to keeping them alive. In Hess and Soldo (1985), it was reported that, "lower mortality and morbidity rates for married over non-married persons, especially for men, and; marital satisfaction of elderly couples was found to be an extremely strong predictor of an individual's happiness, general well-being, overall health, and longevity" (p. 155-156). The longevity of older couples that are happily married only emphasized the importance of keeping marriages healthy, happy, and strong.

Research has shown that healthy marital relationships possess an abundance of certain aspects that unhealthy relationships do not. Gottman (1998), Holman and Larson (1994), and Flowers (1998) have illustrated how important communication is to any successful relationship. It is well documented that strong verbal, nonverbal, and meta-communication skills, as well as listening skills, all have high predictive value when it comes to martial success. What is not well

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known is how other key aspects of a marital relationship influence the future of the marital bond? This author wishes to propose that there are eight dyadic dimensions of marriage that, in addition to the verbal elements, every good marital relationship should possess. These eight dimensions, each of which may or may not include verbal elements within themselves include: friendship (Chatterjee, 1999; Cooper, 1980; Flowers, 1998); similar interpersonal values (Flowers, 1998); maturation synchronicity (Flowers, 1998); a balance between involvement in and disengagement from the marriage (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Eckstein & Axford, 1999; Gottman, 1998); self-consciousness (Flowers, 1998); sexual fulfillment (Christopher & Sprecher, 2000; Edwards & Booth, 1994; Flowers, 1998); spousal familial influence (Holman & Larson, 1994; Whyte, 1990); and mental or physical health (Reynolds, Remer, & Johnson, 1995).

Back home in Ghana, many studies on divorce such as the one conducted by Acheampong and Heaton (1989) show a similar trend of increase in divorce rates in Ghana. The authors state that "overall we find the prevalence of high rates in Ghana." The concern here about the rise in the divorce rates is experienced by the fact that divorce had been and indeed would continue to be the ultimate result of people not being satisfied with their marriages. Reflecting on such marital insecurities or the fact that some married people are not satisfied with their marriages hence the rise in divorce rates, one is tempted to ask thus; "What is happening to marriages these days? Do people still perceive marriage along the lines of the French essayist, Montaigne, who commented that; "Marriage is like a

cage; one sees the birds outside desperate to get in, and those inside equally desperate to get out." Does this assertion imply that there is a hidden factor in marriage which can only be felt by those who experience it? And that such a factor or factors determine the course of the marital union? Both experience and observation highlight marital satisfaction as the hidden element which determines the direction of the marital relationship. It is a result of this factor that people who are not happy or satisfied with their marriages do resort to such measures as emotional or psychological divorce, separation or divorce.

Abra (2001) and Ahene (2011) on their part think that divorce has come to stay so far as the Ghanaian culture is concerned. People openly talk about their divorce experiences which hither to was not the case. A lot more advocacy on how to achieve satisfying marriages is put forward by some non-governmental agencies and religious bodies. Ahene (2011) posits that many married individuals are aware of what to do to achieve happy marriages or relationships in a study he conducted in Cape Coast on religion and marital satisfaction. But whether married individuals put what they know about satisfying marriages into practice will be made known in the course of this study.

<div align="center">**Statement of the Problem**</div>

The rationale for studying marital satisfaction stems from its centrality in individual and family well-being (Stack & Eshleman, 1998), from the benefits that accrue to society when strong marriages are formed and maintained; for example desistance from crime (Laub, Nagin, & Sampson, 1998) and from the need to develop empirically defensible interventions for adults that prevent (e.g.,

Hahlweg, Markman, Thurmaier, Engle & Eckert, 1998) or alleviate marital distress and divorce. Although they reviewed a decade of "research on nature and determinants of marital satisfaction," Bradbury, Fincham and Beach, (2000) found more than one hundred studies related to marital satisfaction and representing diverse orientations and goals. The sheer magnitude of this work attests to the continued relevance of this topic.

There has been an overwhelming amount of literature pertaining to the importance of communication in marital relationships (Bradbury, Beach, Fincham, & Nelson, 1996; Bradbury, & Fincham, 1992; Eckstein & Axford, 1999; Flowers, 1998; Gottman, 1994, 1998; Gottman, Notarius, Gonso, & Markman, 1979; Gottman & Silver, 1994; Johnson & Booth; Larson & Holman, 1994, 1998; Reynolds, Remer, & Johnson, 1995; Sternberg, 1988; Whyte, 1990).

Factors that contribute to marital satisfaction may vary across cultures. For instance, Kamo (1993) reported that husbands' earning was important for marital satisfaction. In Japan, however, it was not so important as in the United States. Shek (1998) noticed that the parents' and children's view of family functioning were related to marital life satisfaction, self-esteem, and self happiness. Studies by Huston and Vangelisti (1991), Donnelly (1993), and Morokoff and Gillilland (1993) have shown that personal sexual satisfaction, frequency of sex and sexual activities, and the sexual interest and satisfaction of one's spouse have a great deal to do with marital satisfaction. Rogers and Amato (1997) reported that the level of satisfaction in intact (first) marriages has declined since at least the mid-1970s. Although marital satisfaction and its relation with different aspects of human life

have been well researched, it still continues to be an important topic of research among marriage and family therapists. According to Huston & Vangelisti (1991), since mid-20th century, researchers have been examining factors that contribute to marital satisfaction.

There is however, a lack of studies looking at other realms of marital satisfaction. Moreover, there are only a few researchers advocating that certain aspects of marital relationships, if present, can be predictive of marital satisfaction and thus success. There is no doubt that religion and years of marriage of couples are very powerful predictors of marital success, but these variables are not the only predictors as made known by Abra (2001). Certain elements such as friendship, attachment to and independence from each other, and the sexual fulfillment of each individual, age of couples and gender may also contribute to marital satisfaction and help establish stability over time.

Again, the Brong Ahafo region according to the Violence and Domestic Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service is the second region after the Greater Accra region where wife batteries and violence in households were reported most. Divorce has become relatively common in Sunyani the capital of the region. Despite these growing worrying developments not much research has been done to assess the extent to which couples are satisfied with their marriages in the region and the Sunyani municipality in particular. Again, there is not enough literature on marital satisfaction in Ghana so the researcher believes the study will contribute to knowledge in this area. Abra (2001) worked on determinants of marital satisfaction among Ghanaian couples with specific reference to the

Greater Accra region while Adonu (2005) did a cross cultural study on marital satisfaction in Ghana and Britain.

It is in this light that the researcher seeks to study marital satisfaction among married people in Sunyani municipality in order to investigate the extent to which married people are satisfied with their marriages.

## Purpose of the Study

Generally, the study seeks to assess marital satisfaction from the perspective of married people in the Sunyani Municipality. Therefore, the study is purported to achieve the following:

1.  To investigate the extent to which married people are satisfied in their marriages.

2.  Assess religious influences on marital satisfaction.

3.  Assess educational influences on marital satisfaction.

4.  Assess how age of the married people influences marital satisfaction.

5.  Assess gender influences on marital satisfaction.

## Research Questions

In an attempt to keep the study focused, the study provided answers to the following questions:

1.  What is the extent to which married people in the Sunyani municipality are satisfied in their marriages?

2.  To what extent does religion influences marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani municipality?

3. What is the extent to which educational level influences marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani municipality?

4. To what extent does age of married people influences their marital satisfaction in the Sunyani municipality?

5. To what extent does sex influences marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani municipality?

## Research Hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested.

1. $H_0$: There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim married people with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

$H_1$: There is significant difference between Christian and Muslim married people with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

2. $H_0$: There is no significant difference between married people with high educational level (GCE A level – Masters and above) and those with low educational level (JSS – Diploma) with respect to their level of marital satisfaction.

$H_1$: There is significant difference between married people with high educational level and those with low educational level with respect to their level of marital satisfaction.

3. $H_0$: There is no significant difference between young married people (18 – 40 years) and old married people (41 – 60 year and above) with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

$H_1$: There is significant difference between young married people and old married people with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

4. $H_0$: There is no significant difference between married men and married women with regard to the level of marital satisfaction.

$H_1$: There is significant difference between married men and married women with regard to the level of marital satisfaction.

## Significance of the Study

The study among other things will expose married people to how achieve marital satisfaction and therefore will help manage risky behaviours that lead to divorce. It would make married people aware that marriage is meant to be enjoyed hence they should put in some effort to achieving satisfaction in their marriages.

The findings of the study will expose counsellors and religious leaders to some of the marital problems their clients and members face respectively. It will also suggest some counselling techniques and pragmatic ways both counsellors and Para-professionals can assess to assist married people who are not satisfied in their marriages.

Finally, it is expected that findings of the study will provoke further research into the marital satisfaction of married people in order to understand and help couples in their marriage. It is the firm belief of the researcher that by embarking on this study, it would provide an opportunity for him to contribute a

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little solution to one of the problems facing married people in the Sunyani municipality and by extension Ghana as a whole.

## Delimitation of the Study

Married people go through a lot of challenges in life. It may be psychological, biological, social or psychosocial. Issues under these could be studied by the researcher however; the researcher decided to delimit to marital satisfaction of married people. This is because marriage is a lifetime process and its satisfaction goes beyond the benefit of only married people but the off springs and society at large.

Sunyani municipality was chosen because first, couples everywhere display similar characteristics and second, Sunyani municipality has a lot of married people; whether customary, registered and wedded that will give the researcher varieties of opinions on the various questions posed.

## Limitations of the Study

In a study on marital satisfaction among married people, one cannot be very sure of the kind of information the respondents will give out. It could be that they will give out accurate information about their situation or inaccurate information especially as the questions center on marital satisfaction and so it is anticipated that respondents will be biased in terms of what the actual situation is.

## Organization of the Rest of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters including chapter one. The second chapter reviewed related literature in two perspectives, namely, theoretical and empirical reviews. Chapter three assessed the methodologies in terms of

research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrumentation, pilot testing, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. The fourth chapter dealt with Results and Discussion and the final chapter dealt with Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations.

# CHAPTER TWO

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### Introduction

This chapter reviews some related literature on the topic under consideration. The review is in two sections, theoretical review and empirical review. The theoretical aspect of the review deals with concepts and some theories related to marriage and marital satisfaction. The second part is on some empirical studies on marriage and marital satisfaction.

### Theoretical Review

In this section attempts were made to review what authors and theorists have said about marriage and marital satisfaction as concepts. Theories that support marriage and marital satisfaction that various authors and experts in the field of marriage have written about were also reviewed.

### Marriage as a Concept

Every known human society has some form of marriage. In every complex society governed by law, marriage exists as a public legal act and not merely a private romantic declaration or religious rite. As Davis (1985) summed up the anthropological evidence: "Although the details of getting married who chooses the mates, what are the ceremonies and exchanges, how old are the parties vary

from group to group, the principle of marriage is everywhere embodied in its practice".

As a practically universal human idea, marriage is about regulating the reproduction of children, families, society. While marriage systems differ, marriage across societies is a sexual union between a man and a woman that creates kinship obligations and sharing of resources between men, women, and the children their sexual union may produce.

Marriage can be described as a union between two biologically unrelated female and male who live together and seek to derive benefits from such union such as sexual gratification, love, companionship etc. and also use such a union as a legitimate means to procreate (Abra, 2001). Acknowledging that marriage is a basic institution in every society Nukunya (1992) on his part disclosed that despite the universality of it there is no accepted definition for it. He however quoted one of the often quoted definitions as contained in the official handbook of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain as "a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized as a legitimate off-spring of both parents." (p. 23)

Akinade (1997) on his part defines marriage as "the union and cohabitation of two people of the opposite sex with a permanent commitment to each other and their children when they are born and are dependent on them." According to Peil (1977) marriage is a publicly recognized, more or less permanent alliance between a man and a woman (the conjugal unit).

The difficulty in arriving at a compromise definition may stem from the fact that modernity has brought in its trail other forms or types of marriages such that trying an all encompassing definition for them in a single definition will not only be an arduous task but also render the whole attempt cumbersome and meaningless. Nonetheless the attempts by Akinade (1997), Peil (1977), and Nukunya (1992) to define marriage have been very relevant and thus useful to this study and discussions.

**Marital Satisfaction as a Concept**

A uniform definition for marital satisfaction is a herculean one owing to the fact that what one perceives as satisfying in marriage is somewhat different from one person to another. From a relativistic point of view as posited by Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) a satisfying marriage is the one in which rewards to both partners are greater than the cost and it is preferable to any other alternative.

Marital satisfaction is the level of commitment a person has towards his or her marriage and spouse. When looking at marital satisfaction it is important to examine those factors that help or hinder satisfaction. Integral factors involved in marital satisfaction include communication and spousal support.

John Gottman, a leading researcher in the field of marriage, describes key criteria that can lead to dissatisfaction in a marriage. Gottman refers to these as "the four horsemen," and they are criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling (Gottman & Silver, 1994). Criticism includes an opinion, judgment, or disapproval of what is wrong or bad about a spouse. Contempt is distinguished

from criticism by the intention to insult and psychologically abuse a spouse. This includes the use of words and body language and throwing insults at a spouse's sense of self. Defensive phrases, along with the stance they express, lead to conflict rather than resolution. Thus, defensiveness adds to marital troubles (Gottman & Silver, 1994). Finally, stonewalling frequently occurs when a couple is talking things out. A stonewaller removes him or herself from the discussion by becoming a "stone wall." It is a powerful act, and "conveys disapproval, icy disdain and smugness" (Gottman & Silver, 1994, p. 5).

Gottman and Silver (1994) also discovered that contrary to some public opinions, expressing anger and disagreement throughout the course of a marriage may help the marriage partners become stronger than those marriage partners that suppress the anger and disagreement within. Research has found that during conflict, happy couples demonstrate a ratio of five positive behaviours to everyone negative behaviour (Gottman & Carrere, 2000).

Problems become apparent in a marriage when complaints are unacknowledged and a spouse continually repeats the same act that precipitated the complaint (Gottman & Silver, 1994). Perren, Von Wyl, Burgin, Simoni and Von Klitzing (2005) supported this idea by finding that decreases in communication and sensitivity were a major source of declining satisfaction in a marriage. The quality of communication associated with marital outcomes is continuing to gain evidence over time. When spouses experience strain, it can be assumed that their marital interaction and communication might be primed for more critical comments and blaming (Rogers & White, 1998).

When looking at marital satisfaction, spousal support must be considered. Research has shown supportive spouses react more positively to one another. "The more satisfied spouses are with their marriage, the more likely they will approach one another in attempts to elicit support, and the more positively each will respond to these requests" (Heffner, Kiecolt-Glaser, Loving, Glaser & Malarkey, 2004, p. 250). Feeling heard and validated by a spouse helps to increase the support felt by each spouse. Also, as spouses work on trying to improve the marriage, the support they feel may also be increased. Individuals who reported higher rates of spousal support were more likely to report higher levels of Marital Satisfaction, fewer symptoms of depression, and more manageable stress levels (Purdom, Lucas & Miller, 2006). As spousal support increases, Marital Satisfaction also increases (Purdom et al., 2006).

However, what happens to marital satisfaction when one or both spouses are stressed by specific day-to-day responsibilities, child characteristics, or parent-child relationships coupled with age and number of children? When demands external to the marriage are high, even those couples with good coping strategies and skills may find it difficult to exercise those skills effectively (Karney & Bradbury, 2005). "Marriages taking place in more stressful contexts may be more challenging simply due to the increased severity of the obstacles that couples face inside and outside of their marriages" (Karney & Bradbury, p. 173).

