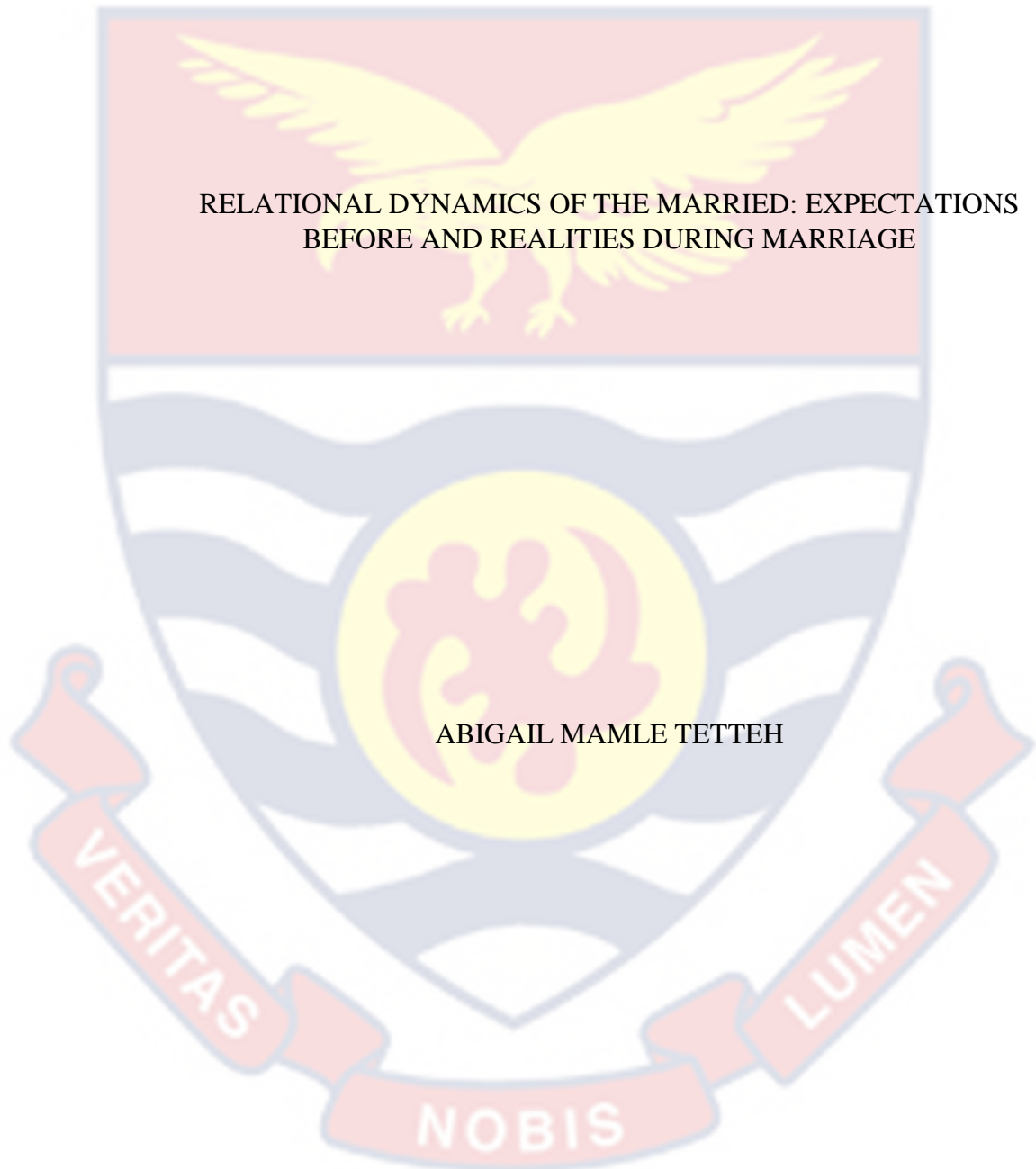UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

RELATIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE MARRIED: EXPECTATIONS
BEFORE AND REALITIES DURING MARRIAGE

ABIGAIL MAMLE TETTEH

2023

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RELATIONAL DYNAMICS OF THE MARRIED: EXPECTATIONS
BEFORE AND REALITIES DURING MARRIAGE

BY

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Thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology of the

Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Legal studies,

University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

award of Master of Philosophy degree in Sociology

JULY, 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

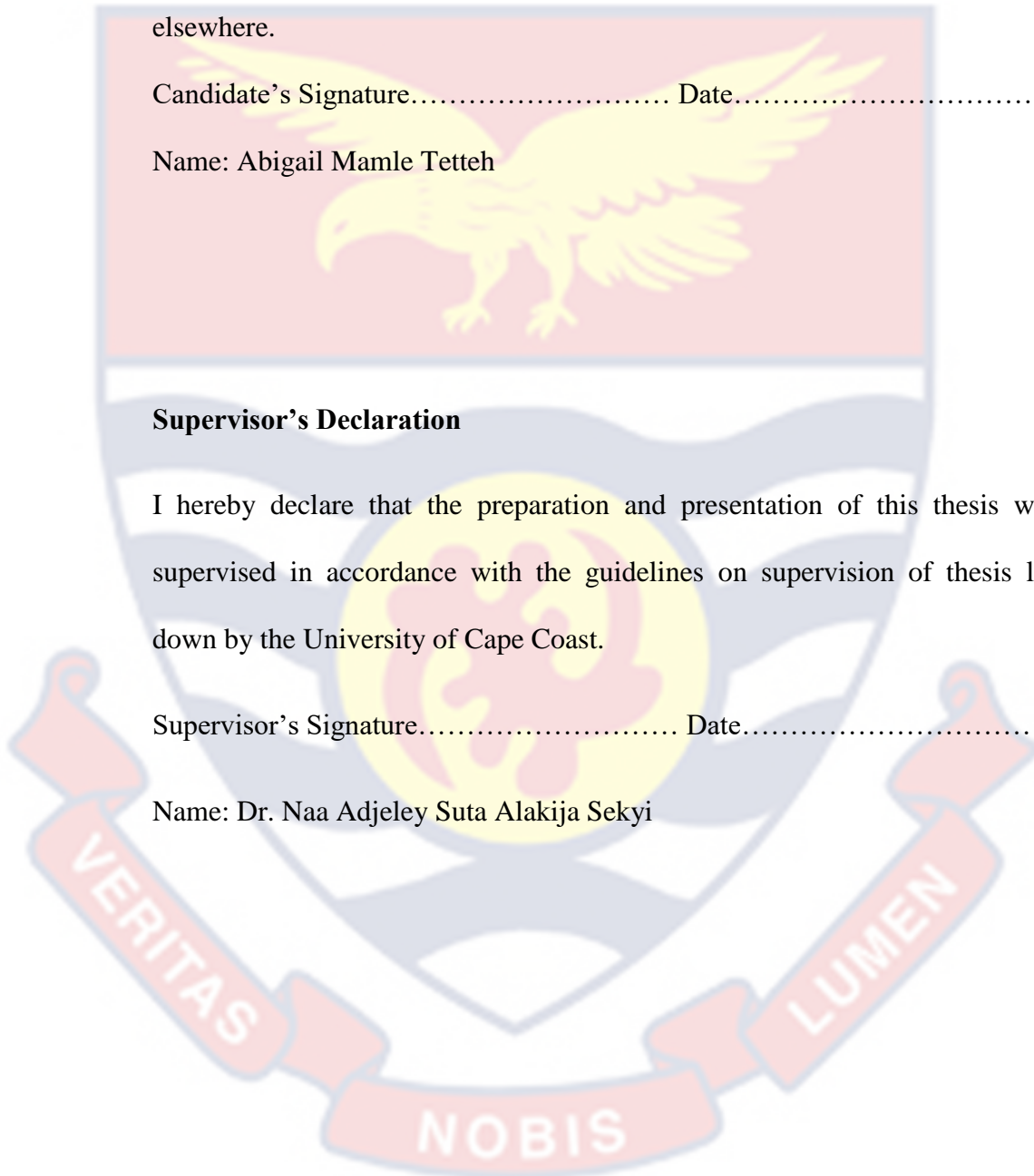Candidate's Signature…………………… Date…………………………….

Name: Abigail Mamle Tetteh

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Supervisor's Signature…………………… Date…………………………….

Name: Dr. Naa Adjeley Suta Alakija Sekyi

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relational dynamics in marriages as a result of the expectations couples had before marriage. An exploratory qualitative research design was employed. Ten (10) couples, making twenty (20) participants from Madina and Ashiyie were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide. From this study, it has been revealed that all couples have expectations for marriage before they get married. These expectations however can either be conscious or unconscious. Couples' expectations are mostly conceived through childhood socialization, the influence of media and the influence of religion. Some of such expectations include 'having frequent communication with their partners', 'getting gifts from their partners', 'getting to spend quality time with their partners', 'getting all kinds of help and assistances from their partners', 'expecting a God fearing partner, a humble partner, a submissive partner' and many others. The study continually reveals that when couples' expectations are met, they breed positive relational dynamics in the form of happy communication, exchanging of gifts, having quality time for each other and many others which brings joy and resultantly, marital stability. On the other hand, unmet expectations in marriage breed negative relational dynamics in the form of silent treatments, quarrels, fights and other negative actions towards each other which causes distress and marital instability. However, the situation of distress and marital instability can be curbed or reduced if couples are educated on the pros and cons of marital expectations prior to marriage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I count myself among the fortunate ones to have massive support from various people throughout this process. My deepest appreciation to everyone who made this possible. To my dear husband, Mr. Simon Nyarko Teye, I want to express so much gratitude for encouraging me through it all. You made me have faith and confidence that I could complete this easily. Also to my father, Mr. David Tetteh, I want to bless you so much for the immense support throughout this journey. Not forgetting my siblings, Rebecca, Eunice, Ebenezer and Isaac, you all have been very supportive and I'm so grateful.

