

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

IMPACTS OF COUPLE-ORIENTED AND GROUP-ORIENTED  
APPROACHES ON MARITAL SATISFACTION OF COUPLES AT THE  
VERGE OF DIVORCE IN SUNYANI MUNICIPALITY, GHANA

BY

KYEREMEH TAWIAH DABONE

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College of Education Studies, Faculty of Educational Foundations, University  
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## DECLARATION

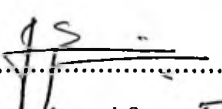
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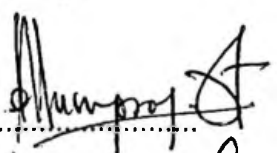
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Name: Kyeremeh Tawiah Dabone.....

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Principal Supervisor's Signature.......... Date: 31/08/2018  
Name: Rev. Prof. Joseph K. Essumang.....

Co-Supervisor's Signature.......... Date: 31-08-2018  
Name: Prof. Eric Mako-Gampson.....

## ABSTRACT

The study assessed the impact of couple and group-oriented approaches on marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce in the Sunyani Municipality. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the 48 participants for pretest study after which the participants were assigned into experimental and control groups. Five research questions were formulated to keep the study in focus. Similarly, seven hypotheses were also tested. The Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) was used in collecting pre-test and post-test responses from the married people. The study revealed that what respondents considered most as a reason for them to quit their marriages was character issues of the spouses. The finding revealed that participants who were exposed to couple-oriented marital counselling approach did not differ significantly with regard to positive impact on their marriage from those that were exposed to group-oriented marital counselling approach. Marital seminars to enlighten couples on factors responsible for marital dissatisfaction and how to handle these factors should be organised on regular basis by churches, mosque, and other agencies related to marriage.

## KEY WORDS

Couple-orient approach

Couples

Group-oriented approach

Marital satisfaction

Marriage

Marriages at the Verge of Divorce

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## DEDICATION

To my parents, Mr Daniel Dickson Dabone (late) and Mrs. Martha Dabone,  
my mother

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most universal unions of two people with different abilities and talents and tastes and interests, and in a word, is made up of various characters (Goldenberg-Goldenberg 2002). The most common reason for marriage is love. A marriage of love is the series of profound and positive feelings of attachment to another person, passion, intimacy, mixture, passion and understanding (Knox, 1985; quoted the promise, Adib Rad, Sabaghian, 2005).

People enter marriage with expectations when these expectation are met then satisfaction is delivered in the marriage. On the contrary, when these expectations are not met then dissatisfaction sets in. Resulting from this then married people may resort to divorce. Divorce cases have increased at an increasing rate (Osei-Poku, 2015). Interestingly, when married couples sought for counselling their cases are usually handled using individual or couple counselling approaches (Tano, 2012). It is therefore imperative to ascertain if other approaches would offer a better 'help'. Hence the group-oriented and the couple-oriented approaches were applied through some theories such as family system theory, the exchange theory and others to married people at the verge of divorce to assess their impact. The finding of this study is expected to provide to marriage counsellors alternative approaches to individual or couple



approaches. It is also expected the findings would provide an evidential base as to what approach works best in counselling dissatisfied married people.

### **Background to the Study**

When studying marriage, a universal similarity within the human condition, researchers have predominantly focused on divorce, the diseased marriage, without looking first to the successful marriage (Marshal, 2015). The study of marriage and marital relationships has previously been seen as a two-sided coin. It is very difficult to study marriage without, also, discussing divorce. As is the contrary, it seems as though the divorce side of the coin gets carefully studied, and dissected while the opposite side, marriage satisfaction, is merely glanced at. In the mountain of research on marriage and marital relationships, the divorce side of the coin gleams and glitters in the sun while the marriage half fades into scholarly obscurity.

Riley (2001) 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 (2002) estimated that about half of first marriages initiated in recent years would be voluntarily dissolved in the United States. According to Hetherington (2008), there has been a significant decline in the proportion of two parent families in first marriages and the number increased in the single parent households and step families. He

continued to say that almost one half of marriages ended in divorce in the United States, and one million children experienced their parents' divorce each year. It was projected that between 50% and 60% of children born in the 1990s would live, at some point, in a single parent family. From those who divorced, 75% of all men and 66% of women would 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 occurred 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 would have a stepfather within four years of parental separation, and 1 out of every 10 children would experience at least two divorces of their residential parent before turning 16 years of age (Hetherington 2008).

The high rate of marital disruption, combined with an increase in births outside marriage, mean that about half of all children would reside at least temporarily in single-parent households, usually with their mothers (Villa & Del Prette, 2013). Because of remarriage, about one in seven children lives with a parent and step parent and about one in three children would live with a step parent for some time prior to reaching age 19 (Bumpass, 2013).

Observers 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 fulfilment from marriage, and greater social acceptance of divorce (Pesters, 2014). Remarriage following divorce became common, and nearly one-half of marriages involved 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 represented a fundamental change in how adults met their needs for intimacy over the life course in the USA (Cherlin, 2002).

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. 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 2006). 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.

Marriage is a social union or legal contract that establishes rights and obligations between the spouses, between spouses and their children, and between the spouses and their in-laws (Haviland, 2011). The institution of marriage was traditionally a union between a man and a woman but currently, some countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, and Portugal) have accepted same sex marriages and even legalized them (Akuamoah, 2013).

Marriage has been documented in every known culture (Brown, 2011). More than 90% of the world’s population will marry at least once (Epstein & Guttman, 1984). Most societies also have instituted divorce procedures (Brown, 2011). 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 (Brooks, 2006).

When one looks at the incredibly high numbers and percentages of failed marriages in Belgium 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 and Weinick (1993). Additionally, the average duration of a marriage between the years of 1970 and 1988 has been 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 thing 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, 2008). 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).

In Ghana, many studies on divorce such as the one conducted by Acheampong and Heaton (2009) 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, p. 23.” The concern here about the rise in the divorce rates is experienced by the fact that divorce had been and indeed 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?

Abra (2001) and Ahene (2011) on their part think that marital satisfaction has come to stay so far as the Ghanaian culture is concerned. People openly talk about their level of satisfaction or otherwise in marriage which hitherto was not the case.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Today, divorce is a quick way for people who feel trapped in an unhappy marriage to get out. However, people who really suffer from the divorce are not so much the couples/partners 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-centred manner. Divorce in itself could be good and lifesaving when there is emotional torture and physical abuse on a spouse but may have several concomitant effects such as the burden of single parenting and spousal lack of commitment to honour his/her duties to their children.

The Brong-Ahafo region, according to Domestic and Violence Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service reports (2011, 2014, 2015), is the second region after the Greater Accra Region where wife battering and violence in households have been reported most. Divorce has become relatively common in Sunyani, the capital of the region. According to the marriage registry of the Sunyani Municipal Assembly, in 2012, 512 marriages were registered. In the same year, 203 divorce cases were recorded. Again, in 2013 and 2014, 417 and 829 divorce cases were recorded respectively. (It is important to indicate that these figures do not represent or mean that the couples whose marriages were registered were the same people who filed for the divorce). Despite these worrisome developments not much research has been carried out to assess the

extent to which couples are satisfied with their marriages in the region and the Sunyani municipality in particular. Dabone (2012) found that married people in the Sunyani Municipality were not satisfied in their marriages.

Again, there is not enough literature on marital satisfaction in Sunyani Municipality so the researcher believes the study will contribute to knowledge in this area. Although literature is scanty on the issue, almost all the studies that attempted to provide some intervention were restricted to individual counselling approaches. Some of these studies include; Bosomah (2007), Asafo-Agyei (2009) and Tano (2012). Bosomah carried his study in the Sunyani municipality on using the Reality Therapy to improve the marital quality of distressed married people. Even though Bosomah found some difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of his respondents, the differences were not statistically significant. Asafo-Agyei (2009) conducted an ex-post facto study on the impact of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy on people envisaging marriage. His findings revealed that people who went through the intervention indicated that they were not satisfied in their marriages. According to Tano (2012), the divorce rate in the Sunyani Municipality increased by 9.08% from 2007 to 2008, it saw increases of 13.41%, and 18.39% in 2009 and 2010 respectively. This was revealed in his study on “Improving marital quality of married people in Sunyani municipality through individual counselling.”

Statistics at the circuit court registry in the Municipality show worrying figures. In 2012, hundred and eight (108) married people filed for divorce. The figure shot up to 217 in 2013 amounting to 49.77 in percentage terms. Two hundred eighty nine (289) and 334 married people filed for



divorce and in 2014 and 2015 respectively. The question then is, are there not couple-oriented or group-oriented marriage counselling approaches to improving troubled marriages? If there are, how different are they from individual-oriented marriage counselling approaches in terms of their impact on married people? How well can these help in curbing the soaring divorce rates and its pervasive consequences? It is in this light that the researcher investigated impact of couple and group-oriented approaches on marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce in Sunyani Municipality, Ghana.

### **Purpose of the study**

Generally, the study assessed the impact of group and couple-oriented counselling approaches for couples at the verge of divorce. Therefore, the study was purported to:

1. examine respondents' view on the reasons why couples at the verge of divorce want to quit their marriages.
2. assess the differences in the satisfaction level of respondents with regard to those who were exposed to couple-oriented and that of group-oriented marriage counselling.
3. ascertain the effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.
4. determine the effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.
5. explore the effects of demographic variables (age, income, and level of education) on the level of marital satisfaction respondents who have gone through group-oriented marriage counselling.

6. explore the effects of demographic variables (age, income, and level of education) on the level of marital satisfaction respondents who have gone through couple-oriented marriage counselling.
7. examine the most prevalent reasons influencing respondents' level of satisfaction in their marriages.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were drafted and answered to guide the study. These were fallout from the objectives of the study.

1. What is the difference in the marital satisfaction levels of respondents with regard to those who are exposed to couple-oriented and group-oriented marriage counselling?
2. What is the effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction?
3. What is the effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction?
4. Which factors of marital satisfaction are most likely the causes of spouses "at the verge of divorce" position as the most dissatisfied in their marriage?
5. What are the reasons accounting for respondents' level of marital dissatisfaction?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following research hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study.

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the effect of the interventions in marital satisfaction among experimental and control groups.

- H<sub>A1</sub>: There is significant difference in the effect of the interventions in marital satisfaction among experimental and control groups.
- H<sub>O2</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction between young and old couples who go through group-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>A2</sub>: There is significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction between young and old couples who go through group-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>O3</sub>: Income has no significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who undergo group-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>A3</sub>: Income has significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who undergo group-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>O4</sub>: Level of education has no significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who go through group-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>A4</sub>: Level of education has significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who go through group-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>O5</sub>: There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction between young and old couples who undergo couple-oriented marriage counselling.
- H<sub>A5</sub>: There is significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction between young and old couples who undergo couple-oriented marriage counselling.

H<sub>O</sub>6: Income has no significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who undergo couple-oriented marriage counselling.

H<sub>A</sub>6: Income has significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who undergo couple-oriented marriage counselling.

H<sub>O</sub>7: Level of education has no significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who go through couple-oriented marriage counselling.

H<sub>A</sub>7: Level of education has significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who go through couple-oriented marriage counselling.

### **Significance of the study**

The study among other things will expose couples to how to achieve marital satisfaction and therefore will help manage risky behaviours that lead to divorce. This will be done through the interventions that will be given to couples at the verge of divorce. It will make couples 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 use to assist couples who are not satisfied in their marriages, in particular those wanting to divorce.

Finally, it is expected that findings of the study will provoke further research into the marital satisfaction of couples in order to understand and help couples in their marriages. I have the firm belief that by embarking on this

study, it will provide an opportunity for me to contribute to one of the problems couples in the Sunyani municipality face and by extension Ghana as a whole.

### **Assumptions of the Study**

The aim of the research was to assess the impact of group and couple-oriented marriage counselling approaches on marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce. The study was founded on the following assumptions.

1. Marital satisfaction is a function of effective marital counselling approach
2. Couples who go through couple-oriented counselling approach will have different level of marital satisfaction from married who have gone through group-oriented counselling approach.
3. Couples at the verge of divorce who go through couple-oriented counselling will have improved level of marital satisfaction than couples of the same category who do not go through couple-oriented counselling.
4. Couples at the verge of divorce who go through group-oriented counselling will have improved level of marital satisfaction than couples of the same category who do not go through group-oriented counselling.
5. Couple-oriented and group-oriented counselling approaches afford members opportunity to learn from each other strategies to derive satisfaction in marriage.

## **Delimitations of the Study**

The aim of the research is to assess the impact of group and couple-oriented marriage counselling approaches for couples at the verge of divorce. Therefore study had the following delimitations. Participants of this study included couples at the verge of divorce who agreed to participate when they were invited to do so. This study did not include lesbian and gay married people in therapy, but included couples who had separated and those whose marriages were at the verge of divorce.

In terms of design the study was delimited to only quasi experimental. Also the study focused on in-marriage couple and married people. It excluded pre-marriage and post-marriage issues. The study was restricted to the Sunyani Municipality and in terms of content it looked at issues of marital satisfaction.

## **Limitations of the Study**

According to Best and Kahn (1998), limitations are conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and their application to other situations. In a study on marital satisfaction among married people, I could not be very sure of the kind of information the respondents gave out. They may not give out accurate information about their situation or inaccurate information especially as the questions centre on marital satisfaction and so I anticipated that respondents may be biased in terms of what the actual situation is. To address this, I assured respondents that their individual responses will under no circumstance be made known to any individual or organisation or be used against them now or in the future. I informed respondents not to put their names on the inventory.

In experimental studies of this nature, blind or double-blind effect would have been more appropriate. This is a situation where the researcher hires a professional to carry out the intervention. It offers the researcher a mind of certainty that the effects of the intervention were not the results of his or her involvement in the data collection or treatment procedures. It was important I carried out the intervention since I had acquired knowledge in drawing my internal boundaries from that of the clients in treatment procedures. This was done effectively to reduce “researcher factor” or effect of researcher the in the treatment procedure.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

**Couple-oriented counselling:** This involves two counselees (husband and wife) who have a common concern and a counsellor who offers an intervention to assist them.

**Group-oriented counselling:** This involves more than two counselees who have a common concern and a counsellor who offers an intervention to assist them.

**Couples:** People who are united (husband and wife) by religious, ordinance or traditional laws of Ghana to live as husband and wife.

**Couples at the verge of divorce:** Couples who score 30 – 44 on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI). The minimum scores an individual can have on the instrument is 30 and a maximum of 120. These scores have been put into four intervals namely; very satisfied (105 – 120), satisfied (75 – 104), Not satisfied (45- 74) and at the verge of divorce (30 – 44).

## **Organisation of the Study**

The study was organised into five chapters. The first chapter dealt with the introduction and background to the study, the statement of problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, assumptions of the study, delimitation, limitation of the study, operational definition of terms and organisation of the study. The second chapter also reviewed related literature in three perspectives, namely, theoretical, conceptual and empirical perspectives. Chapter Three assessed the methodologies in terms of area of study, 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 of the findings and the final chapter dealt with summary, conclusions and recommendations.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Related literature on the topic under consideration is reviewed in three sections, theoretical review, conceptual framework and empirical review. The theoretical aspect of the review dealt with concepts and some theories related to marriage and marital satisfaction and divorce. The second part gave a composite picture of the study and explains how the variables in the study are related. The third section was on some empirical studies on marriage, marital satisfaction and approaches for improving marital satisfaction of married people.

#### **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.

#### **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 due to 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 was propounded by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy in early 1940s 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 (2016) 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, 2016; Whitchurch & Constantine, 2013), and assists in explaining the behaviour 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

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 (2005) 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. 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 (2009) 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 & 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

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, 2009, p.408).

### **Family Systems Theory**

The family systems theory was propounded by Murray Bowen in the 1950s. One of the more recent attempts to utilize theory in the study of family 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 assess the impact of couple and group-oriented approaches on the marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce.

### **Exchange Theory**

George Homans in the 1950s propounded the exchange theory. The theory looks the cost and benefit analysis that people make before taking decisions. In marriage the spouses look at the cost and benefits of their own actions as well as their spouses. If the actions are beneficial then there is satisfaction but they see the actions as cost then, there is dissatisfaction.

The major premise of exchange theory is that "humans avoid costly behaviour and seek rewarding statuses, relationships, interaction, and feeling

states to the end that their profits are maximized” or their losses are minimized (Nye, 2009, p. 2). Exchange theory holds excellent potential for the present study for several reasons. First, the theory is especially useful in analysing 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 (2011) emphasised 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, 2011, 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.



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.

Ofori (2016) maintains that in exchange theory, the smaller the number; the higher the benefits and the higher the number; the smaller the benefit. Which implies the higher the cost. If a spouse appears good to the partner, the partner seemingly attains a higher benefit but if one of the partners estimates the marriage to have some problems, there is a higher cost to that partner.

### **Role Theory**

There are few sources that specifically identify theoretical frameworks to use in the study of marital satisfaction. Role theory offers a unique perspective that was propounded 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, 2011). The theory has its central idea that, human actions are directed in ways seeking to bring results that they hope will satisfy 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 2011).

Scanzoni (2009) 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 (2014) 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 (2008) 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 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 (2008) 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 propounded the communication (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

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.

In so far as refusing to talk to one another conveys a message Scanzoni and Scanzoni (2008) assert that silent treatment is a way of showing hostility and anger instead of a desire to work through the problem or what counsellors 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 (2008) 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 (2010) contended that in most traditional Ghanaian communities women did not take part in decision making. They however, quoted Ainsworth (2005) 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 (2014) 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.

### **Conceptual Review**

The following conceptual issues are reviewed under this section. Attempts are made to review what authors and theorists have said about

marriage and marital satisfaction as concepts, types of marriage. Again, a diagram on how the variables of the study are related is also presented under this section.

### **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 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 (2007) 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 (2007), 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 (2008) 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.

People enter marriages with some expectations. These expectations may include, achieving financial independence with the support of the spouse, satisfaction in sexual desires, being loved and appreciated among others. When these expectations are met, then an individual is said to achieve marital satisfaction. 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 every one 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 (2010) 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.

### **Types of Marriages**

Marriages differ by types and forms. An attempt will now be made at highlighting only some of the popular ones as Peil (2007) 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 flesh”. 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 (2008) 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 (2008) 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".

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 yoked. 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, 2008). Religious inclinations carry along with it values and beliefs systems. According to Collins (2008) 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 tranquillity, 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 Islamic marriage is to bring about mutual fulfillment and self realisation, 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 contracted according to the custom of ethnic group from which the female belongs. The families contract marriage on behalf of the couples. Generally, marriage in Ghana is recognised 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 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 it is potentially polygamous thus it allows the man to marry more than one woman. However, Christians 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). Leadership is ascribed to men. 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, 2004).

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, 2004; 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.

### **History of Couples Counselling**

Physician Abraham and Hannah Stone opened the first marriage-counselling centre in 1929 in New York City. Unlike individual therapy, marriage counselling was originally considered a short-term endeavour to mend an impaired relationship, and it characteristically dealt with present issues instead of the past. The introduction of general systems theory and family research triggered marital counselling to concentrate on the structure as a framework for behaviour (Gagliardi, Guise, Lapidus, & Vickers, 2001).

Originally, marriage counselling was performed collaboratively (spouses were seen individually by different therapists) or concurrently (spouses worked with the same therapist at different times). Conjoint therapy was introduced in 1959 by Don Jackson, in which spouses were seen together with the therapist (Gagliardi et al., 2001). Jackson devised concepts like homeostasis, quid pro quo, and double blind for couples counselling, and started investigating how systems processes transpired between the two individuals. In 1986, Emotionally Focused Therapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, and Integrative Behavioural Couples Therapy were established and getting good experiential support (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002).

Marriage counselling was legitimized in the 1960's by receiving licensure. By the mid-1980's, couples therapy established sustained theory



development and empirical research than before. 1986 was the year of publication of Jacobson and Gurman's *Clinical Handbook of Marital Therapy*. The coverage of that handbook seemed to indicate couple's therapy as perceptible and permanent (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002).

Although research into couple therapy only actively started in 1950, it has grown at a fast pace. In 1970 such research was still largely descriptive and contained only empirical data. Then in the middle of the 1970's the research history of couple therapy reached a turning point - couple therapy researchers became interested in exploring different models of couple therapy and began investigating effect sizes of the studied treatment methods.

### **Goals of Couples Counselling**

There are multiple types of couples counselling, however, they all share similar goals of defusing disagreeing verbal communication, increasing intimacy and respect, eliminating barriers that create a feeling of constant disputing states, and to generate an intensified sense of compassion and understanding within the framework of the relationship (Foote, 2014). According to Kepler (2015) goal setting is generally incorporated into multiple sessions; it can be exceedingly complex and an intricate skill that takes time. It is not something that can be done in one session, except if the couple has participated in counselling previously and they are aware of what they want to do (Bader, 2010).

Bader (2010) believes an efficient goal is one that compels an individual to do some reflecting and confrontation of themselves. These goals should be individually focused and not reliant on what the other person says or does (Bader, 2010).

Couple therapy has developed along with family therapy. Some family therapists identified marital problems as the core approach to family change (e.g. Ackerman, 2010). Olson (1980, p.974) described the relationship between couple therapy and family therapy as 'fraternal twins'. Family and couple therapy traditionally derive from the same frame of concepts and techniques (Fraenkel, 1997, p.380). Nonetheless, most of the early pioneers of family therapy clearly discounted the relevance of couple therapy to their work, considering it quite an unimportant conceptual and professional position (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002).

Research into couple therapy has only become substantive in recent years. Olson's survey (Olson, 1970, p.501) shows that there were only about twenty-five articles regarding couple therapy published before 1950. It is reckoned that approximately fifty articles were published during the 1950's and over one hundred publications appeared from 1960 to 1970.

According to Olson's report in 1970, the nature of the research was largely descriptive, with the exception of a few studies that had made use of careful, thorough and exact methods or experimental designs. Olson (1970, pp. 522-523) noted four research areas. The first, which was the most thorough, exacting, and systematic approach to the evolution of couple therapy, investigated the effectiveness of treatment (Burton & Kaplan, 1968; Ely, 1970; Fitzgerald, 1969). The second described the traits of individuals who become couple therapists because of their professional background and affiliation (Alexander, 1968; Kimber, 1967). The third contained descriptions of those who seek couple therapy (Green, 1963; Kimber, 1966; Levitt & Baker, 1969).

The fourth research area addressed the methodological difficulties of carrying out research into couple therapy (Olson, 1969).

In Goodman's 1973 paper, all the existing research in the field, published between 1931 and 1968, and containing some empirical data, was examined. Goodman (1973, pp.112-113) reported that 56% of these works were based on subjective reports, and only 22% included a specified sample, meaning that they were too poorly defined to provide information concerning the populations to which the findings might apply. Goodman concluded that the usual standards for evaluating research could not be applied to the marriage counselling papers. Furthermore, she found that the scanty research made it impossible to identify an active research front for the field.

On the other hand, Gurman's (1973a, b) review of the emerging trends in the literature on research and practice in couple therapy brought attention to the very fast growth rate in the overall literature and the scarcity of measurement-based papers that touched on matters of treatment outcome or process. As Broderick and Schrader (1981) noted couple therapy had reached its peak by the late 1960s yet it had practically nothing to show for itself empirically by the mid 1970s.