An important variable that needs to be addressed is: are those couples that stay together - truly satisfied? According to Esquer, Burnett, Baucom and Norman (1997) marital satisfaction is sought, or expected, by most married individuals.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Bureau of Census in 1992 reported that 52% of marriages ended in divorce. This fact, along with other stimulants, has caused researchers to investigate the influences on marital satisfaction. Many predictors of stability and satisfaction in marriage do, in fact, exist. Among the various possibilities explored by researchers, conclusive studies have been done on the influences of past and present satisfaction with one's spouse's personality and living conditions, the effect of autonomy and relatedness on marriage, the Empty Nest Syndrome, as well as types of premarital relations and their effect on marital satisfaction.

Literature linking the quality of premarital relationships to marital satisfaction continues to grow. Studies reviewed in this literature show that relationship satisfaction declines in the first 2 to 3 years of marriage, and that although the majority of satisfactory marriages are stable, marital dissatisfaction does not always result in marital instability. Thus, determining different premarital antecedents which influence later marital satisfaction is important. Four types of premarital couples were determined for study by Fowers and Olson (1992). All couples of each type completed a prepare inventory 3-4 months prior to their marriage, and again 2-3 years later. The purpose of the prepare inventory was to assess and identify strengths and weaknesses related to relationship issues, such as expectations, communication, personality, and conflict resolution tactics. The Vitalized couples had the highest degree of overall marital satisfaction, with strong communication abilities, strong satisfaction concerning affection, sexuality, shared time, finances, and a strong belief in religious importance. Harmonious couples were moderately satisfied with their marriages overall. These

individuals shared and related well with each other and each other's family and friends, yet the decline in satisfaction seemed to be caused by their unrealistic view of marriage and child-related issues.

Traditional couples had moderate dissatisfaction, although they were the least likely to divorce, and conflicted couples showed distress and high divorce tendencies. The important influence on marital satisfaction found in this study can be seen through the greater amount of emphasis placed on marital satisfaction by Harmonious couples, than that placed on stability by Traditional couples. Thus communication and relationship satisfaction did result in greater marital satisfaction and did prove to be influenced by premarital views. A dimensional analysis done on past and present satisfaction, proved that concerning many different domains, current and past relationship satisfaction can predict over-all marital satisfaction. This study done by Plechaty, Couturier, Cote and Roy (1996) hypothesized that spouses' personality and living conditions as a couple, namely intimacy and communication, would be the most frequent sources of satisfaction or dissatisfaction accounting for much in the relationship.

A preliminary correlation analysis showed that age and the number of children a couple had did significantly correlate with marital satisfaction, yet the two domains of spouses' personality and living issues (including intimacy and communication), were the major influences on marital satisfaction. Other influences on happiness and satisfaction in marriages were found to be autonomy and relatedness by Rankin-Esquer, Burnett, Baucom and Epstein (1997).

Autonomy refers to spouse's perceptions of the extent to which partners encouraged a sense of independence and individuality.

Relatedness, in this study, referred to a spouse's perceptions of the amount of closeness that their partners provided. The findings of this study did differ for males and females, specifically in that females found relatedness to be important in determining the standards of their relationship, held by themselves and their husbands, and that no relationship was found between male's views of standards, or their interpretation of their wives, and relatedness. It was found through this study that autonomy and relatedness were not only significantly positively correlated with each other but also with marital adjustment and satisfaction in both males and females.

Finally, research done on the well-known "empty-nest" stage in adult life also found significant influence on marital satisfaction. While observing and researching those adults in the launching stages of parenthood, White and Edwards (1990) found that overall, an empty nest, (the absence of children), has a significant positive effect on marital happiness. This happiness was found to be strongest relatively soon after the last child is launched. Also, the degree of enjoyment couples got out of their "post-launch honeymoon phase" was greater if the child most recently launched was in his teenage years, rather than young or even middle adulthood. The strongest and most repeatedly found reason for these trends seems to be the unavoidable existence of parental stress. "Even the best of children of the most conventional parents tend to be a source of strain in the marital relationship," stated White and Edwards (p. 240).

The fact remains that for most parents, the role of parents continues despite living separations from the children, yet the empty nest stage has proved to positively affect marital satisfaction (Katz, 2001). These factors found to contribute to a "happy" marriage are by no means the only influences on marital satisfaction. Autonomy and relatedness, otherwise known as an encouraging sense of spousal independence and perceptions of closeness, were found to positively correlate to each other, and more significantly, to overall marital satisfaction. Also, the important parental stage of childlessness, or the Empty Nest period, proved to positively influence marital satisfaction for both spouses (Pacey, 2004).

In another set of studies, Amstutz-Haws and Mallinckrodt (1996) surveyed 25 heterosexual couples who were 18-30 years old and had been married between 6-13 months on how much they felt they were psychologically detached from their parents and have established themselves as distinct individuals. Each spouse was also asked whether they felt they got along as a couple, whether they were satisfied with the marriage, whether they received enough affection and whether they agreed enough on various issues. A husbands' lack of independence from both his parents was the biggest predictor for both spouses not adjusting very well to the new marriage. Both spouses reported higher levels of adjustment and satisfaction in their marriage when the husbands were free from excessive guilt, anxiety, mistrust, responsibility, inhibition, resentment and anger in relation to their mothers. The couples were also better adjusted in their new marriage when the husband possessed a greater ability to manage and direct practical affairs without the help of his father. Wives' adjustment to marriage seemed to depend

on how well the husbands separated from their parents. However, husbands' adjustment to marriage depended on how well both spouses separated from their parents' influence. Amstutz-Haws and Mallinckrodt (1996) also found that a person who marries someone similar to his/her psychological type and also has similar interests is much more likely to stay married and be happier with his or her selection.

Marioles (1997) asked 426 married and pre married couples to take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator which measures people's preferences on how they relate to the world. The study then compared each type with each spouses' marital satisfaction. A person can have four different types that determine how to deal with the world. One can be either extraverted or introverted. Extraverted people prefer relating to people in the outer world to relating to the inner world of ideas which introverted people prefer. A sensing person likes to have known facts to make decisions whereas an intuitive person prefers to look for possibilities and relationships that are not apparent to make decisions.

### Theories that Support Marital Satisfaction

The study of marriage and satisfaction are very subjective thereby leaving researchers at bay on the subject. This is manifest in the lack of consensus in defining "marital satisfaction". This is thoughtful of the lack of satisfactory theory to explain marital functioning. Labels such as "satisfaction", "adjustment", "success", "happiness", and "quality" have all been used in describing the quality of marriage (Fincham, Beach & Kemp-Fincham, 1997). Some of the theories which are as pegs on which this work hangs include:

i. The system theory

ii. The Attachment versus Independence

iii. The Family System theory

iv. The Exchange theory

v. The Role theory

vi. The Communication theory

**Systems Theory**

Systems theory provides a useful framework for studying couples. A marital relationship can be viewed as a system of interacting roles and communication networks. Underlying this system is the perception of relationship satisfaction that determines whether or not the system is able to maintain itself in its present form. Constantine (1986) defined system structure as "the sum total of the interrelationship among elements of a system, including membership in the system and the boundary between the system and its environment" (p. 52). Systems theory is a way of looking at the world in which people are interrelated with one another (Constantine, 1986; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993), and assists in explaining the behavior of complex organized systems, such as a spousal relationship.

Systems theory provides useful insights into the relationships between leisure and couple variables, and provides a good foundation for studying couple activity patterns and their impact on couple marital satisfaction. From a systems theory perspective (Constantine, 1986), couple leisure activities contribute to

several aspects of the couple's marital relationship. One of these aspects influenced by couple leisure is couple bonding, which in turn can affect satisfaction in two ways. First, common activities and interest enforce boundaries around the relationship. Shared interests and activities may be one of the more important forces establishing and maintaining boundaries in the couple system.

Second, couple leisure activities contribute to developing collective interest and identity by placing couples in situations where they are learning to enjoy activities together (Fincham, Beach & Kemp-Fincham, 1997). In order to better evaluate and understand the satisfaction spouses experience with their relationship, there must first be guidelines to follow for evaluation. Determining that the spousal relationship is a system and using a systems perspective increases the understanding of how and why the relationship system functions as it does, as well as how to best deal with issues such as communication, growth, adaptation, setting boundaries, rules, setting goals and interacting together.

**Attachment vs. Independence**

It is only natural for a young couple to appear as if they share one life. Within most Christian societies, marriage vows state that, "the two shall become as one". This kind of attachment, if carried out in the relationship for an extended amount of time, can become a strain on the individualistic characteristics of each partner. Eckstein & Axford (1999) noted that young children and adolescents need to learn a healthy balance between attachment and independence. They say that when couples feel both independent from and attached to their partner, they appear to be happiest. Several theoretical bases have been used by numerous

researchers to explain the concept of a balance between attachment and independence in the marital dyad. One of the most prominent of these theories is Bowlby's Attachment theory.

Guided by Bowlby's attachment theory Ainsworth (1985) noted that adults who possess a secure attachment style tend to develop mental models of themselves as being valued and worthy of others' concern, support, and affection. Significant others are described as being accessible, reliable, trustworthy and well intentioned. Secure individuals report that they develop closeness with others easily, feel comfortable depending on others and having others depend on them, and rarely are concerned about being abandoned or others becoming extremely close to them. Their romantic relationships, in turn, tend to be characterized by more frequent positive affect, by higher levels of trust, commitment, satisfaction and interdependence, and by happy, positive, and trusting styles of love.

According to Ainsworth, adults who hold an ambivalent or attached style, tend to possess mental models of themselves as misunderstood or under-appreciated. They report that others seem to be reluctant to get as close as they would prefer, frequently worry that their significant others do not truthfully love them or will abandon them the first chance they get. These beliefs along with others such as, that partners are undependable and are unwilling to commit themselves, force these adults to over-commit (i.e. become too attached) in order to counterbalance the views that are held of their partners.

Conversely, adults who hold an avoidant or detached style tend to possess mental models of themselves as being aloof, emotionally distant, and skeptical.

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They report that others seem to be overly eager to make long-term commitments to relationships and/or are just unreliable. The feelings of being uncomfortable when close and difficulty trusting and depending on others, forces these adults to push away and become disengaged from significant others in order to relieve the tensions of the uncomfortable feelings.

In essence attachment can be adequately represented in terms of two underlying dimensions. These dimensions reflect the degree to which an individual feels uncomfortable in close romantic relationships (discomfort with closeness) and the degree to which he or she fears abandonment from romantic partners (anxiety over abandonment). High discomfort with closeness involves a belief that attachment figures are untrustworthy and cannot be relied upon to provide assistance in times of need. In contrast, high anxiety over abandonment involves a belief that a married person is 'unlovable' and unworthy of help from attachment figures in time of need (Roberts & Noller, 1998, p. 121).

This modality of thinking puts a lot of emphasis on how one thinks of his/her partner. Although there is some truth to the idea that humans must categorise entities outside of themselves in order to realize a consistency within the world, nevertheless the way in which this organisation occurs starts within the self. This is touched upon within Bowlby's theory, but is either not extended to its full length or not given the importance it so rightly deserves.

A belief that one is unlovable by others probably will result in abandonment issues for the individual, but what of the individual who has never learned how to be comfortable alone. This person probably will have

abandonment issues also but, in this context, does not hold the negative self-view of 'I am unlovable'; this person would hold a view more closely to that of 'I am nothing if I am alone'. Each of these individuals will possibly be too attached to his/her partners, but it has little to do with how they categorize their partner and everything to do with what's going within themselves.

Eckstein and Leventhal (1999) used the analogy of a 'three-legged sack race' to illustrate the importance of a balance in the level of attachment and independence in a marital relationship. Using theoretical bases of family systems they too state that there are two types of imbalances that can occur; "one is the concept of too much dependence (no individuation), the other extreme imbalance is independence (no contact)" (p. 400). Within the analogy a couple that maintains this balance has their inside legs inside the sack and their outside legs free. When there is no individuation then all three legs are inside the sack, and when there is far too much independence all three legs are outside the sack.

This analogy of the three-legged sack race was used to describe these theoretical concepts in laymen's terms for the Eckstein and Leventhal experiment. The author seeks to add to this already useful analogy and say that instead of looking at three distinct levels of attachment, for the purposes of this study the researcher will be looking at an attachment continuum that is curvilinear in nature. The three extremes of attachment, independence, and balanced would fall to the far right, left, and top respectfully.

Gottman, in a third theoretical basis, in his 1998 review of the Bank Account Model (BAM) which assessed the seven negative patterns in ailing

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marriages, suggests that "...the amount of cognitive room that couples allocate for the relationship and their spouse's world," soothes each individual and aids in problem resolution (p. 182). Problem resolution is one of many areas of a relationship that can be fixed in a less stressful state when a balance between attachment and independence is maintained within the relationship.

Levels of attachment in the marital dyad are extremely important areas of research because of the tendency for insecure attachments to lead to marital violence. "Discomfort with closeness is primarily associated with a lack of emotional involvement in relationships and a strong tendency to deny negative affect (Eckstein & Leventhal, 1999, p.408).

**Family Systems Theory**

One of the more recent attempts to utilize theory in the study of leisure and relationship satisfaction utilizes the family systems perspective. Specifically, Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) find the three dimensions of Olson's Circumplex Model (1993) to be particularly appropriate for this area of study. Within Olson's model, family cohesion can be described as the emotional connection between family members, and family adaptability is associated with flexible leadership roles and relational rules. Family cohesion and adaptability are often facilitated through the communication dimension of the model. Leisure activities quite possibly provide the very best opportunity for this necessary communication. It seems that there is much promise in the application of family systems theory to the study of leisure and marital satisfaction. Still, it is clear that some effort needs to be made to find one major theory in the field of family

sciences that can deal with the complexities of the relationship between shared leisure and marital satisfaction demonstrated in the literature.

In light of the current knowledge available, the present study examined the levels of several leisure variables in the relationships of couples as related to marital satisfaction. The issue at hand is not one of causality, but rather correlation. Little research has been conducted on the relationship between the two main variables (shared leisure and marital satisfaction) over the course of the family's life. The theory highlighted couples with adolescent children to reveal information on one specific part of the marital career. As young married couples begin to have children, the time they are able to spend in shared leisure usually diminishes. However, as adolescents are gaining more independence, perhaps their parents are able to once again find more time to dedicate to shared leisure. Further research should expand the knowledge regarding changes in the relationship between leisure and marital satisfaction over time. The purpose of this study, then, was to access the marital satisfaction levels of married people.

**Exchange Theory**

In reviewing the aforementioned studies, it is clear that this area of research lacks a unifying major theoretical approach. Many of the researchers indicate no theoretical orientation guiding their studies. For instance, Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001) never specifically identify a theory, but they use language of exchange theory arguing that couples are less likely to divorce when they have a joint lifestyle because of the "costs" they might incur. The act of creating a joint lifestyle constructs a set of goods that are seen as "benefits" of the marriage.

Shared activities are described as a form of "marital capital." The language of exchange theory is fundamental in this assumption of Kalmijn and Bernasco: "The way couples organize their leisure depends in part on the *costs* and *benefits* involved in developing a joint lifestyle" (p. 641). If researchers are already using the language and concepts of exchange theory, it is likely that this theory might offer a valuable perspective through which family scientists can view this leisure and marital satisfaction relationship.