To my thesis supervisor, Dr. Naa Adjeley Suta Alakija Sekyi, I say a very big thank you for sacrificing time even amidst your busy schedules to guide me through this whole process. I usually call you mummy because you did not just supervise my thesis but also advised and encouraged me as every mother will do. Your wisdom and knowledge has made great impact in me, God bless you so much. Also to Professor Raymond Tutu of Delaware State University in the USA, thank you for your contributions and advice. I appreciate you so much. I am also grateful to all lecturers in the Sociology and Anthropology department for their support, contributions and advice throughout this process. To my colleagues, Kenneth Amankwaah Boateng, Albert Dodoo, Patience Pensang, Adinkra Selorm and Joseph Sarpong, thank you all for your support and contributions. Finally, to all gatekeepers and participants, I want to say thanks so much. You all are the best!

DEDICATION

To my loving and wonderful husband, Mr. Simon Nyarko Teye, to my ever

supportive father, Mr. David Amue Tetteh and lastly in memory of my late

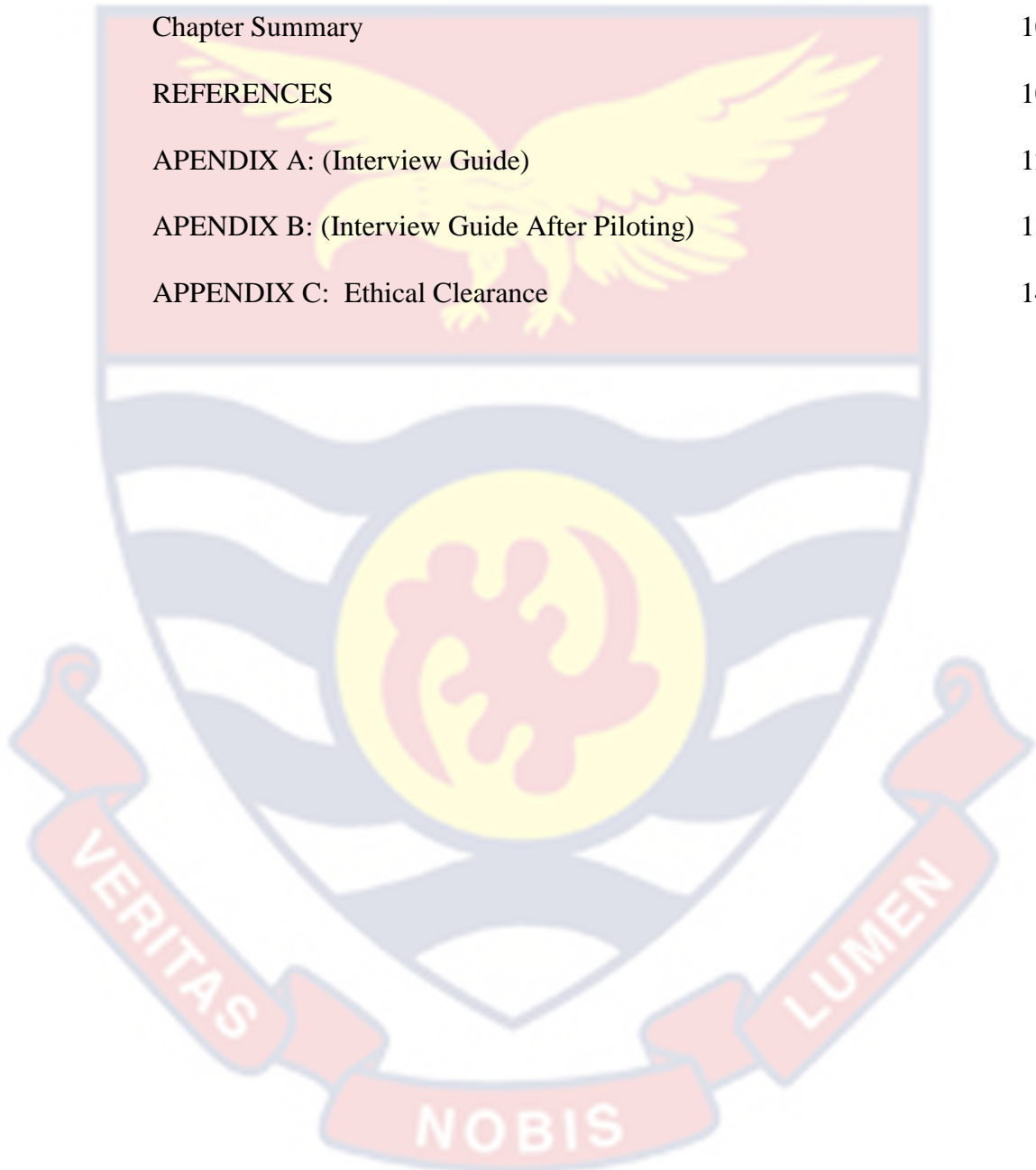mothers, Mrs. Esther Dede Tetteh and Mrs. Rebecca Tetteh.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Within the larger society, there exist the smallest group which happens to be of high importance to every Sociologist in understanding and predicting the conduct of humans. This group, which is made up of two individuals is known as the dyad. According to Becker and Useem (1942), two persons qualify to be classified as a dyad when intimate, face-to-face association between them have endured for a period of time, making it enough for the establishment of detectable pattern of interacting personalities. Becker and Useem's position on a dyad therefore qualifies the institution of marriage to be studied as a dyad.