Between the middle and the late 1970s, the research history of couple therapy reached a crossroads. For the first time, the field of couple therapy was interested in collecting a significant volume of experiential studies of treatment results that appeared to be useful for and relevant to clinical practice. A run of research reviews by Gurman and his colleagues (Gurman, 1971, 1973b; Gurman & Kniskern, 1978; Gurman, Kniskern, & Pinsof 1986)

assembled the major findings regarding the experimental status of the capacity and validity of couple therapy.

The emergence of a meaningful body of research became evident by the late 1980s, research which mainly explored the three models of couple therapy: emotionally-focused, psychodynamic and insight-oriented therapy. The 1990s posed a series of questions that were usually asked in the research literature, such as (e.g. Christensen & Heavey, 1999; Halford, 1998): “Does conjoint couple therapy work for relationship problem?” and “How powerful is conjoint couple therapy?” To these questions, researchers responded that couple therapy had increased relationship satisfaction more than if the couples opted for no treatment and that it is reasonably effective with approximately 60-75% of couples improving. Some researchers (e.g. Jacobson & Truax, 1991; Jacobson & Addis, 1993; Hahlweg & Markman, 1988; Hahlweg & Klann, 1997; Johnson et al., 1999; Snyder et al., 1991; Bergin, 1963) added three other indices of the power of couple therapy, namely: measures of clinical significance; assessment of the durability of post-treatment effects; and assessment of possible negative effects as a result of treatment.

### **Effectiveness/Satisfaction of Couples Counselling**

One study found that marital therapy is more successful than no treatment in decreasing marital unhappiness. The average percentage of enhancement after therapy is about 40%. The chance of the relationship improving increases from about 30% (projected enhancement rate for the control group) to about 70% for persons who received marital therapy. Additionally, this study determined the similarity between the European and United States studies, revealing that marital therapy is about uniformly

successful in diverse cultural locations. This delivers strong indication for generalizability of the outcomes of marital therapy (Hahlweg & Markman, 1988).

After treatment, another study initially found that couples progressed more than 83% of untreated spouses. Second, this study used the reliable change index to determine 66% of spouses showed improvement after treatment. Third, following treatment, 62% of spouses fell into the non-distressed scope on psychometric methods of marital distress and 54% preserved these improvements six months to four years later. This study signifies the impact of marital counselling on couples (Byrne, Carr, & Clark, 2004).

Another study discovered findings that indicated a variety of fulfillments for clients ranging from improved understanding of their circumstance through emotional encouragement to enhanced communication with their husband or wife. These findings indicate that marriage counselling is an operational aid for couples dealing with marital dissatisfaction (Brown & Manela, 1977).

Research that evaluated changes in marital satisfaction after counselling has found that approximately 48% of couples exhibited either enhancement or complete recovery in marital satisfaction at a five-year follow up. It was determined that relationship decline resulted for 38% of spouses and 14% stayed the same (Foote, 2014).

Kepler (2015) argues that there is limited research on the satisfaction rate of couples counselling among partners who participated in some form of counselling prevention. According to the study conducted on client

satisfaction with marital counselling, 75% of the clients who participated found it helpful (Brown & Manela, 1977).

### **Counselling Groups for Specific Populations**

According to Littrell and Zinck (2000), counselling groups are generally very effective with female at-risk students. In their study, the majority of female participants reported a significant reduction in problem severity upon termination of the themed counselling groups. In addition, female participants expressed meaningful changes that occurred in personal attitudes and in their relationships with other people. More important, these significant changes made during group counselling tend to endure beyond termination.

Group counselling is also seen as the most practical, effective, and efficient method of intervention for students of divorced families (Yaumen, 1991). Erwin and Toth (2000) suggest divorce-themed counselling groups seems to reduce feelings of isolation and shame while providing peer validation and appropriate peer modelling. Yaumen (1991) also points out the significance of emphasizing the positive benefits that can come from families experiencing divorce while facilitating small groups.

### ***Stages in the Counselling Groups***

There are varying opinions on specific stages that groups move through in marital group work. However, most of the research on developmental stages for groups is specific to counselling groups rather than group work. Therefore, this section will address the general stages in marital counselling groups. According to Corey & Corey (2006), there are four general stages to counselling groups: initial, transition, working, and final.

According to Corey and Corey (2006) the initial stage of group work includes discussing of functions of a group, here-and-now focus, trust issues, group norms, and group rules. Marriage counsellors establish trust, set group rules, develop strategies for confidentiality, and gather needed permission slips if required. The initial stage establishes the foundation for a successful group in a school setting.

As the group develops trust and a comfort level in sharing information and giving feedback the group progresses into the next stage called the transition stage. This stage suggests movement into accepting group norms, developing routines and accomplishing the task at hand. The transition stage may include: member anxiety, defensiveness, resistance, conflict, challenging of leader or group members, monopolistic behaviour, pseudo-support, dependency, socializing, intellectualizing, and questioning. As the group develops an identity, members may play roles in the group as they go through the stages of group development in a family environment. The leader needs to utilize skill to maintain the integrity of the group and keep members on track, according to Corey and Corey (2006).

As the group settles in to work on goals, develop coping strategies, and apply what is being learned, the working stage is coming together. The working stage may include combinations of group involvement, commitment, disclosure, honesty, acceptance, feedback, group cohesion, trust, and genuine caring. Corey and Corey (2006) indicate that this may be the stage of the most critical growth. As members engage in dialog, set goals, build trust, and move forward, the school counsellor may document data to show pre and post group feedback indicating change in feelings and behaviour.

The final stage is closure and may include: processing growth, dealing with feelings, preparing for separation, homework, and follow-up interviews. As the group has moved through the stages, the members are ready to leave group and practice their skills in their own lives. The stages in counselling groups may not always happen sequentially, as it is common for groups to move back and forth between stages (Corey & Corey, 2006).

### **Types of Groups**

According to Corey and Corey (2006) groups may be described as the following types: task groups, psychoeducational groups, counselling groups, brief or solutions-focused groups and psychotherapy groups.

**Task groups.** Task groups are very common in everyday life and permeate all types of jobs, organizations, and industries. The inherent focus of these types of groups is goal-orientated and serves to accomplish certain objectives and identify goals (Corey & Corey, 2006). According to Corey and Corey (2006), noteworthy characteristics in task groups are; evidence of a clear purpose, value member input, demonstrate appreciation of differences, encourage feedback, and focus on current issues. An example of this type of group would be an advisory group that meets to evaluate the school counselling program, collect data, and make recommendations for change. Task groups structurally consist of three simple stages: warm-up, action, and closure. Task groups can be very simple or complex and can form as a subgroup within a larger group.

**Psychoeducational groups.** “Psychoeducational interventions assist group members in sharing and developing coping skills and behaviors to deal with new or difficult situations” (Corey & Corey, 2006, p.3). Psychoeducational groups are the most prevalent groups in the school setting. These groups are



more structured than other groups and specifically intend to address certain deficits or improve social competencies in students. They can be both preventative and intervention-based. Sessions are typically around two hours but can be as short as thirty minutes in length. They usually are scheduled once a week and may last for four to six sessions. These groups are considered effective with both children and adolescents.

Psychoeducational group themes have an extensive range and may include groups for stress or anger management, skills for recognizing and coping with eating disorders, and topics for transition and relationship building, according to Corey and Corey (2006). These groups often include the component of assistance in overcoming issues and building certain behavioural and affective skills. Therefore, the goal of psychoeducational groups is to build skills or overcome deficits. There is an emphasis on teaching and learning in psychoeducational groups. The counsellor takes on the role of teacher/facilitator.

***Counselling groups.*** According to the American Society of Group Work (ASGW) small counselling groups serve smaller targeted theme-groups of students on a specific issue related to prevention, remediation, or crisis. An example of a small counselling group theme includes a post-trauma group organized after a school shooting or similar intense crisis. Counselling groups rely on interactive feedback and focus on the here-and now.

“Counselling groups focus on interpersonal processes and problem-solving strategies that stress thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. A counselling group aims at helping participants resolve problems in living or dealing with developmental concerns” (Corey, & Corey, 2006, p.12). Members strive to

understand interpersonal problems and actively look to remove the barriers that prevent optimal development. Members often develop interpersonal skills that assist in coping with the present crisis. These groups characterize techniques of supporting fellow group members with their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

Other small group themes may explore personal growth and honest self-exploration. The structure of these groups can be open (members decide) or focused (leader decides). According to Corey and Corey (2006), common group themes may include: interpersonal skill development, behaviour plans for change, study skills, coping skills, and diversity awareness and appreciation.

The focus of these groups is more on the process rather than content. Therefore, the focus of counselling groups is essentially very different than of psychoeducational groups. Goals are also more personal rather than group-oriented. Group leaders structure activities that elicit the here-and-now, model appropriate behaviours, and promote self-exploration and self-reflection. Rather than teaching and giving content as the counsellor does in the psychoeducational group, the counsellor plays a passive facilitative role and the group members share and learn from the experience of other members.

***Psychotherapy groups.*** Psychotherapy groups were developed in part due to the shortage of individual therapy counsellors during World War II (Corey & Corey, 2006). Generally, psychotherapy groups fall under the realm of mental health therapy rather than school counselling due to the intensity of the issue covered in psychotherapy. These groups promote member exchanges to bring about change in their lives over time. This sort of interaction allows for

support, caring, confrontation, and other techniques that are not always possible in short-term school counselling sessions. The goal is to remediate psychological problems. Group members may have acute or chronic mental or emotional disorders that impair functioning. These groups connect present behaviour to historical material to assess, interpret, and diagnose. According to Corey and Corey (2006), types of psychological problems addressed in psychotherapy mental health groups may include but not be limited to: depression, post-traumatic stress, sexual issues, severe eating disorders, and anxiety.

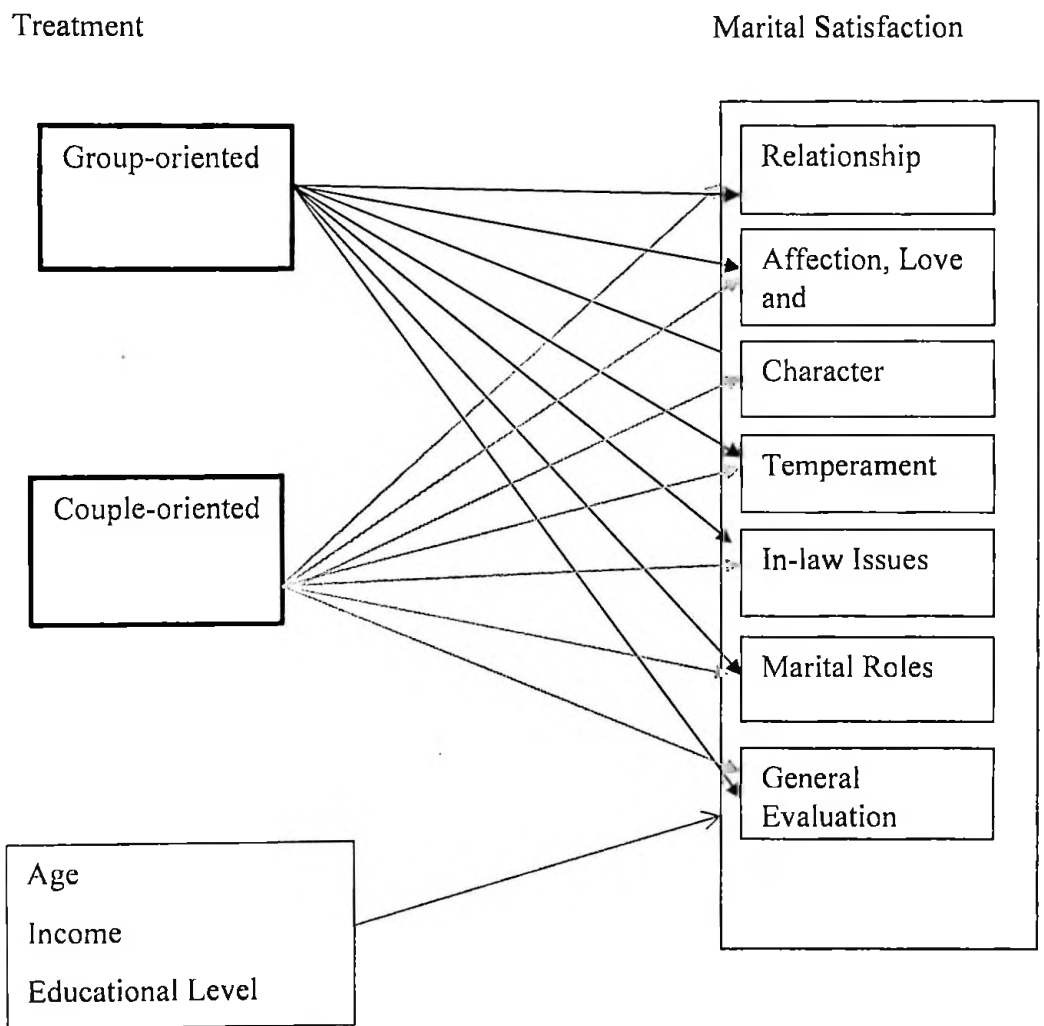
Group psychotherapy leaders may work with symbolic techniques and the unconscious thought processes. These groups generally require more time and sessions than other groups previously mentioned that may be more appropriate for school settings. These groups are to be led by certified therapists who may offer specialization in these areas. When school counsellors encounter these issues, it is wise to consult and refer the family to seek community based counselling for best outcomes.

**Brief groups.** The final type of group described is brief group, as these groups derive their name from their limited time structure. A brief group is a structured group with defined focus, specific purpose and designated number of sessions. Examples of brief groups include: test-prep group, grief group, new student group, or career exploration group. These groups generally meet from four to twelve sessions. The sessions are very structured with planned objectives prior to starting session. Students with similar issues such as exploring career exploration, being new to the school, or coping with learning disabilities may benefit from brief group sessions

Schnedler (2008). These groups have become very popular due to their cost-effectiveness and time-effectiveness format. Research shows that brief groups can be beneficial and usually use Behavioural or Cognitive-Behavioural approaches (Garner & LaFountain, 1996). The format of brief groups is appealing to overworked school counsellors and allows for opportunity to facilitate more groups with more students over time.

### Conceptual Framework

The hypothesised conceptual frame of how the variable are related is present below. It is presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Dabone (2017)

The variables in the current study and how they are related to give meaning to the investigation are presented in Figure 1. The independent variables are couple-oriented, group-oriented counselling approaches, age, educational level and income levels while the dependent variable is the marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce.

There would be two broad groups (treatment and control) which participants would be assigned randomly. These two groups would be assessed to see the marital satisfaction levels after which the treatment group will receive intervention through the use of theories (family systems theory, communication theory, attachment versus independence theory, exchange theory and role theory) in couple-oriented and group-oriented approaches. The control group will not receive these treatments.

A post-test will then be given to ascertain the marital satisfaction levels of participants who went through couple-oriented approach and those who went through group-oriented approach as well as those who received no intervention.

### **Empirical Review**

The researcher examined in this part of the literature review, studies which have bearings on relevant variables of marital satisfaction namely income levels, educational level and age in this study. The review captured the following themes.

- i. Studies on selected Indices of Marital Satisfaction
- ii. Studies on Religious Influence and Marital Satisfaction
- iii. Educational Level and Marital Satisfaction
- iv. Age and Marital Satisfaction

v. Income levels and Marital Satisfaction

**Studies on Selected Indices of Marital Satisfaction**

Burr (2010) 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 fulfilment 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.

Asiedu (2014) maintains that communication becomes effective verbal is accompanied with non-verbal signs. He further reveals that the non-verbal aspect of communication manifests the emotional dispositions of the communicator. Nsowah (2014) asserts that all challenges of couples are basically emotional.

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 generalised impression 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 discussion into the realm of role, role expectations and roles performance.

Oppong (2007) (as cited in Schandorf & Kwarfo, 2010) 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. Oppong also found the persistent influence of sibling 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 (2009) 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 (2009) 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, 2008) that lower-status couples are accustomed to greater gender - role differentiation.

Schandorf and Kwarfo (2010) 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. People with high levels of education are able to concentrate and absorb the concepts or ideas they study (Danso, 2015).

Benneh (1991) (as cited in Schandorf & Kwarfo, 2010) 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.

Frimpong and Kyere (2017) maintain that marital success thrives on finances. They explain that the effective management of the family's (husband, wife and children) finances brings about happiness in the marriage. They further explain effective management to mean involvement of each spouse in the income and expenditure of the family.

### **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

marital solidarity. They also found that the better educated persons maintained more egalitarian or less traditional role structures.

In Nigeria, Olagungu (1998) found that marital stability was positively associated with educational status. Also Scanzoni and Scanzoni (2008) 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 (2013) 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 (2013) 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 (2009) 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.

Kyere (2014) found statistical significant difference among married people who had gone through group counselling in improving their marriages

in terms of their educational levels. He found the middle level which he defined to be senior high school levels as well as diploma holders improving steadily after intervention that low and high education level married people.

Berdiako (2015) found statistical significant difference between married men with high and those with low education level in terms of marital satisfaction. His study concentrated on improving the marital satisfaction of married men in the Mpraeso district of the eastern region of Ghana through group counselling.

Peprah (2010) found statistically significant difference between high and low educated couples who were taken through the family system theory. He revealed that couples with low education background had seen high level of satisfaction in their marriage after the intervention than their colleagues with high level of education. He explained the finding to have come from the fact that couples with low educational background had a renewed mind and were much more ready to learn than their counterparts with high level of education who might have still held on the mind "I know my right" and will not lower their egos and learn.

Berdiako (2015) found significant difference between married men with high and those with low education level in terms of marital satisfaction. His study concentrated on improving the marital satisfaction of married men in the Mpraeso district of the Eastern Region of Ghana through group counselling.

Ato-Forson (2015) who found no significant difference in the marital success of couples with regard to their educational levels. In a study he conducted in Assin Fosu he concluded that there was no difference between

couples with low level of education and those with high level of education who went through the integrative behavioural therapy. Ato-Forson described marriage as the only institution in which the couples are given certificate before the lesson starts. He added that unlike secular education, students are given certificate after completion of their programme of study. Ato-Forson explained that there was no significant difference their marital success because marriage is a concept that is wide and keeps changing.

### **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 non-random 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.

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 have. Middle-aged adults seemed to have greater adjustment problems than both young and elderly participants involved in the study.

Tampuri (2014) found that older spouses differed significantly from younger spouses who engaged in cross culture marriage. He study on the Ghanaian and Ivorian married spouses and found that younger spouses were more satisfied in their marriages than their older counterparts. He studies also revealed that the marriage starts with fantasies from the various countries and each spouse enjoys the differences and culture in the various countries. Some also gets fascinated by the similarities in cultures. He added that as the spouses get aging their satisfaction in the marriage diminishes.

Owusu-Amoah (2015) indicated that younger people have a sense of competition among themselves even if the activity is not competitive. His study tested for difference among age groups and their marital quality in the Kwabre East of the Eastern region of Ghana. He found significant difference in the marital quality of married people in terms of their age groups.

Bridgewaters (2013) found among married people in Birmingham, England that older female spouses did not differ significantly from younger female spouses who were taken through group approaches in solution focus brief therapy. The study aimed at improving the marital quality of the spouses through the solution focus brief therapy. She recommended that miracles questions were useful in assisted spouses who were dissatisfied in their marriages. She however concluded that solution focus brief therapy is efficacious treating spouses in terms of age and marriages in general.

Argun (2015) found significant difference between young and old couple and their marital enrichment after counselling. Argun investigated young and old couples in the Catholic Church in Freetown, Serra Leon and their marital enrichment in terms of couple counselling.

Pratt (2014) also found came out with a similar finding in a study he conducted among young and old workers and the marital quality after marital improvement programmes. He found out that there was significant difference in marital quality after the intervention between the young and old working couples. He added that the young working couples were found to do better than the old working couples after the intervention.

## **Income Levels and Marital Satisfaction**

Disagreements over finances rank among the top reasons contributing to divorce (Lawrence, Thomasson, Wozniak, & Prawitz, 1993). “Couples dissatisfied with their financial situation frequently consider their entire relationship a failure” (Blumstein & Schwarz, 1983, p. 55). Because money is woven into many parts of the family and marital fabric, it is essential to better understand this family financial phenomenon (Lown, & Allgood, 2000). Obviously economic hardship causes individual and personal suffering that may bleed over into the relationship. Such suffering is manifested in men as irritability and withdrawal, and for the couple, economic instability delivers a serious blow to marital self-image (Freeman et al., 1993).

More people might be better off if solving the problem were as easy as increased income and more favorable economic factors. However, most research suggests otherwise. Along with economic factors, research suggests that money management also affects marital satisfaction. “Money management constitutes a major source of marital conflict, and financial disagreements consistently rank as one of the most common distress areas for American couples” (Aniol & Snyder, 1997, p. 347). Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) found that couples who argue about money are really arguing about how to manage the money they have. Godwin (1990) has described the inadequacy of family financial management behaviors:

Godwin and Carroll (1986) found that families, on average, engaged in fewer than 6 of 18 recommended financial management behaviors. As measured by Beutler and Mason (1987), fewer than 10% of families had high budget formality scores, including keeping written plans and records of

expenditures, reviewing expenditures and using a planning horizon of one year or more. Almost 20% of their families never engaged in any of these practices and reported planning horizons of one day or less. Mullis and Schnittgrund (1982) found that fewer than one fourth of families engaged in formal budgeting. Titus, Fanslow, and Hira (1989), using an index of 10 items, reported that families' average proficiency in financial planning behavior was 54 on a 100-point scale. (p. 222)

Although economic and management factors contribute to marital distress, there is also evidence that gender differences play a part in the problem. "Couples are together because they have something in common, but they certainly have differences when it comes to money. One spouse typically tends to save more while the other tends to want to enjoy life a little more" (Opiela, 2002, p. 56). While this sounds simplistic, research has supported the idea that husbands and wives feel and act differently about money. Zagorsky (2003) speaks to differences in husbands and wives perceptions about money: Overall the majority of couples have dramatically different perceptions about their income and especially their assets. Half of all couples disagree on the family's income by more than 10% and half of all couples disagree on the family's net worth by more than 30%. (p. 137)

Aniol and Snyder (1997) argued that husbands' marital satisfaction is tied to financial concerns whereas the wives' marital satisfaction is not; however, Financial stress can include cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses that affect the relationship. "Economic strain leads to an increase in spousal hostility and a decrease in spousal warmth" (Freeman, Carlson, & Sperry. 1993, p. 325). In addition to increased hostility, financial stresses are

and child-care responsibilities has a way of breaking down under stress when it suddenly becomes crystal clear that, for all practical purposes, it is *his* money, not *theirs*, and that he wields, at the very least, the considerable power of absolute veto. (p. 237)

Kerkmann et al. (2000) found that couples were more satisfied when they believed that they were handling their finances appropriately. “Effective financial management is an important aspect of all family relationships at all times; its significance grows during unemployment as resources shrink and family tensions increase” (Voydanoff, 1978, p. 97). It is reasonable to think that marital satisfaction decreases in conjunction with economic hardship, e.g., job loss, unemployment or underemployment, unexpected hospital bills, or slow economy. Half of all U.S. families no longer feel a sense of self-sufficiency in regard to their finances. Rather, they feel that their wellbeing is determined by what happens in the country as opposed to their own actions (Myhre & Sporkowski, 1986). “When couples encounter economic hardship, their relationship faces additional and sometimes extraordinary stress” (Freeman et al., 1993, p. 324). While financial problems are relative to the demands and expectations of the couple together and as individuals, very low-income levels are one of the most significant stressors in married life, involving the inability to meet basic economic needs (Albrecht, Bahr, & Goodman, 1983).