The major premise of exchange theory is that "humans avoid costly behavior and seek rewarding statuses, relationships, interaction, and feeling states to the end that their profits are maximized" or their losses are minimized (Nye, 1979, p. 2). Exchange theory holds excellent potential for the present study for several reasons. First, the theory is especially useful in analyzing dyads. Since the data in the present study related specifically to marital dyads, exchange theory is a fitting perspective. Another beneficial aspect of exchange theory is the focus on individual perceptions. Supporting this theory Eshelman (1981) quoted Bernard as emphasizing a relativistic approach which suggested that a marital relationship is successful if rewards to both partners are greater than the cost and it is preferable to any other alternative. She illustrates her stance thus; "If A & B do not like one another, they get on another's nerves; the costs of remaining married are great in frustration and loneliness. But the rewards are great also together they can afford a lovely home; they have high status in the community; the children are protected from scandal; the church approves of them.

The marriage relationship is "successful" or "good" not because it is the best possible but in the sense that satisfactions are greater than the cost (Eshelman 1981, p. 449). Lamanna and Riedmann (1997) see this theory as bargaining an idea from exchange theory which basically assumes that whether or not relationships form or continue depends upon the costs and rewards they provide to partners. According to this theory satisfaction in marriage can only come about if needs of partners can be provided. In such a marriage provision of needs become the utmost concern of partners. Needs satisfaction in its turn depends on what values the couples have which are generally shaped by the individual's psychological, sociological and religious exposures.

**Role Theory**

There are few sources that specifically identify theoretical frameworks to use in the study of marital satisfaction and shared leisure. Role theory offers a unique perspective that is described by Baldwin, Ellis and Baldwin (1999). This theory holds that marital satisfaction varies according to both an individual's salient recreation role and their role support for their spouse's salient recreation role. Marital satisfaction is predicted to be highest when spouses share a strong commitment to an activity or when one spouse who is strongly committed to an activity receives significant role support from the non-committed spouse.

Role theorists again, contend that the integrative quality of a marriage is seen as a function of how couples perceive their roles, expect the role to be and perform the role (Eshelman, 1981). The theory has is central idea that, human actions are directed in ways seeking to bring results that they hope will satisfy

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their motives. The proponents of this theory in explaining why human actions are socially patterned contend that most of a person's activities involve counter activities on the part of other persons. Roles are considered to be social constructs because a husband cannot act as such without reference to a real wife. This implies that the actions of men and women are not separate, isolated or discreet but are intertwined activities of two or more persons (Eshelman 1981).

Scanzoni (1979) identifying roles as work or employment asserted that changing sex roles has potential impact for marital and family structure. He noted that economic constraints and resultant employment behaviours might overtime have resulted in changing norms about sex roles. Kelly (1974) on his part noted that the most significant and dramatic changes in modern marriage has been on role expectation and behaviour.

Glen (1994) contributing to the changing perception in norms about marital roles noted that until recently these were culturally prescribed but they have now become a matter for negotiation in individual marriage. Akinade (1997) observed the flexibility in the expectation of the roles of the spouses in modern times. He contended that such flexibility in roles tends towards egalitarianism. However, on this contention Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) object to it and rather see it as a mere assertion derived from wishful thinking. They contend that people's own observation that marriage was no more an owner-property arrangement in which a wife was assumed to be "owned" by her husband meant she must then automatically be his equal. They argued "the assumption that husband and wife roles complement each other's and therefore husbands and

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wives are equal cannot be valid". According to them women have been assigned to tasks that carry fewer rewards, risky and at lower ranks and demand greater dependence. Such clarification by Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) is very crucial and momentary since it is the general perception that when gender-role differentiations are removed or reduced then wives are said to be equal to their husbands.

**Communications Theory and Marital Satisfaction**

Bateson, Jackson, Haley and Weakland (as cited in Nwoye, 1991) have a theory of communication which has it that the essential factor in troubled marriage is the problem of inappropriate communications. According to this theory the problem is due to lack of clarity or presence of confusion in the communication network exchanged by couples. Couples communicate verbally (with words) and non-verbally with gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions, words on paper, images etc. Confusion erupts when the verbal and non-verbal contradict, thereby sending a double message. For instance a woman who says "I don't mind if you go on business trip" but whose slumping posture, resigned tone of voice and depression-like lack of enthusiasm says "I really do not want you to go". In contrast a wife gets confused double message when the husband says "I love you and like spending time with you" but is never home, never takes his wife out to dinner, or never does anything to show his love and appreciation. Good communication demands that the message received is the same as the message sent.

Communications establish, maintain and change relationship through communication interactions among members (Duncan & Rock, 1994). They maintain that all behaviour is communicative even silence conveys some meaning.

Couples should note that as much as communication is an essential tool in marriage they must watch for its quality as they use it. As said earlier, there can be 'good' communication as well as 'poor communication'.

Emphasizing the need for good communication between couples Gordon (1994) attributed what goes wrong in marriage relationships partly to mis-communication. They added that many couples are living together as complete strangers due to silence, confusion etc. In this instance the authors are describing what happens when there is a break in communication or when there is an inefficient communication especially when contents of the information being given become distorted.

Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) used the term garbled communication to describe the issue of miscommunication. They explain that this type of communication is made up of information which contains misperception, miscalculation and misinterpretation. On misperception, the authors explained for instance that a husband who informs his wife about his intentions to purchase a land for their home could be misperceived by the wife that he has a lot of money but refused to give her the amount of money she requested for her additional shoes and bags. In order to avoid conflict in such a situation there is the need to check for clarity and feedback during communication.

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In so far as refusing to talk to one another conveys a message Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) assert that silent treatment is a way of showing hostility and anger instead of a desire to work through the problem or what counselors call "crazy making behaviour". It could also happen that a person's body language conveys a message contradicting the person's verbal message. For instance a husband who says there is nothing the matter but his non-verbal behaviour such as long face, pouting, sighing with eyes directed upwards etc. indicate that he is terribly displeased (p. 388).

Larson, quoted by Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) commented that marital communication suffers among couples with unemployed husbands. This is true because where husbands are inadequate providers, wives tend to be unduly critical of them. When this happens, communication between the spouses become inflammatory and characterized by anger. In the same vein could it therefore be extrapolated that when wives (especially those who do not contribute to the family budget) become a drain on the household budget, communication between them and their husbands could suffer the same fate?

On decision making in the household Schandorf and Kwarfo (1990) contended that in most traditional Ghanaian communities women did not take part in decision making. They however, quoted Ainsworth (1985) who has suggested that the roles of women in the division of labour and decision making in the family were determined by the quality of education they had received. Schandorf and Kwarfo quoted Asante (1989) who on his part added that occupational status and the age of the spouses were important factors in decision making. Asante

further argued that decision making was more likely to be autocratic where the husband had a higher level of education and occupational status than the wife.

Kelly (1974) noted that decision making should form an early component in the lives of the newly married couples. He gave a whole array of areas and issues for which decision making becomes necessary. He has explained that decision making enables couples to plan ahead without anxiety and unreasonable optimism. Decision making is a give and take endeavour in which the wife and husband search for mutual responsibilities and enjoyment that will lay the strongest possible foundation for their future happiness.

All the authors quoted in this part of the discussions have given indications as to how both effective and non-effective communication can enhance or ruin marriages. Decision-making on its part has been identified as an essential component of marriage which complements effective communication to build up a harmonious marriage. As has already been noted, in marriage when only one partner always takes decisions on matters that affect the couple or the marital unit the disenfranchised partner is bound to seek redress through unconventional means such as angry acting out. Decision making has a very close link with communication because no two people can decide on issues together without using one communication type or the other.

Decision making and communications go together because decision-making by two people can only result from communication.

Marriages differ by types and forms. An attempt will now be made at highlighting only some of the popular ones as Peil (1977) put it. The types to be discussed here include:

1.    The religious marriage (i.e., The Christian and Islamic)

2.    The customary marriage

**Christian Marriage and Marital Satisfaction**

The Christian religion sees marriage as God ordained and ordered and therefore bases their marriages on biblical concept. In Genesis 2:24 the bible talks about marriage "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one fresh". From this perspective, God created man and woman to be joined together in marriage and not outside marriage.

Marriage in the Christian sense is to be seen as a commitment and not as contentment (Brown & Brown, 1999). This implies that partners in marriage should not seek to derive benefits from their marriage but rather that they should be concerned with what they can provide for their partners.

Collins (1988) refers to how the bible describes some good marriages as well as others which periodically had marital tensions as in the marriage of Abraham, Job, Lot, Sampson, etc. God's purpose for marriage is for partners to relish in each other and this is anticipated to lead to marital satisfaction. The Bible states that "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10). However, marrying a contentious, quarrelsome partner may not

bring marital satisfaction as described in Proverbs chapter 21 verse 9. Marital tension or conflict which leads to unsatisfactory marriages as cited in the bible, may have within it any of the symptoms of selfishness, lack of love, unwillingness to forgive, anger, bitterness, communication problems, anxiety, sexual abuse, drunkenness and feeling of inferiority. When a marriage is plagued with any or all of the above symptoms then definitely it does not fulfill God's purpose.

According to Collins (1988) (as cited in Abra, 2001) the bible describes the purposes for marriage, the roles of husband and wife, the importance of sex, and the responsibilities of parents. For instance as described in 2 Corinthians 7: 1-5 the purpose of marriage is for fulfillment of marital roles, sexual intimacy and for companionship.

The bible prescribes the type of bond that should exist between married individuals. For example, wives should submit themselves to their husbands as the church does to the Lord, and husbands are also to love their wives as their own bodies. The bible further explains that to love means the husband is to feel for, and to care for the wife just as he does for his own body. Love from the Christian point of view is as described in 1 Corinthians 13 part of which is the following: "For Love is patient and kind. It does not envy nor boast. It is not proud, rude, self-seeking, keeps no record of wrongs. It does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, trusts, hopes and perseveres. Love never fails." If indeed married partners can love each other just as is given here then a satisfactory marriage would be evident in "love".

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From the preceding biblical viewpoint about marriage one can expediently construe what to do so as to expect a satisfying and cheerful marriage. In the same way one can as well envisage what conditions will make a marriage unsatisfactory. For instance the bible speaks about two people becoming "one" which implies intimacy and companionship, (Gen. 2:22). From 1 Corinthian Chapter 7 one can deduce marital roles, commitment, Communication and Decision making. Ephesians 5:22 also talks about the need to love in marriage (Abra, 2001).

The bible again cautions against the marriage of opposing beliefs (though it does not entirely ban such marriages altogether) and this is what it refers to as being unequally bondaged. Though religion can be a binding force in marriage yet when a husband and wife have different viewpoints, religion can then become a destructive focus for marital tension, (Collins, 1988). Religious inclinations carry along with it values and beliefs systems. According to Collins (1988) values involve what actually is important in life. Value conflicts are the generating point of many marital problems. In marriages where couples have similar values the marriage is often healthy. Conflicting values lead to tension, power struggles and criticisms.

From the prior discourse on what and how God proposed marriage to be, these bits and pieces have been figured out as conditions that would lend a hand to satisfaction in marriage. These include – closeness and companionship, communication, decision-making, steadfastness, marital roles, love and belief systems. The researcher acknowledges the fact that these conditions as ascribed

from the bible are only a hand full and encourage future researchers to attempt sourcing several others.

**The Islamic Marriage and Marital Satisfaction**

Akinade (1997) (as cited in Abra, 2001) states that, Islamic marriage is carried out along the dogmas of Islam using the commands of the Quran as a guide. He maintains that those who go for this kind of marriage possibly will also practice monogamy. However, those who can accommodate and care reasonably for more than one wife up to a maximum of four wives may do so (Holy Quran 4:4). The Quran in Chapter 4, verse 22 talks of Islamic marriage as being a covenant. Islamic marriages are intertwined with the idea of God i.e., marriage in Islam is thought of as religious commitment and internalized as divine blessings. Marriage in Islam is found in Quran 4:1 God created woman to relieve man of loneliness (Abra, 2001). The fundamental rationale for Islamic marriage is that, God created for men mates to seek in their company peace and tranquility, and set between them mutual love and mercy (Quran 30:21). The prophet declares that the best Muslim is the one who is best to his family and the greatest, most blessed joy in life is a good righteous wife.

Abdallati (1975) in an unpublished book, explains that marriage in Islam is regarded as a righteous act; the act of responsible devotion. For there are passages in the Quran and statements by the prophet which state that when a Muslim marries, he has thereby perfected half his religion. Thus marriage in Islam is intertwined with the principles of Islamic faith. In marriage, partners make commitments to each other and to God. According to Abdalati commitment  in

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Islamic marriage is to bring about mutual fulfillment and self realization, love and peace, compassion and serenity, comfort and hope (p. 127). For happiness and a fulfilling married life Islam has set the behaviour for husbands and wives. For example the Quran and Sunah have prescribed (1) kindness and equity (ii) compassion and love (iii) sympathy and consideration (iv) patience and goodwill.

Islamic marriage also creates new roles for partners. For instance it is the husband's solemn duty to God to treat his wife with kindness, honour and patience; to keep her honourably and to cause her no harm or grief. (Quran 2: 229 - 232; 4:19).

Similarly, the Quran gives the wives rights and duties as in Quran 2: 228. For instance the Quran states that men are guardians and protectors of women and thus give the men a degree over the women because they the men expend their wealth (Quran 4:4). An Islamic husband has the responsibility for full maintenance of the wife. Such maintenance entails the right to lodging, clothing, nourishing, general care and well-being (Abdallati, 1975). Additionally, husbands are to treat wives with equity, to respect their feelings and to show kindness and consideration. A husband cannot subject his wife to suspense and uncertainty. If he has no love or sympathy for her, she has the right to demand freedom from the marital bond (Abdallati, 1975). It must be noted here that just as one Islamic scholar remarked "The worst thing which is allowed by Islam and disliked by God is divorce".

Abdallati (1975, p. 131) quoting Quran 25:74 enumerates the wife's obligations towards her husband. That; she must contribute to the success and

blissfulness of the marriage as much as possible. The wife must be attentive to the comfort and well being of her mate etc. To fulfill her obligations, the wife must be faithful, trustworthy and honest. The Quran also touches on how the wife should be intimate with her husband. This is interpreted to mean that she should make herself desirable, attractive, responsive and co-operative. A wife may not deny herself to her husband. (Abdallati 1975, p. 132).

The above discussions have focused on a detail analysis of the Quranic injunctions for Islamic marriage. The deductions made from these injunctions as regards marital satisfaction according to Abra (2001) are:

(i)     Marriage in Islam is seen as a perfection of one's faith and this means that if one married in the Islamic faith then his belief system is enhanced (Quran 2: 222)

(ii)    Quran 2: 224-232 alleges that Islamic marriage creates new roles for partners. In these same passages the

(iii)   Quran enjoins husbands to treat wives with kindness, honour and patience and this involves accommodating the wife's behaviour which in turn demands a lot of commitment and adjustment.

(iv)    Islamic religion acknowledges the importance of decision making in marriage thus in both mate selection and in divorce, partners are expected to reach a mutual consent as in Quran 2: 228 & 233.

(v)     Love, as an essential element in Islamic marriage is highlighted in Quran 30: 22. The passage states among others, that "He has

created wives for you and He has put love and tenderness between you".

(vi)     The Quran commands the wife to be intimate with her husband.

It is evident that both Christian and Islamic religions have some core values for marriage and both go further to stipulate what marriage 'should' and 'should not' be. The instructions stipulated regulate marriages and hence give clues as to what state of affairs must win through so as to make sure a satisfactory marriage is achieved.