Marriage, over time has become an institution that most people recognize, seek after, and respect (Meier, Hull, & Ortyl, 2009; Gibson-Davis, Edin, & McLanahan, 2005; Schoen & Standish, 2001; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001). The fact that marriage is associated with recognition and respect is also true about married couples in Ghana; who mostly feel fulfilled and respected (Authur-Norman, 2015). In Ghana, marriage rates have traditionally been relatively high. According to the Ghana Statistical Service, the marriage rate in Ghana increased steadily between 1996 and 2010. In 1996, the crude marriage rate was approximately 8.5 marriages per 1,000 populations, and by 2010, it had increased to around 10.3 marriages per 1,000 populations (Authur-Norman, 2015).

Divorce rates also began to increase, resulting in high demand for researchers to focus on treating marital distress (Karney, 2007). Baucom and

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Epstein (1990) contend that expectations are one of the five cognitive phenomena which when distorted, can contribute to marital distress. Despite high divorce rates, marriage continues to be a highly sought-after and respected institution as indicated earlier (see Meier, Hull, & Ortyl, 2009; Gibson-Davis, Edin, & McLanahan, 2005; Schoen & Standish, 2001; Thornton & Young-DeMarco, 2001).

Consistently, better physical health, mental health, and overall life satisfaction has been associated with being in a satisfying and stable marriage (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Marital satisfaction is viewed as comparison between one's marital expectations and one's marital reality and marital stability is viewed as the comparison between one's best available marital alternative and one's marital reality (Lenthall, 1977). Booth, Johnson and Edwards, 1983 in their research titled 'Measuring Marital Instability' defined marital instability as "affective and cognitive states along the related actions that are precedent to terminating a relationship, and also refers to a situation in an intact dyad, not to ones that already have been disrupted."

Solomon and Knobloch (2001), defined expectations of marriage as "A person's conceptualization of the perfect marriage." in her research entitled Marital Ideals of Engaged Couples. Several other authors seem to look at expectations of marriage through the lens of a cognitive or rational process and list some of the expectations as communication, emotional support, shared responsibilities, intimacy, as well as trust and loyalty (Sharp & Ganong, 2000; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986; Berger & Kellner, 1970) This informs that expectations of marriage are conscious and deliberate rather than being unconscious.

Some authors on the other hand, acknowledge the processes influencing the formation and progression of expectations of marriage as unconscious and emotional (Dicks, 2014; Ruszczynski, 1995; Clulow, 1993; Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1982). According to Azzopardi (2007), partners enter marriage with their own personal ideas and history which happens to be constructed, defining interpersonal roles which are not experienced as personal perspectives but as absolute truths. For one to have a particular construction of expectations of marriage, it is dependent on the interaction between the person in question and some other factors including family of origin, media, the belief of the society at that particular day and age, tradition, and many others (Azzopardi, 2007). As partners meet to form a relationship, they consciously or unconsciously negotiate their expectations and ideals to create a coherent and unified story. The significant transition from courtship to marriage marks the negotiation of norms for the marriage (Chadiha, Veroff, & Leber, 1998) and the co-creation of a new, often unexpected marital reality (Berger & Kellner, 1970).

Expectations of marriage that are conscious give individuals the sense that they can understand, predict, and control their future marital relationship (Baucom & Epstein, 2008). If partners happen to speak about their expectations, it is therefore seen as a reflection of the couple's narrative of their future together (Orbuch, Veroff & Holmberg, 1993). On the other hand, various authors have the assertion that couples enter marriage 'blissfully blinded' (Moody, 2018); since most expectations are unconscious and are therefore never talked about or discussed (Dicks, 2014; Stark, 2001; Ruszczynski, 1995; Waller & Hill, 1951).