At a very basic level, economic wellbeing involves income. “The process of making family income and consumption adaptations to cope with inflation may create tension” (Guadagno, 1983, p. 215). Serious family financial problems have more to do with low income as opposed to the failure

of financial management procedures (Kerkmann et al., 2000), and level of income impacts other areas of marital satisfaction as well. Conversely, saving money and accumulating assets positively relate to marital stability (Schaninger & Buss, 1986).

Sagarson (2014) in a study conducted in Italy on predictors of marital quality found that financial matters were considered the most important predictor to 83% out of the 350 respondents. He explained that the world today has become a place where money can get almost everything done. Therefore if there is money in the house that can bring about happiness, spouses can play their marital roles effectively and hence an improvement in the marital quality of those spouses.

Martins (2013) found that group intervention on cognitive behavioural theory saw a significant difference among married people with respect to different levels of income. She found that married people with higher levels of income responded positively to the group treatment than their counterparts with low income.

Kheamba (2015) found in Nariobi, Kenya, that there were no statistically significant differences between low and high income earners who were exposed to group counselling in rational emotive behaviour therapy. He investigated clairvoyants of satisfaction in marriage and found that income was a major factor in the determination of marital satisfaction among couples.

Petershie (2011) found that income had an effect on marital quality of married people. He added that it was one of top reasons the respondent identified as predictor of marital satisfaction. His study also did not find



significant differences between high and low income earners with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

Fischer (2013) in a study conducted in Cologne, Germany on high and low income migrants found that income was the number one factor that led to divorce. After intervention he found no significant difference between high and low income earners with respect to their satisfaction in marriage.

Abasi-Ifreke (2013) found in Jalingo in the Taraba State of Nigeria that counselling intervention did not result in any positive impact on the mind set of the high and low income married people. Abasi-Ifreke studied how married people with high and low income reacted to counselling intervention in aid to improve their marital quality.

### **Couple-Oriented Counselling**

Another type of prevention of marriage dissolution is marital counselling, also known as couples counselling. Couples counselling is presented to support couples that may be contemplating separation or pursuing better-quality intimacy and understanding.

In couples counselling, the relationship is the primary emphasis, while each spouse should also anticipate focusing on self-improvement and awareness (Foote, 2014). By the time a couple reaches out to a counsellor, they have predictably been distressed with the emotional, behavioural, and cognitive symptoms that are forecasters of relationship displeasure, instability, and eventually divorce (Gottman & Notarius, 2002).

It is said that increasing couples' gratification across problem areas in relationships, enlightening interactional patterns of communication and conflict resolve, and concentrating couples on a more precise interpretation of

their partner has revealed increased relationship gratification and stability (Casado-Kehoe, Vanderbleek, & Thanasiu, 2007).

Couple therapy has developed along with family therapy. Some family therapists identified marital problems as the core approach to family change (e.g. Ackerman, 2010). Olson (1980, p.974) described the relationship between couple therapy and family therapy as 'fraternal twins'. Family and couple therapy traditionally derive from the same frame of concepts and techniques (Fraenkel, 1997, p.380). Nonetheless, most of the early pioneers of family therapy clearly discounted the relevance of couple therapy to their work, considering it quite an unimportant conceptual and professional position (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002).

Research into couple therapy has only become substantive in recent years. Olson's survey (Olson, 1970, p.501) shows that there were only about twenty-five articles regarding couple therapy published before 1950. It is reckoned that approximately fifty articles were published during the 1950's and over one hundred publications appeared from 1960 to 1970.

The format of couple therapy is different from individual, group and family counselling. Individual counselling deals with individual issues in a one-to-one setting. In group counselling however, the counsellor(s) facilitates the group dynamics for the interaction of the group members to develop and resolve the group issues (Corey, 2004). Family counselling deals with family issues, the therapist observes interactions between family members as well as the perception of non-interacting family members (Lowenstein, 2010, p.3). By comparison, the relationship in couple therapy is triangular, the counsellor, one partner and the other partner. The therapist is counselling two people, a

couple. In situations where one of the partners in the couple is unavailable to come to counselling; then the counselling becomes one-to-one. However, in the case that only one partner comes to counselling, the therapist should counsel him or her, keeping the other partner in mind. Thus, the relationship remains triangular to the therapist. The therapist in couple therapy should not allow only one partner to spend a lot of time talking as in individual counselling. The reason is that each partner in couple therapy tends to draw the therapist into supporting that partner's 'side'. The equalising attitude is probably the most distinguishing feature of couple therapy and is perhaps what distinguishes couple therapy most from individual therapy, group therapy and family therapy (Taibbi, 2009, p.3).

Couple therapy is defined as a method of psychological therapy used to treat relationship difficulties for both individuals and couples (Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002; Gurman, 2005; Crowe, 2006). The focus of couple therapy is on the presence of both partners, excluding child or adolescent problems or parent and child interaction, although the children may be invited if there are specific issues (Glick, Berman, Clarkin, & Rait, 2000; Gurman & Fraenkel, 2002).

Osunuga (2012) found in Abuja, Nigeria that participants responded more effectively to couple-oriented approach to marriage counselling than group-oriented marriage counselling. Botshelo (2014) found that the exchange theory was effective in improving the marital quality of distressed couples who were exposed to that intervention. He maintained that the couple oriented intervention had heeled 43% improvement in marital quality as compared to

their control groups in a study he conducted on distressed married people in Selebi-Phikwe in Botswana.

Axmed (2015) also found in Bosaso in Somalia that couples who were treated in an experimental setting had improvement in the satisfaction levels of their marriage than their counterparts who were not. He used the communication theory to assist the participants through an 8 week intervention process.

Asiraa (2015) maintains that the manner in which spouses relate to each other determines their marital quality. In a study she conducted in the Dormaa East District of Brong-Ahafo, she found that relationship between spouses is crucial for the success or otherwise of marital life. Ankomah and Obeng (2014) revealed that character is the fundamental determinant of marital happiness. They explain that the character of a person will determine how he/she discharges his/her marital roles, relates with the spouse and children. It will determine how one also relates with the in-laws. In the course of the sessions membered the difficulties they had with the character dispositions of their spouses. the comments they passed after the intervention were contrary to the expressions they made before the intervention.

### **Group-Oriented Counselling**

“We become group members the instant we are born, and we become members of many groups as our lives unfold” (Kline, 2003, p.1). Groups are seen as a common facet of life. Groups such as family, church, community, school clubs, athletic and academic groups are just a few examples of group membership for typical students.

environment setting. A well-informed counsellor may need to know the types of groups recommended for the family setting.

Grisham (2014) found significant difference between couple and group-oriented approach to married people who were taken through solution focused brief therapy in marriage counselling. His study revealed that group-oriented marriage counselling approach was more efficacious than couple oriented marriage counselling approach.

Sydney (2013) found that group activities in marriage counselling has the potential to trigger success or otherwise owing to counsellor dispositions. Adofeli (2015) found in Lusaka, Zambia that there was little or no effect of group counselling on the marital quality of married people. He explained that people fear to share their marital details and even if they share they only talk about the positive side which they are proud of.

Nwogiri (2014) investigated the correlation between leisure and marital quality among African- Americans who visited Banjul, Gambia between the year 2010 and 2013. He found that married people who engaged in group activities whilst on leisure indicated that though they learnt some skills and ideas from other married people that did not have any significant impact on their marital quality.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

Counselling theories and approaches form the basis of counselling practice. The couple-oriented and group-oriented approaches were used on couples at the verge of divorce. Some studies prove the efficiency of these two approaches while others advocate for couple oriented approach. To verify

these assertions the present was undertaken. Factors contributing to marital satisfaction include age, educational level and income.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

#### **Introduction**

This section presents a description of the research design, study area, population, the sample and sampling procedures which are used for the research. It also gives a detailed description of data collection instruments and data collection procedures as well as procedures of data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

I employed the experimental design specifically the quasi-experimental design (Pretest-posttest control group). It enabled me to assess the impact of couple and group-oriented counselling approaches on the marital satisfaction levels of couples at the verge of divorce in the Sunyani Municipality. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010) the pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design observes an experimental group subjected to intervention, and observe once again after the intervention. The control group is isolated from any influences of the experimental intervention; this is observed both at the beginning and at the end. Besides, the design is appropriate in determining the hypothesis by reaching valid conclusions about relationship between the independent and dependent variables. According to White and Sabarwal (2014), quasi-experimental research design identifies a comparison group that is as similar as possible to the treatment group in terms of baseline characteristics.

Saani (2015) states that for a treatment condition to be effective there should be no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group. He argues that once there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group then it implies external threats to validity have been compromised.

Blakstad (2008) also posited that, in a quasi-experimental design, the researcher manipulates one variable, and controls the rest of the variables. It has a control group, subjects are assigned between the groups, and the researcher only tests one effect at a time. He pointed out that, it is also important to know the variable(s) to be tested and measured. He further asserted that a quasi-experimental design is typically carried out by manipulating a variable, called the independent variable, affecting the experimental group. The effect that the researcher is interested in, the independent variable(s) is measured. Jefferson (2007) is also of the view that, a quasi-experimental study is a type of evaluation that seeks to determine whether a programme or intervention had the intended causal effect on programme participants. He also pointed out that there are three key components of a quasi-experimental study design: pre-test and post-test design, a treatment group and a control group, and non-random assignment of study participants. It was therefore appropriate to employ the quasi-experimental study to reach valid conclusions about relationships between the independent and the dependent variables.

Blakstad (2008) states that, the research design aids in controlling independent variables for the experiments and aims at removing extraneous and unwanted variables to a larger extent. The control over the irrelevant



variables is higher as compared to other research types or methods. The strengths notwithstanding, Blakstad identified that the quasi-experimental design is likely to create artificial situations. This stems from the fact that the quasi-experimental design controls irrelevant variables at times and this can create situations that are somehow artificial.

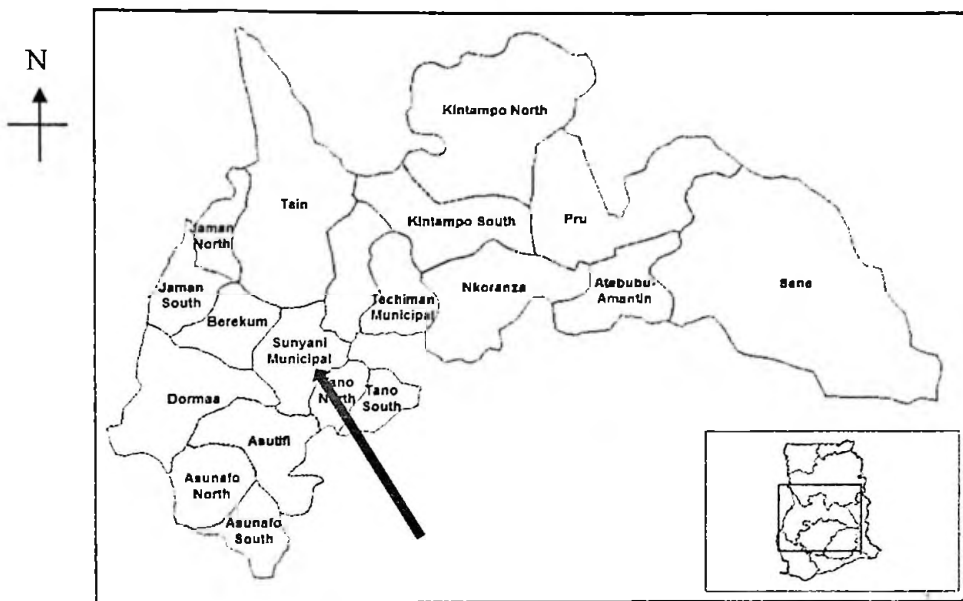
In spite of the weaknesses and considering the nature of the study, I found the quasi-experimental design the most appropriate for this investigation.

### **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  $7^{\circ} 55'N$  and  $7^{\circ} 35'N$  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 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 2:** A map of Brong Ahafo showing the study area of Sunyani Municipality.

Source: Geographical Society of Ghana (2015)

### **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 of Ghana. 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 centred on three thousand four hundred and forty six (3,446) registered marriages as at June 2016 from the circuit court registry.

### **Sampling Procedure**

In order to get the appropriate sample from the population of married people in the municipality, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for determining sample size was employed. “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 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 for the pretest. Stratified, quota and purposive sampling techniques were used to get the desired sample of three hundred and forty four (344) for the pretest.

**Stage one:** The population was put into two strata in terms of religion. Two religions (Christianity and Muslim) were used to aid the pretest data collection. According to Randolph (2013), the stratified sampling technique is used when a researcher wants to obtain estimates of known precision for certain subdivisions of the population by treating each subdivision as a stratum. Each stratum was further divided in five subdivisions. Then quota

were assigned to the subdivisions or suburbs (the suburbs are known as “areas” in Municipality) I visited the suburbs and selected the individual respondents using the purposive sampling technique. 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.

In all a sample size of 344 individuals were given the MSI to answer. An analysis of their results indicated those who were very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied and those at the verge of divorce.

**Stage two:** After analysing the responses of the respondents, those who were “at the verge of divorce” were assigned into control and experimental groups. There were 48 participants for the quasi-experimental study.

There were 11 sub-groups in all, 2 groups of group-oriented experimental groups, 8 groups of couple-oriented experimental group and 1 group for control. Again, there were 2 participants each for couple-oriented experimental groups. There were also 8 participants each in the two group-oriented experimental groups and this was informed by Jacobs, Masson and Harvill (2006), Corey and Corey (2001), Jacobs (1992) and Stevens (2004) who advocated that ideal size for marriage counselling groups is between six and eight. There were 16 participants in the control group. In all there were 16 participants each in the group-oriented, couple-oriented and the control group.

### **Data Collection Instrument**

The Marital Satisfaction Inventory developed by Essuman (2010) was adapted for the study. The inventory was chosen because it has a long standing

validation in Ghana. It is an inventory to assist married people find out the extent to which they are satisfied in their marriage. The inventory is made up of 35 items. The demographic items of the inventory are five while the main items are thirty in number. However, two items were added to the demographic section of the instrument. The 30 items are 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; items 2, 5, 10, 20, 21, 25)

Scale 2: Affection, Love and Appreciation (five items; items 3, 4, 16, 23, 27)

Scale 3: Character (six items; items 6, 12, 18, 19, 22, 28)

Scale 4: Temperament (three items; items 13, 14, 29)

Scale 5: In-law Issues (three items; items 11, 17, 24)

Scale 6: Marital Roles (three items; items 9, 15, 26)

Scale 7: General Evaluation (four items; items 1, 7, 8, 30).

The inventory is designed with both positive and negative items. The negative items are fifteen in number whilst the positive items are also fifteen in number. The instrument was used to ascertain the baseline data (pretest) as well as the posttest data.

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

Validity is defined as “the appropriateness of the interpretations, inferences and actions that we make based on test scores” (Johnson & Christensen, 2004, p 140). They explained further that, it is paramount to ensure validity in research instrument, thus, in ensuring validity you must ensure that the test measures what it is intended to measure, for the specific group of people and for the specific content, and also the interpretations that

are made are justified based on the correct test scores. Similarly, Hair, Causby, and Miller, (2005) opined that validity refers to how well a concept is defined by its measure.

To establish the content validity of the instrument, it was critically analysed by my supervisors and two other professionals in the field of counselling psychology for their review since content validity can be determined by expert judgment (Gay, Geoffrey & Peter, 2009). The suggestions they made were used to restructure the instrument. According to Amedahe (2002) it is the soundness of the interpretations given to the assessment scores that are validated, not the instrument. This implies that if the instrument measures what it intends to measure and the results are used for the intended purpose then the instrument can be said to be valid. The pilot test helped to refine the research instrument.

To ascertain the reliability of the Marital Satisfaction Inventory and also the feasibility of the inventory, a study was conducted by Dabone (2012) in the Sunyani Municipality. This gave a coefficient of 0.86 for the 30 items, (N=320) which indicates that the items had a good internal consistency. Again Dabone (2015) carried out an exploratory factor analysis on the seven scales that make up the MSI with married people in Cape Coast and found the instrument to be highly reliable. The summary of Dabone (2015) finding using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient analysis were as follows:

Scale 1: Relationship	0.76
Scale 2: Affection, Love and Appreciation	0.82
Scale 3: Character	0.79
Scale 4: Temperament	0.83

Scale 5: In-law Issues	0.74
Scale 6: Marital Roles	0.81
Scale 7: General Evaluation	0.76

### **Pilot Testing**

A pilot testing is done for information on the validity and reliability of the instrument being used. A pilot test was done to validate the instrument, that is, find out how valid and reliable the instrument for the main data collection will be. Reliability means the consistency or stability of the test scores (Gay et al., 2009, Hair et al 2005, Johnson & Christensen, 2004). This implies that the assessment tool will produce the same or almost the same scores anytime it is administered to the same individual.

A pilot test was conducted in Berekum Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region of Ghana. This is because Berekum is considered 3<sup>rd</sup> in terms of high divorce rate. However, the living standard survey (2010) reveals that people living in Sunyani and Berekum Municipality have very similar characteristics as compared to the Jaman North District which is 2<sup>nd</sup> in terms of high divorce rates. The responses from the forty (40) 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 to use. Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2010) maintain that the Cronbach's alpha is used when measures have multiple scored items. Cronbach's alpha was computed for the MSI after construct validation was computed and was 0.94, which indicates a high correlation between the items and the MSI is consistently reliable. Opinions differ about the ideal alpha value. Some experts

the MSI and to interpret to respondents who could not read to understand the items in the MSI. As part of the training for the research assistants, I briefed them on the essence of the study and took them through each item on the questionnaire. We discussed what each item meant. This was to ensure that the research assistants understood the items themselves and to ascertain their readiness for the data collection.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

In this section how the data were collected for the study is described. Before embarking on the data collection exercise I obtained a letter of introduction from the Head, Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Cape Coast to the pastors and imams in the Sunyani Municipality in the Brong Ahafo Region. A preliminary contact was made with the selected churches and mosques and a letter of introduction from the Department of Guidance and Counselling was given to each of the diocesan/circuit pastors and area imams of the participating churches and mosques. Permission was then sought from the head of the churches and mosques concerned before the instrument was administered.

For ethical reasons, I explained the rationale and all other ethical issues involved in the study to the head pastors and imams and the respective respondents to elicit their voluntary concern. I employed and trained two teaching assistants to help in collecting the baseline data for the study. These teaching assistants (M.Phil Students) were briefed on the purpose of the study. They were given in-depth information about the procedures in collecting the data. At the beginning of each session we held meetings to discuss the tasks for the day and at the end of each session to discuss our successes and



had between 3 and 5 sessions. Also Kiser and Nunnally (1990) advocated that clients who received three sessions or less of group intervention in SFBT had a success rate of 69.4% while clients attending four or more sessions had a success rate of 91.1%. The participants were assured of confidentiality and were also encouraged to think of possible solutions to the challenges rather than focusing on the challenges themselves. The breakdown for the sessions is as follows:

### **Session One: Establishing Relationship**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. get to know other members of the group;
- b. explain the purpose of the group;
- c. explain at least three (3) advantages of group counselling to clients;
- d. list at least four ground rules to guide the group;

#### *Activities:*

This session was used to allow members acquaint themselves to the group and build healthy relationships. The “repeated rounds” method was used by members to introduce themselves and also learn the names of each other. The repeated rounds method is a process where group members introduce themselves in a manner where the first person mentions his/her name. The second person continues by mentioning the name of the first person as well as his/her own name. The process continues till the last person in the group mentions the name of the preceding member as well as his/her own name. The purpose of the group was clarified as well as role of the leader. How the group

sessions were to be conducted was also discussed. Members were helped to verbalise their expectations.

Together with the participants, group rules were set. Some of the rules set included members showing respect for each other as well as to their views, being punctual and keeping issues discussed confidential. The advantages of group counselling were discussed. The group members were encouraged to think about their goals. They were made to understand that before the beginning of each session, their preferred goals would be established. This was to identify the change participants experienced. They were encouraged to set specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic goals. Participants were also encouraged to note any changes in their marital relationship before the next session. Members were given the opportunity to seek answers to questions or issues that perplexed them.

### **Session Two: Relationship Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. acknowledge at least five behaviours that destroy marital relationship;
- b. identify the enormity of the problem in their marital relationship;
- c. explain at least five behaviours that improve relationships
- d. describe expected changes in the marital relationship.

#### *Activities:*

The session started with a word of prayer from one of the participants after which questions or issues they wanted to clarify with respect to the first session were dealt with. The discussion for the day was based on the first scale of the MSI dubbed "Relationship Issues" with Items 2, 5, 10, 20, 21, and 25.

This was anchored on the attachment versus independence theory. Through question and answer method behaviours that destroy marital relationship were elicited from the participants. The respondents were given an exercise to rank the enormity of relationship challenges in their marriage. We discussed the answers the participants brought out. It was revealed that while some had grandiose challenges with relationship in their marriages others had slight challenges.

Through discussion method, behaviours that could spark healthy relationship in marriage were brought forth. Drills were used to guide member to describe changes they envisage in their marital relationship. Each member shared his/her gains or what new they had learnt for the day. I summarised what we had discussed for the day and also encouraged members to put to use what they had learnt. The session then came to an end with a word of prayer from one of the participants.

### **Session Three: Affection, Love and Appreciation Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five challenges people face in expression of affection, love and appreciation;
- b. appreciate the magnitude of problems participants face in expressing affection, love and appreciation;
- c. Explain at least five ways in overcoming challenges people face in expression of affection, love and appreciation.

### *Activities:*

The session started with prayer by a different member other than the ones who gave the word of prayer in the previous sessions. I then ushered participants into the day's session by finding out from them what gains they had made since the previous session. This helped me in appreciating and strengthening positive changes that may have taken place. It was also to motivate members that improvement was a possibility and that they should strive for it. From there, I shared with them the objectives for the day. The day's discussions centred on the expression of affection, love and appreciation, which was the second scale on the MSI with Items 3, 4, 16, 23 and 27. Through the Dalton plan, challenges people face in the expression of affection, love and appreciation were identified by the participants. The Dalton plan is an educational concept created by Helen Parkhurt. It is a method of education by which pupils work at their own pace and receive individual help from the instructor when necessary. It also encourages students to help each other with their work. This is useful in group activities (Bridgewaters, 2013).

Using exploratory model the participants were allowed to talk briefly about their concerns based in the expression of affection, love and appreciation. From there they were guided to determine the magnitude of the problems associated with expressing affection, love and appreciation to their marriage partners. The discussion method was used to get participants to share their ideas as to how the challenge could be resolved. I drew the participants' attention to the key issues discussed, reassured them of confidentiality. Participants were encouraged to share what they learnt from the session.

## **Session Four: Character Issues**

### *Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. state at least four character issues that spouses consider as problematic
- b. identify the magnitude of problems with character issues;
- c. explain at least five ways that can be used to improve problematic character issues;

### *Activities:*

This session focused on the participants' character issues. The session started with a prayer followed by a discussion on improvements since the previous session. The counsellor shared the objectives for the day with them. The day's discussions were based on Items 6, 12, 18, 19, 22 and 28 of the MSI representing the "Character scale". Using discussion method, the participants shared some of the problem characters they find with the spouses. The participants were guided to estimate the enormity of the change they face. Through expository teaching I took the participants through how problem characters could be dealt with while encouraging the participants to share their experiences in that regard. Every member was invited to share his/her ideas on the solutions to their issues. I summarised the key issues for the day and encouraged the participants to put into practice the new ideas they learnt.