**The Customary Marriage and Marital Satisfaction**

Studies of African societies generally indicate that within the whole sub-region, men and women are expected to marry. As a result, some researchers indicate that in Africa, marriage is nearly universal. Married life is important to many Africans, including Ghanaians, because it is the basis for assigning reproductive, economic, and noneconomic roles to individuals. Voluntary celibacy is quite rare in traditional African societies. The pro-family and marriage ideology that exists in Ghana also has implications for social relations. Among the various ethnic and linguistic groups, unmarried women are often viewed differently from the married. This may explain why by age twenty, a significant proportion of women in Ghana are married (Takyi & Oheneba-Sakyi, 1997). Marriage is nearly universal in Ghana, and couples are expected to have children. The family is the basis of social organization, the main source of security in old age and the primary caretaker of the young.

In Ghana, marriage is constructed according to the custom of ethnic group from which the couples belong. Generally, marriage in Ghana is recognized as a union between a man and a woman with the knowledge of both families of the bride and the groom. In the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana, marriage is a union between a man and a woman who agree to live together as husband and wife and have gone through all procedures recognized in the society for such a purpose. The purpose of such marriage is to provide companionship for the couple, the means to offer support for each other, and a legitimate avenue for sexual satisfaction and reproduction. Marriage is usually a group affair which involves not only the immediate relatives of the couple but more distant kin folk.

Inquiries are made by both families to ensure the family of the prospective son-in-law or daughter-in-law is respected. Usually violent behaviour, immorality, witchcraft, incurable or contagious diseases, and insanity in a family are not approved. Generally, many Ghanaians prefer a spouse who is hardworking and respectful, peaceful (not violent or do not advocate violence), and of the same or compatible religious background.

The customary rites or marriage ceremony, as practiced by the woman's ethnic group, are performed by the man's head of family, by the father or uncle or any member of the family who is recognized by the community as honourable.

Presentation and acceptance of drinks and gifts known as dowry bride wealth signifies the consent of family members to the marriage. It is also a sign or a token of support for the marriage and is used to compensate the parent for the

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loss of the services of their daughter. The dowry or the bride wealth does not mean that the woman has been sold to the man.

Customary marriages differ among societies. Despite the differences, drinks and cash are widely used. Although cash is involved in the northern part of Ghana, drinks and cola are also used. One characteristic of customary marriage is that it allows polygamy thus it allows the man to marry more than one woman. However, Christains who complete a religious marriage usually abide by the biblical principle of "one man one wife".

Marriage in the developing societies (such as those of Ghana) where socio-economic life is characterised to a large extent by poverty, personal strivings of marriage partners seem to be geared more towards material realities than the fulfillment of the psychological needs of marriage where personal relationship to a partner produces the companionship, deep levels of communication and sharing (Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1985; Klomegah, 1997). Such experience might be culturally grounded and reinforced by stereotypic systems of gender role.

In Ghana, men are generally the "champions" (hunters, "workers", kings, opinion leaders, etc). This gives rise partly to the prevalence of polygamous marriage systems in which affluence is the fundamental qualification (besides other factors such as religion and education) by which men in society take on more wives. As Klomegah (1997) reported, in Ghana (and other West African societies), polygamy is very common. In the typical rural communities where farming is the main occupation, having many wives is of economic benefit to the

men since the wives (and their children) constitute the labour force on the farms. Having large families is therefore "designated" as success and power for men in such societies (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974).

Further, in Ghanaian cultural experience, marriage is not merely a relationship between two individuals (man and woman) who are in love. Rather, marriage is a union between the families of the couples. The marriage contract on the surface appears to be between two individuals but in reality, the contract is between the lineage groups of both the man and woman. This however does not necessarily imply a constant future invasion of the privacy of the couple by family members of the two lineages in the contract (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974; Tettey, 2002). A study by Asamoah (2004) revealed that an in-law who is able to extend a helping hand to the family of the spouse is seen as a successful individual and hence the marriage declared successful. Again Asamoah maintained that what is more satisfying in marriage to an individual is the ability of the spouse to accept the family of his or her spouse as his or her own and extend to them any assistance they deserve.

## Empirical Review

The researcher examines in this part of the literature review, studies which have bearings on relevant variables of marital satisfaction namely sex, religion educational level of married people and age in this study. The researcher also attempts to use studies based on theories on marriage and marital satisfaction reviewed above.

## Studies on Selected Indices of Marital Satisfaction

Burr (1970) studied a random middle class sample to test how marital satisfaction obtains with various aspects of marriage over the life cycle. He intended to find the precise areas of satisfaction with six different aspects of marital relationship. The areas are;

i.   The way finances are handled

ii.  The couple's social activities

iii. The way a spouse performs his or her household tasks

iv.  The companionship in marriage

v.   The sexual interaction and

vi.  The relationship with the children

Burr's studies found that

(1)   Contrary to the hypothesized assumption that there is a decrease in satisfaction from the early stages of family life to the later stages the study showed no major trends of decreasing scores in any of the six areas of satisfaction but rather several of them actually tended to rise over most of the life cycle. These findings imply that contrary to the perception that as marriages advance in age the partners no more derive satisfaction from conditions which used to satisfy them earlier on, Burr on the contrary found that as marriages advance in age those conditions which used to give them satisfaction at the earlier stage do actually continue to give them more satisfaction than it used to be.

(2)     The second hypothesis considered whether there were gradual changes or abrupt changes in marital satisfaction over the life cycle. The study discovered that rather than having trends in the development of marital satisfaction, there were a lot of relatively abrupt variations in some types of satisfaction and virtually no satisfaction in others. This finding seems very applicable because as human beings our tastes and preferences may change with time.

(3)     The assumption that the pre-launching stage of the family life cycle was the most difficult one was also not upheld. The results found that the school going age period was rather associated with much difficulty. There are other studies such as that of Lang (1932), Pineo (1963) and Wallin (1953) which confirm Burr's findings.

Studying factors accounting for marriage stability and divorce among Christian couples in Cape Coast: a case study of Roman Catholic, Methodist and Pentecost churches, Acquah (1989) found that, marriage stability can be affected by lack of love or affection, ineffective communication, poor maintenance of the family, childlessness, sexual incompatibility, in-law interference, negative personality traits of a couple, wide age gap between spouses, wife's education being higher than that of the husband and doctrinal differences.

Blazer (1963) studying complementary needs and marital happiness like many earlier writers recognised the importance of needs fulfillment in a happy marriage and in his study proceeded to test whether a theory of love could be hinged on terms of complementary needs. The theory sought to establish a link

between the degree of similarities of needs of spouses and their marital happiness. The researcher intended this theory to be applied in mate selection had it been proved significant.

Of the 15 correlations involved he called Type I Needs (e.g., Achievement, Difference, Order, Exhibition, Dominance etc.) no correlation was statistically significant in the hypothesised direction. In a second general hypothesis which assumed a positive linear relationship between complementariness of needs and marital happiness, all the correlations were negative. The explanation that can be deduced from Blazer's (1963) study is the fact that partners anticipating marriage or who are already in marriage and have similar needs do not mean that when such needs are fulfilled in their marriage they would automatically be happy.

Danso (1997) in a study on "Marital Instability and Divorce in A Typical Akim Kotoku Village" found that factors contributing to stable marriages are: confidence in the other spouse's affection and satisfaction with the degree of affection shown, egalitarian rather than patriarchal marital relations guaranteed the success of marriage.

Korson (1969) opined that the display of love or affection as a key factor in marital happiness is given a rather low profile treatment amongst Muslim couple or even those anticipating marriage. Korson conducted a study on student attitudes to mate selection in a Muslim society, Pakistan. The researcher used unmarried graduate students from the University of Karachi and the University of Punjab in Lahore. An interesting but established fact about the students' attitude

to mate selection was that the question of 'love' was out. This is because in Pakistani tradition "the criteria for a successful marriage are not necessarily companionship and love, but fertility, permanence and the alliance of the two family groups. This finding confirms the earlier assertion that Muslims do not consider 'love' as a basic element in marriage.

Rausch, Barry, Herfel and Swain (1975) have taken an important step in understanding the relationship between communication and conflict in marital relationship. In their study, four conflict situations varying in intensity were created for each couple and each was taped so that each conflict interaction could be coded and analysed. The study gives a qualitative generalized impressions on relationship between conflict and communication and a quantitative analysis. The authors found the interactive styles of husbands and wives in handling conflict to be very much alike. The authors used the study to strongly argue that the determinants of human behaviour start beyond the conditions which ignited it to include social roles and expectations of others. They argued that the same message elicit different replies in different circumstances. Rausch et. al (1975) concluding statement on the part that social roles and expectations of others brings about conflict has brought this discussions into the realm of role, role expectations and roles performance.

Oppong (1977) (as cited in Schandorf & Kwarfo, 1990) showed considerable evidence of conflict between sexes. For example the studies found conflict situations in the area of prescribed norms, and conflict in behaviour. He noted that role conflict has been amalgamated by women being in employment.

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Oppong also found the persistent influence of sibbling solidarity, the influence of in-laws, the co-existence of kin, the prevalence of polygyny and multiple sexual liaisons etc. as preventing conjugal development. Oppong made this study on Ghanaian civil servants.

Scanzoni (1979) conducted a study on black and white couples to determine how marital solidarity among them is influenced by sex role norms and economic factors. There was a probability selection of respondents. His findings were that when black and white husbands and wives are compared on measures of sex role norms, self-concept and task performance evaluation of wives, blacks emerged as more egalitarian on the more innovative and behavioural measures of sex roles. But blacks are less egalitarian on the neo-traditional and more ideological sex role dimensions. Again black wives are evaluated more positively than whites in terms of task performance. Scanzoni's (1979) findings on sex role norms are very crucial and confirm the point he and his associates made in the theoretical aspect of this review (i.e., Scanzoni & Scanzoni, 1988) that lower-status couples are accustomed to greater gender - role differentiation.

Schandorf and Kwarfo (1990) in their studies on power and authority in the marital homes in Western Region of Ghana found that despite the tradition that husbands traditionally decide on issues, in the event of irresponsibility on the part of the husband concerning financing, the wife took major decisions affecting the home.

Benneh (1991) (as cited in Schandorf & Kwarfo, 1996) found out that indeed decision-making in the household is believed to depend to a great extent upon the relative power position of the spouses and their respective aspirations.

The studies above have shown that marital satisfaction of couples does not depend on any one particular item or condition but on a number of them. For example while one study looked at the influence of roles, decision making, love, etc. others also considered items like financing and traditional practices in couple's locality.

**Studies on Religious Influence and Marital Satisfaction**

Religion and spirituality were important factors when assessing marital satisfaction in this study. Lukoff, Lu and Turner, (1995) defined religion as one's adherence to a church or institution's beliefs or practices. Literature on the impact of religion on marital satisfaction was split. In his sixty-year review of family research, Jenkins (1991) found that high religiosity and increased church attendance increased marital satisfaction, while a study conducted by Booth, Johnson, Branaman and Sica (1995) found no relationship between religiosity and marital satisfaction. In a study by Beach and Hurt (2008), it was found that prayer significantly affected the satisfaction of marriage immediately after study implementation and with six-month follow-ups.

Although greater individual religiousness and religious homogony has been associated with increased marital satisfaction and adjustment, this research area required conceptual advancements (Thomas & Cornwall, 1990). Heaton (2002) found that couples with religious preferences who exercised the same

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religious faiths were more satisfied in their marriages than couples who had no religious preference.

In a qualitative study by Robinson and Blanton (1993) where 15 couples were interviewed, religion was the most prevalent theme that emerged from that analysis as an indicator of long-term marital satisfaction. Some of the couples reported that having religious faith was more powerful when both spouses believed in God. Although the amount of church involvement was different among the couples in this study, some found this to be a strong factor in the satisfaction of their marriages.

Bachand and Caron (2001) examined explanations for stability and satisfaction for long-term married couples and found that support as well as religion/religious agreement contributed to this. In this study, 36% of the couples perceived religion as a positive factor, 26% reported that it directly affected their marriage, and 36% stated that religion played little to no role in affecting their marital satisfaction.

In a review of ten qualitative studies on marital satisfaction, Brooks (2006) found that religion was the sixth factor most cited that contributed to lasting and satisfying marriage relationships. Brooks also found in her study that the importance of religion focused on being Christian, believing in God, and the power of prayer as contributing factors.

Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar and Swank (2001) (as cited in Bradbury, Fincham and Beach, 2000) showed that several aspects of marriage quality (e.g. marital satisfaction) are predicted by religious activities such as

praying together and considering the sanctity of marriage. Hatch, James and Schumm (1986) studied the interaction between (inter alia) Spiritual Intimacy and Marital Satisfaction. They found that while Spiritual Intimacy correlated significantly with Emotional Intimacy and Marital Satisfaction, it did not have a direct effect on Marital Satisfaction, rather it affected Marital Satisfaction indirectly, via Emotional Intimacy.

Another view is that of Thornton and Camburn (1989) (as cited in Call & Heaton, 1997) which suggests that there is a reciprocal relationship between religiosity and family oriented behaviours, that is religiosity may be affected by a change in family behaviours, and family behaviours may be affected by a change in religiosity.

Berggren (1997) found that religion discourages divorces, to the extent of a 14% decrease in one city in Sweden. Gartner, Larson and Allen (1991) (as cited in Legako & Sorenson, 2000) found that religious psychotherapists experience higher levels of marital satisfaction and lower divorce rates, especially if they attend church together regularly. Jones, Watson and Wolfram (1992, cited in Legako & Sorenson, 2000) found that of the alumni of seven Christian psychology graduate programs, 80.5% were married, 15.9%were single, 0.5% were cohabiting, and 4.7% were divorced. Robinson (2002) refers to studies which show a lower divorce rate for agnostics and atheists than for Christians, and suspects that there may be two factors which skew the results: firstly that some couples drop out of church after divorce; and secondly, that financial and

educational levels may need to be considered (Christianity seems to be stronger among poorer communities, where educational levels also vary from the norm).

Larson and Swyers (as cited in Larson, 2002) claims that religiosity does have a significant effect on divorce rates. In a 15 year national (USA) study, they found that 37% of couples who rarely or never attended a religious service had divorced, whereas only 14% of couples who attended frequently had divorced. Larson and Goltz (as cited in Larson, 2002) found that couples who attended church frequently were more committed to marriage, while denomination and affiliation were not related to marital commitment. Larson summarises that a strong commitment to marriage, and jointly engaging in religious activities both help to promote marriage quality.

The study by Booth and Johnson (1995) correlated five indicators of religiosity with five indicators of marital satisfaction. They found that all five of the religiosity indicators significantly affected one indicator of marital satisfaction (*Divorce Proneness*), but did not affect any other indicators. They also found that two indicators of marital satisfaction (*Interaction* and *Happiness*) affected religiosity. *Marital Happiness* affected both *Church Attendance* and *Religious Influence In Daily Life*, and *Interaction* affected *Church Attendance*. They also found one gender difference: *Marital Interaction* had a positive effect on *Prayer* for men only. In all other respects there were no gender differences. Overall they concluded that any increase in religiosity leads to an improvement in the marriage. They concede that Fundamentalism and Religiosity of the individuals at the time of marriage are factors which should be considered.