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There are researches on marital stability or marital satisfaction that has drawn a link with expectations. Vaterlaus, Skogrand, Chaney and Gahagan, (2017) after their study on Marital Expectations in Strong African American Marriages, indicated that expectations do not always lead to marital distress or divorce but can also lead to marital satisfaction and stability if only the couples have positive relational behaviour towards the expectations, hence helping them to be met. On the other hand, researches have also drawn a link between expectations and marital instability. The five cognitive phenomena as introduced by Baucom and Epstein, (1990) entails *perceptions* which talks about what events occur, *attributions* which talks about why events occur, *assumptions* which talks about the nature of the world's r's among events, *beliefs and standards* which talks about what should be, and *expectancies* which deals with predictions of what events will occur.

The relational behaviours mentioned in Vaterlaus et al (2017)'s study is in other words the relational dynamics in marriages. Relational dynamics in marriage encompass the interactions, patterns, and overall functioning of the relationship between spouses. These dynamics can greatly influence the quality, satisfaction, and longevity of the marriage. These dynamics come in the forms of communication (Gottman & Levenson, 2002), emotional connection (Reis et al., 2010; Feeney & Collins, 2015), division of labour (Kluwer et al., 2010), intimacy and sexuality (Muise et al., 2016) and a lot more based on the uniqueness of the marriage.

The institution of marriage and family have become a normalized part of the Ghanaian social structure, and are acknowledged as the foundation of all social life hence, deemed very important (Baataar & Amadu, 2014).

Although marriage is deemed very important in Ghana (Authur-Norman, 2015), its stability is on the decline due to changing attitudes towards marriage and family formation, hence the expectations and its associated failures (Baataar & Amadu, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

Several researches have proved that unmet expectations can lead to marital distress and instability. The findings of these authors and more give further understanding to this: Segrin and Nabi, (2002) in their quest to find out whether television viewing affected marital expectations came out with the fact that when unrealistic expectations which are developed from the media or viewing of televisions are not met, they highly lead to instability in marriage. Baucom and Epstein (1990) are also of the view that expectation is one of the cognitive behavioural therapies that can cause instability in marriage when they are not met. Glenn, (1991) in his study of factors leading to divorce, indicated that unrealistic marital expectations can lead to distress, instability and finally divorce. In addition, Popenoe, (1991) after researching on the decline of American marriages came out with the fact that when one's expectations are geared towards the person's personal fulfilment, instability and divorce occurs in the long run.

Likewise, met expectations can result in marital satisfaction and stability. Typically for Vaterlaus et al, (2017), they sought to fill the gap by looking away from divorce and focusing on stable marriages. They looked at marital expectations in strong African American marriages and indicated that marriages first begin with unrealistic expectations and later progresses to realistic expectations, and this can be achieved by the collective effort of the

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couple involved. According to them, when couples have a positive mind set towards their expectations, they are likely to be met and the marriage becomes stable. All the above researches and findings are good and commendable because they are able to draw a clear link between expectations and marital stability or instability but extra and new information is needed to fill the lacuna in the literature of marriage.

Unmet expectations do not instantly end up in marital instability. Likewise, met expectations do not instantly result in marital stability. Before met or unmet expectations push the marriage to get to the stage of stability or instability, there are definitely hidden occurrences that have not been talked about or studied by researchers, making it a gap the needs to be filled. These occurrences are the relational dynamics in the marriage. When couples have their expectations met or unmet, how do they behave towards each other? The above question is the problem that this research seeks to delve into or the lacuna in literature that needs to be filled.

Albeit 'The Division of Labor in Contemporary Marriage: Expectations, Perceptions, And Performance' by Hiller and Philliber, (1986) looked at something concerning expectations and couples' relation with each other, they did so narrowly by focusing on expectations and perceptions of marital roles with respect to childcare, housework, money management and earning of income. Their findings, not only being outdated, came out to compare gender roles in marriage, which makes the outcome of their study still lacking the relational dynamics aspect of the marriage and also makes it very different from the focus of my study. Again, Azzorpadi, (2007)'s study on the 'Expectations of Marriage before & after Marriage among Maltese

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Catholic Couples' is similar to my study but focused on the expectations and their outcome without the inclusion of how couples relate or couple's relational dynamics hence, leaving a gap.

Generally, little research regarding relational dynamics among couples have been done and that is a gap in literature. It is for these reasons that I chose to study the relational dynamics of married couples in their marriages which happens to be influenced by their expectations before marriage.

More so, the paucity of research on relational dynamics of married couples is likely to constrain marriage counsellors, psychologists, marriage practitioners and others. whose works are largely based on marital experiences. Hence, the study will be useful in providing additional information to augment the work of marriage practitioners.