## **Session Five: Temperament Issues**

### *Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. explain what was meant by temperament;

- b. state at least four temperament issues spouses considered as problematic
- c. identify the magnitude of problems with character issues;
- d. explain at least five ways that can be used to improve problematic temperament issues;

*Activities:*

I introduced the session with a word of prayer and a discussion on improvements realised since the previous session. I then shared the objectives for the day with the spouses. The day's discussions were based on Items 13, 14 and 29 of the MSI captioned "Temperament Issues".

The discussion method was used to explain what was meant by temperament. Through question and answer method the spouses brought up temperament issues they considered as problematic. Using discussion method, the participants spoke about some of the problem characters they find with the spouses as well as what their spouses find with them. Through discovery method the participants were guided to estimate the enormity of the challenge that confronted them. Through brainstorming we came out with how temperament could be handled to avoid problems in the marriage. The spouses were invited to share their ideas on the possible solutions we came out with. I summarised the key issues for the day and encouraged the participants to put into practice the new ideas they learnt. We prayed and closed.

**Session Six: In-law Issues**

*Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. rate their in-law relationships;

- b. Identify at least five challenges in-laws posed to the marriage
- c. describe at least five appropriate ways to cope with in-law problems

*Activities:*

The session followed the normal routine; with a prayer. We held discussion on improvements since the previous session. I then shared the objectives for the day. The discussion on in-law issues was based on Items 11, 17, and 24 of the MSI. This was based on Attachment versus Independence theory. Using questioning method (scaling), I found out how the participants' rated their relationship with their in-laws. Again, the discussion method was used to elicit some of the challenges in-laws posed in marriages. Through brainstorming we developed some coping strategies to deal with the challenges in-laws posed in their marriages. I summarised the key ideas discussed and invited questions from the spouses. A word of prayer was shared and the session was brought to a close.

**Session Seven: Marital Roles**

*Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. identify at least three challenges spouses have with their marital roles;
- b. identify the magnitude of spouses' concerns with marital roles;
- c. describe at least five ways married people can discharge their marital roles effectively;

*Activities:*

The counsellor introduced the session by enquiring about clients' successes from the previous session. Counsellor then shared the objectives for

the day. The discussion on marital roles was based on Items 9, 15, and 26 of the MSI which is christened “Marital Roles”.

We started with our usual word of prayer and we discussed our gains from the previous sessions. I then shared the objectives for the day and we moved into the business for the day. Through discussion method participants identified some challenges they had with marital roles. The question and answer method was then used to get the participants to ascertain the magnitude of the challenges they had with marital roles by ranking them. Through the Dalton plan participants were equipped with skills in discharging their marital roles effectively. I summarised the key ideas discussed and invited questions from the participants and ended the session with a word of prayer.

### **Session Eight: Review of Sessions**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. recap the preceding sessions;
- b. clarify issues relating to the sessions;
- c. evaluate the sessions;
- d. close the group.

#### *Activities:*

I guided the participants to review the preceding sessions after a word of prayer was shared. The main lessons learnt were summarised and highlighted. Participants were invited to share their thoughts about the sessions and to discuss any other issues bothering them with regard to the earlier sessions. The participants were then asked to evaluate the sessions.



There were comments such as “I’m now a counsellor”, “I’m renewed” and “I can now handle my marital issues much better now”.

I drew the participants’ attention to the end of the interventions. While some were beaming with smiles, it was a sorrowful moment for others. I commended them for their commitment and maturity in handling the issues and disagreements that came up. I encouraged them to go and practice what they have acquired and build bridges rather than walls. I also assured them of my availability for their future counselling needs and my maintaining confidentiality with the issues discussed. I briefed them on the need for a posttest. I scheduled an appointment with them for the posttest.

### **Couple-oriented Group**

The couple-oriented intervention also took place within eight sessions. A 45minutes to 1 hour duration was used for each session. Dobson (2015) advocates that counsellors use of eight weeks of treatment in dealing with marital distress among couples. The processes of the intervention were similar to that of group-oriented approach. The sub-scales of the MSI served as focal point for the various sessions of the intervention. The following are the details.

#### **Session One: Establishing Relationship**

##### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. create rapport
- b. explain the purpose of the group.
- c. explain at least five (5) benefits of couple-oriented counselling to clients.
- d. list at least four ground rules to direct the group.

### *Activities:*

The session started with a word of prayer from a spouse. I sought questions from the couples with regard to the previous session and clarified them. The discussion for the day was based on the first scale of the MSI named "Relationship Issues" with Items 2, 5, 10, 20, 21, and 25. Through question and answer method, behaviours that destroy marital relationship were elicited from the participants. The respondents were given an exercise to rank the enormity of relationship challenges in the marriage. We discussed the answers the participants brought out. It was revealed that while some had serious challenges with relationship in their marriage others had slight challenges.

Through discussion method behaviours that could spark healthy relationship in marriage were brought forth. Drills were used to guide member to describe changes they envisaged in their marital relationship. Each spouse shared his/her gains or what new they had learnt for the day. I summarised what we discussed for the day and also encouraged members to put to use what they had learnt. The session then came to an end with a word of prayer from one of the participants.

### **Session Three: Affection, Love and Appreciation Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five challenges they face in expression of affection, love and appreciation;
- b. appreciate the magnitude of problems participants face in expressing affection, love and appreciation;

- b. identify the magnitude of problems with character issues;
- c. explain at least five ways that can improve problematic character issues;

*Activities:*

This session focused on the participants' character issues. Again, the session started with a discussion on improvements since the previous session after an open prayer. The counsellor shared the objectives for the day. The day's discussions were based on Items 6, 12, 18, 19, 22 and 28 of the MSI representing the "Character scale". Using discussion method, the participants indicated some of the problem characters they found with their spouses. They also shared the problem characters they thought their spouses found with them. The participants were guided to estimate the enormity of the change they face. Through expository teaching I took the participants through how problem characters could be dealt with while encouraging the participants to share their experiences in that regard. Every member was invited to share his/her ideas on the solutions to their issues. I summarised the key issues for the day and encouraged the participants to put into practice the new ideas they learnt.

**Session Five: Temperament Issues**

*Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. explain what was meant by temperament;
- b. state at least four temperament issues spouses considered as problematic
- c. identify the magnitude of problems with temperament issues;

- d. explain at least five ways that can be used to improve problematic temperament issues;

*Activities:*

I introduced the session with a word of prayer and a discussion on improvements realised since the previous session. I then shared objectives for the day. The day's discussions were based on Items 13, 14 and 29 of the MSI captioned as "Temperament Issues".

The discussion method was used to explain what was meant by temperament. Through question and answer method the spouses brought up temperament issues they considered as problematic. Using discussion method, the participants spoke about some of the problem characters they found with their spouses. Through discovery method the participants were guided to estimate the enormity of the challenge that confronted them. Through brainstorming we came out with how temperament could be handled to avoid problems in the marriage. The spouses were invited to share their ideas on the possible solutions we came out with. I summarised the key issues for the day and encouraged the participants to put into practice the new ideas they learnt. We prayed and closed.

**Session Six: In-law Issues**

*Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. rate their in-law relationships;
- b. identify at least five challenges in-laws pose to the marriage
- c. describe at least five appropriate ways to cope with in-law problems

### *Activities:*

The session followed the normal routine; with a prayer. We held discussion on improvements since the previous session. I then shared the objectives for the day. The discussion on in-law issues was based on Items 11, 17, and 24 of the MSI. This was based on Attachment versus Independence theory. Using questioning method (scaling), I found out how the participants' rated with their in-laws. Again, the discussion method was used to elicit some of the challenges in-laws posed in marriages. Through brainstorming we developed some coping strategies to deal with the challenges in-laws posed in their marriages. I summarised the key ideas discussed and invited questions from the spouses. A word of prayer was shared and the session was brought to a close.

### **Session Seven: Marital Roles**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. identify at least three challenges spouses have with their marital roles;
- b. identify the magnitude of spouses concerns with marital roles;
- c. describe at least five ways married people can discharge their marital roles effectively;

#### *Activities:*

The counsellor introduced the session by enquiring about the participants' successes from the previous session. Counsellor then shared the objectives for the day. The discussion on marital roles was based on Items 9, 15, and 26 of the MSI which is christened "Marital Roles".

We started with our usual word of prayer and we discussed our gains from the previous sessions. I then shared the objectives for the day and we moved into the business for the day. Through discussion method participants identified some challenges they had with marital roles. The question and answer method was then used to get the participants to ascertain the magnitude of the challenges they had with marital roles by ranking them. Through the Dalton plan participants were equipped with skills in discharging their marital roles effectively. I summarised the key ideas discussed and invited questions from the couple and ended the session with a word of prayer.

### **Session Eight: Review of Sessions**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. recap the preceding sessions;
- b. clarify issues relating to the sessions;
- c. evaluate the sessions;
- d. close the group.

#### *Activities:*

I guided the couple to review the preceding sessions. The main lessons learnt were summarised and highlighted. The couple were invited to share their thoughts about the sessions and to discuss any other issues bothering them with regard to the earlier sessions. They were then to evaluate the sessions. There were comments such as "I'm sorry dear, please forgive me. I didn't know I was hurting you that much" "I have learnt a lot. Thank you Sir".

I drew of couple's attention to the end of the interventions. In this approach too there were a lot of mixed feelings. Some of the couples were

very remorseful while others were so delighted. I commended them for their commitment and maturity in handling the issues and disagreements that came up. I encouraged them to go and practise what they have acquired and build bridges rather than walls. I also assured them of my availability for their future counselling needs and of my maintaining confidentiality with the issues discussed. I briefed them on the need for a posttest. I scheduled an appointment with them for the posttest.

### **Post-test**

Mitchel and Gordon (2014) stipulate that a two week period of practice of lessons from a treatment is ideal to conduct a post-test by the experimenter. Following this I conducted a posttest to determine the effect of the two approaches on the marital satisfaction of the couples at “the verge of divorce”.

### **Data Management Issues**

In order to execute good data management practices, I solely handled the filled inventories to ensure that information given out by respondents did not end up in wrong hands due to the sensitive nature of the data. After the data were collected, they were securely stored in a locked cabinet to prevent other people from having access to it. After the data were entered in the computer they were protected with a password. Respondents were not required to write their names on the instrument so as to provide anonymity to help ensure protection of respondents. Code numbers that I assigned were used to identify respondents. To maintain the integrity of this study and the University of Cape Coast, I ensured that accurate data were used so that results could be verified and data reused in future. Also interactions held during the intervention were treated as strictly confidential.

## **Data Processing and Analysis**

The data gathered for the study were scored and analysed statistically using the Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) software version 21. The analysis took two forms; pretest data analysis and post-test analysis.

### **Pretest Data Analysis**

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.

To find out whether or not couples in the Sunyani municipality satisfied in their marriages, respondents were given a four point Likert type scale inventory to respond to. The scoring was based on the four point Likert scale of measurement of Very True (VT), True (T), Not True (NT) and Not at all True (NAT). The options of the items were weighted as VT = 4, T = 3, NT = 2 and NAT = 1. The inverse is true for the negative items. The total score a married person can obtain for all the 30 items is 120 maximum and 30 minimum.

The least the score the more a person is at the verge of divorce in marriage. Thus intervals for the categories are as follows

At the verge of divorce	30 – 44
Not satisfied	45 – 74
Satisfied	75 – 104
Very satisfied	105 – 120

### **Posttest Data Analysis**

In analysing the data, frequencies and percentages were used for the demographical data. According to Curtis and Curtis (2012) and Adams, Khan,



Raeside and White (2007) frequencies and percentages give a descriptive presentations of phenomena and are best in assessing demographical data, perceptions, views, levels of knowledge in psychological research. The research questions one, two and three were answered independent sample t-test. Research questions four and five were also answered using means and standard deviations. The means and standard deviations were deemed to be appropriate because the import of that research was to weigh the views of the respondents. According to Michael (2013) the standard deviation is used in conjunction with the mean to summarise continuous data, not categorical data. In addition, the standard deviation, like the mean, is appropriate when the continuous data is not significantly skewed or has outliers.

Hypothesis one was tested using Two-way mixed ANOVA. According to Pallent (2010) the two-way mixed ANOVA compares the mean difference between groups that have been split on two independent variables. Its primary purpose is to understand if there is an interaction between the two independent variables on the dependent variable. This tool was appropriate because I wanted to estimate the difference between group and couple-oriented approaches (independent variables) on the marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce (dependent variable).

The independent sample t-test was used to answer research questions three and four as well as hypotheses 2,3,5 and 6. 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). Independent t-Test is used on two different groups of participants to determine the mean values or scores (Pallent, 2010). The strength of this tool is that, it

goes one step beyond merely observing variables and looking for relationships.

Hypotheses 4 and 7 were tested with a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). It is used to determine whether there are any statistically significant differences between the mean of three or more independent (unrelated) groups.

### **Ethical Consideration**

I submitted a research protocol that set out in detail the procedure to be followed during the field survey to the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast. The protocol highlighted the proposed research design, methodology, written consent forms for married people, pastors and imams as well as explanatory literature in the procedures for ensuring confidentiality, voluntary participation, and anonymity. In addition, information on the objectives of the study and a debriefing session for participants immediately following administration of questionnaires was adhered to. This research was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast which ensured that the research design and field work procedures do not violate ethical considerations (see Appendix C).

### **Summary of Research Methods**

The study made use of quantitative line of enquiry and utilize a quasi-experimental design to guide the investigation. A pretest-posttest experimental and control groups were used. Forty eight (48) participants were used for treatment. A Marital Satisfaction Inventory by (Essuman, 2010) was used for pretest and posttest data collection. Protocol for Institutional Review Board was followed and the data collection exercise spanned a period of eight weeks.

It was carried out by my research assistance and I. Descriptive statistics (Means and Standard deviations) and Inferential statistics (independent sample t-test and ANOVA) were used to answer research questions and test hypotheses.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### **Advance Organiser**

The study assessed the impact of group-oriented and couple-oriented approaches of marriage counselling on the marital satisfaction of couples at the verge of divorce in the Sunyani Municipality. The initial sample was made up of 344 married people. Out of this sample 48 were randomly assigned in experimental and control groups. The non-randomised control group pre-test post-test quasi experimental design was employed in investigating the impact of the group and couple-oriented marriage counselling approaches in improving marital satisfaction of couples at “the verge of divorce”.

This chapter presents the responses of the respondents and how they are analysed using frequency, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-test, and ANOVA guided by research questions and hypotheses. The data are organised in tables and cross tabulations. The t-test, and ANOVA were tested at statistical significant level of 0.05.

#### **Demographic Data of Respondents**

This section presents results of the demographic characteristics of the sample used for the study.

#### **Distribution of Respondents by level of Satisfaction**

Three hundred and forty four married people were initially sampled for the study. Out of the 344 respondents 58 couples representing 116 spouses were at the verge of divorce. One hundred and sixty eight (168) were not

satisfied and 42 of the respondents were satisfied while 18 of them were very satisfied with their marriages. Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents for the initial survey by level of satisfaction.

Table 2 – *Distribution of Respondents by Level of Satisfaction*

Level of Satisfaction	N	Mean	SD
At the Verge of Divorce	116	1.23	.01427
Not Satisfied	168	1.81	.02931
Satisfied	42	2.64	.01597
Very Satisfied	18	3.29	.02374
Total	344	2.24	0.0208

Source: Field survey (2017)

To obtain the overall marital satisfaction of the respondents, the scoring was based on the four point Likert type scale of measurement of Very True (VT), True (T), Not True (NT) and Not at all True (NAT). The options of the items were weighted using Likert format with VT = 4, T = 3, NT = 2 and NAT = 1. The inverse was done for the negative items as VT = 1, T = 2, NT = 3 and NAT = 4.

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

At the verge of divorce	1.00 – 1.5
Not satisfied	1.5 <sup>+</sup> – 2.5
Satisfied	2.5 <sup>+</sup> – 3.5
Very satisfied	3.5 <sup>+</sup> – 4.0

From Table 2, the mean for all the respondents' marital satisfaction is 2.24. This lies in the score band of 1.5<sup>+</sup> – 2.5 which implies that couples in the Sunyani Municipality are not satisfied in their marriages. This finding buttresses the finding of Dabone (2012) in which married people in the Sunyani Municipality were found to be dissatisfied in their marriages. The finding is also in line with the 2011, 2014, 2015 reports of Domestic and Violence Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service, that Brong-Ahafo region, is the second region after the Greater Accra region wherein terms of physical abuse on wives by husbands and violence in households. The finding also goes to support figures at the marriage registry of the Sunyani Municipal Assembly (2016) that divorce is on the increase in the municipality.

#### **Distribution of Respondents by Experimental and Control Groups**

Data in Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents by experimental and control groups.

Table 3 – *Distribution of Respondents by Experimental and Control*

##### *Groups*

Approach	Participants	No. of Groups
Group oriented	16	2
Couple oriented	16	8
Control	16	1
Total	48	11

Source: Field survey (2017)

Out of the 58 couples representing 116 spouses that were at the verge of divorce 24 couples representing 48 spouses were assigned into control and experimental groups. Out of this there were two groups for the “group

oriented” treatment consisting of 8 members in a group. There were also eight groups for the couple-oriented treatment group consisting of 2 members each. Equal number of spouses was also constituted for the control group. This is shown in Table 3.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Gender**

Data in Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents by gender.

Table 4 – *Distribution of Respondents by Gender*

Gender	Group-oriented Treatment	Couple-oriented Treatment	Control	Total
Male	8	8	8	24
Female	8	8	8	24
Total	16	16	16	48

Source: Field survey (2017)

There was the need to make a comparison with respect to gender differences in the study. The issue of gender was therefore considered very important to the study. Out of the 48 respondents for the experimental study, 24 representing 50% were males and the same number of the respondents was females.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Age**

Data in Table 5 presents the distribution of respondents by Age

Table 5 – *Distribution of Respondents by Age*

Age	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
20 – 30	10	20.83
31 – 40	14	29.17
41 – 50	8	16.67
51 – 60	10	20.83
60+	6	12.50
Total	48	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

Out of the 48 respondents 24 were in the young category (20 - 40 years) while 24 were in the old category (41- 60+ years). A detail analysis of the respondents' distribution by age revealed that 14(29.17%) were within 31 – 40 years. Ten representing 20.83% each were within 20 – 30 years of age and 51 – 60 years while 8(16.67%) were within 41 – 50 years. Only a small portion 6(12.50%) were above 60 years of age.

#### **Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level**

Data in Table 6 presents the distribution of respondents by educational level.

Table 6 – *Distribution of Respondents by Educational level*

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
None	0	0.00
JHS	12	25.00
SHS	15	31.25
Tertiary	21	43.75
Total	48	100

Source: Field survey (2017)



Table 6 shows the educational background of the respondents. Out of the 48 respondents 21(43.75%) had gone through the tertiary, 15(31.25%) were SHS graduates, 12(25%) went as far as the JHS level. None of the respondents was an illiterate. This is instructive. All the respondents could read and write and were in the position to make meaning out of the inventory and other documents that were given to them during the treatment.

### **Distribution of Respondents by Income Level**

Data in Table 7 presents the distribution of respondents by income level.

Table 7 – *Distribution of Respondents by Income level*

Income Level	Frequency	Percentage
¢150 – 500	19	39.58
¢501 – 1000	20	41.67
¢ 1001 – 2000	4	8.33
¢ 2000+	5	10.42
Total	48	100

Source: Field survey (2017)

Out of the 48 respondents 20(41.67%) lived on the monthly income of 501 – 1000 cedis, 19(39.58%) were on the income range of 150 – 500 cedis. Four of the respondents representing 8.33% lived within 1001 – 2000 cedis in a month while 5(10.42%) earned over 2000 cedis. It was revealed that some of the respondents lived below the minimum daily wage. In the Ghana's Labour Act 651, as at the 2017 the minimum wage was 8 cedis 80 pesewas. The monthly was minimum wage is calculated as the daily minimum wage × 27 day. Hence the monthly minimum wage as at 2017 is 237 cedis 6 pesewas.

For the purpose of comparison, the four categories were put into two groups. Low income level (₺150-500 and ₺501-1000) and high income level (₺1001-2000 and ₺2000+).

### Main Results of the Study

Data in Table 8 presents the equivalent conditions of marital satisfaction of the respondents.

Table 8 – *Test of Equivalent Conditions of Marital Satisfaction*

	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Group oriented	16	473.46	22.63	5.01	451.09	514.02	451.00	576.00
Couple oriented	16	473.12	19.07	5.21	467.75	513.13	462.00	543.00
CONTROL	16	473.28	15.42	5.27	469.34	502.08	473.00	536.00
Total	48	473.37	19.04	3.91	468.61	499.26	451.00	576.00

Source: Field survey (2017)

According to Pallent (2010) for an effective experimental study the researcher needs to check for equivalent experimental conditions. This study involved three experimental conditions: (1) participants exposed to group-oriented marriage counselling intervention, (2) Participants exposed to couple-oriented marriage counselling intervention and (3) control group. The 48 participants selected after the screening were assigned to these treatment conditions, with group oriented experimental condition having 16 participants, couple oriented experimental condition having 16 participants and control condition having 16 participants. The pre-test levels of marital satisfaction of the participants in the experimental conditions were assessed to ensure that the levels of marital satisfaction were equivalent among all the groups before the

intervention. Table 8 presents the pre-test means and standard deviations. The means of the three groups were largely equivalent: group-oriented (473.46), couple-oriented (473.12) and control (473.28). The Levene's test also indicated that there was homogeneity of variance among the group. A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was also conducted to test the equivalence of the marital satisfaction levels of the groups before the interventions. The results showed that the mean scores on the level of marital satisfaction of the three groups were not significantly different ( $F_{(2, 46)} = .073$ ,  $p = .862$ ). Thus, the levels of marital satisfaction of the respondents for the experimental conditions were equivalent.

Table 9 – *Test of Homogeneity of Variances of Marital Satisfaction*

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.648	2	46	.189

Source: Field survey (2017)

After the test for equivalent conditions, it was important to check for the test of homogeneity. This is presented in Table 9.

Table 10 – *ANOVA for Marital Satisfaction*

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	56.436	2	27.574	.073	.826
Within Groups	25917.318	46	418.731		
Total	25973.754	48			

Source: Field survey (2017)

Further analysis of the dimensions also indicated that the mean scores on all the dimensions of marital satisfaction were equivalent. This provided

grounds for the intervention to be done to ascertain the efficacy of the two approaches in improving marital satisfaction.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of group and couple-oriented marriage counselling approaches on the marital satisfaction of couples in the Sunyani Municipality. Five (5) research questions were formulated to guide the study. These questions served as the thematic areas for data presentation and discussion. These were: differences in the satisfaction level of respondents with regard to those who were exposed to couple-oriented and that of group-oriented marriage counselling, effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction, effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction, factors of marital satisfaction that are most likely the causes of spouses "at the verge of divorce" position as the most dissatisfied in their marriage and reasons accounting for respondents' level of marital dissatisfaction. Seven research hypotheses were also formulated and tested to explore the effects of demographic variables (age, income, and education) on the marital satisfaction of respondents who went through group-oriented and couple-oriented marriage counselling.