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Heaton and Albrecht (as cited in Glenn & Supancic 1984, Greeley 1989, and Larson & Goltz 1989) summarise by saying that religious norms act as barriers to marriage breakup, especially among Catholic and conservative Protestant communities, which encourage couples to resolve their conflicts as a positive alternative to divorce. On a similar note, de Vaus and Wolcott (1997) report that church attenders in Australia are more likely to believe that divorces are too easy to obtain.

Noono (1997) on his part studied on causes of marriage breakdown and found that the breakdowns in, traditionalist and Christian orthodox churches were very high while those among Christian charismatic and Muslim were relatively low. Still on religion and divorce, Acheampong and Heaton (1989) cited the studies of Fallers of the Busoga of East Africa which found no significant difference between the divorce rate of Christians and Muslims.

To continue the Ghanaian case, studies by Acheampong and Heaton (1989) showed a similar increase in divorce rates in Ghana. The authors again quoted a study of Yoruba of Western Nigeria by Lloyd who found no significant differences among the religions - Christians, Muslims and traditional believers. However, they quoted Akinade (1979) who studied the elites of Lagos and observed that most of the divorces occurred among protestant couples; the Catholic couples were very slow to divorce.

These studies above on religion and divorce rate showed that there were no significant differences in the rate of divorce when different religions (e.g. Christians Muslims and traditionalists) were compared. Can it thus be inferred

from these studies that when the determinants of marital satisfaction for these different religions are compared they would not be different? Can it also be inferred that the degree of satisfaction that each of them would derive would also not be statistically different since dissatisfaction in marriage is the chief cause of divorce? I think that definitely there would be some difference but would the differences be significant?

### Educational Level and Marital Satisfaction

Given that educational level generally increases as age increases (e.g. people do not decrease in educational level) and that age is positively correlated with marital satisfaction, it seems reasonable to suggest that educational level would be positively correlated with marital satisfaction as well (Bayer, 1969). Research conducted in America has indicated that educational level may predict marital satisfaction in some populations, though past studies were focused on whether women continued their education beyond time of marriage (Bayer, 1969, 1972), or have shown whether educational attainment pre- and post-nuptials was related to marital satisfaction (Davis & Bumpass, 1976).

While studies have explored whether continued education for women could be predictive of marital instability has been explored, no studies have been devoted specifically to whether educational level pre- and post-nuptials is related to marital satisfaction as far as the researcher read for this study. Because of this dearth in research, one variable included in this study is education level and its possible correlation to marital satisfaction. Davis and Bumpass (1976) studied continued education among women in the United States. They found that women

with eight or less years of schooling at time of marriage were less likely to continue with their education, though this was attributed to less initial commitment to education. They also found that women who had some college education at the time of marriage were more likely to continue their education past the time of their marriages, and that women who were divorced or separated also tended to continue their education. However, there was no confirming or disconfirming evidence that a desire to continue education was what led to the marital instability that caused the disruption (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972). It would therefore be interesting to explore whether educational level could lead to marital instability, especially when Cherlin (1979) in America, Janssen, Poortman, and Kalmijn (1998) in a study in the Netherlands, and Kalmijn (1999) all found that highly educated women had higher rates of unstable marriages. Jose and Alfons (2007) also found that as educational level increased, there were indications of increased sexual adjustment problems.

Heaton (2002) explored information from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth in United States of America that indicated that marriages contracted after 1980 are becoming increasingly stable and sought to find explanations for this change. In contrast with the aforementioned findings (e.g. Cherlin, 1979; Janssen et al., 1998; Kalmijn, 1999), Heaton found that marital dissolution is lower among women who were more educated or who married at an older age. In fact, he concluded that age at marriage played the greatest role in accounting for trends in marital dissolution, and stated that women who married at older ages had more stable marriages. He also found that marriages were more

stable if the husband was older or more educated, but not if the wife was older or more educated.

Tucker and O'Grady (2001) also included a discussion of intelligence, as measured by educational attainment level, in their study. They investigated factors related to marital satisfaction, including attractiveness, educational level, and age at marriage. Using American undergraduates to rate eight bogus marriages on a 15-item Likert scale, they found that subjects judged similarities in educational levels to be an important determinant in whether the couple was likely to have a satisfying marriage. An important aspect of this study was that people of higher educational levels were only seen as having more satisfying marriages if the education level was commensurate with that of their spouse. Lower-educated couples were also judged as having satisfying marriages, as long as they were similarly matched in level of education. It is important to note, however, that these test subjects judged conflict marriages. Dyadic satisfaction among real-life couples was not assessed. Elder (1969) took a sociocultural look at educational level and marriage, and defined it, along with physical attractiveness, as a factor in marriage.

Marriage mobility is defined as the change of social class or status, usually to a higher level, through marriage. A woman who is high in marriage mobility has a greater ability to change social status through marriage. Elder hypothesised that women who were better-educated and more attractive were more likely to marry men of a higher social status. Although his findings on female marriage mobility may now seem quaint and out-of-date, Elder made the point, that

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"American society generally disapproves of a marital exchange in which the ownership of these attributes (education and attractiveness) is reversed, such as when the woman has the intelligence and talent, and the man has the youth or beauty" (p. 520). This theory is consistent with the conclusions made by Tucker and O'Grady (2001) that married couples with differing levels of education may be less satisfied with their marriages if the woman of the dyad is the one with a higher level of education. However, there may be the added factor, which Elder (1969) discussed, that women who attend college have a larger pool from which to choose potential partners. It may be that women who have a high level of education are more satisfied with their marriages because they were exposed to more potential mates and were allowed higher selectivity. As the relationship between marital satisfaction and differences in partner educational level is unclear and yields mixed results when examined, it is important to explore this relationship further.

Social Scientists (Kelly, 1974) have found a relationship between social status and the degree to which couples are satisfied with aspects of their lives such as companionship, empathy and physical affection. Higher educational attainment is an aspect of social status since social status is determined by education, occupation and income. Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) in a study of sex roles, economic factors and marital solidarity in black and white marriages found out that persons who were better educated tended to be more economically and maritally satisfied and experienced greater marital solidarity. They also found that

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the better educated persons maintained more egalitarian or less traditional role structures.

In Nigeria, Olagungu (1988) found that marital stability was positively associated with educational status. Also Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) has cited examples of how couples with higher status were more likely than the lower status couples to feel that their marital companionship, empathy and physical affection were satisfactory.

Bumpass (2003) in his study with 210 married people in the United States of America revealed that 105 of them who had had higher levels of education indicated higher levels of marital satisfaction as compared to those with lower levels of education. On the marital satisfaction inventory score sheet to these married people Bumpass (2003) stated that people with higher levels of education scored 3.6 which were higher than the average of 2.0. They added that people with lower levels of education score an overall of 2.7 which was also above average. In their conclusion they stated that married people with higher levels of education showed higher levels of satisfaction than their counterparts with lower levels.

Acheampong and Heaton (1989) had a study on socio-demographic correlates of the timing of divorce in Ghana. In this study they quoted studies to show that higher educational attainment lowered the divorce and separation rates.

It seems likely that education correlated positively with marital satisfaction as few available studies (as quoted above) on the influence of education on marital satisfaction show.

## Age and Marital Satisfaction

Most research in the area of marital satisfaction has focused on age at time of marriage (e.g. Lee, 1977; Booth & Edwards, 1985). There is virtually unanimous agreement that there is an inverse association between the age at first marriage and the probability of divorce; meaning that the younger one is when married, the higher the likelihood of divorce (Lee, 1977). People who marry early are at a higher risk of marital instability than those who marry later in life. One major reason for addressing age is that factors which are negatively related to marital "success" (i.e. whether one divorces or remains married) include many which are related to age at time of marriage, such as low education, premarital pregnancy, short premarital acquaintance, personality maladjustment, and low socioeconomic background (Burchinal, 1965).

Bumpass and Sweet (1972) studied whether the inverse correlation between age at time of marriage and marital instability was attributable to the participant's education, premarital pregnancy, religious affiliation, parental marital stability, or husband's marital history. They performed a multivariate analysis on a large sample of married white women under the age of 45, and found that marital instability was not attributable to the aforementioned factors. Their data showed that age at marriage was the strongest single predictor of marital instability in their analysis. This means that, in absence of all other seemingly relevant variables, age at time of marriage was the strongest predictor of marital stability.

Lee (1977) studied the relationship between marital satisfaction, age at marriage, and marital role performance. "Role performance" was defined as the extent to which a person acts out what is perceived to be his or her role socioeconomically and interpersonally in marriage. This study used the used data from a nonrandom sample of 394 married couples, including spouses' evaluations of role performance in order to gain a more accurate response. All respondents were in their first marriage, had been married six years or less at the time of the study, and were under 35 years of age. Through use of multivariate analysis, Lee found a positive correlation between age at time of marriage and marital satisfaction after controlling for the antecedent variables of length of marriage, education, socioeconomic background, and religious importance. This means that as the age at marriage increased, marital satisfaction increased as well. He hypothesized that those who marry young may be cognizant of their better potential to remarry in the event of a divorce, and may then be less willing to tolerate dissatisfaction.

Booth and Edwards (1985) expanded on the research done by Bumpass and Sweet (1972) and Lee (1977) and also found that age at marriage was positively correlated with marital satisfaction due to inadequate preparation. They hypothesized that this situation likely stemmed from inadequate role models or from lack of exposure length to these role models because of early termination of their "marriage apprenticeship" (p. 68) as a result of early marriage. They felt that people who married at an early age were more likely to experience deficiencies in their marital role performance, which then led to marital dissatisfaction.

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Researchers used random digit dialing procedures to locate eligible participants. In total, the analysis involved 1,715 men and women currently in their first marriage. To test their hypotheses that early marriage was related to marital instability and poor role performance, and to control for the confounding variable of external pressure for marriage, Booth and Edwards used the Marital Instability Index (Booth, Johnson, & Edwards, 1985) as well as multiple items to assess role performance, alternatives to the present marriage, and external pressure for marriage. They found that marital instability is the highest for those who married early (before age 20). Those who married in their twenties scored the lowest on marital instability. They found that those who married later than their twenties scored similarly to those that married earlier, which suggested that marital stability may have a curvilinear relationship with age.

Bradbury, Fincham and Beach (2000) continued in this similar study of marital satisfaction in relation to age. Their research indicated that both society and the individual benefited when couples formed strong marriages, as those unions frequently led to less involvement in crime and other detrimental activities by spouses and/or offspring. According to them, slowly declining divorce rates over the last eight years may be related to a sharp increase in the average age of brides and grooms during that same span of time; however, overall marital satisfaction dropped significantly over the past four decades, and continued to noticeably decline for nearly all couples during the first decade of marriage. Furthermore, the positive and negative factors that led to both increased marital satisfaction and marital dissatisfaction, respectively, might not be mutually

exclusive (i.e. satisfaction in marriage is a judgment based on criteria that changed both with the age of each partner and that of the marriage).

Jose and Alfons (2007) examined the effects of age, number of children, employment status, and length of marriage on marital satisfaction. They found that those who married later were more likely to remain married, but also that those who married younger and got divorced were more likely to remarry. Contrary to previously stated results, these researchers found that age had a significant negative effect on the sexual adjustment and marital adjustment of first-married adults. In other words, the older one was at the time of first marriage, the less adjusted the individual was toward the marriage and, consequently, the less satisfaction one would had. Middle-aged adults seemed to have greater adjustment problems than both young and elderly participants involved in the study.

**Sex and Marital Satisfaction**

Studying marital satisfaction over the family life cycle, Rollins and Feldman (1970) found that on only two of the four indices of satisfaction were there consistent patterns over the family life cycle for both husbands and wives. The researchers stated that the two indices of satisfaction in which the husbands and wives followed different patterns over the family life cycle were on the subjective affective state of each individual with reference to their marriage.

From their data Rollins and Feldman (1970) concluded that marriage has very different meanings for husbands than for wives and that very different events within or outside the marriage and/or family influenced the developmental pattern

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of marital satisfaction in men and women but women had significant satisfaction ahead of men.

However, in Blazer's (1963) study on complementary need fulfillment and marital happiness of husbands and of wives, the correlation between marital happiness of husbands and wives was found to be positive. Thus when correlation for husbands and wives was computed, it indicated that both husbands and wives had similar view on what gives marital happiness.

In a study by Rausch, Barry, Hertel and Swain (1975) in which the researchers sought to find out how communication and conflict were related in a marital situation, the researchers found the styles of interaction of husbands  and wives very much alike. The only noticeable differences existed in power relationships where husbands had the upper hand.

### Summary of Literature Review

This part of the literature review was based on empirical studies by researchers whose studies had direct bearing on this study. From the studies it became apparent that conditions which gave satisfaction are varied. Almost all the four variables used in this study namely sex, religion, educational level and age had at one time or the other been studied by researchers.

In 1991 a study conducted by Gartner, Larson and Allen on religious commitment and mental health on the outcomes of marital satisfaction conducted in Ireland showed there existed no significant different between Muslims and Christians in their marital satisfaction. However, other researchers like Lukoff et

al (1995), Robinson and Blanton (1993) assert that there is a positive correlation between religion and marital satisfaction.

The studies reviewed showed that educational levels had influence on marital satisfaction. A case in point is that of Bayer's studies of 1969 and 1972 which noted that educational level may predict marital satisfaction in some populations. Janssen et al (1998) were found to have noted highly educated women had higher rates of unstable marriages.

Age of married people and marital satisfaction were noted to have positive correlation. All the researchers whose works were reviewed for this study noted that age of married people have influence on their marriage. Lee (1977) stressed that people who marry early are at higher risk of marital instability than those who marry later in life.

Finally, the reviewed studies showed that sex has influence on the satisfaction of married people. According to Rollins and Feldman (1970) men and women hold different meanings to marriage. A study by Blazer (1963) also showed that there existed positive correlation between gender and marital satisfaction.

## CHAPTER THREE

## METHODLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter discusses how the study was carried out and deals with the area of study, design of the research, the population, sampling techniques, research instrument, validity and reliability of the instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

### Study Area

The study was conducted in Sunyani Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. The population of Sunyani according to the 2010 population census provisional results is 79,072. The municipality is located in the heart of the region, between Latitudes 70 55'N and 70 35'N and Longitudes 20'W and 20 30'W. It shares boundaries with the Wenchi District to the north, Berekum and Dormaa municipalities to the west, Asutifi District to the south and Tano South District to the east. The municipality has been divided into five (5) sub areas.

In terms of vegetation Sunyani Municipality falls largely within the Moist – Semi Deciduous Forest Vegetation Zone. Most of the primary vegetation can be found in patches around the north-west, east and southern parts of the municipality. These include the Yaya and the Amoma forest reserves. This vegetation zone also contains most of the valuable timber species. As indicated by

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the characteristics of the vegetation cover, tree crops such as cocoa and citrus thrive well in this zone.