Research Objectives

Main Objective

The study seeks to examine the relational dynamics among married couples within the context of their expectations before the marriage and realities faced within the marriage.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the research will:

1. Explore the nature of expectations couples had before marriage

2. Interrogate how marital expectations influence couples' relational dynamics

3. Explore how relational dynamics lead to marital stability or instability

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Research Questions

1. What are the expectations of couples before marriage?

2. In what ways do one's expectations influence the relational dynamics in his/her marriage?

3. How do the relational dynamics lead to stability or instability in marriage?

Significance of the Study

This study attempts to contribute to the knowledge base by revealing the nature of expectations people hold before they enter into the institution of marriage and how those expectations; whether met or unmet affect the relational dynamics between themselves and their spouses.

In addition, it will fill the lacuna in literature with regards to marital expectations and its associated issues in Ghana.

It will help marriage counsellors as well as family specialists and other stakeholders in dealing with issues pertaining to spousal expectations, hence finding easy ways to resolve marital problems that are caused by spousal expectations.

The reorientation of spouses as well as would-be spouses and the kind of interventions by counsellors, stakeholders and even the government, made to shape marital expectations will go a long way to prevent several marital misunderstanding that result in divorce and instability in marriages and will bring peace and satisfaction between married couples. This will enable a positive socialization of children which will positively affect the larger society in the long run.

Delimitations

This study covers couples in Accra (Madina and Ashiyie) who have been legally married and culturally recognized and accepted by society as husband and wife.

Due to the design of this study (exploratory), I looked into the expectations of the couples by allowing them to reveal all that they remember.

Additionally, relational dynamics of two or more people may look difficult to access, therefore this study looked into relational dynamics with regard to three (3) scales which served as a guide; communication, ways of showing love and affection, and character of the spouses.

Limitations

The study faced several limitations. Firstly, there was difficulty in reaching the target sample. This is because almost all the participants were available only on weekends and didn't also have much time to spare. Secondly, due to the fact that both couples needed to be interviewed on the same day to get the needed results, it ended up being very challenging since most couples were not free or available at the same times; it was either the husband was available with the absence of the wife or vice versa. Thirdly, there was difficulty convincing some of the participants to answer honestly especially the participants I personally knew. This is because marital issues are highly sensitive issues. Finally, audios recorded from earlier interviews accidentally got deleted and was unable to be retrieved so I had to spend extra time and other resources to get new participants to cover up for the lost data.

Definition of Terms

Relational dynamics:

The changes in the ways in which married couples (man and woman) feel and behave towards each other.

Marriage:

The legal, spiritual and physical union between a man and a woman who have agreed to come together as husband and wife with a commitment to rights and obligations, and who have gone through all the customary processes and procedures recognized by both parties and/or families. (Yin & Black, 2014)

Expectations:

Conscious and unconscious mental constructions of preferences or desires to be given or received in marriage.

Marital stability

Marital stability denotes a couple's propensity to remain in marriage due to satisfying related actions (Booth, Johnson & Edwards, 1983).

Marital instability

Marital instability refers to a situation in an intact dyad, not to ones that already have been disrupted and denotes affective and cognitive states along the related actions that are precedent to terminating a relationship (Booth, Johnson & Edwards, 1983).

Organisation of the Study

The study is organised in five main chapters. Chapter One, the introductory chapter consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, research objectives, research questions,

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significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms and organization of the study. Chapter Two focuses on the review of related literature. Chapter Three outlines the methods of data collection employed for the study. These include the study area, target population, sampling procedure and size, research instruments, data processing and analysis and ethical considerations. Chapter Four looks at data analysis, discussions, presentation and interpretations of findings. Chapter Five sums up the entire work, which comprises summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings for policy and further research.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study by exposing readers to the background of marriage, marital expectations as well as stability and instability in marriages. It has also indicated with proof how expectations in marriage have been studied extensively with a link to marital stability and instability, leaving out the relational dynamics existing in marriages. In the quest to fill the lacuna in literature, this study seeks to examine the relational dynamics among married couples within the context of their expectations before the marriage and realities faced within the marriage using relevant questions. This study hopes to help marriage counsellors as well as family specialists and other stakeholders in dealing with issues pertaining to spousal expectations. More light has also been thrown on the definitions of relational dynamics, marriage, expectations, marital stability and marital instability as used in the study for easy understanding.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter contributes to fulfilling the objective of the study, which is to explore the relational dynamics among married couples within the context of their expectations before the marriage and the realities faced within the marriage. It does this by reviewing relevant related literature on concepts and theories and provides empirical evidence on the subject. Here, the concepts of marriage, expectations of marriage, relational dynamics, marital stability, and marital instability as well as how different authors have explained and classified these concepts have been explained in details and examined empirically.

More so, a number of theories are reviewed to understand the expectations of marriage and also the behaviour of couples based on their met or unmet expectations.