### **Analyses of Research Questions and Testing of Hypotheses**

This section presents results of the study in terms of research questions and hypotheses. The research questions are first presented followed by the hypotheses.

**Research Question One:** What is the difference in the marital satisfaction levels of respondents with regard to those who are exposed to couple-oriented and group-oriented marriage counselling?

Table 11 – *Difference in the Marital Satisfaction Levels of Respondents with regard to those who were exposed to Couple and Group-oriented Marriage Counselling*

Scale	Couple-oriented		Group-oriented		t-Value	P Value	SIG
	Mean (N=16)	SD	Mean (N=16)	SD			
Relationship	2.75	.714	2.95	.423	1.229	.060	NS
Affection, love and appreciation	2.62	.473	2.89	.624	1.131	.063	NS
Character	2.96	.407	2.52	.492	1.481	.072	NS
Temperament	2.58	.748	2.56	.679	1.362	.105	NS
In-law issues	2.97	.255	2.79	.211	3.293	.046	S
Marital roles	2.61	.481	2.62	.418	1.411	.231	NS
General evaluation	2.63	.246	2.63	.220	1.341	.256	NS
Marital satisfaction	2.73	.475	2.71	.438	1.607	.0619	NS

Source: Field survey (2017)

The import of this research question was to ascertain if differences existed in the satisfaction level of participants who were taken through treatments in couple-oriented and group-oriented marriage counselling approaches. The independent sample t-test was considered appropriate in answering this research question.

In answering Research 1, Table 12 revealed that at significance level of 0.05 the results showed that at  $df = 30$ ,  $t = 1.607$ ,  $p = .062$  which is greater than 0.05. This implies there is no significant difference in the marital

satisfaction levels of respondents with regard to those who were exposed to couple and group-oriented marriage counselling.

The study revealed that the couple-oriented group had a (M = 2.73, SD = .475) while those in the group-oriented group had (M = 2.71, SD = .438). Both groups fell in the score band 2.5+ – 3.5 which is interpreted as Satisfied. This is an indication that the treatment had positive impact on the participations. However, the couple-oriented approach was efficacious than the group-oriented approach.

**Research Question Two:** What is the effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents’ level of marital satisfaction?

Table 12 – *Effect of Group-Oriented Marriage Counselling on Level of Marital Satisfaction*

Scale	Pretest		Treatment		t- Value	P Value	SIG .
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Relationship	1.25	.327	2.95	.423	1.379	.031	S
Affection, love and appreciation	1.47	.248	2.89	.624	3.021	.013	S
Character	1.32	.440	2.52	.492	1.561	.041	S
Temperament	1.16	.547	2.56	.679	1.514	.475	NS
In-law issues	1.19	.126	2.79	.211	3.132	.016	S
Marital roles	1.44	.355	2.62	.418	1.423	.056	NS
General evaluation	1.06	.224	2.63	.220	1.341	.251	NS
Marital Satisfaction	1.27	.324	2.71	.438	1.910	.011	S

Source: Field survey (2017)

The research question was to establish whether there was an effect or not with couples who went through treatment in group-oriented marriage counselling approach and their control. In answering Research 2, Table 12 revealed that participants who went through group-oriented marriage

counselling had a marital satisfaction level of 2.71 whilst the pretest score was 1.27. The group-oriented approach fell within the score band of 2.5+ – 3.5 which is interpreted as satisfied while the pretest score fell within the score band 1.0 – 1.5 which is interpreted as at the verge of divorce. This revealed that there was an effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.

To establish whether the effect was significant or not an independent sample t test was conducted to ascertain the level of significance. The test was held at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the result showed that at  $df = 14$ ,  $t = 1.910$ ,  $p = 0.01$  which is less than 0.05. It is therefore concluded that there was significant effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.

Three out of seven sub scales showed no significance the pretest and posttest of the respondents. These scales were temperament, marital roles and general evaluation.

**Research Question Three:** What is the effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction?

Table 13 – *Effect of Couple-Oriented Marriage Counselling on Level of Marital Satisfaction*

Scale	Pretest Mean	SD	Treatment Mean	SD	t-Value	P Value	SIG.
Relationship	1.25	.327	2.75	.714	3.792	.000	S
Affection, love and appreciation	1.47	.248	2.62	.473	-.539	.590	NS
Character	1.32	.440	2.96	.407	-5.87	.000	S
Temperament	1.16	.547	2.58	.748	-.229	.819	NS
In-law issues	1.19	.126	2.97	.255	2.517	.013	S
Marital roles	1.44	.355	2.61	.481	3.454	.001	S
General evaluation	1.06	.224	2.63	.246	2.437	.016	S
Marital satisfaction	1.27	.324	2.73	.475	1.429	.028	S

Source: Field survey (2017)

Research question 3 was intended to establish whether there was an effect or not with couples who went through treatment in couple-oriented marriage counselling approach as compared to and their pretest. In answering Research 3, Table 13 revealed that participants who went through couple-oriented marriage counselling had a satisfaction level of 2.73 whilst their pretest score was 1.27. The couple-oriented approach fell within the score band of 2.5+ – 3.5 which is interpreted as “satisfied” while the pretest score fell within the score band 1.0 – 1.5 which is interpreted as at the “verge of divorce”. This revealed that there was an effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents’ level of marital satisfaction.

In order to assess whether the effect was significant or not an independent sample t-test was conducted to ascertain the level of significance.



The test was held at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results showed that at  $df = 14$ ,  $t = 1.429$ ,  $p = .03$  which is less than 0.05. It is therefore concluded that there was a statistical significant effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.

**Research Question Four:** Which factors of marital satisfaction are most likely the causes of spouses “at the verge of divorce” position as the most dissatisfied in their marriage?

Table 14 – *Factors of Marital Satisfaction are most likely the Causes of Spouses “At the Verge of Divorce” Position as the most Dissatisfied in their Marriage*

Scale	Mean	SD	Position
Relationship	1.35	.569	6 <sup>th</sup>
Affection, love and appreciation	1.31	.549	5 <sup>th</sup>
Character	1.27	.450	4 <sup>th</sup>
Temperament	1.22	.714	1 <sup>st</sup>
In-law issues	1.37	.233	7 <sup>th</sup>
Marital roles	1.24	.450	2 <sup>nd</sup>
General evaluation	1.25	.233	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Source: Field survey (2017)

Research question four sought for factors of marital satisfaction that are most likely the causes of spouses “at the verge of divorce” position as the most dissatisfied in their marriage. The study revealed that what respondents considered most as a factor for them to be at the verge of divorce position was temperament issues of the spouses. This had score of (M=1.22, SD=.714).

**Research Question Five:** What are the reasons accounting for respondents' level of marital dissatisfaction?

Table 15 – *Reasons Accounting for Respondents' Level of Marital*

*Dissatisfaction*

Sn	Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I always feel fulfilled, happy when I have my wife/husband by me	48	2.12	.322
2	I like the way my wife/husband converses and shares his/her experiences with me	48	1.14	.411
3	I am satisfied sexually with my marriage	48	2.42	.354
4	Am very disturbed because my wife/husband does not appreciate all the sacrifices I put in my marriage	48	2.39	.334
5	We (I and my wife/husband) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often	48	1.31	.284
6	My wife/husband cannot be trusted. He/she is cunning, not reliable.	48	1.19	.521
7	I will feel much happier if I move out of my present marriage	48	2.37	.453
8	My wife/husband is the best I can ever have	48	2.29	.391
9	I like my wife/husband a lot for the financial support in the marriage I like my wife/ husband for house chores	48	2.36	.537
10	My wife/husband always seeks my opinion on important issues concerning our marriage. I like this.	48	2.27	.384
11	My in-laws are very helpful and give me respect	48	1.39	.492
12	I am fed up with my wife/husband because he/she is stubborn, never ready to change his/her bad ways (like keeping his/her friends)	48	1.95	.394
13	My wife/husband is too cold for my liking. I do not enjoy his/her company.	48	1.41	.397
14	My wife/husband is indifferent. He/she does not care about what I do with my life	48	2.41	.335
15	My wife/husband keeps his/her money to himself/herself. He/she does not contribute to the upkeep of the home and family.	48	1.24	.527

16	I noticed that my wife/husband is becoming more attractive to me. I am growing to love him/her more and more.	48	2.38	.494
17	My in-laws are my worst enemies in my marriage. They make my life miserable.	48	1.31	.529
18	One thing I like about my wife/husband is that he/she admits his/her faults and apologises.	48	2.44	.397
19	My wife/husband is insolent. He/she speaks to me with disrespect.	48	2.29	.353
20	Our conversation always ends in a quarrel. so we scarcely converse these days	48	2.38	.471
21	I and my wife/husband accept disagreement without hurting each other's feelings	48	2.49	.387
22	My wife/husband nags almost everyday and makes my life very uncomfortable.	48	1.34	.452
23	my wife/husband appreciates very much how I help him/her in the home (with the household chores)/husband appreciates cooking	48	2.34	.531
24	My wife/husband does not like my relatives. He/she treats them badly when they visit. This makes me highly displeased.	48	1.31	.584
25	I like the way my wife/husband keeps in touch when she travels. He/she phones and converses to my liking.	48	1.29	.576
26	My wife/husband cooks well and takes good care of the home. I love him/her for this. My husband/wife is committed gives enough housekeeping money	48	2.48	.473
27	My wife/husband respects and admires me very much. He/she says I work hard.	48	1.37	.522
28	My wife/husband complains too much. Nothing I do at home pleases him/her.	48	2.34	.482
29	My wife/husband is fond of hitting me with objects to harm me when he/she is angry. I feel unsafe because he/she is violent	48	1.27	.437
30	I enjoy my wife/husband's company most times.'	48	1.33	.436

Source: Field survey (2017)

An in-depth analysis of the specific items that constituted the instrument (MSI) for this study revealed an interesting trend. Table 15 revealed 12 out of the 30 (40%) of the items had a mean score between 1.00

and 1.5 which is interpreted as at the verge of divorce. These items include “I like the way my wife converses and shares her experiences with me” ( $M = 1.14$ ,  $SD = .411$ ), “we (I and my wife/husband) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often” ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = .284$ ), “My wife/husband cannot be trusted. He/she is cunning, not reliable” ( $M = 1.19$ ,  $SD = .521$ ), “My in-laws are very helpful and give me respect” ( $M = 1.39$ ,  $SD = .492$ ), “My wife/husband is too cold for my liking. I do not enjoy his/her company” ( $M = 1.41$ ,  $SD = .397$ ), “My wife keeps her money to herself. She does not contribute to the upkeep of the home and family” ( $M = 1.24$ ,  $SD = .527$ ) and “My in-laws are my worst enemies in my marriage. They make my life miserable” ( $M = 1.31$ ,  $SD = .529$ ).

The rest are “My wife nags almost every day and makes my life very uncomfortable” ( $M = 1.34$ ,  $SD = .452$ ), “I like the way my wife keeps in touch when she travels. she phones and converses to my liking.” ( $M = 1.29$ ,  $SD = .576$ ), “My wife respects and admires me very much. She says i work hard.” ( $M = 1.37$ ,  $SD = .522$ ), “My wife is fond of hitting me with objects to harm me when she is angry. I feel unsafe because she is violent” ( $M = 1.27$ ,  $SD = .437$ ) and “I enjoy my wife's company most times.” ( $M = 1.33$ ,  $SD = .436$ ).

These are items that cut across all the sub-scales of the instruments. Out of the 12 items, 3 fell under the relationship scale (Items 2, 5 and 25). Three of the scales had 2 items each. These were Character scale (Items 6 and 22), temperament scale (Items 13 and 29) and In-law Issues (Items 11 and 17). The rest had one item each these are Affection, love and appreciation scale (Item 27), Marital roles (Item 15) and General evaluation (Item 30).

## Research Hypothesis 1:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference in the effect of the interventions on marital satisfaction among experimental and control groups

This hypothesis tested whether group-oriented and couple-oriented approaches have been effective in improving the level of marital satisfaction among the participants. The relative effectiveness of the two approaches was also assessed. The mean scores on the level of marital satisfaction among participants exposed to the two approaches were therefore compared with those in the control group who did not receive any intervention. Table 16 presents the means and standard deviations of the experimental conditions for the pre-test and post-test overall marital distress scores.

Table 16 – *Descriptive Statistics*

Measure	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
Marital Satisfaction before intervention	Couple-oriented	1.4286	.37302
	Group-oriented	1.2143	.01806
	CONTROL	1.41	.5848
Marital Satisfaction after intervention	Couple-oriented	2.6964	.46203
	Group-oriented	2.6473	.71783
	CONTROL	1.431	.64613

Source: Field work (2017)

The results in Table 16 showed that the pre-intervention scores were lower than the post-intervention marital satisfaction scores for all the experimental conditions. The pre-intervention and post-intervention scores were basically around the same figure. The post-intervention mean for couple-oriented ( $M = 2.70$ ,  $SD = .4620$ ) was higher than that of group-oriented ( $M =$

The test of within-subjects effect (Table 17) presents the results of the pre-intervention/post-intervention scores of marital satisfaction, and any interaction with the experimental conditions (couple and group-oriented approaches). The results indicated that the post-intervention marital satisfaction scores were significantly higher than pre-intervention with very high effect size [ $F(1, 48) = 18.005, p < .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .691$ ]. There was significant interaction effect between the experimental conditions and type of test (pretest/post-test) [ $F(2, 48) = 6.153, p < .000, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .964$ ], which means that the experimental conditions also differed significantly between the pre and post-test periods.

Table 18 – *Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances*

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Marital Satisfaction before intervention	1.359	2	48	.173
Marital Satisfaction after intervention	2.681	2	48	.092

*Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups*

- a. *Design: Intercept + Group*
- b. *Within Subjects Design: Test*

An important assumption for conducting a between-participant ANOVA is that of homogeneity of variance. The Levene's test of equality of error variance indicated that error variance of the dependent variable is equal across the groups as the p-values for both pre-intervention and post-intervention marital distress were greater than .05. This suggests that the assumption of homogeneity of variance has been satisfied. The test of between-subjects effects was then examined.

Table 19 – *Tests of Between-Subjects Effects of Marital Satisfaction*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Part Eta Squared
Intercept	47.013	1	47.013	18.02	.082	.691
Group	46.124	2	22.155	6.47	.001	.632
Error	34.251	48	6.327			

The result of the test of between-subjects effects showed that there was overall main effect of the approaches (Group) on the improvement of marital satisfaction [ $F(2, 48) = 6.47, p > .082, \text{partial eta square} = .632$ ]. This suggests that at least, two of the experimental conditions did not differ significantly.

Results of the study indicated that both couple-oriented and group-oriented approaches are effective in improving marital satisfaction. This shows that couples at the verge of divorce (participants) who were exposed to the two approaches (couple and group oriented) had an improvement in their marital satisfaction. In view of this finding, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) of Hypothesis 1 which states that there is no significant difference in the effect of the interventions on marital satisfaction among experimental and control groups was rejected. This implies there is that there is significant difference in the effect of the interventions on marital satisfaction among experimental and control groups.

### **Research Hypothesis 2:**

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction between young and old couples who have gone through group-oriented marriage counselling.

Research hypothesis 2 sought to find out if there were statistically significant differences in the levels of marital satisfaction of young and old participants who received treatment using group-oriented marriage

counselling. Participants in the treatment group were taken through eight-sessions of intervention. The control group did not receive any treatment. Each group comprised four couples (8 respondents). Table 21 shows the post test scores of the young and old participants in the treatment based on an independent sample t-test analysis.

Table 20 – *T-table Comparing Level of Marital Satisfaction between Young and Old who have gone through Group-oriented Marriage Counselling*

Scale	Old (41-60+yrs)		Young (20-40yrs)		t-Value	P Value	SIG.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Relationship	2.89	.405	2.98	.253	2.517	.013	S
Affection, love and appreciation	2.72	.433	2.84	.488	3.454	.101	NS
Character	2.61	.387	2.71	.318	2.437	.016	S
Temperament	2.53	.099	2.47	.145	4.499	.140	NS
In-law issues	2.65	.273	2.82	.432	-.779	.437	NS
Marital roles	2.37	.275	2.41	.544	3.071	.502	NS
General evaluation	2.72	.403	2.85	.363	2.864	.105	NS
Marital satisfaction	2.64	.74584	2.73	.90720	.715	.475	NS

Source: Field survey (2017)

Data in Table 20 is used to hypothesis 2. And the data reveals that young couples at the verge of divorce have a satisfaction level of 2.73 and old couples at the verge of divorce had 2.64. They both fell within the score band of 2.5+ – 3.5 which is interpreted as satisfied. The results revealed that young couples at the verge of divorce treated with group-oriented approach improved



Table 21 – *T-table Comparing Level of Marital Satisfaction between High Income and Low Income Respondents who have gone through Group-oriented Marriage Counselling*

Scale	High Income Mean	SD	Low Income Mean	SD	t- Value	P Value	SIG.
Relationship	2.33	.425	2.81	.354	3.124	.002	S
Affection, love and appreciation	2.75	.553	2.00	.181	2.913	.004	S
Character	2.88	.257	2.76	.430	3.006	.043	S
Temperament	3.22	.994	3.19	.774	-.229	.819	NS
In-law issues	2.88	.259	3.00	.358	3.515	.001	S
Marital roles	2.54	.518	1.94	.375	6.053	.002	S
General evaluation	3.36	.333	2.18	.326	5.936	.013	S
Marital satisfaction	2.85	.477	2.55	.400	3.982	.020	S

Source: Field survey (2017)

Data in Table 21 is used to test Hypothesis 3. The data reveals that couples at the verge of divorce, those with higher income levels had a satisfaction level of 2.85 and those with lower levels of income had 2.55. They both fell within the score band of 2.5<sup>+</sup> – 3.5 which is interpreted as satisfied. The results revealed that the higher income couples improved more in terms of marital satisfaction than the lower income married people. The overall means show that both groups were satisfied.

The Null Hypothesis 3 was tested at statistical significance level of 0.05 and the results show that at  $df = 14$ ,  $t = 3.982$ ,  $p = 0.020$  which is less than 0.05. Therefore we reject the Null Hypothesis 3. This implies that there is significant difference between higher income earning and lower income

earning couples at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling.

**Research Hypothesis 4:**

Ho4: Level of education has no significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who have gone through group-oriented marriage counselling.

Research hypothesis four was intended to find out if there were significant differences in the levels of marital satisfaction of couples in terms of their educational levels. Participants in the treatment group were taken through eight-sessions of intervention. The control group did not receive any treatment. Each group comprised of four couples (8 respondents). Table 22 shows the ANOVA scores of participants.

Table 22 – ANOVA Comparing Level of Marital Satisfaction among Educational Level who have gone through Group-oriented Marriage Counselling

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Between Groups	.828	1	.828	2.820	.095
	Within Groups	59.343	15	.294		
Affection, love and appreciation	Between Groups	.314	1	.314	1.538	.216
	Within Groups	41.196	15	.204		
Character	Between Groups	.961	1	.961	4.443	.066
	Within Groups	43.686	15	.216		
Temperament	Between Groups	.176	1	.176	.902	.343

	Within Groups	39.529	15	.196		
	Between Groups	.123	1	.123	.565	.453
In-law issues	Within Groups	43.814	15	.217		
	Total	.078	1	.078	.310	.578
Marital roles	Between Groups	51.098	15	.253		
	Within Groups	.828	1	.828	2.820	.095
General evaluation	Between Groups	59.343	15	.294		
	Within Groups	.314	1	.314	1.538	.216
Marital satisfaction	Between Groups	41.196	15	.204		
	Within Groups	.961	1	.961	4.443	.606
	Total	43.686	15	.216		

Source: Field survey (2017)

The Null Hypothesis 4 was tested at significant level of 0.05 and the results showed that at  $df = 14$ ,  $f = 4.440$ ,  $p = 0.606$  which is greater than 0.05. Therefore we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis 4. This implies that there is no significant difference in marital satisfaction among participants who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach in terms of educational level.

#### Research Hypothesis 5:

Ho5: There is no significant difference in the level of marital satisfaction between young and old couples who undergo couple-oriented marriage counselling.

Research hypothesis seven sought to find out if there were statistically significant differences in the levels of marital satisfaction of young and old couples who received treatment using couple-oriented marriage counselling.

Participants in the treatment group were taken through eight-sessions of intervention. The control group did not receive any treatment. Each group comprised two spouses (a couple). Table 23 shows the post test scores of young and old participants in the treatment groups based on an independent sample t-test analysis.

Table 23 – *T-table Comparing Level of Marital Satisfaction between Young and Old Couple who went through Couple-oriented Marriage Counselling*

Scale	Young Mean	SD	Old Mean	SD	t-Value	P Value	SIG.
Relationship	3.33	.425	3.19	.354	3.124	.002	S
Affection, love and appreciation	3.18	.553	3.00	.418	2.913	.004	S
Character	3.88	.252	3.77	.431	3.006	.003	S
Temperament	3.22	.994	3.20	.774	-.229	.819	NS
In-law issues	3.88	.406	3.98	.253	2.517	.013	S
Marital roles	3.22	.434	3.04	.488	3.454	.001	S
General evaluation	3.01	.387	3.11	.318	2.437	.016	S
Marital satisfaction	3.39	.493	3.33	.434	4.499	.010	S

Source: Field survey (2017)

Data in Table 23 is used to test hypothesis 5. The data reveals that young couples at the verge of divorce had a satisfaction level of 3.53 and old couples also at the verge of divorce had 3.47. They both fell within the score band of 2.5+ – 3.5 which is interpreted as “satisfied”. The result revealed that the young couples at the verge of divorce who went through couple-oriented approach improved in terms of marital satisfaction more than the old couples

at the verge of divorce that also went through couple-oriented in terms of marital satisfaction even though both were “satisfied.”

The Null Hypothesis 5 was tested at significant level of 0.05 and the results showed that at  $df = 14$ ,  $t = 4.499$ ,  $p = 0.01$  which is less than 0.05. Therefore we reject the Null Hypothesis 5. This implies that there is significant difference between young and old couples at the verge of divorce who went through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

### **Research Hypothesis 6:**

Ho6: Income has no statistically significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who undergo couple-oriented marriage counselling.

Research hypothesis eight inquired about whether there was significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who went through couple-oriented marriage counselling with respect to their income levels. Participants in the treatment group were taken through eight-sessions of intervention. The control group did not receive any treatment. Each group comprised two spouses (couple). Table 24 shows the post test scores of High Income and Low income participants in the treatment group based on an independent sample t-test analysis.

Table 24 – *T-table Comparing Level of Marital Satisfaction between High Income and Low Income who went through couple-oriented Marriage Counselling*

Scale	High Income Mean	SD	Low Income Mean	SD	t- Value	P Value	SIG.
Relationship	3.49	.055	2.93	.387	2.434	.016	S
Affection, love and appreciation	3.04	.544	3.13	.438	1.425	.156	NS
Character	3.06	.412	3.08	.309	.449	.654	NS
Temperament	3.86	.157	3.51	.119	2.923	.040	S
In-law issues	3.43	.425	3.19	.354	3.124	.012	S
Marital roles	3.72	.553	3.00	.418	2.913	.014	S
General evaluation	3.38	.252	3.77	.431	3.006	.013	S
Marital satisfaction	3.43	.343	3.23	.351	1.229	.401	NS

Source: Field survey (2017)

Data in Table 24 is used for Hypothesis 6. The data reveals that couples at the verge of divorce and with higher income levels had a satisfaction level of 3.43 while their counterparts had 3.23. They both fell within the score band of 2.5<sup>+</sup> – 3.5 which is interpreted as “satisfied”. The results revealed that the higher income couples improved more in terms of marital satisfaction than their counterparts with lower income. Both groups were however satisfied with their marriages.