Also in terms of climate, the municipality falls within the wet Semi-Equatorial Climatic Zone of Ghana. The mean monthly temperatures vary between 23 °C and 33 °C with the lowest around August and the highest being observed around March and April. The relative humidities are high averaging between 75 and 80 percent during the rainy seasons and 70 and 80 percent during the dry seasons of the year. Sunyani experiences double maxima rainfall pattern. The main rainy season is between March and September with the minor between October to December.
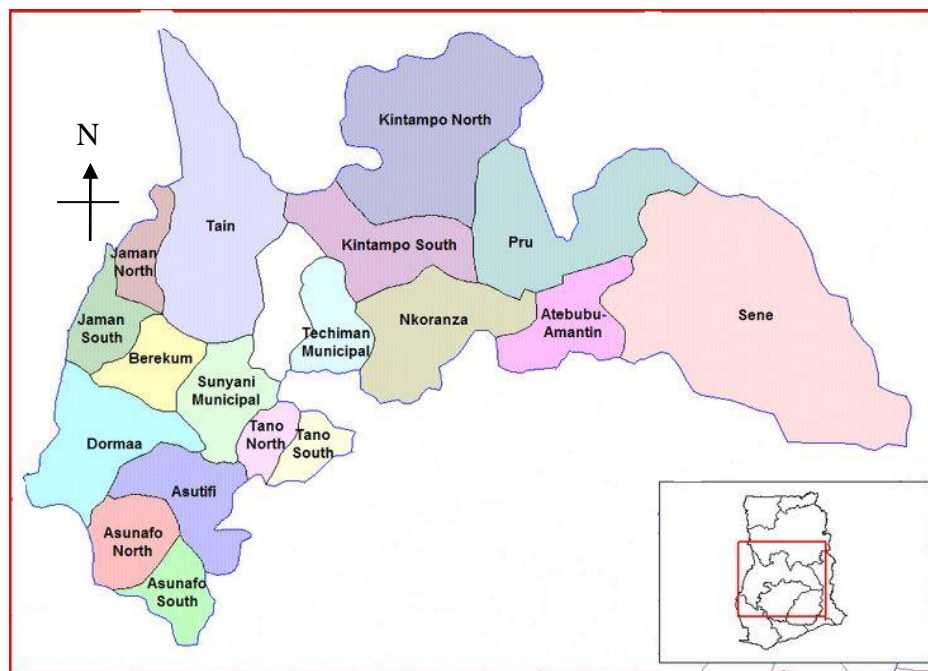


**Figure 1:** A Map of Brong Ahafo Region Showing the Study Area of Sunyani

Municipality

Source: Geographical Society of Ghana (2010)

## Research Design

Research design is seen as the blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. It provides the procedural outcome for the conduct of any investigation. Gay (1992), remarks that research design indicates the structure of a study, the nature of the hypothesis and the variables involved in the study. The research design chosen for the study is descriptive survey. This is because the main purpose of the study is to investigate marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani Municipality.

A descriptive survey was employed for the study to obtain quantitative data from the respondent for analysis since the research is temporal and would be conducted within a limited time frame. This type of design is usually conducted to estimate the prevalence of the outcome of interest for a given population (Gay, 1992). This provides a quick and reliable data for analysis since the research would be conducted within a limited time frame (McBride, 1995).

Descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way (Shuttleworth, 2008). It involves collecting data in order to answer questions concerning the current status of the subject of study (Gay, 1992). It also results in a description of a data, whether in words, pictures, charts or tables. Descriptive study is basically designed to find out the existing situation of a particular phenomenon and the issues evolving around it.

The advantages of this design are that the subject is observed in a complete natural and unchanged environment. Descriptive research is often used

as a pre-cursor to more quantitative research designs, the general overview giving some valuable pointers as what variables are worth testing qualitatively. More so, the use of descriptive designs allows variables and procedures to be described as accurately and completely as possible so that other researchers can replicate the study.

## Population

Amedahe (2002) defined a population as the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. The target population for the study comprised all married people in the Sunyani Municipality. However, such an all-inclusive population would involve a long period of time which in effect would reduce accuracy of measurement. This is because the population might change with regard to the dependent variables (Wiersma, 1980). Therefore the study centered on an accessible population of about thousand nine hundred (1900) registered marriages.
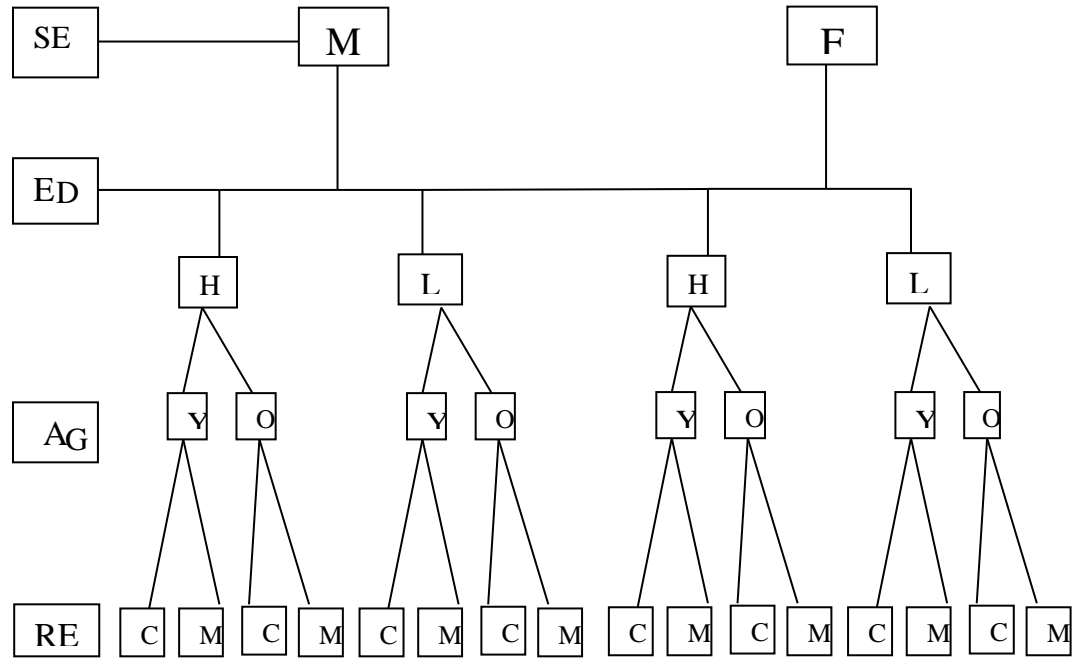
**Figure 2:** Multi-Stage Sampling Framework

Where

SE is Sex of respondents

M is male married people

F is female married people

ED is educational level of married people

H is higher level of education thus GCE A level to Masters

L is lower level of education thus JSS to Diploma

AG is Age of married people

Y is young married people between the ages of 18 and 40

O is older married people between the ages of 41 and 60+

RE is religion of respondents

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C is Christian married people

M is Muslim married people

In order to get a sample size from the population of married people in the municipality, the Krejcie and Morgan table of determining sample size was employed. The formula is

$$Size = \frac{x^2 NP(1-P)}{d^2(N-1) + x^2 P(1-P)}$$

$x^2$ = table value of Chi-Square @ d.f= 1 for desired confidence level .01=2.71 .05=3.84 .01=6.64 .001=10.83

N = Population size

P = Population proportion (assumed to be .50)

D = degree of accuracy (expressed as a proportion)

The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Morrison, 1993, p. 112). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) noted that as the population increases the sample size increases at a diminishing rate and remains constant at slightly more than 380 cases.

The multi-stage sampling procedure was used to get the required sample size. Purposive and quota sampling techniques were used to get the desired sample size of three hundred and twenty (320). The bases for the purposive selection were to get equal numbers of Christians and Muslims as well as equal numbers of males and females to be part of the study. In purposive sampling, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment. This is also called judgmental sampling, the elements were chosen

because they were relevant to the research problem. The researcher went through the following stages to come up with the sample.

**Stage one:** Two of the independent variables (religion and sex) used in the study were given quotas. Eighty each was assigned to Christian married men, women, Muslim married men and women. This brought the total to 160 Christians and 160 Muslims. The other two independent variables (educational level and age) were not given quotas but were derived from religion and sex. As such the respondent in terms of the educational level were 320, married people with higher educational level were 107 while those with low educational level were 213. In terms of age old married people were 112 while young married were 208.

**Stage two:** This stage dealt with selecting individual respondents. This was purposively done depending on how willing respondents were to be used in the study.

## Instrument

The instrument developed by Essuman (2010) was adopted for the study. It is a marital satisfaction inventory (Appendix B). It was designed for married people to assist them find out the extent to which they are satisfied in their marriage. The inventory is made up of 35 items. The background items which began and guided the inventory were five while the main items were 30. The 30 items have been grouped into seven scales. Each scale helps to find out how satisfied a married person is in his or her marriage. The scales are named as listed below:

Scale 1: Relationship (six items)

Scale 2: Affection, Love and Appreciation (five items)

Scale 3: Character (six items)

Scale 4: Temperament (three items)

Scale 5: In-law Issues (three items)

Scale 6: Marital Roles (three items)

Scale 7: General Evaluation (four items)

The inventory was designed with both positive and negative items. The negative items were 15 whilst the positive items were 15.

## Pilot Study

To further test the reliability of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory and also the feasibility of the study, a pilot study was done in the Dormaa Municipality of the Brong Ahafo Region. Forty (40) married people made up of equal number of men and women were purposively sampled and used. The responses from the forty married people were analysed using the Cronbach's Alpha formula to calculate a reliability index for the instrument. Since majority of items were multiple scored especially on the likert scale, the Cronbach's co-efficient alpha was deemed appropriate. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990) maintain that the Cronbach's alpha is used when measures have multiple scored items. This gave a coeffient of 0.86 for the 30 items, (N=40) which indicates that the items had a good internal consistency.

## Validity of Instrument

The Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) has undergone face and content validity. The items were scrutinized and reviewed to improve the content and

make the language clear and simple to understand (Essuman, 2010). Again, the inventory has been used for similar studies in other parts of the country.

## Reliability of Instrument

According to Essuman (2010), a reliability study was undertaken using the alpha coefficient method for the inventory. The study realised a reliability coefficient of 0.79.

## Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction (Appendix A) was collected from Department of Educational Foundations to confirm the identity of the researcher. Further discussions were made with regards to what the study is about and the number of respondents needed for the study with the respondents.

The researcher moved round and picked the respondents purposively depending on their willingness and availability and explained any misunderstanding to the respondents in the case of the Christian respondents. The researcher recruited and trained two SHS graduates who helped in the collection of the data. With the Muslim respondents an Imam led the researcher through the five areas and explained the intention of the exercise. All completed inventories were collected back the same day and this ensured a hundred percent return rate. After collecting the data, respondents were thanked. Two weeks was used for the data collection exercise.

## Data Analysis

The data gathered for the study were scored and analyzed statistically using the Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) software version 16.0.

In scoring the MSI, a scoring manual developed by the author was used. Each of the items was given a code to help easy identification. Responses to the various items were coded. Completed inventories were also given serial numbers for easy identification.

In analysing the data, frequencies and percentages were used for the biographical data. Means and Standard Deviations were used to analyse the research questions whilst the hypotheses were tested with an independent sample t-test. An independent sample t-test is used when a researcher wants to compare the mean scores for two different groups. (Agyenim-Boateng, Ayebi-Arthur, Buabeng and Ntow, 2010). The strength of this tool is that, it goes one step beyond merely observing variables and looking for relationships.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Introduction

The study looked at the levels of satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani Municipality. This chapter presents the responses of the respondents and how they are analysed using frequency, percentages, means, standard deviations and t-test guided by research questions and hypotheses. The data are organised in tables and cross tabulations. The t-test was used to test the hypotheses at statistical significant level of 0.05.

### Biographic Data of Respondents

Table 1 represents the sex distribution of the respondents. The distribution indicates that in all 160 (50%) males and 160 (50%) females were sampled for the study. The percentage ratio of males and females was 50:50

**Table 1:  Sex Distribution of Respondents**

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 160 | 50 |
| Female | 160 | 50 |
| **Total** | **320** | **100** |

Source: Field work, 2011

The age distribution of respondents is presented in Table 2. The 1992 constitution of the republic of Ghana contends that a person is considered an adult from eighteen years and above and hence eligible for marriage.

**Table 2:  Age Distribution of Respondents**

| Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Young (18 - 40) | 208 | 65 |
| Old (41- 60+) | 112 | 35 |
| **Total** | **320** | **100** |

Source: Field work, 2011

Table 2 shows that out of the total of 320 respondents 208 representing 65% are in the young age bracket and 112 representing 35% are in the old bracket.

**Table 3:  Religious Affiliation of Respondents**

| Religion | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Christianity | 160 | 50 |
| Islam | 160 | 50 |
| **Total** | **320** | **100** |

Source: Field work, 2011

The table 3 shows that respondents came from the two dominant religions in Ghana with equal percentages.

**Table 4: Educational Level of Respondents**

| Educational level | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Lower level (JSS- Diploma) | 213 | 66.56 |
| Higher level (GCE A level – Master) | 107 | 33.44 |
| **Total** | **320** | **100** |

Source: Field work, 2011

Table 4 shows that out of the total of 320 respondents 213 representing 66.56% had lower level of education and 107 representing 33.44% higher level of education.

## Research Question One

**What is the extent to which married individuals in the Sunyani municipality are satisfied with their marriages?**

To find out whether or not married people in the Sunyani municipality are satisfied or not, respondents were given a four point Likert scale inventory to respond to. The scoring was based on the four point Likert scale of measurement of Very Satisfied (VS), Satisfied (S), Not satisfied (NO) and Not at all satisfied (NAS). The options of the items were weighted in the Likert format with VS = 4, S = 3, NO = 2 and NAS = 1. The inverse is true for the negative items.

A maximum score a respondent could obtain was 120 and a minimum score of 30. The weights were equated to a maximum of 4 and a minimum of 1 to reflect the averages, using the number of items as a denominator. To interpret the score a person obtains on the inventory, score bands were used as shown below. The greater the score the more satisfied a person is in marriage. Thus for

Not at all satisfied we have an interval of      1.0 – 1.5

| | |
|---|---|
| Not satisfied we have an interval of | 1.6 – 2.5 |
| Satisfied we have | 2.6 – 3.5 |
| Very satisfied we have | 3.6 – 4.0 |

**Table 5:   Means and Standard Deviation of all the Respondents on the MSI**

| All MSI Items | Mean | SD | N |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **2.4905** | **0.1313** | **320** |

Source: Field work, 2011


From Table 5, the mean for all the respondents' marital satisfaction was 2.49. This lies in the score band of 1.6 – 2.5 which implies that married people in the Sunyani Municipality are not satisfied in their marriages.

## Research Question Two

**To what extent does religion influences marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani Municipality?**


**Null Hypothesis One**

There is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim married people with regards to their marital satisfaction.

Data in Table 6 are used to answer Research Question 2 and test Hypothesis 1.

**Table 6:  t-test Comparing the Marital Satisfaction of Christians and Muslims**

| | Christians | | Muslims | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Scale | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | t-Value | P Value | Remarks |
| Relationship | 2.2094 | .40750 | 2.2573 | .36335 | 1.110 | .268 | NS |
| Affection, love and appreciation | 2.0313 | .52151 | 2.0925 | .42553 | 1.151 | .251 | NS |
| Character | 2.8583 | .33448 | 2.7573 | .41833 | 2.386 | .018 | S |
| Temperament | 3.2208 | .85077 | 3.1875 | .86365 | -.348 | .728 | NS |
| In-law issues | 2.9188 | .34618 | 2.9750 | .28606 | 1.584 | .114 | NS |
| Marital roles | 2.1917 | .40012 | 2.0104 | .52926 | -3.455 | .001 | S |
| General evaluation | 1.9844 | .33139 | 2.1688 | .33827 | 4.925 | .000 | S |
| **Marital satisfaction** | **2.4878** | **.13382** | **2.4927** | **.13507** | **.325** | **.746** | **NS** |

Source: Field work, 2011                df = 318, p < 0.05

In answering Research 2, Table 6 revealed that Christians had a satisfaction level of 2.49 whilst Muslims had 2.49. They both fell within the score band of 1.6 – 2.5 which is interpreted as not satisfied. This revealed that Muslims and Christian married people indicated that they were not satisfied with their marriages.