The Concept of Marriage

Marriage constitutes one of the most revered social institutions central to security in society and serves as a universal expectation for all women and men; almost all of whom marry at least once in their lives, by which their status changes from a girl to a woman and a boy to a man respectively (Kawarazuka, Locke & Seeley, 2019; Mensah, 2018; Willoughby, Hall & Goff, 2015). The recent edition of the Merriam Webster Dictionary defines marriage as 'the state of being united as spouses in a consensual and contractual relationship recognized by law'. This definition is broad and opens up to all forms of marriages like marriages of persons of the same sex, often

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referred to as same-sex marriages or gay marriages, and also marriages of one man to two or more wives (polygyny) or one woman to two or more husbands (polyandry). Notwithstanding, this study focuses on monogamy, where one man marries one woman. In Ghana, marriage under the ordinance is a civil union available to any Ghanaian to take advantage of. This is governed by Marriages Act (Cap 127) and is the only, strictly monogamous legal means of marriage in Ghana.

Marriage is the basis of the family institution, which is closely related to other social institution. That said, it is also regarded as an important establishment for safeguarding families in every society (Nukunya, 1992). As a universal culture, it has gained attention for its continued importance in ensuring unity between two individuals and their families. Besides, there have been plethora varied definitions of marriage by many scholars, all of which despite their subjectivities attached to the definitions, permit the view of marriage as religious, legal and psychological union; in which it legitimises the context for procreation, socialisation of generations, allocation of resources and organization of household labour (Lehrer & Chen, 2013).

In religious terms, marriage is deemed as sacred and cherished institution instituted by God and can be seen as the most intimate of all relationships; emotionally and spiritually. It involves learning to be separate and together, to allocate power, to pool financial and emotional resources, to shape a sexual life, to share intimate as well as mundane feelings, and most challenging of all, to rear another generation (Napier, 2000). More so, marriage is seen as a social institution in which two individuals come together under the ambient of a legal contract/marriage certificate, which ensures

legitimacy for the permanence of the relationship (Kim, Lee, Lee, Kim & Jung, 1993). As a result, the marriage holds as long as the legal contract between the couple is intact (Musick & Bumpass, 2006). This makes possible benefits to the parties involved by serving as a major source of social, emotional, and marital support for most people; and a means of ensuring economic stability between couples (Jarnkvist, 2019; Lehrer, 2008). From the psychological perspective, marriage denotes a conscious relationship between two individuals fuelled by the drive to establish connection and intimacy with another person. This drive for connection and intimacy exists among those who want children and those who do not. It exists among those temperamentally suited to be good partners and those who are not (Cutrona, 2004).

Taking into account that marriage is a well celebrated institution that attracts a lot of respect, it is often performed as a ritual in most cultures with series of ceremonies held to mark it. In other words, a relationship is not marriage until the marriage ceremony is completed. In Ghana as well as other cultures, before two people can be declared and recognised as a couple, they go through the customary marriage ceremony during which solemn declaration of consent are uttered by the couples to actualize commitment and love for lifetime. According to Bisig (2015), public declaration of consent by couples is necessary in ways that make their agreement become knowable and also portrays the perception that marriage is indissoluble. The practice of marriage ceremony paves the way for newly married couples to carry out all forms of customary rights such as childbirth (Siregar, 2019). Just like the other rites of passage, the marriage ceremony helps newly married couples adjust to

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a new life; in which a different form of behaviour is expected and required (Kitahara, 1974).

Overview of marriage forms in Ghana

Marriage in Ghana is quite complex such that it entails both Western and traditional marriage concepts (Gyesaw & Ankomah, 2013); and also characterized by legality, with series of formal elements that stipulate whom one can marry, and informal elements that define expectations of marital behaviour or roles.

Ghanaian marriages have both the semblance of Western monogamous marriage with its legal definition and social functioning and at the same time are characterized by several customary practices such as polygamy, gender role ideologies, social restrictions and societal prescriptions regarding family life (Simon & Alstein, 2017; Manuh, 2010). For instance, according to Yin and Black 2014, marriage often imposes legal or normative duties on people engaged in the union and their progeny.

In Ghana, among the numerous rights and obligations associated with marriage is the one that has to do with receiving legal guardianship and parental recognition of a woman's or man's child or children. Despite this, the fact that a man gave birth to a child with a woman does not automatically provide the man custody of the child. For example, among the Talensi's of Northern Ghana, if a man is not customarily engaged to a woman and the man and the woman give birth to a child, that child is not regarded as belonging to the man, but rather belonging to the woman and her family. Until the man fulfils the customary rights of the woman or the child, the family of the woman claims responsibility and control over the child (Yin & Black, 2014).

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The plural understanding of the marriage concept delineates four (4) basic types which are; Traditional or Customary marriage, Muslim marriage, Christian marriage, and ordinance marriage (Simon & Alstein, 2017).