The Null Hypothesis 6 was tested at significant level of 0.05 and the result showed that at  $df = 14$ ,  $t = 1.229$ ,  $p = .40$  which is less than 0.05. Therefore we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis 6. This means that concerning couples at the verge of divorce who went through the couple-oriented

treatment, there is no significant difference between those earning higher income and those earning lower with regard to improvement in their marital satisfaction.

**Research Hypothesis 7:**

Ho7: Level of education has no statistically significant effect on the level of marital satisfaction of respondents who have gone through couple-oriented marriage counselling.

Research hypothesis nine was intended to find out if there was statistically significant difference in the levels of marital satisfaction of couples who have gone through couple-oriented treatment in terms of their educational levels. Participants in the treatment group were taken through eight-sessions of intervention. The control group did not receive any treatment. Each group comprised two spouses (couple). Table 25 shows the ANOVA scores of participants.

Table 25 – ANOVA Comparing Level of Marital Satisfaction among Educational Level who have gone through Couple-oriented Marriage Counselling

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Relationship	Between Groups	.706	1	.706	1.645	.201
	Within Groups	86.706	15	.429		
Affection, love and appreciation	Between Groups	.005	1	.005	.013	.909
	Within Groups	76.284	15	.378		
Character	Between Groups	.000	1	.000	.000	1.000
	Within Groups	96.039	15	.475		
Temperament	Between Groups	3.314	1	3.314	11.949	.501
	Within Groups					

	Within Groups	56.020	15	.277		
	Between Groups	.176	1	.176	.651	.421
In-law issues	Within Groups	54.745	15	.277		
	Total	.593	1	.593	1.530	.217
Marital roles	Between Groups	78.284	15	.388		
	Within Groups	.706	1	.706	1.645	.201
General evaluation	Between Groups	86.706	15	.429		
	Within Groups	.005	1	.005	.013	.909
Marital satisfaction	Between Groups	76.284	15	.378		
	Within Groups	.000	1	.000	.627	1.028
	Total	96.039	15	.475		

Source: Field survey (2017)

The Null Hypothesis 7 was tested at significant level of 0.05 and the result showed that at  $df = 14$ ,  $f = .627$ ,  $p = 1.028$  which is greater than 0.05. Therefore we fail to reject the Null Hypothesis 7. This implies there is no significant difference among the various categories of educational level in terms of their marital satisfaction regards the participants who were taken through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

## Discussion

This section of the chapter discusses the findings as revealed from the results. It is presented under thematic areas in consonance with the research questions and hypotheses.



## **Difference in the Marital Satisfaction Levels of Respondents with regard to those who are exposed to Couple-oriented and Group-oriented Marriage Counselling**

The results revealed that treatment had positive impact on the participations. However, the couple-oriented approach was efficacious than the group-oriented approach. This was in line with the existing literature. For example, Peters (2014) found that there was a difference in the marital distress of couples who had been exposed to couple and group oriented marital counselling approaches. He results indicated that couple-oriented approach was more efficacious than group oriented in handling couples who in going through marital distress.

Johnson (2015) conducted a study on how to improve marital quality through the use of cognitive behavioural therapy in couple and group-oriented approaches. His study revealed that there was a difference in the improvement of marital quality after the participants had been taken through the cognitive behavioural therapy. However, those that were taken through the couple approach had a higher improvement than those that went through the group oriented. He did not find difference in the two experimental groups.

This finding is consistent with the finding of Osunuga (2012) who found in Abuja, Nigeria that participants responded more effectively to couple-oriented approach to marriage counselling than group-oriented marriage counselling. He added that after treatment the marital quality of couples exposed to couple-oriented ( $M= 2.8$ ,  $SD= 1.028$ ) approach differed significantly from those exposed group-oriented ( $M= 2.1$ ,  $SD= 0.846$ ) approach with p value of 0.021.

The finding is however inconsistent to the finding of Grisham (2014) who found statistically significant difference between couple and group-oriented approaches on married people who were taken through solution focused brief therapy in marriage counselling. His study revealed that group-oriented marriage counselling approach was more efficacious than couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

I believe that to a large extent people see and treat their marital issues as private. Married people who hold this mind set will find it extremely difficult to open up in group-oriented marriage counselling approaches. No matter how high the therapist is on fidelity, such married individuals will be comfortable in couple-oriented marriage counselling approach than in group-oriented marriage counselling. I think this explains the finding of current study.

Another reason could be that in group-oriented marriage counselling different married individuals come into counselling with diverse experience. Married people will find it a bit difficult to adjust and adapt to these diverse experiences. However in couple oriented approach it is just about two spouses, they might have lived together for some time and might know their strengths and weaknesses. It will be easy for the couples to respond to treatment much faster.

Adusei (2015) has argued that in an experimental condition where treatment is effective, it should inform a resultant positive change in the behaviour of the respondents. This was the case of the present study. There was a change in the marital satisfaction levels of the treatment groups and their control.

I believe that there are a number of reasons that are responsible for this. One of them is the fidelity of the practitioner. That is the knowledge base of the practitioner in terms of how he/she applies his experience to the experimental process. Even though I have relatively few years of experience as a spouse, I have been taught causes in marital counselling. I have been counselling married people. I also read and consulted my supervisors who have incredible worth of experience in marriage and marital counselling techniques. I fed on their knowledge which served as a guide and a source of reference. The participants (treatment groups) benefited from these experiences and it is not surprising that they showed signs of relief during and after the treatment which was evident in the post test scores.

Another reason is the counsellor's ability to draw responses and contributions from the participants. A very tactful and experience counsellor will get all the participants to share their experiences which becomes a source of motivation for each and everyone to note that they have similar concerns. Once that is achieved the counsellor builds on that to assist the participants learn from the positives of other group members. This was done effectively in the current study and hence the post test scores of the treatment groups showing an improvement in the level of marital satisfaction than those in the control groups.

### **Effect of Group-Oriented Marriage Counselling on Respondents' Level of Marital Satisfaction**

The results showed that there was significant effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction. Group counselling has numerous advantages when garnered effectively by a

counsellor, will benefit the participants immensely. Sydney (2013) maintains that group activities in marriage counselling has the potential to trigger success or otherwise owing to counsellor dispositions.

The finding of the study is inconsistent with the finding of Adofeli (2015) who found in Lusaka, Zambia that there was little or no effect of group counselling on the marital quality of married people. He explained that people fear to share their marital details and even if they share they only talk about the positive side which they are proud of. Another reason Adofeli gave to support his claim was that intervention periods to change marital quality in most of the studies he reviewed spanned between 8 weeks and 12 weeks. He contended that this is a relatively short period of time to revive marital quality and also instil in participants the skills to improve their marriages.

Nwogiri (2014) agrees with the finding of Adofeli. Nwogiri investigated the correlation between leisure and marital quality among African- Americans who visited Banjul, Gambia between the year 2010 and 2013. Through a descriptive survey design, he found that married people who engaged in group activities whilst on leisure indicated that though they learnt some skills and ideas from other married people that did not have any significant impact on their marital quality.

From a theoretical perspective, Gottman (2003) argues that group counselling has more benefits to clients than harm. He espouses that using the family system theory members with the group see themselves as a unit and therefore work in tandem to ensure that each member of the group do not only contribute to the interactions but also benefit from the interactions. The standpoint of Gottman supports the finding of the current study. The results as

presented in Table 13 reveal that the treatment group saw an improvement in their marital satisfaction.

The family systems theory sees members in the family as a unit. The success of the family becomes incumbent on each other. Amehiah (2013) maintains that one of the conditions of successful group is that members are made to understand that each member of the group lives for one another. The success or otherwise of a member of the group depends on each other. In the group-oriented treatment groups members were made aware of this condition. Although all the participants were at the verge of divorce, some of them were more experienced in marital issues than others. Others were knowledgeable in new trends of spicing up relationships. The participants got the opportunity to carry themselves along. They offered assistance among themselves and also ensured that each member had gained some level of understanding in the information shared during the intervention. This I believe was one of the reasons for the finding of the current study.

People begin to open up when they see that other group members have similar concerns as theirs. This is one of the benefits of group counselling. When the intervention began some of the participants were not forthcoming with information. I encouraged them to open up as that was vital for their success. As this appeal sunk in, people started sharing their concerns. The other participants upon realising this also contributed to the discussions. New ideas were then learnt and I believe strongly that it is one of the reasons the participants saw an improvement in the marital satisfaction after the intervention.

One thing that could mar the success of group counselling is issues of confidentiality. This was really an area of concern for the participants. Some of the participants felt that some members of the groups could let out some of the information they may share during the sessions. They were assured of confidentiality and were taught on the importance of confidentiality in groups and in their marriages. This helped the participants to open up and became active members of the group. It therefore stands to reason that this was one of the premises for the success the participants chalked in the group-oriented approach.

### **Effect of Couple-oriented Marriage Counselling on Respondents' Level of Marital Satisfaction**

There is an Akan, Ghana adage, that says that it is easier to light up an already used firewood than a new one cut out of wood. What this means is that it is easier for dissatisfied couples to resolve their issues by themselves or through the assistance of others. This adage is quite instructive in the sense that it stresses the fact that couples can be given interventions to help them improve their marital relationship. This was the case in the current study.

The finding supports by the finding of Botshelo (2014) who found that the exchange theory was effective in improving the marital quality of distressed couples who were exposed to that intervention. He maintained that the couple-oriented intervention had heeled 43% improvement in marital quality as compared to their control groups in a study he conducted on distressed married people in Selebi-Phikwe in Botswana.

Axmed (2015) also found in Bosaso in Somalia that couples who were treated in an experimental setting had improvement in the satisfaction levels of

their marriage than their counterparts who were not. He used the communication theory to assist the participants through an eight-week intervention process.

I believe that couples who voluntarily decide to join a treatment group is a great step in achieving marital satisfaction. Once the counsellor explores this willingness on the part of the clients and elicit the challenges they face, he will be in a part position to offer remediation through an intervention. The clients are more likely to respond positively (Biggles, 2015).

Couple intervention deals with two individuals and the counsellor. This brings about an intimate relationship than in it would have happened in a group-oriented treatment. This facilitates easier understanding and clients or the couple are able to adjust to the content of the intervention than their counterparts who in a group-oriented situation.

The results revealed that the participants saw improvement on all the seven subscales. However, there were significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the participants with regard to relationship, affection, love and appreciation, character and in-law-issues.

Relationship between spouses is crucial for the success or otherwise of marital life. Asiraa (2015) maintains that the manner in which spouses relate to each other determines their marital quality. I agree with Asiraa on her assertion on marital relationship. A good relationship brings about affection, love and appreciation. Your partner begins to appreciate your character when there is good relationship. The relationship also transcends to your in-laws and the satisfaction in the marriage increases.

Researchers such as Ankomah and Obeng (2014) revealed that character is the fundamental determinant of marital happiness. They explain that the character of a person will determine how he/she discharges his/her marital roles, relates with the spouse and children. It will invariably determine how one also relates with the in-laws. In the course of the sessions membered the difficulties they had with the character dispositions of their spouses. the comments they passed after the intervention were contrary to the expressions they made before the intervention.

From a theoretical perspective, the exchange theory has it that there is cost and benefit to every activity and actions of people. Ofofu (2016) maintains that in the exchange theory, the smaller the number; the higher the benefits and the higher the number; the smaller the benefit. Which implies the higher the cost. The couple-oriented approach dealt with two spouses at a time. Moreover, a couple deals with a husband and wife excluding children and extended family members. If a spouse appears good to the partner, the partner seemly attains a higher benefit but if one of the partners estimates the marriage to have some problems, there is a higher cost to that partner.

I agree with Ofofu to some extent but he failed to look at the other side of the couple. In Ghana when marriage is contracted, it goes beyond just the couple. It includes the children and the extended family members of both spouses. A spouse may not derive satisfaction from the partner be it the husband or the wife but this individual may assess his or her overall marital satisfaction high. It implies that, that spouse might be deriving satisfaction from the children or other family members. For instance, the results in Table



13 revealed the couple had improved significantly in terms of in-law issues and general evaluation.

### **Factors of Marital Satisfaction which are Most Likely the Causes of Spouses "At the Verge of Divorce" Position as the Most Dissatisfied in their Marriage**

The study revealed that what respondents considered most as a factor for them to be at the verge of divorce position was temperament issues of the spouses. This finding is consistent with the finding of Lown and Allgood (2000) who found among 87% American women out of 360 that they wanted to quit their marriages because of the temperament disposition of their partners.

In another study conducted by Almendinger (2013) in Lausanne in Switzerland, it was revealed that the greatest reason spouses desired to quit their marriages was temperament of their spouses. They assigned reasons such as temperament, affection and character. The study was conducted using an ex-post facto design on the same spouses at two different times. The divorce rate had increased by 17%.

Mbriwa and Dourado (2014) found in Arusha, Tanzania that what respondents reminisced as factors they would opt out of their marriages were sexual strength of their partners, financial support, and respect their partners offered them. Out of the 220 respondents, 83% of them indicated that how strong their partners were sexually was their top most priority. They will not hesitate to opt out of their marriages if their partners were not strong in bed or were not strong sexually.

According to Dogan (2011) a section of the respondents he studied in Ankara, Turkey indicated that In-law harassments accounted for the top most factor they would envisage divorce. Dogan explained that once an individual gets married the individual marries an entire family not only the spouse. In a situation where the family members of the spouse show acts of disrespect, mistrust and gross insubordination, the married man or woman is put in a very uncomfortable situation. Persistence of these acts are likely to get the individual to desire for divorce.

I agree with the cited authors with respect to the issue under consideration. A number of factors may account for a married man or woman to desire divorce. As the finding of the current study revealed, temperament of a spouse is a very important component in marriage. These include issues of trust, being humble and respectful. These can result from one's in-laws, the kind of temperament one has and how one relates with the spouse. The temperament a spouse puts up may also be the result of marital roles one has to play and how he or she discharges these duties. These have the penchant to spark a tendency of divorce.

Marriage thrives on trust and could be seen as one of the bending agents of marriage. If both spouses trust one another it may lead to success in marriage. If there is mistrust on the part of one of the spouses it could breed insecurity, nagging and lack of confidence. The slightest sign or conduct could make a spouse feel suspicious. Marriage that lacks trust can be described as a marriage on a "stretcher on its way to the hospital". Such a marriage can land on rocks and married persons in such a situation may contemplate divorce.

Another factor why married people at the verge of divorce may desire to quit their marriages is the roles they expect their spouses to play in the marriage. Marriage is seen as an exchange where two people bring on board their talents, knowledge, finances and time. Each partner is expected to play a role. If the role is played to the expectation of the spouse he or she feels happy. However, if the roles are played to the dissatisfaction of the spouse it tends to breed anguish, displeasure, stress, depression and it will not be surprising if such a spouse decides to opt out of the marriage.

According to Nasigri (2014) in-laws contributed to 26% of divorce among 203 divorcees he carried a study on in Atebubu in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. Some of the reasons the respondents gave were that their in-laws treated them with abject disrespect. Some of them went the extent of inflicting physical pain on the bodies of these married people. When the maltreatment became unbearable a spouse might want to throw in the towel.

Babatunde (2013) in a study that assessed the binding agents of a successful marriage, found that marital roles was the most predominant agent that determines marital dissatisfaction. He found that both males and females rated marital roles as very high in terms of what brings about dissatisfaction in marriage. Eighty six percent (86%) of the respondents indicated that to be the most influencing factor in marital dissatisfaction.

This finding is inconsistent with the finding of Kwakye (2014) who found among married people that relationship issues contributed 65% of the marital satisfaction level of spouses in Agona Nyarkrom of the Central Region of Ghana. He explained that the way and manner people relate with you is

instructive in so far as getting along with them and becoming satisfied in that relationship is concerned.

The finding is also in line with the finding of Amoako (2011). In a longitudinal study of new married couples in the Dansoman circuit of the Methodist Church Ghana, he concluded that matters of temperament were considered tops on the factors that influence marital quality of married people. He added whopping 91% out of the 245 respondents affirmed this position.

I am of the opinion that satisfaction in marriage is a function of whether your expectations in the marriage are met or not. Even though I felt that love, affection and appreciation is crucial in marital success, the participants had different expectations. My believe is founded on the assertion that the kind of relation a spouse will have with you is dependent on whether the individual loves you, appreciates you or even have some affections with you.

### **Reasons Accounting for Respondents' Level of Marital Dissatisfaction**

Reasons that bring about marital dissatisfaction be distinctive or inter-related and these can get married person desiring to quit his or her marriage. The finding is in line with the finding of Adoli (2010) who found among married people that what made them dissatisfied in their marriages were issues such as “My wife keeps her money to herself. She does not contribute to the upkeep of the home and family” and “My wife is fond of hitting me with objects to harm me when she is angry”. He added that the respondents indicated these were their greatest concerns in their marriages. Adoli utilised a qualitative approach in getting the responses from the married people.

Meriku and Dufie (2016) found that what made couples more dissatisfied in their marriages were the way the spouses conversed with them. They found among their respondents their conversations ended in quarrels which affect their emotions. Out of the 320 respondents they studied in the Mampong Municipality of the Ashanti Region of Ghana, 198(61.88%) had that challenge in their marriages. This finding supports the finding of the current study. This is because two of the items used for this study expressed a similar concern. The items were “I like the way my wife converses and shares her experiences with me” and “we (I and my wife) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often”.

Respect and trust are useful tools in marriage. The effective use of them brings about satisfaction while disregarding in leads to dissatisfaction and may push spouses to desire for divorce. It was therefore not out of place that the respondents indicated issues on respect and trust as some of the issues that make dissatisfied in their marriages. Weija (2015) maintains that respect is the most important factor in maintaining marital quality of married people. He stresses that respect of one another in marriage as well as showing respect to in-laws is one of the surest ways of maintaining marital quality.

Another reason that makes or mars marital relationship is finances. One of the reasons the respondents found to makes them dissatisfied in their marriages was “My wife keeps her money to herself. She does not contribute to the upkeep of the home and family”. I believe that couples are expected to openly discuss how much income they receive on dairy basis or at the end of the month. They should also discuss how they want that income to be spent or invested. One this is done in a very transparent manner, each spouses gets

satisfied with the other and trusts him/her so far is their finances are concerned. Frimpong and Kyere (2017) maintain that marital success thrives on finances. They explain that the effective management of the family's (husband, wife and children) finances brings about happiness in the marriage. They further explain effective management to mean involvement of each spouse in the income and expenditure of the family.

### **Difference in the Effect of the Interventions on Marital Satisfaction among Experimental and Control Groups**

The study revealed that there is significant difference in the effect of the interventions on marital satisfaction among experimental and control groups. The finding of the study is consistent with the finding of Osunuga (2012) who found significant difference in the pretest and post test scores of the respondents he studied but found no improvement in the control group. He found that the respondents had seen improvement in the post test scores in the two therapies (Logo therapy and Cognitive behavioural therapy) he offered on depressed clients. His study also revealed that there was significant difference in the improvement of depression with respect to the two therapies.

Rodolf (2013) also found that there was no statistically significant difference in Person-centred and Rational Emotive Behavioural therapies on the marital quality of spouses. He however, he found that there was significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents. He found Rational Emotive Behavioural therapy to be more efficacious than Person-centred therapy in improving the marital quality of spouses. He however found no difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group.

Saani (2015) states that for a treatment condition to be effective there should be no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group. He argues that once there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group then it implies external threats to validity have been compromised. Saani's condition was satisfied with the finding of the current study.

In a successful treatment there be changes (improvement) in the pre-test and post-test scores of the participants. There should however be marginal or no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group. This to determine the efficacy of the intervention given to the participants. If the intervention was well executed then it should manifest in their post-test scores. There is usually no significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control group because the control group does not receive treatment at the time the experimental groups receive their treatment. They receive treatment after the post-test has been carried out. I believe this is why Saani (2015) indicated that if there is a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test scores of the control then the reason could be attributed factors such as internal and external threats to validity.

In the current study, the participants in the control group received same measure of treatment as the experimental groups received two weeks after the post-test was conducted. Although there was no test after this exercise, I virtually asked some of the participants how they felt after the treatment. They revealed that they felt much better than they used to be. Some of the couples used phrases such as "our marriage will work again". Other said that "this had

come in a good time. We are happy with ourselves and I hope our children will be happy too”.

### **Difference in the Level of Marital Satisfaction between Young and Old Married People Who have gone through Group-oriented Marriage Counselling.**

The finding of the study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between young and old couples at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach. All ages of human strive for intimacy but is it much profound within the ages of 18 and 35 according Erik Erikson. This claim of Erikson is support by Abraham Maslow in his need theory. Maslow asserts that individuals demand love and belongingness from other people. It therefore stands to reason that youth likes anything group. This perhaps explains why the young married people achieved higher levels of satisfaction in their marriages after the group-oriented intervention than the old married people. There was higher enthusiasm on the young married people during the treatment than their older counterparts.

However, the finding that old married people did not differ significantly from young married after the group-oriented intervention support the finding of Tampuri (2014). Tampuri found that older spouses did not differ significantly from younger spouses who engaged in cross culture marriage.

Bridgewaters (2013) found among married people in Birmingham, England that older female spouses did not differ significantly from younger female spouses who were taken through group approaches in solution focus brief therapy. The study aimed at improving the marital quality of the spouses through the solution focus brief therapy.



The finding can be explained in relation to the fact that young people are more curious and anxious to make their marriages work. The more matured have more experiences to bring about more positive change in their lives. This might affect the way they approach treatment or intervention. In relation to this finding, Kyei (2015) noted 51 % of his 180 respondents were affected by the already knowledge they held. They indicated that they knew problem solving strategies. Most of them relaxed and that affected their post intervention scores. This is likely the situation of the current study.

The finding also revealed that two out of the seven sub-scales showed significant differences between young and old married people. These scales are “relationship” and “character” with the p-values of .013 and .016 respectively. On both scales young married people saw higher improvement than the old as shown on Table 20. What I believed might have accounted for this was that some of the young married people still remembered some of the lessons they had benefited from during premarital counselling. The learnt experiences might have been in extinction. The treatment might have caused a spontaneous recovery among the young participants.

Owusu-Amoah (2015) indicated that younger people have a sense of competition among themselves even if the activity is not competitive. During the intervention I realised that the young couples were putting up signals that there was a sense of good relationship between them. After a number of sessions some of them could openly give pegs and call their partners names such as “Honey”, “Dear” and “My world” which hitherto was not the case. A times when a couple saw their colleagues do some of these things they also did

similar things. I believe strongly this was to communicate that the relationship between them (husband and wife) was good or to portray a good character.

### **Effect of Income on the Level of Marital Satisfaction of Respondents who go through Group-oriented Marriage Counselling**

The study revealed that there is significant difference between higher income earning and lower income earning couples at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling. Sagarson (2014) in a study conducted in Italy on predictors of marital quality found that financial matters were considered the most important predictor to 83% of his 350 respondents. He explained that the world today has become a place where money can get almost everything done. Therefore if there is money in the home that can bring about marital success, spouses can play their marital roles effectively and hence an improvement in the marital quality of those spouses.