The Null Hypothesis 1 was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at df = 318, p = 0.746 which is more than 0.05. Therefore we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis 1. This implies there is no significant difference between Christian and Muslim married people with regard to their marital satisfaction.

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The finding for the respondents of the two religions that they were not satisfied with their marriages was not expected, because both religions give instructions on how to achieve satisfying marriages. Both the Quran and the Bible admonish their followers to show love and affection to their partners.

The finding of this study does not support the finding of Kissembe, Megesa and Shorter (1977) who found out that there was a significant difference between Christian and Muslims spouses in terms of marital quality. His study revealed that 76% of Christians were satisfied in their marriage as compared to 32% of Muslims. The finding of this study again contradicts the finding of a study conducted by Larson (2002) in his bid to access the marital stability aided by spirituality. He concluded that Christians were satisfied in their marriages than their Muslim counterparts and emphasized that there existed significant difference among them. The finding is again in contrast with the study of Abra (2001). Her study conducted in the Accra Metropolitan area made it evident that there existed significant difference between Muslims and Christians in their marital satisfaction.

The study is however in consonance with earlier studies like that of Abdallati (1975). He stated that Islam encourages their members to be loving and caring just as is done in the Christian fraternity and was not surprised when his study revealed that there was no significant difference between Muslim and Christians in the satisfaction of their marriages. Again, a study done by Gartner, Larson and Allen (1991) on religious commitment and mental health on the

outcomes of marital satisfaction showed there existed no significant difference between Muslims and Christians in their marital quality.

The researcher believes that both religions showed dissatisfaction primarily because of two basic reasons. These are location and time. Though similar studies have been conducted at some places and these religions showed satisfaction, the researcher believes the sites are different. The location of a group of people can influence their thinking and behaviour. The area is noted to be among the areas in Ghana where divorce rates are high. The researcher again believes that changes in time can also account for the level of marital satisfaction. This is because the behaviour and attitudes of a people changes with time due to several factors which affect the culture.

Although, on the whole there were no statistical significant differences, some of the scales showed significant differences. Character and Marital roles scales showed that Christians did significantly better on these scales than their Muslim counterparts. For both scales p values were less than 0.05 ( ie 0.018, 0.001 < 0.05).  A discussion with some Christian leaders revealed that most Christians are of late going through pre-marital counselling and series of marriage workshops in the Christian fraternity. Their opinions were that these teachings inculcate in Christian married people Christian values which depict in their character and roles they play in their marriages. Thomas and Cornwall (1990) concluded along the same thought in their Religion and family studies in the 1980s and stated Christian religion is about a man (Jesus Christ) who is stainless

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in character and those who serve him in truth are called Christians and show resemblance to him in character.

Muslims on the other hand performed significantly better on general evaluation than the Christians with regards to marital satisfaction. ($p = 0.00 < 0.05$). This success on the part of Muslims could be alluded to the Quran 2:228 which admonishes men to have a degree of rights over their wives. This means that they are the heads of the family and hence their responsibility to provide the needs of their wives and children. Most Muslim men try their best to fulfill this religious obligation and therefore it is not surprising that both Muslim men and women showed average satisfaction. Mahoney, Pargament, Tarakeshwar and Swank (2001) on their part agree that Muslims are significantly better in their marriages than Christians. They arrived at this conclusion in their study which sought to assess the links between religion, marriage, and parenting in Turkey. One of the reasons they gave for their findings was that it is against the ethics of their religion and Allah for a Muslim female to disobey or seem to be disobeying the males and particularly her husband. Wives, because of this, do all it takes to satisfy their husbands with the husbands reciprocating the submissiveness of their wives by making sure that they are satisfied in their marriages.

**Research Question Three**

**What is the extent to which educational level influences marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani municipality?**

## Null Hypothesis Two

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference between married people with high educational level and those with low educational level with respect to their level of marital satisfaction.

**Table 7: t-test Comparing the Marital Satisfaction of Married People with Higher Level of Education and those with Lower Levels**

| Scale | High level | | Low level | | t-Value | P Value | SIG. |
|-------|------|------|------|------|---------|---------|------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| Relationship | 2.2539 | .27314 | 2.2230 | .43220 | -.779 | .437 | NS |
| Affection, love and appreciation | 1.9682 | .27493 | 2.1089 | .54476 | 3.071 | .002 | S |
| Character | 2.7196 | .40347 | 2.8521 | .36293 | 2.864 | .005 | S |
| Temperament | 3.1589 | .74584 | 3.2269 | .90720 | .715 | .475 | NS |
| In-law issues | 2.9907 | .05529 | 2.9249 | .38661 | -2.434 | .016 | S |
| Marital roles | 2.0436 | .54385 | 2.1299 | .43837 | 1.425 | .156 | NS |
| General evaluation | 2.0631 | .41222 | 2.0833 | .30970 | .449 | .654 | NS |
| **Marital satisfaction** | **2.4569** | **.15636** | **2.5070** | **.11855** | **2.923** | **.004** | **S** |

Source: Field work, 2011          df = 318, p < 0.05

Data in Table 7 is used to answer Research Question 3 and test Hypothesis 2. In answering Research Question 3, Table 7 revealed that married people with higher level of education had a satisfaction level of 2.46 and those with lower levels had 2.51. They both fell within the score band of 1.6 – 2.5 which is interpreted as not satisfied. The results revealed that married people with lower levels of education were ahead of those with higher levels of education in terms of marital satisfaction even though both were "not satisfied."

The Null Hypothesis 2 was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at df = 318, p = 0.004 which is less than 0.05. Therefore we reject the Null Hypothesis 2. This implies there is significant difference between married people with higher levels of education and those with lower levels of education with regard to their marital satisfaction.

It was to the researcher's dismay to find out that those respondents with lower levels of education showed higher levels of marital satisfaction than those with higher levels of education. This was not preempted and it goes contrary to the findings of some major studies which concluded that married people with higher levels of education show higher satisfaction in their marriages than those with lower levels of education. Bumpass (2003) confirmed that married people with higher levels of education attained higher levels of marital satisfaction as compared to those with lower levels of education. Earlier, Scanzoni (1979) had discovered a pattern which showed that higher educated wives were more task and skill oriented and were more satisfied in their marriages as compared to their counterparts with lower levels of education. This argument seem to sit well with Acheampong and Heaton (1989) when they found that educated couples appeared more satisfied in their marriage than the less educated.

Again, the perception most Ghanaians and for that matter people in the municipality hold is that those with higher levels of education are well informed. They understand issues better than those with lower levels of education and it was therefore expected that these assertions would be reflected in the results but the results showed otherwise.

A lot of reasons were given for the results depicted in the study after the researcher made frantic efforts to seek answers from some stakeholders of education and the respondents themselves. Some of the reasons they gave were that, so much education is taking place on marital issues in our communities in our churches, mosques, airwaves and so many social gatherings, so much so that wherever pockets of people meet, it is one of the issues commonly discussed. The people with lower levels of education have taken advantage of these forms of education for it is said that "it is he who doesn't know that seeks to know and he who has not seen that searches to see." Most of the people in these categories consented that this kind of education had impacted positively on their marriages.

In the view of the researcher, with the advent of gender advocacy most of the higher educated females have resulted to the "I know my right" syndrome. This syndrome is where wives match their husbands boot for boot and relent on certain basic responsibilities which hitherto were stereotyped as feminine. These responsibilities include cooking in the home, washing of dishes and cloths and even gracing the beds of their husbands. The situations have taken adverse effects on marriages and stings so sharply as "a bad and never-healing sore". What have covered the grave are the legal dimensions the situations have taken these days. The outcomes of the "I know my right" syndrome are not farfetched. They are clear as day alternate with night. Husbands have developed defensive mechanisms and both husbands and wives are not happy and have taken negative twirl on marriages.

Throughout his readings of literature for this work, the researcher did not come across any work that supports this finding, that married people with higher levels of education were more dissatisfied than those with lower levels of education It is therefore the conviction of the researcher that some of the reasons outlined by the stake holders on education and marriage explains the new trend (see preceding page).

Although there was statistical significant difference in the overall mean only three of the scales out of seven on the MSI showed significant differences between higher and lower educated married people and their satisfaction in marriage. Both scales had p-values less than 0.05 (ie. 0.005, 0.016 and 0.002). These are the character, in-law issues and affection, love and appreciation scales. Also, three of the scales on the MSI showed that both married people with high and low levels of education were satisfied with their marriages. They all fell in the score band of 2.6 – 3.5 which is interpreted as satisfied. These are the character, temperament and in-law issues scale and out of these three, character and temperament had means indicating that married people with lower levels of education were more satisfied than those with higher levels of education.

**Research Question Four**

**To what extent does age of married people influence their marital satisfaction in the Sunyani municipality?**

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## Null Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no significant difference between young married people and old married people with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

Data in Table 8 are used to answer Research Question 4 and test Hypothesis 3.

**Table 8:  t-test Comparing the Marital Satisfaction of Old and Young Married People**

| Scale | Old | | Young | | t-Value | P Value | SIG. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| Relationship | 2.3289 | .42475 | 2.1819 | .35427 | -3.124 | .002 | S |
| Affection, love and appreciation | 2.1750 | .55288 | 2.0010 | 4.1818 | -2.913 | .004 | S |
| Character | 2.8824 | .25176 | 2.7676 | .43090 | -3.006 | .003 | S |
| Temperament | 3.2202 | .99403 | 3.1955 | .77413 | -.229 | .819 | NS |
| In-law issues | 2.8780 | .40516 | 2.9840 | .25329 | 2.517 | .013 | S |
| Marital roles | 2.2202 | .43278 | 2.0369 | .48844 | -3.454 | .001 | S |
| General evaluation | 2.0089 | .38690 | 2.1130 | .31828 | 2.437 | .016 | S |
| **Marital satisfaction** | **2.5305** | **.09939** | **2.4685** | **.14536** | **-4.499** | **.000** | **S** |

Source: Field work, 2011          df = 318, p < 0.05

In answering Research 4, Table 8 revealed that old married people had a satisfaction level of 2.53 and those with lower levels had 2.47. They both fell within the score band of 1.6 – 2.5 which is interpreted as not satisfied.  The results however revealed that old married people were slightly ahead of young married people in terms of marital satisfaction.

The Null Hypothesis 3 was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at df = 318, p = 0.000 which is less than 0.05.

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Therefore we reject the Null Hypothesis 3. This implies there is significant difference between young and old married people with regard to their marital satisfaction.

These results were expected and the reasons the researchers assigned to this were that older people are matured in understanding than younger ones. Most psychologists agree to this assertion and they maintain that age and understanding are strongly positively correlated. A study conducted by Booth, Johnson, and Edwards (1985) confirms these findings. They found that marital instability is high with young married people especially those who married before age twenty. Communication they say is the engine of every healthy relationship and what propels this communication is "understanding". Gordon (1994) attributed what goes wrong in marriage relationships partly to mis-communication.

The researcher again thinks that the young married people are quick to react and very vindictive. They take a lot of things for granted and get confused over a lot of things because of the changed life stage they find themselves. Older married people on the other hand have met a lot of life phenomena and have assimilated and accommodated these phenomena. They tend to appreciate the weaknesses of people especially their partners than young people do.

Also with relationship, Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) asserted that marriage is a merger into a new social unit which must erase all traces of the two individuals as separate entities. The more this merger comes the more quality the marriage becomes and the more the satisfaction is achieved. The logic and perceptions are that the more people are experienced in getting along with people

the better the relationship. What it means is that age is a factor of relationship. Thus, experienced old married people were ahead of young married people.

Affection, love and appreciation to researchers Rankin-Esquer et al. (1997) is a pinnacle on which satisfying marriages revolve. To the young married people, showing affection is a trade off of freedom for entrapment and wedlock as most of them revealed to the researcher. On the part of the old, affection, love and most importantly appreciation is what quenches the fire in troubled marriages. Again, societies, especially the Ghanaian communities attach so much importance to sustained and successful marriages. Successful married people in that sense are respected; a good number of the old married people said this attached respect is something they long for.

The researcher identified that some studies were in contrast to the stand point of this study. A case in point is that of Katz's (2001) study of nonfiction children and youth divorce emotions which stated that there is no significant difference between young and old people with regards to their marital satisfaction. She was however found to have stated that older married people had the potential of improving and sustaining successful marriages. Again, Rogers and White (1998) had earlier found that there is no significant difference between young and old married people with respect to their satisfaction in marriage. To them what is perceived to be a difference between young and old married people is the level of commitment.

The results revealed that there were statistical significance in all the scales on the MSI expect temperament scale. Again, the revelations were that older

people were satisfied in five out of the seven scales; relationship, affection, love and appreciation, character, temperament and marital roles. Out of these five, four were statistically significant.

The only scale which saw young married people showing higher level of satisfaction than the old married people is the in-law issues scale as shown in the results. The difference was statistically significant and the reasons the researcher gathered from the young married respondents are that, they want to build trust with their in-laws. In the bid to building trust with their in-laws, they go all out to impress them. The in-laws in this way get the idea that the son or daughter have them at heart and there accept them into their folds. Adonu (2005) maintains that acceptance of the married people by the partner's family is an integral part of the customary marriage in Ghana.

## Research Question Five

## To what extent does sex influences marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani municipality?

## Null Hypothesis Four

There is no significant difference between married man and married women with regard to the level of marital satisfaction.

Data in Table 9 are used to answer Research Question 4 and test Hypothesis 3.

In answering Research Question 5, Table 8 revealed that male married people had a satisfaction level of 2.52 and female married people had 2.46. Their results were interpreted as not satisfied because they both fell within the score

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band of 1.6 to 2.5. The results however revealed that female married people were ahead of male married people in terms of marital satisfaction even though both of them were satisfied.

**Table 9: t-test Comparing the Marital Satisfaction of Male and Female Married People**

| Scale | Female | | Male | | t-Value | P Value | SIG. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | | |
| Relationship | 2.1531 | .35612 | 2.3135 | .39932 | 3.792 | .000 | S |
| Affection, love and appreciation | 2.0762 | .48259 | 2.0475 | .47077 | -.539 | .590 | NS |
| Character | 2.9271 | .26678 | 2.6885 | .43842 | -5.879 | .000 | S |
| Temperament | 3.3729 | .80562 | 3.0354 | .87403 | -3.591 | .000 | S |
| In-law issues | 2.8854 | .25914 | 3.0083 | .35849 | 3.515 | .001 | S |
| Marital roles | 2.2542 | .51868 | 1.9479 | .37487 | -6.053 | .000 | S |
| General evaluation | 1.9672 | .33308 | 2.1859 | .32608 | 5.936 | .000 | S |
| **Marital satisfaction** | **2.5194** | **.14412** | **2.4610** | **.11695** | **-3.982** | **.000** | **S** |

Source: Field work, 2011          df = 318, p < 0.05

The Null Hypothesis 4 was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at df = 318, p = 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Therefore we reject the Null Hypothesis 4. This implies there is significant difference between male and female married people with regard to their marital satisfaction.

This statistically significant difference met the views held by the researcher. To him women by their nature are very committed to any course they embark on. Once they enter into marriage most of them throw in their all

especially those with children. It is therefore not surprising that the overall went the trend it did. These views of the researcher are supported by literature when Rollins and Feldman (1970) concluded that marriage has very different meanings for husbands than for wives and that very different events within or outside the marriage and or family influenced the developmental pattern of marital satisfaction in men and women but women had slight satisfaction ahead of men. Gottman and Silver (1994) further noticed that there existed significant difference between female and male married people in the satisfaction of their marriages. This was made evident in his study on why marriages succeed or fail in New York.

Some studies that are in contrast with the findings of this study are that of Rausch et al. (1975) where they found out how communication and conflict are related in a marital situation, the researchers found the styles of interaction of husbands and wives very much alike. The only noticeable differences existed in power relationships where husbands had the upper hand. An earlier study on the subject matter done by Blazer (1963) found no significant difference between male and female married people in his study on complimentary need fulfillment and marital happiness of husbands and those of wives.

The results also showed that all but one of the scales on the MSI had statistical significant differences between males and female married people with regards to their marital satisfaction. The scale which did not show significant difference is affection, love and appreciation. Although, the grand mean stated that both males and females were not satisfied, three of the scales on the MSI

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indicated both male and female married people were satisfied. These scales are the character, temperament and in-law issues scales. The in-law issues scale showed that males performed better than their female compatriots while the character and temperament scales on the MSI showed that females were more satisfied.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the most important findings are highlighted and implications for counselling drawn from the findings. Some recommendations are offered to draw attention to the current levels of marital satisfaction of married people in the Sunyani Municipality.

### Summary

The study sought insight into the issues of marriage and marital satisfaction to ascertain whether the married people in the Sunyani Municipality are in their marriages or not. . This was done by providing various variables that are believed to influence the marital satisfaction of married people. Some of these variables were religion, educational level, age and sex.

A descriptive survey was employed for the study and a Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) was adopted from Essuman (2010) to solicit for respondents' (married people) view. The respondents were sampled purposively. Means and Standard deviations were used to answer research questions whilst the hypotheses were tested with the Independent Sample t-test.

**Key Findings**

1. It was found from the study that married people in the Sunyani Municipality were not satisfied in their marriages.

2. The study also revealed that both males and females were not satisfied in their marriages and there was statistical significant difference between them.

3. The study indicated that, both Christians and Muslims were not satisfied in their marriages. There was also no statistical significant difference between Christians and Muslims married people in terms of their marital satisfaction.

4. The study showed that married people with higher level of education and those with low level of education were both not satisfied in their marriages. No statistical significant difference existed between them.

5. The study finally revealed that, young married people and old married people were both not satisfied in their marriages. There also existed no statistical significant difference between young and old married people in terms of their marital satisfaction.

**Conclusions**

With all their expectations of companionship, affection and security people get into marriages, only to be disappointed and do not get the satisfaction they envisaged. This has been the case of married people in the Sunyani Municipality of the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. On the scales of MSI

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(Relationship; Affection, Love and Appreciation; Character; Temperament; In-law issues; Marital roles and General Evaluation) respondents from their free will indicated their levels of satisfaction although the levels of satisfaction differed from one person to the other. This goes to confirm that marital satisfaction is a subjective matter.

The study has added some knowledge in the area of marriage and marital satisfaction issues that can provoke further studies; specifically the finding that married people with high levels of education were more dissatisfied than those with low levels.

Generally, it was realised from the study that married people in the Sunyani Municipality were not satisfied with their marriages. With regard to the four independent variables (Gender, Religion, Education and Age) none showed a satisfaction in marriage. To the researcher, this is matter of importance which should attract the attention of all.

### Implications for Counselling

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

1. It is a very worrisome issue to know that married people in the Sunyani Municipality were not satisfied. The implication is that some things are either not done right by the married people themselves or the stakeholders (counsellors, religious leaders, media, etc.) issues on marriage.

2. One of the implications deduced from the study is that being a male or a female married person at Sunyani was an issue to be noted since the

married men indicated being significantly more dissatisfied in their marriages than the married women. It implies that dynamics of sex in marriages should be taken with all the seriousness it deserves by counsellors and other stakeholders interested in good marriages.

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

4. It was also implied from the study that the perceptions held by many people that the Christian and the Muslim religions teach their followers about issues in marriages and therefore they should be satisfied in their marriages may not be valid.

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

## Recommendations

1. The researcher recommends that more programmes on marriage should be undertaken by counsellors in our churches and mosques. Stake holders in marriage issues should organize more workshops and marriage seminars in the municipality. This the researcher believes that will help married people in the municipality to take advantage of some of the vital issues discussed at those programmes so that their marriages can be sustained and improved to become a success.

2. Counsellors and other stake holders who are interested in marriage issues should place emphasis on what make either a man or a woman happy in marriage. They should drum home what are expected of a man to make his marriage a success as well as what are expected of a woman to make her marriage successful.

3. All who matter so far as marriage is concerned such as parents, counsellors, religious and opinion leaders should not rest on the laurels but continue to lift up their bid to educating married people. Especially our higher educated married people so that they appreciate the fact that theories and ideologies learnt in schools are somewhat different in reality and hence open themselves up to other forms of learning and play down their educational credentials in marriage. Counsellors should try and make the higher educated ones understand is important to spend quality time with partners and family as they do with their education and jobs.

4. Counsellors should not hide behind religious perceptions and think that all is well in religious marriages. They should go all out and give the Christians and Muslims married people all the information they require to make the marriages a success based on the married couples religious doctrines and principles on marriages.

5. From the results, younger people were more dissatisfied in their marriages than older people. It is there recommended to the young foes to consult counsellors and other people who are well versed in marriages as to what marriage is about and how to achieve satisfactory marriages. To the older

people, it is said that knowledge is not worth keeping when it does not benefit society. They should open up to marriage aspirants and young married people when they get to them to seek knowledge to achieve satisfying marriages. Counsellors should also put in more effort so far as premarital counselling for younger people is concerned. They should encourage younger people to seek premarital counselling.

## Suggestions for Further Research

1. This study did not cover married people in other religions though they are equally susceptible to the effects of dissatisfying marriages. It is therefore suggested that future research be carried out on married people in other religions other than the ones used for this study.

2. This study was done in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana and more specifically, the Sunyani Municipality. The researcher therefore recommends highly that in future, similar studies be done in other regions to ascertain whether people in the other regions are satisfied or not satisfied in their marriages and if not what can be done to salvage the situation.

3. One major revelation was that, married people with lower levels of education were more satisfied than those with higher levels of education according to the face value of their means. The researcher recommends that further studies be carried out into this.

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**APPENDICES**

# UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

## CAPE COAST, GHANA
### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

*Telephone*: 32440/4 & 32480/3 Direct: 042-36037
*TELEX*: 2552, UCC, GH
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University Post Office

Cape Coast, Ghana

Our Ref.:

Your Ref:                                                        26/07/2011

### THESIS DISSERTATION WORK

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you Mr./Mrs./Miss. *Kyeremeh Tawiah Dabone* a student from the University of Cape Coast, Department of Educational Foundations. He/She is pursuing a Master of *Philosophy* degree in *Guidance and Counselling* As part of his/her requirements, he/she is expected to work on a thesis entitled: *Marital Satisfaction among Married People in Sunyani Municipality.*

He/She has opted to make a study at your institution/establishment for the project. We would most grateful if you could provide the opportunity for the study. Any information provided will be treated as strictly confidential.

Thank you.

for (Dr. Emmanuel Kofi Gyimah)
**HEAD**

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
CAPE COAST - GHANA

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# MARITAL SATISFACTION INVENTORY MSI

BY

## JOSEPH KWESI ESSUMAN, PH.D
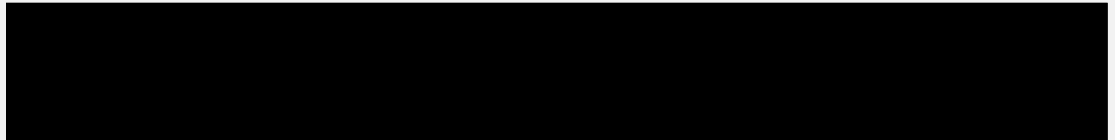
COUNSELLING CENTRE UCC
CAPE COAST

**Please fill in the following**

Age……………Gender…………………..Religion……………Educational

Level………........Address (Permanent)………..............................................

**ISBN: 9988 – 0 – 9394 – 2**

## INSTRUCTIONS

This inventory is designed for married couples. It is to assist you as a spouse to find out the extent you are satisfied in your marriage. Such knowledge would alert you to work to improve your marriage if your satisfaction score is low (i.e. not satisfied). If it is high (i.e. satisfied), you will be encouraged to maintain it and even examine areas which you can improve further to enrich your marriage. The richer your marriage relationship is the more satisfied you will feel.

The inventory has thirty (30) items (statements). In filling it, read each item first. Make sure you understand. On the right side of the items there is a row of boxes. Indicate in one of the boxes a tick (√) to show how true the item applies to you. See the example below. Confidentiality of the information you provide is very much assured.

Thank you.

| Very True | True | Not True | Not At All True |
|-----------|------|----------|-----------------|
|           | √    |          |                 |

### FORM A (FOR MEN)

| No. | Items | Very True | True | Not True | Not At All True |
|-----|-------|-----------|------|----------|-----------------|
| 1 | I always feel fulfilled, happy when I have my wife by me. | | | | |
| 2 | I like the way my wife converses and shares her experiences with me. | | | | |
| 3 | I am satisfied sexually with my marriage. | | | | |
| 4 | I am very disturbed because my wife does not appreciate all the sacrifices | | | | |

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| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | I put in my marriage | | | | |
| 5 | We (I and my wife) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often. | | | | |
| 6 | My wife cannot be trusted. She is very cunning, not reliable. | | | | |
| 7 | I will feel much happier if I move out of my present marriage. | | | | |
| 8 | My wife is the best I can ever have. | | | | |
| 9 | I like my wife a lot for her financial support in the marriage. | | | | |
| 10 | My wife always seeks my opinion on important issues concerning our marriage. I like this. | | | | |
| 11 | My in-laws are very helpful and give me respect. | | | | |
| 12 | I am fed up with my wife because she is stubborn, never ready to change her bad ways (like her keeping bad friends). | | | | |
| 13 | My wife is too cold for my liking. I do not enjoy her company. | | | | |
| 14 | My wife is indifferent. She does not care about what I do with my life. | | | | |
| 15 | My wife keeps her money to herself. She does not contribute to the upkeep of the home and family. | | | | |
| 16 | I notice that my wife is becoming more attractive to me. I am growing to love her more and more. | | | | |
| 17 | My in-laws are my worst enemies in my marriage. They make my life miserable. | | | | |
| 18 | One thing I like about my wife is that she admits her faults and apologises. | | | | |
| 19 | My wife is insolent. She speaks to me with respect. | | | | |
| 20 | Our conversation always ends in a quarrel. So we scarcely converse these days. | | | | |
| 21 | I and my wife accept disagreement without hurting each other's | | | | |

| No. | Items | Very True | True | Not True | Not At All True |
|-----|-------|-----------|------|----------|-----------------|
| | feelings. | | | | |
| 22 | My wife nags almost everyday and makes my life very uncomfortable. | | | | |
| 23 | My wife appreciates very much how I help her in the home (with the household chores). | | | | |
| 24 | My wife does not like my relatives. She treats them badly when they visit. This makes me highly displeased. | | | | |
| 25 | I like the way my wife keeps in touch when she travels. She phones and converses to my liking. | | | | |
| 26 | My wife cooks well and takes good care of the home. I love her for this. | | | | |
| 27 | My wife respects and admires me very much. She says I work hard. | | | | |
| 28 | My wife complains too much. Nothing I do at home pleases her. | | | | |
| 29 | My wife is fond of hitting me with objects to harm me when she angry. I feel unsafe because she is very violent. | | | | |
| 30 | I enjoy my wife's company most times. | | | | |

## FORM B (FOR WOMEN)

| No. | Items | Very True | True | Not True | Not At All True |
|-----|-------|-----------|------|----------|-----------------|
| 1 | I always feel fulfilled, happy in the company of my husband. | | | | |
| 2 | I like the way my husband converses and shares jokes with me. | | | | |
| 3 | I am satisfied sexually with my marriage. | | | | |
| 4 | I am very worried because my husband does not appreciate all the sacrifices I put in my marriage. | | | | |
| 5 | We (I and my husband) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often. | | | | |
| 6 | My husband is not trustworthy. He is cunning, not reliable. | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | I will feel much happier if I move out of my present marriage. | | | | |
| 8 | My husband is the best I can ever have. | | | | |
| 9 | I like my husband a lot for helping me with the household chores. | | | | |
| 10 | My husband always seeks my opinion on important issues concerning our marriage. I like this. | | | | |
| 11 | My in-laws are very helpful and give me respect. | | | | |
| 12 | I am fed up with my husband because he is stubborn, never ready to change his bad ways (like affairs with women). | | | | |
| 13 | My husband is too cold for my liking. I do not enjoy his company. | | | | |
| 14 | My husband is indifferent. He does not care about what I do with my life. | | | | |
| 15 | My husband keeps her money to himself. He does not perform his financial duties for the upkeep of the home. | | | | |
| 16 | I notice that my husband is becoming more attractive to me. I am growing to love him more and more. | | | | |
| 17 | My in-laws are my worst enemies in my marriage. They make my life miserable. | | | | |
| 18 | One thing I like about my husband is that he admits his faults and apologizes. | | | | |
| 19 | My husband speaks to me harshly as if I am a child. I strongly dislike this. | | | | |
| 20 | Our conversation always ends in a quarrel. So we scarcely converse these days. | | | | |
| 21 | I and my husband accept disagreement without hurting each other's feelings. | | | | |
| 22 | I thought it is only women who nag. My husband nags too much to my discomfort. | | | | |

| 23 | My husband appreciates my cooking always. I like this. | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | My husband speaks harshly and angrily to my relatives when they visit. This displeases me. | | | | |
| 25 | I like the way husband phones and converses when he travels. He does it frequently. | | | | |
| 26 | My husband is committed. He gives enough house-keeping money and sometimes gives more. | | | | |
| 27 | My husband has great respect for me. He admires my hard work at home. | | | | |
| 28 | No matter how well I cook, my husband would find some fault. He is always complaining about my cooking. | | | | |
| 29 | My husband gets angry too frequently and beats me. I am thinking of reporting him to the police. | | | | |
| 30 | I enjoy my husband's company most times. | | | | |

## SCORING GUIDE FOR THE MSI

| | **SCALE 1:** Relationship | | | | | **TOTALS** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item No. | 2 | 5 | 10 25 | 20 | 21 | |
| Item Scores | | | | | | |
| | **SCALE 2:** Affection, Love and Appreciation | | | | | |
| Item No. | 3 | 4 | 16 | 23 | 27 | |
| Item Scores | | | | | | |
| | **SCALE 3:** Character | | | | | |
| Item No. | 6 | 12 | 18 28 | 19 | 22 | |
| Item Scores | | | | | | |
| | **SCALE 4:** Temperament | | | | | |
| Item No. | | 13 | 14 | 29 | | |

| Item Scores | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **SCALE 5:** In-Law Issues | |
| Item No. | 11 17 24 | |
| Item Scores | | |
| | **SCALE 6:** Marital Roles | |
| Item No. | 9 15 26 | |
| Item Scores | | |
| | **SCALE 7:** General Evaluation | |
| Item No. | 1 7 8 30 | |
| Item Scores | | |
| | **TOTAL SCORE FOR MSI** | |