Martins (2013) found that group intervention on cognitive behavioural theory saw a significant difference among married people with respect to different levels of income. She found that married people with higher levels of income responded positively to the group treatment than their counterparts.

Kheamba (2015) came out with a finding that is contradictory to the finding of the current study. In Nariobi, Kenya, Kheamba investigated predictors of satisfaction in marriage. His study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between low and high income earners who were exposed to group counselling through rational emotive behaviour therapy.

I have realised that during group activities, people with higher income exerted some kind of competition among themselves. They employ all

avenues to demonstrate that they are better than the other person. I saw this attitude in the high income married people during the initial stages of the intervention. Although I put in measures to keep it to the barest minimum I believe it impacted the finding in a way.

Another explanation to this finding is that people with low levels of income are reserved in group activities when they are together with their counterparts with high levels of income. Even though they participate fully in the group activities one is likely to see a sense of timidity in their eyes. This is likely to affect their performance. In the current study, all the participants were encouraged to participate actively but that notwithstanding there were times married people with low income were a bit reluctant to share some experiences or seek clarification. I believe this might have affected their post intervention scores.

The results of the study as presented in Table 21 revealed that six out of the seven sub-scales revealed differences between high income and low income earning married people. These scales were relationship, affection, love and appreciation, and character. The others were in-law issues, marital roles and general evaluation. The reason to this finding could be that when a spouse has higher level of income and the individual is able to play his or her marital roles effectively by ensuring that the family gets what they desire. When this is done, that spouse is likely to be seen as an individual with good character by the partner which in turn will develop the relationship between them. The fall out of this will be a sense of affection, appreciation and love between them and hence will score high on the general evaluation of their marital satisfaction.

## **Effect of Level of Education on the Level of Marital Satisfaction of Respondents who have gone through Group-oriented Marriage Counselling**

The finding of the study showed that there is no significant difference in marital satisfaction among participants who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach in terms of educational level. This finding is inconsistent with the finding of Kyere (2014). He found among his married respondents who went through group counselling to improve their marriages, that there were significant differences in improvement with regard to their levels of education. He found that the middle level, which he defined to be senior high school levels as well as diploma holders improved after intervention than the low and high education level married people.

The finding of the study is inconsistent with the finding of Berdiako (2015) who found significant difference between married men with high and those with low education level in terms of marital satisfaction. His study concentrated on improving the marital satisfaction of married men in the Mpraeso district of the Eastern Region of Ghana through group counselling.

I expected the finding of the study to show significant differences among the various levels of education. The reason is that people who have gone through higher levels of education are expected to demonstrate better study habits than those at lower levels. This is expected to be realised in the treatment group. This was not the case of the current study.

Different levels of education come with different level of concentration and absorption. People with high levels of education are able to concentrate and absorb the concepts or ideas they study (Danso, 2015). I believe that

marriage is a different terrain. It is in a constant state of flux and a continuous dynamic process. It does not depend on one's level of education but a person's willingness to acquire new skills and strategies to confront the challenges that come their way. All the participants irrespective of their educational level were willing to learn the new skills offered them. This is likely one of the reasons why there was no significant difference in the marital satisfaction of the respondents in terms of their educational background.

Another reason for this finding could be the fact that these days people are educated on the media, at religious meetings and in the communities. One does not necessarily have to attend school to get new level of knowledge. Once the education is offered in a language people can understand, they take advantage of such avenues of learning. Thus, people with low levels of education who avail themselves such education become at par with their counterparts with higher levels of education.

I believe that many a time people with higher levels of education get opportunity to become public and civil servants or corporate workers. Their institutions require them to work for long hours. On the contrary, people with lower levels of education are most self-employed or unemployed. They therefore have the luxury of time to avail themselves for seminars, community durbars and such programmes that are likely to educate them on a number of issues such as marital enrichment. During intervention, married people with lower levels of education who had the opportunity to attend such programmes come into the intervention seemingly at par with their compatriots with higher levels of education. It will therefore not be surprising when there is no

significant difference in their post intervention scores. This was the case of the current study.

### **Difference in the Level of Marital Satisfaction Between Young and Old Married People Who Undergo Couple-Oriented Marriage Counselling**

The finding of the study revealed that there is significant difference between young and old married people at the verge of divorce who went through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach. The finding of the study is supported by the finding of Argun (2015) who found significant difference between young and old couples and their marital enrichment after counselling. Argun investigated young and old couples in the Catholic churches in Freetown, Serra Leon and their marital enrichment in terms of couple counselling.

Pratt (2014) also came out with a similar finding in a study he conducted among young and old employees and the marital quality after marital improvement programmes. He found out that there was significant difference in marital quality after the intervention between the young and old working couples. He added that the young working couples were found to do better than the old working couples after the intervention.

What is likely to readily come to mind when one wants to look at the marital satisfaction between young and old couples is that the older couples might have gained vast experiences in life that they could bring to bear on their marriage to enhance it. It is therefore expected that older married people should have higher level of satisfaction. This argument for me though could be true to some extent, it also would hold water when one argues that perhaps the encounters of premarital counselling still lingers fresh in the minds of young

added that it was one of top reasons his respondents, identified as predictor of marital satisfaction. His study however found significant differences between high and low income earners with regards to their level of marital satisfaction.

Fischer (2013) in a study conducted in Cologne, Germany on high and low income migrants, found that income was the number factor that led to divorce. After intervention he found significant difference between high and low income earners with respect to their satisfaction in marriage.

The finding of the study is at variance with the finding of Abasi-Ifreke (2013) who found that in Jalingo in the Taraba State of Nigeria that counselling intervention did not result in any positive impact on the mindset of the high and low income married people. Abasi-Ifreke studied how married couples with high and low income reacted to counselling intervention in aid to improve their marital quality. Both groups improved after the intervention.

To a larger extent the finding could be explained by the tenets of the communication theory. The theory holds that if a partner is spoken to and the import or the content of the message is understood to meet the intention of the partner who spoke, then communication is said to be effective. Money solves a lot of problems but there are instances where communication has solved the problem much better than money (Heward-Mills, 2014). If the counsellor explores the essence of communication to the spouses; which in most cases is the remote cause of the marital dissatisfaction or distress they leave the problems behind and build bridges with one another. This does not matter whether the couple is high income or low income earner. The communication was effectively used in this regard and that could probably be the reason behind the current finding of the study.

## **Effect of Level of education on the Level of Marital Satisfaction of Respondents who have gone through couple-oriented marriage counselling**

The study revealed that there is no statistically significant difference among the various categories of educational level in terms of their marital satisfaction regards the participants who were taken through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach. This finding is inconsistent with the finding of Peprah (2010) who found significant difference between high and low educated couples who were taken through the family system theory. Peprah revealed that couples with low education background had seen high level of satisfaction in their marriage after the intervention than their colleagues with high level of education. He explained the finding to have come from the fact that couples with low educational background had a renewed mind and were much readier to learn than their counterparts with high level of education who might have still held in their minds “I know my right” and will not lower their egos and learn.

This assertion of Peprah is unfounded and lacks scientific justification. Readiness for learning is not a function of experience or lack of it on the part of the learner. Thorndike attributes the law of readiness among a number of factors including stimulation of the learner by the instructors (counsellors), review of relevant knowledge, among several others.

The finding of the current study agrees with the finding of Ato-Forson (2015) who found no significant difference in the marital success of couples with regard to their educational levels. In a study he conducted in Assin Fosu, he concluded that there was no difference between couples with low level of



education and those with high level of education who went through the integrative behavioural therapy. Ato-Forson described marriage as the only institution in which the couple are given certificate before the lesson starts. He added that unlike secular education, students are given certificate after completion of the programme of study. Ato-Forson explained that there was no significant difference their marital success because marriage is a concept that is wide and keeps changing. It does not matter your level of education an aspect of this concept may appear new to a married individual.

People who may go through formal education may get the opportunity to learn an aspect of marriage from school. Others may also learn about marriage from their parents or other significant married people in their vicinity or religious organisations. Couples came into the couple-oriented intervention with different levels of understanding of what make marriage successful or not. I believe some of the couples with lower level of education might have had a better understanding of some of the aspect of marriage. In much the same way, some of the couples with higher level of education were better place in terms understanding with some of the aspects of marital satisfaction. All the couples had some level of knowledge in marital satisfaction. It was therefore not surprising to find that there was no significant among the various categories of educational level in terms of their marital satisfaction regards the participants who were taken through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

## Summary of Results

1. There is no significant difference in the marital satisfaction levels of respondents with regard to those who were exposed to couple and group-oriented marriage counselling.
2. There was significant effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.
3. There was a statistical significant effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.
4. The study revealed that what respondents considered most as a factor for them to be at the verge of divorce position was temperament issues of the spouses.
5. Some of the reasons accounting for marital dissatisfaction were "I dislike the way my wife converses and shares her experiences with me" and "we (I and my wife) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often".
6. The test of within-subjects effect results indicated that the post-intervention marital satisfaction scores were significantly higher than pre-intervention. The result of the test of between-subjects effects showed that there was overall main effect of the approaches (Group) on the improvement of marital satisfaction.
7. There is no statistically significant difference between young and old married people at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach.

8. There is significant difference between higher income earning and lower income earning married people at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling.
9. There is no significant difference in marital satisfaction among participants who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach in terms of educational level.
10. There is significant difference between young and old married people at the verge of divorce who went through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.
11. Married people at the verge of divorce who went through the couple-oriented treatment, there is no significant difference between those earning higher income and those earning lower with regard to improvement in their marital satisfaction.
12. There is no statistically significant difference among the various categories of educational level in terms of their marital satisfaction regards the participants who were taken through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this chapter, a summary of the findings of the study is presented. Conclusions drawn, and recommendations made are all presented under this section.

#### **Summary**

This study sought to study the impact of group and couple oriented marriage counselling approaches on the marital satisfaction of married people at the verge of divorce. A sample of 344 spouses was initially purposively drawn from the churches and mosques in the Sunyani Municipality. The responses from this sample were analysed to determine people at the “verge of divorce”. Out of the 344 married people 58 couples, representing 116 married individuals emerged as those at the verge of divorce. Forty eight couples were randomly assigned in the experimental and control groups. This was after a test of equivalents was done to ascertain that no significant differences existed between the experimental and control groups. There were two broad treatment groups (group-oriented and couple-oriented) and one control group. The Marital Satisfaction Inventory by Essuman (2010); a standardised inventory was adapted and used to elicit responses for the study. The instrument had two main sections namely, Section A (Background Information) and Section B (Marital Satisfaction). A pilot test was conducted in Berekum Municipality using 40 married people. The data collection period lasted for 12-weeks. Two weeks after the intervention, post tests were conducted for all the 48 couples.

## Key Findings

Based on the research questions and the hypotheses for this study, the findings were as follows:

There is no significant difference in the marital satisfaction levels of respondents with regard to those who were exposed to couple and group-oriented marriage counselling. However, the couple-oriented approach was efficacious than the group-oriented approach.

There was significant effect of group-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction. This means that married people who went through group-oriented treatment had improved in terms of marital satisfaction than their counterparts in the control.

There was a statistical significant effect of couple-oriented marriage counselling on respondents' level of marital satisfaction. This means that married people who went through couple-oriented treatment had improved in terms of marital satisfaction than their counterparts in the control.

The study revealed that what respondents considered most as a factor for them to be at the verge of divorce position was temperament issues of the spouses.

Some of the reasons accounting for marital dissatisfaction were "I dislike the way my partner converses and shares her experiences with me", "we (I and my wife) quarrel over petty disagreements and each other's feelings very often", "My partner cannot be trusted. She is cunning, not reliable", "my in-laws are very helpful and give me respect", "My partner is too cold for my liking. I do not enjoy her company", "My partner keeps her money to herself.

She does not contribute to the upkeep of the home and family” and “My in-laws are my worst enemies in my marriage. They make my life miserable”.

The test of within-subjects effect results indicated that the post-intervention marital satisfaction scores were significantly higher than pre-intervention with very high effect size. There was significant interaction effect between the experimental conditions and type of test (pretest/post-test) which means that the experimental conditions also differed significant between the pre and post-test periods. The result of the test of between-subjects effects showed that there was overall main effect of the approaches (Group) on the improvement of marital satisfaction. This suggests that at least, two of the experimental conditions did not differ significantly. There was however, significant difference between the experimental groups and their control.

There is no statistically significant difference between young and old married people at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach.

There is significant difference between higher income earning and lower income earning married people at the verge of divorce who went through group-oriented marriage counselling.

There is no significant difference in marital satisfaction among participants who went through group-oriented marriage counselling approach in terms of educational level.

There is significant difference between young and old married people at the verge of divorce who went through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

Married people at the verge of divorce who went through the couple-oriented treatment, there is no significant difference between those earning higher income and those earning lower with regard to improvement in their marital satisfaction.

There is no statistically significant difference among the various categories of educational level in terms of their marital satisfaction regards the participants who were taken through couple-oriented marriage counselling approach.

### **Conclusions**

Every individual enters a marriage with an expectation and desires that these expectations are met regardless being young or old. It was revealed from the study that a number of factors are responsible for married individual attaining satisfactory or being at the verge of divorce. This includes the kind of relation one builds with the spouse, how affection, love and appreciation are demonstrated and the kind of character one exhibits. Others are temperament issues, how in-laws are approached as well as how marital roles are accomplished in the marriage. It was surprising that the most important factor was temperament not love, affection and appreciation issues. This is because a number of marriage counsellors believe that the success or otherwise of marriage revolves round love, affection and appreciation.

Another revelation of the study was that there was no significant difference in the marital satisfaction of married people in terms of educational level. In both couple and group-oriented approach there was no significant difference. The reason may be that marriage as an institution is wide and

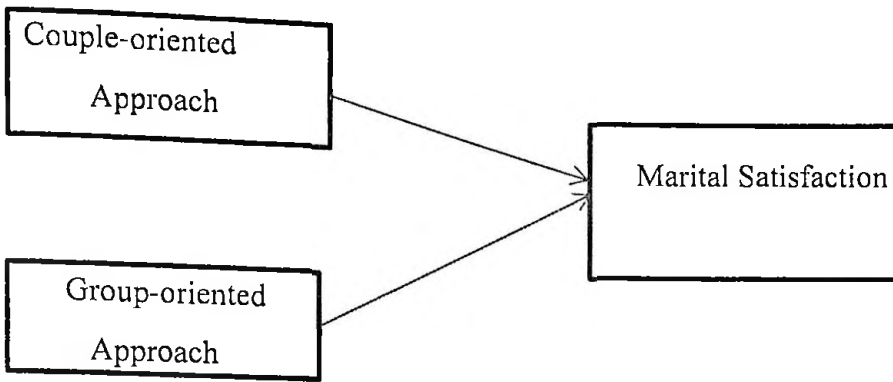
dynamic. It may require commitment to learn new skills to improve the marriage not necessarily a spouse's educational background.

The study has made significant contributions to the existing literature. It also has the ability to aid counsellors and married people to prevent divorce situation. It has also equipped the participants with skills in improving their level of satisfaction in marriage. I envisage fervently that the beneficiaries of this study will put to use the techniques learnt to deal with future challenges in their marriage. To this end, the aim of counselling is also achieved.

The study also made it evident that both group and couple oriented approaches are effective in improving marital satisfaction levels of couples. However, couple-oriented approach is efficacious than group-oriented approach.

Finally, based on the findings of this study, I present my observed model for this study in Figure 3. The results after the interventions showed that not all the independent variables had significant effects on marital satisfaction. Age income and educational level did not bring about significant changes in the marital satisfaction levels of couples in the treatment groups. However, the couple-oriented and group-oriented approaches caused significant changes in the marital satisfaction levels of respondents.





**Figure 3:** Final Observed Model of the Study

Source: Dabone (2017)

### **Implications for Counselling**

The study has avowed a number of findings which has implications for counselling. They include the following:

1. Marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a function of a number of factors and reasons. The implication is that counsellors have not adequately explored these factors and dealt with them. This is because the respondents identified some factors and reasons as responsible their dissatisfaction in marriage.
2. The study revealed that both couple and group-oriented approaches in marriage counselling are efficacious. This implies teachers of counsellor trainees had not paid much attention in training counsellor trainees on how to use both approaches. This is because most of the studies carried out only made use of couple-oriented approaches.
3. The findings of the studies also imply that counsellor fidelity in the use of these approaches is important. The counsellor was well grounded in group and couple-oriented strategies.
4. Another implication from the study is that the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) used in this study is a useful tool for assessing marital

satisfaction issues. This is because aided in soliciting information from the respondents. It was also one of the major teaching and learning materials used for the study.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made.

It is recommended that marriage counsellors should resort to the use of various approaches in assisting married couples improve their marital satisfaction. This is dependent on the finding that both couple and group-oriented approaches were efficacious in improving the marital satisfaction of married people at the verge of divorce.

It is recommended that more education should be undertaken by counsellors with regards to how to use the two approaches. This will assist counsellors to appreciate when to use either couple or group-oriented approach because both approaches proved efficacious on respondents' level of marital satisfaction.

The study revealed that the participants considered some factors and reasons as responsible for the challenges they faced in their marriage. It is recommended that counsellors should undertake an appraisal on what make married people satisfied or dissatisfied in their marriages. This will place counsellors in a better position in offering interventions to married people.

It is also recommended that counsellor pay attention to couple-oriented approach when dealing with couples who are dissatisfied in their marriages. This has the ability to save the counsellor's time as well as aid the spouses handle their marital challenges appropriately.

## **Suggestions for Further Studies**

1. It is suggested that future research be carried out on couples in terms of their religions to assess which of the approaches works best for which religion.
2. The study excluded couples engaged in polygamy. A further study to include this group would be very informative.
3. There should be a nationwide study into the marital satisfaction levels of married persons with the two approaches. This can be done by undertaking the kind of this study in all the ten regions separately. The results of such studies will give a firm foundation for counsellors, and other helping professionals to make definite decisions regarding which of the approaches best helps.
4. Another study to investigate why the couple-oriented approach was more efficacious than the group-oriented approach is suggested.
5. A further study using the two approaches to compare marital satisfaction levels of couples who went through pre-marital counselling as against those who did not can be conducted.

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## Appendices

# MARITAL SATISFACTION INVENTORY MSI

## INSTRUCTIONS

This inventory is designed for married people. 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

Please fill in the following

Age.....Gender.....Religion.....Educational  
Level.....Address (Permanent).....

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 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 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.				

Appendix B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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C/O Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy



19<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2017

Mr Kyeremeh Lawiah Dabone  
Department of Guidance and Counselling  
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr Dabone,

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE –ID :( UCCIRB/CES/2017/19)**

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted **Provisional Approval** for the implementation of your research protocol titled ' **Impact of Couple and Group-Oriented Approaches on Marital Satisfaction of Married People at the Verge of Divorce in Sunyani Municipality, Ghana.**'

*This approval requires that you submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.*

Please note that any modification of the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

.....  
ADMINISTRATOR  
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
Date:.....  
  
Samuel Asiedu Owusu  
Administrator



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16<sup>th</sup> February, 2017

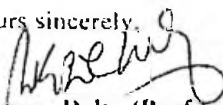
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We write to acknowledge receipt of your hard bound and soft copy of your thesis proposal. You are hereby informed to proceed to the next stage of your research.

We hope and wish that you finish and present your findings on schedule.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

  
**Prosper Deku (Prof.)**  
VICE-DEAN

cc: Dean, FEF, UCC  
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## Appendix D

### Lesson Plan for Treatment

Week	Ending	Topic	References/ Teaching and Learning	Teaching & Learning Materials	Remarks
1		Introduction and Setting group rules	Jacobs, E., Masson, R. L., & Harvill, R. L. (2006). <i>Group counseling: Strategies and skills (5<sup>th</sup> ed.)</i> . Australia: Thomson, Brooks/Cole.	Photocopies of MSI	
2		Relationship issues	Neukrug, E. (2011). <i>Counselling theory and practice</i> . Australia: Brooks/Cole, Cengage	Photocopies of MSI	
3		Affection, love and appreciation issues	Heward-Mills, D. (2005). <i>Model marriage: A marriage counseling handbook</i> . Accra:	Photocopies of MSI	

			Parchment House		
4		Character issues	Gladding, S. T. (2007). <i>Family therapy: History, theory and practice (4<sup>th</sup> ed.)</i> . Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall	Photocopies of MSI	
5		Temperament issues	Heward-Mills, D. (2005). <i>Model marriage: A marriage counseling handbook</i> . Accra: Parchment House	Photocopies of MSI	
6		In-law issues	Neukrug, E. (2011). <i>Counselling theory and practice</i> . Australia: Brooks/Cole, Cengage	Photocopies of MSI	
7		Marital roles issues	Gladding, S. T. (2007). <i>Family therapy: History, theory and</i>	Photocopies of MSI	

			<i>practice (4<sup>th</sup> ed.).</i> Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice- Hall		
8		Closure and termination	Jacobs, E., Masson, R. L., & Harvill, R. L. (2006). <i>Group          counseling:          Strategies and          skills (5<sup>th</sup> ed.).</i> Australia: Thomson, Brooks/Cole.	Photocopies of MSI	

## Treatment Plan for Group-Oriented Approach

### Week One

**Topic/ Sub-topic:** Introduction and Setting group rules

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Get to know one another better</p> <p>Explain the purpose of the group</p> <p>Explain five advantages of group counselling</p> <p>Set rules to guide the groups</p>	<p>Through discussion method counselor introduces himself and leads members to introduce themselves.</p> <p>Through expository teaching, counselor explains the purpose of the groups to member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through questions and answer method, counselor assists clients to understand the advantages of group counselling</li> <li>- Expected question</li> </ul> <p>Mention any five</p>	<p>Photocopies of notes on advantages of group counselling</p> <p>Copies of the MSI</p>	<p><b>Advantages of Group Counselling</b></p> <p><b>Relate to others:</b></p> <p>The members of the team are strongly noticed that means it helps them throughout the feelings that they undergo and also it encourages the people around. This matters when the defined challenges of different people are interconnected. It can be handled that all the things are focused on the relationships.</p> <p><b>Safety net:</b></p> <p>Safety net</p>	<p>Explain in brief the purpose of our meeting.</p> <p>Explain five advantages of group counseling</p> <p>Suggest two reasons why confidentiality is important</p>



	<p>advantages of group activities</p> <p>Expected Answer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It helps you to realize you are not alone</li> <li>2. Facilitates giving and receiving support</li> <li>3. Helps you to find your voices</li> <li>4. It helps you to relate to others and yourself in healthier ways.</li> <li>5. It provides a safety net, - Counselor leads members to formulate rules that would guide the sessions</li> </ol>		<p>will be built among the team members if the hardships are shared. It has different authentication and selective friend safety nets within the group. It manages the group counseling strategies and skills and practices that are inbuilt as the team develops. This practice will make them a group and also for their lives. It enumerates within the team. In addition to strengthening skills, isolated and the individuals then has anxiety and depression.</p> <p><b>Ever growing support:</b></p> <p>Usually the groups will be divided into sub groups that are identified</p>	
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within the people to comfort and to provide insight to them. It serializes the ever growing support of the group members and also making the people more insightful within the team. It builds positive energy and praise people for their behavior.

**Encouragement:**

When the ideas are shared people will encourage the person as they will overcome that obstacle. It supports the group and the members in it. It has regularized happenings in and out of the group. It is polished within the dynamics of every individual. It

			<p>eliminates social phobias due to anonymity and also encourages different view points.</p> <p><b>Disadvantages of Group Counselling</b></p> <p><b>Personality clashes:</b></p> <p>Personality clashes can happen due to different nature of people. There will be some disagreements with the team when a problem is discussed. A dominating personality will try to rule the entire group that the others cannot explain their opinion. This issue has to be fixed by the trainer before becoming huge clash and must ensure that the issue is</p>	
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			<p>fixed.</p> <p><b>Trust:</b></p> <p>Sometimes people will feel uncomfortable to reveal their problems and to break their trusts as to share and forward personal ideas. This will cause some trouble to people as they are obligated to their feelings. Sometimes the person will be rejected. Group counseling also paves way for fear of rejection.</p> <p><b>Intense personal discussions:</b></p> <p>This group counseling activity will sometimes make people curious at certain things. In this case people will feel uncomfortabl</p>	
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			<p>e to play certain role when they will be extremely abused. It also coincides with the extreme graphic details about the past. It can be emerged as the certain way to explore certain extreme information about an individual.</p> <p><b>Inherent risks:</b></p> <p>Few members in the group will exhibit their aggressive behavior that may cause clashes.</p> <p>Fragile people will not be able to understand what will be going on in the group. It has to be analyzed that the group becomes more confidentially damaged as</p>	
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			<p>to endure the practices. They cannot manage the inherent risks that members will confidentially break through at certain level. It will be bounded by certain private session.</p> <p><b>Social phobias:</b></p> <p>Some people will be nervous while speaking before a crew. But this counseling requires the individual to come in front to address about themselves. It has to be addressed in front of the entire group. This sometimes causes detailed research about the phobias that are spoken in front of others.</p>	
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			<p><b>Expensive:</b></p> <p>Sometimes attending the discussion may become expensive as it accounts for intense scrutiny and intimacy of individuals. This adds to the expense that will make therapist as to define the non partial observers. While some individuals seek professional help the counseling will become more reversed. It sometimes becomes worse in case of different viewpoints and experiences.</p> <p>Hence people inspite of their culture, ages and sexes can have discretion to a certain extent. These participants are assigned on their own identification</p>	
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			<p>that makes more compatible. Certain people who suffer from social anxiety can be perceived by attractive people all around. It can be reconciled within the team and can be modulated during many crisis. It accounts to true multiplicity in the forms and also specializes in different groups.</p> <p><b>Rules for Groups</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No eating during sessions</li> <li>2. No drinking during sessions</li> <li>3. No smoking during sessions</li> <li>4. Attendance. You don't absent yourself</li> </ol>	
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			without permission	
			5. No attacking of others or putting others on the spot	
			6. Confidentiality	

Week Two

Topic/ Sub-topic: Relationship issues

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Define relationship</p> <p>Explain five behaviours that destroy relationships</p> <p>Explain five behaviours that improve relationships</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counselor asks clients to define relationship</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain behaviours that could destroy</p>	<p>Photocopies of notes on advantages of group counselling</p>	<p>Relationship is defined as the way in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected.</p> <p>Behaviours that destroy relationships include the following</p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback instead of being open to it.</p> <p>Being closed to new experiences instead of open to new things.</p> <p>Using deception and</p>	<p>Explain five behaviours that destroy relationships</p> <p>Explain five behaviours that improve relationships</p>

	<p>relationship</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five behaviours that could destroy relationship</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback instead of being open to it</p> <p>Being closed to new experiences instead of open to new things</p> <p>Using deception and duplicity instead of honesty and integrity</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them</p> <p>Being manipulative, dominant or</p>		<p>duplicity instead of honesty and integrity.</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them.</p> <p>Showing a lack of affection, and inadequate, impersonal, or routine</p> <p>sexuality instead of physical affection and personal sexuality.</p> <p>Behaviours that destroy relationships include the following</p> <p>Know thyself.</p> <p>Know the other person.</p> <p>Avoid pinning your worth on</p>	
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	<p>submissive</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counselor guides clients to explain five behaviours that improves relationship</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Explain any five behaviours of couples that could improve relationships</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Believe, trust and assume good faith</p> <p>Be willing to take full responsibility for your own words and actions</p> <p>Grasp the other person's perspectives</p>		<p>being part of a couple or even a family.</p> <p>Remember that the best relationships are based on living, loving, and sharing</p> <p>Grasp the other person's perspective.</p>	
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	<p>Know thyslf</p> <p>Know the other person</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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**Week Three**

**Topic/ Sub-topic: Affection, Love and Appreciation issues**

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Define love and affection</li> <li>b. Express love and affection</li> <li>c. Express appreciation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK on behaviours that improve relationships as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Exchange Theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through asking and answer method counselor asks clients to define love and affection</p>	<p>Copies of notes</p>	<p>Affection is a feeling of liking and caring for someone or something: tender attachment</p> <p><b>Ways people can give/receive affection</b></p> <p>Quality Time – where you give each other 'undivided attention' to talk, listen, eat together or enjoy a shared activity.</p> <p>Words of Affirmation – these are kind, affectionate, appreciative statements that recognize</p>	

	<p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain five ways of expressing love and affection</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counselor guides clients to explain five ways of expressing appreciation</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>identify any five ways of expressing affection and appreciation?</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Giving gifts</p>		<p>what your loved one means to you.</p> <p>Acts of Service – this sounds very formal but simply means doing kind things for each other. Like taking on tasks a partner may not want to do or sharing household chores.</p> <p>Gifts – this might be an expensive present or something you have made.</p> <p>Physical Touch – could be shown in the form of hugs and cuddles; sitting close on the sofa or lying together in bed.</p>	
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	<p>Expressing physical contacts</p> <p>Taking over some of spouse's tasks</p> <p>Spending quality time with the your spouse</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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**Week four**

**Topic/ Sub-topic: Character issues**

Objectives	Counsellor- Clients Activities	Teachin g & Learnin g Materia ls	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Define character</p> <p>Outline five characters that break marriages</p> <p>Explain five characters that grow marriage</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counselor asks clients to explain what is meant by character</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain characters that</p>	<p>Photoco pies of notes on advantag es of group counsell ing</p>	<p>Character can be defined as the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.</p> <p>Character that break marriages include;</p> <p>You are not trustworthy.</p> <p>You give in to temptation.</p> <p>You always expect your spouse to change.</p> <p>You treat your spouse like the enemy.</p>	

	<p>could destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five characters that could destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>not been trustworthy</p> <p>Not accepting one's mistakes</p> <p>Heeding to foolish advice</p> <p>Using harsh words on people</p> <p>Being closed to new experiences instead of open to new things</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method,</p>		<p>Your words constantly tear your spouse down.</p> <p>You fail to ask for forgiveness and forgive.</p> <p>You listen to foolish marriage advice.</p> <p><b>Characters that grow marriage include</b></p> <p>Honor and Respect Your Spouse</p> <p>Set a Positive Example</p> <p>Communicate in Love</p> <p>Pray Together</p>	
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	<p>counsellor guides clients to explain five characters that improve marriage</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Identify any five characters of couples that could improve marriage</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Honor and Respect Your Spouse</p> <p>Set a Positive Example</p> <p>Communicate in Love</p> <p>Pray Together</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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## Week Five

### Topic/ Sub-topic: Temperament issues

Objectives	Counsellor- Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Define temperament</p> <p>Mention five temperament of a spouse that destroy marital relationships</p> <p>Mention five temperament of a spouse that build marital relationships</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counselor asks clients to define temperament</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counsellor leads clients to explain temperaments that could destroy marriage</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>	<p>Temperament is defined as The manner of thinking, behaving, or reacting characteristic of a specific person: a nervous <i>temperament</i>. It could also be seen as the distinguishing mental and physical characteristics of a human according to medieval physiology, resulting from dominance of one of the four humors.</p> <p><b>Temperament of a spouse that destroy marital relationships</b></p>	

	<p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five temperament that could destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>love for controversy</p> <p>hard to please</p> <p>set high standards</p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counsellor guides clients to explain five</p>		<p>love for controversy</p> <p>hard to please</p> <p>set high standards</p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them</p> <p><b>Temperaments that are required for successful marriage</b></p> <p>Accepting or acknowledging ones mistakes</p> <p>Taking up ones responsibility</p>	
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	<p>temperaments that improves marriage</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Explain any five temperament of couples that could improve marriage</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Accepting or acknowledging ones mistakes</p> <p>Taking up ones responsibility</p> <p>Expressing words of encouragement to people rather than insults</p> <p>Being empathetic</p> <p>Seeking spouse's opinion on issues</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>		<p>Expressing words of encouragement to people rather than insults</p> <p>Being empathetic</p> <p>Seeking spouse's opinion on issues</p>	
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	<p>State five behaviours of in-laws that destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>Disrespectfulness</p> <p>Over demanding</p> <p>Invading the privacy of the couples</p> <p>Demanding children from spouses</p> <p>Imposing religious beliefs on spouses</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counsellor guides clients to explain ways in-law issues can be improved</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Explain ways in-</p>		<p>Imposing religious beliefs on spouses</p> <p><b>Ways in-law issues can be improved</b></p> <p>Showing respect to spouses</p> <p>Loving spouses as your own children</p> <p>Encouraging spouses when they encounter challenges</p> <p>Giving spouses enough room to operate</p> <p>Do not over burden</p>	
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	<p>law issues can be improved</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Showing respect to spouses</p> <p>Loving spouses as your own children</p> <p>Encouraging spouses when they encounter challenges</p> <p>Giving spouses enough room to operate</p> <p>Do not over burden spouses with financial demands</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>		<p>spouses with financial demands</p>	
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**Week Seven**

**Topic/ Sub-topic: Marital Roles issues**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Counsellor-Clients Activities</b>	<b>Teaching &amp; Learning Materials</b>	<b>Core points</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Discuss five roles of a husband</p> <p>Discuss five roles of a wife</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Role theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counsellor guide clients to explain their understanding of roles</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain roles of a husband</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method,</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>		

	<p>counsellor guides clients to explain roles of a wife</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Explain any five roles of a wife</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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Week eight

Topic/ Sub-topic: Termination

Objectives	Counsellor- Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Discuss the gains they have had from the sessions</p> <p>Identify five things they will do to improve the marriages</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counsellor guides clients to discuss the gains they have had the sessions</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counsellor leads clients to identify things they will do to improve the marriages</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>		<p>How will do you assess the sessions?</p> <p><b>Expected Answers</b></p> <p>Educative</p> <p>Insightful</p> <p>Interesting</p> <p>Time consuming</p> <p>What have you gained from the sessions?</p> <p><b>Expected Answers</b></p> <p>I am going back with a renewed</p>

	<p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Identify five things they will do to improve the marriages?</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>Admire the assistance my spouse gives me</p> <p>Engage my spouse in decision making</p> <p>I will communicate effectively with my spouse</p> <p>I will satisfy my spouse sexually</p> <p>I will accept my mistakes and apologise for them</p>			<p>mind</p> <p>I have to support my spouse</p> <p>I have enjoy quality time with my spouse</p> <p>I have to respect my spouse</p> <p>I have respect spouse's friends and family.</p>
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	<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p> <p>Counsellor thanks the clients and schedules a date with them for a post test.</p>			
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## Treatment Plan for Couple-Oriented Approach

### Week One

**Topic/ Sub-topic:** Introduction and Setting group rules

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Get to know one another better</p> <p>Explain the purpose of the group</p> <p>Explain five advantages of couple counselling</p> <p>Set rules to guide the groups</p>	<p>Through discussion method counselor introduces himself and leads the couple to introduce themselves.</p> <p>Through expository teaching, counselor explains the purpose of the groups to member</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through questions and answer method, counselor assists clients to understand the advantages of couple counselling</li> <li>- Expected question</li> </ul> <p>Mention any</p>	<p>Copies of the MSI</p>	<p><b>Advantages of Couple Counselling</b></p> <p><b>Relate to others:</b></p> <p>The Couples are able to relate well among themselves</p> <p><b>Safety net:</b></p> <p>Safety net will be built among the team members if the hardships are shared.</p> <p><b>Ever growing support:</b></p> <p>Each spouse brings his/her strength</p> <p><b>Disadvantages of Couple Counselling</b></p>	<p>Explain five advantages of couple counseling</p> <p>Suggest two reasons why confidentiality is important</p>

	<p>five advantages of group activities</p> <p>Expected Answer</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. It helps you to realize you are not alone</li> <li>7. Facilitates giving and receiving support</li> <li>8. Helps you to find your voices</li> <li>9. It helps you to relate to others and yourself in healthier ways.</li> <li>10. It provides a safety net, - Counsellor leads spouses to formulate rules that would guide the sessions</li> </ol>		<p><b>Personality clashes:</b></p> <p>Personality clashes can happen due to different nature of people.</p> <p><b>Trust:</b></p> <p>Sometimes people will feel uncomfortable to reveal their problems and to break their trusts as to share and forward personal ideas.</p> <p><b>Intense personal discussions:</b></p> <p>This group counseling activity will sometimes make people curious at certain things. In this case people will feel uncomfortable to play certain role when they will be extremely abused. It</p>	
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			<p>also coincides with the extreme graphic details about the past. It can be emerged as the certain way to explore certain extreme information about an individual.</p> <p><b>Expensive:</b></p> <p>Sometimes attending the discussion may become expensive as it accounts for intense scrutiny and intimacy of individuals.</p> <p><b>Rules for Groups</b></p> <p>7. No eating during sessions</p> <p>8. No drinking during sessions</p> <p>9. No smoking during sessions</p> <p>10. Attendance. You don't absent yourself</p>	
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			without permission 11. No attacking of others or putting others on the spot 12. Confidenti ality	
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Week Two

Topic/ Sub-topic: Relationship issues

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Define relationship</p> <p>Explain five behaviours that destroy relationships</p> <p>Explain five behaviours that improve relationships</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counselor asks clients to define relationship</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain behaviours that could destroy</p>	<p>Photocopies of MSI</p>	<p>Relationship is defined as the way in which two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected.</p> <p>Behaviours that destroy relationships include the following</p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback instead of being open to it.</p> <p>Being closed to new experiences instead of open to new things.</p> <p>Using deception and</p>	<p>Explain five behaviours that destroy relationships</p> <p>Explain five behaviours that improve relationships</p>

	<p>relationship</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five behaviours that could destroy relationship</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback instead of being open to it</p> <p>Being closed to new experiences instead of open to new things</p> <p>Using deception and duplicity instead of honesty and integrity</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them</p> <p>Being manipulative, dominant or</p>		<p>duplicity instead of honesty and integrity.</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them.</p> <p>Showing a lack of affection, and inadequate, impersonal, or routine sexuality instead of physical affection and personal sexuality.</p> <p>Behaviours that destroy relationships include the following</p> <p>Know thyself.</p> <p>Know the other person.</p> <p>Avoid pinning your worth on</p>	
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	<p>submissive</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counselor guides clients to explain five behaviours that improves relationship</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Explain any five behaviours of couples that could improve relationships</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Believe, trust and assume good faith</p> <p>Be willing to take full responsibility for your own words and actions</p> <p>Grasp the other person's perspectives</p>		<p>being part of a couple or even a family.</p> <p>Remember that the best relationships are based on living, loving, and sharing</p> <p>Grasp the other person's perspective.</p>	
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	<p>Know thyself</p> <p>Know the other person</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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**Week Three**

**Topic/ Sub-topic: Affection, Love and Appreciation issues**

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Define love and affection</li> <li>e. Express love and affection</li> <li>f. Express appreciation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK on behaviours that improve relationships as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Exchange Theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through asking and answer method counselor asks clients to define love and affection</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>	<p>Affection is a feeling of liking and caring for someone or something: tender attachment</p> <p><b>Ways people can give/receive affection</b></p> <p>Quality Time – where you give each other 'undivided attention' to talk, listen, eat together or enjoy a shared activity.</p> <p>Words of Affirmation – these are kind, affectionate, appreciative statements that recognize</p>	

	<p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain five ways of expressing love and affection</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counselor guides clients to explain five ways of expressing appreciation</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>identify any five ways of expressing affection and appreciation?</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Giving gifts</p>		<p>what your loved one means to you.</p> <p>Acts of Service – this sounds very formal but simply means doing kind things for each other. Like taking on tasks a partner may not want to do or sharing household chores.</p> <p>Gifts – this might be an expensive present or something you have made.</p> <p>Physical Touch – could be shown in the form of hugs and cuddles; sitting close on the sofa or lying together in bed.</p>	
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	<p>Expressing physical contacts</p> <p>Taking over some of spouse's tasks</p> <p>Spending quality time with the your spouse</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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Week four

Topic/ Sub-topic: Character issues

Objectives	Counsellor- Clients Activities	Teachin & Learnin g Materia ls	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Define character</p> <p>Outline five characters that break marriages</p> <p>Explain five characters that grow marriage</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counselor asks clients to explain what is meant by character</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain characters that</p>	<p>Photoco pies of MSI</p>	<p>Character can be defined as the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual.</p> <p>Character that break marriages include;</p> <p>You are not trustworthy.</p> <p>You give in to temptation.</p> <p>You always expect your spouse to change.</p> <p>You treat your spouse like the enemy.</p>	

	<p>could destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five characters that could destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>not been trustworthy</p> <p>Not accepting one's mistakes</p> <p>Heeding to foolish advice</p> <p>Using harsh words on people</p> <p>Being closed to new experiences instead of open to new things</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method,</p>		<p>Your words constantly tear your spouse down.</p> <p>You fail to ask for forgiveness and forgive.</p> <p>You listen to foolish marriage advice.</p> <p><b>Characters that grow marriage include</b></p> <p>Honor and Respect Your Spouse</p> <p>Set a Positive Example</p> <p>Communicate in Love</p> <p>Pray Together</p>	
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	<p>counsellor guides clients to explain five characters that improve marriage</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Identify any five characters of couples that could improve marriage</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Honor and Respect Your Spouse</p> <p>Set a Positive Example</p> <p>Communicate in Love</p> <p>Pray Together</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>			
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**Week Five**

**Topic/ Sub-topic: Temperament issues**

Objectives	Counsellor- Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Define temperament</p> <p>Mention five temperament of a spouse that destroy marital relationships</p> <p>Mention five temperament of a spouse that build marital relationships</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counselor asks clients to define temperament</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counsellor leads clients to explain temperaments that could destroy marriage</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>	<p>Temperament is defined as The manner of thinking, behaving, or reacting characteristic of a specific person: a nervous <i>temperament</i>. It could also be seen as the distinguishing mental and physical characteristics of a human according to medieval physiology, resulting from dominance of one of the four humors.</p> <p><b>Temperament of a spouse that destroy marital relationships</b></p>	

	<p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five temperament that could destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>love for controversy</p> <p>hard to please</p> <p>set high standards</p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counsellor guides clients to explain five</p>		<p>love for controversy</p> <p>hard to please</p> <p>set high standards</p> <p>Having angry reactions to feedback</p> <p>Overstepping boundaries instead of showing respect for them</p> <p><b>Temperaments that are required for successful marriage</b></p> <p>Accepting or acknowledging ones mistakes</p> <p>Taking up ones responsibility</p>	
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	<p>temperaments that improves marriage</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Explain any five temperament of couples that could improve marriage</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Accepting or acknowledging ones mistakes</p> <p>Taking up ones responsibility</p> <p>Expressing words of encouragement to people rather than insults</p> <p>Being empathetic</p> <p>Seeking spouse's opinion on issues</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>		<p>Expressing words of encouragement to people rather than insults</p> <p>Being empathetic</p> <p>Seeking spouse's opinion on issues</p>	
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Week Six

Topic/ Sub-topic: In-law issues

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Discuss five behaviours of in-laws that destroy marriage</p> <p>Discuss five ways in-law issues can be improved</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Attachment vrs Independence theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counsellor asks clients to explain the word "in-law"</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counsellor leads clients to explain behaviours of in-laws that destroy marriage</p>	<p>Photocopies of notes on advantages of group counselling</p>	<p>In-laws are relatives by marriage, especially someones mother- and father-in-law.</p> <p><b>Behaviours of in-laws that destroy marriage</b></p> <p>Being disrespectful</p> <p>Being over demanding</p> <p>Invading the privacy of the couples</p> <p>Demanding children from spouses</p>	

	<p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>State five behaviours of in-laws that destroy marriage</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>Disrespectfulness</p> <p>Over demanding</p> <p>Invading the privacy of the couples</p> <p>Demanding children from spouses</p> <p>Imposing religious beliefs on spouses</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method, counsellor guides clients to explain ways in-law issues can be improved</p> <p><b>Expected question</b></p>		<p>Imposing religious beliefs on spouses</p> <p>Ways in-law issues can be improved</p> <p>Showing respect to spouses</p> <p>Loving spouses as your own children</p> <p>Encouraging spouses when they encounter challenges</p> <p>Giving spouses enough room to operate</p> <p>Do not over burden</p>	
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	<p>Explain ways in-law issues can be improved</p> <p><b>Expected answer</b></p> <p>Showing respect to spouses</p> <p>Loving spouses as your own children</p> <p>Encouraging spouses when they encounter challenges</p> <p>Giving spouses enough room to operate</p> <p>Do not over burden spouses with financial demands</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p>		<p>spouses with financial demands</p>	
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Week Seven

Topic/ Sub-topic: Marital Roles issues

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Discuss five roles of a husband</p> <p>Discuss five roles of a wife</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Theoretical Focus:</b> Role theory</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counsellor guide clients to explain their understanding of roles</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counselor leads clients to explain roles of a husband</p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p> <p>Through question and answer method,</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>		

Week eight

Topic/ Sub-topic: Termination

Objectives	Counsellor-Clients Activities	Teaching & Learning Materials	Core points	Evaluation
<p>By the end of the session, clients should be able to</p> <p>Discuss the gains they have had from the sessions</p> <p>Identify five things they will do to improve the marriages</p>	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Counsellor introduces session by reviewing clients RPK as well as sharing his objectives with them.</p> <p><b>Presentation</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p>Through brainstorming counsellor guides clients to discuss the gains they have had the sessions</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p>Through discussion method counsellor leads clients to identify things they will do to improve the marriages</p>	<p>Copies of MSI</p>		<p>How will do you assess the sessions?</p> <p><b>Expected Answers</b></p> <p>Educative</p> <p>Insightful</p> <p>Interesting</p> <p>Time consuming</p> <p>What have you gained from the sessions?</p> <p><b>Expected Answers</b></p> <p>I am going back with a renewed</p>

	<p><b>Expected question</b></p> <p>Identify five things they will do to improve the marriages?</p> <p><b>Expected Answer</b></p> <p>Admire the assistance my spouse gives me</p> <p>Engage my spouse in decision making</p> <p>I will communication effective with my spouse</p> <p>I will satisfy my spouse sexually</p> <p>I will accept my mistakes and apologise for them</p> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p>			<p>mind</p> <p>I have to support my spouse</p> <p>I have enjoy quality time with my spouse</p> <p>I have to respect my spouse</p> <p>I have respect spouse's friends and family.</p>
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	<p>Counsellor draws members attention to the end of the sessions by summaries the key ideas of the sessions</p> <p>Counsellor thanks the couples and schedules a date with them for a post test.</p>			
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