Customary marriage is more prevalent and revered as the actual marriage with ordinance (legal) support or religious blessings (Nukunya, 2003); owing to its traditional significance in Ghana (Mainoo, 2008). Practically, all marriages in Ghana pass through the traditional/customary system to make possible the unification of the spouse's families (Bediako, 1992). Essentially, it is understood that customary marriage does not only exist as common rites that precede all other marriages in the Ghanaian society. According to Twene (2019), a Christian marriage ceremony or ritual is only performed after a successful customary marriage requirement has been met; such that without customary marriage, church wedding as popularly called in the Ghanaian society cannot be done in a functional Ghanaian culture. Even in some situations, customary marriage ceremony is preferred by most Ghanaians to the wedding due to its flexibility and cost-effective nature (Afful & Nantwi, 2018). In fact, Mainoo (2008) argued against the perception that the prevalence of customary marriage in Africa is synonymous with polygyny on the continent. Despite that, polygyny and polygamy are advocated by customary and Muslim marriage, which affirms the traditional marital concept and the Islamic religious tenets. In addition, Twene (2019) observes that the desire for polygyny and polygamy in customary marriage is considered an African ideal but not phenomenon kindred to the marriage type.

The Mohammedan marriage or Muslim marriage as the name suggests is the marriage arrangement existing among Muslims. As already indicated, all

marriages in Ghana including the Mohammedan marriage pass through the traditional/customary system to make possible the unification of the spouse's families (Bediako, 1992). In addition to fulfilling traditional obligations, the Mohammedan marriage also fulfils legal obligations through civil registration of the marriage. Marriage of Mohammedans Ordinance, (CAP 129 OF 1907) is the piece of legislation that regulates Islamic Marriages and Divorce in Ghana (Abubakari, 2022). According to Abubakari, 2022, when it comes to Islamic marriages, unless they are registered in line with CAP 129, they are not really Islamic marriages. Legally, when a Muslim marries according to the Mohammedan law, the marriage is at its best a customary marriage and does not impact the succession of his wealth (Abubakari, 2022).

Christian marriage is one of the commonest marriage rites that bring a Christian man and woman together as husband and wife. Despite the numerous world views about marriage, Christians believe that marriage was created by God, and He (God) has laid down his plans concerning marriage as a lifelong union (Arthur Norman, 2015). There are three primary views of marriage according to Köstenberger and Jones (2004): marriage as sacrament, marriage as a contract, and marriage as a covenant. The church's tradition views marriage as a sacrament. The term sacrament derives from the Latin word sacramentum, which translates as "mystery" (Köstenberger, 1991). This enigma serves as a metaphor for Christ's relationship with the church. The mainstream Western cultural perception is that marriage is a contract - this is better known as the civil marriage in Ghana (Arthur Norman, 2015). In the contract perspective, a couple enters into, maintains, and dissolves a marriage willingly (Köstenberger & Jones, 2004). Christians do not throw this

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contractual aspect of marriage away entirely because even before the church wedding is conducted, the couple is allowed to go through the civil marriage procedure which is backed by law (Osafo, Oppong Asante, Ampomah & Osei-Tutu, 2021). According to the covenant view of marriage, marriage is a holy connection between husband and wife before God. Among evangelical Christians, covenant marriage can be characterised as a lifetime commitment between couples (Cade, 2010).

On the other hand, civil marriage could be described as a statutory marriage, recognised as being legally valid by a state or country. Due to its statutory nature, civil marriage is regulated by the laws regulating marriages in various jurisdictions (Osafo et al., 2021). It is generally conducted by an official who is not a clergy usually at the marriage registry. In Ghana, civil marriages are expected to take place between a man and a woman; even though legislations in other jurisdictions recognize civil marriage between same-sex individuals (either as lesbians or gays) (Osafo et al., 2021). However, it is not a case in Ghana that civil marriage legislation has been amended to incorporate same-sex marriage despite the onslaught of debates regarding the recognition of homosexual relationship in recent times. In Ghana, the statutory marriage is the form of civil marriage that is practiced and it is governed by both the Marriages Act (Cap 127) of 1985. More so, rights and responsibilities are attached to it due to the statutory nature; and are protected by the constitution. As a result, the law invalidates anything that affects these rights and responsibilities of the married couples. Thus, the law creates a legal status for married couples such that certain legal capacity and incapacity are assigned to the couples (Osafo et al., 2021). In addition to the

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legal capacity of the couple includes the right to apply for a decree of dissolution of marriage: judicial separation or restitution of conjugal rights under the Marriage Act (Mainoo, 2008).

Understanding Expectations of Marriage

The term 'Expectations of marriage' has been called differently by different authors; some make mention of 'Marital expectations', 'Marital ideals' or even 'Ideal standards' (Vangelisti & Alexander, 2002; Fletcher & Simpson, 2001; Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000). According to Knobloch (2000), a person's conception of the perfect marriage is defined as their marital ideal. Her concept however lacks the nuance that different academics ascribe to marital expectations (Azzorpadi, 2007). The majority of authors appear to define marital expectations as cognitive, logical processes (Sharp & Ganong, 2000; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986; Berger & Kellner, 1970).

Sharp's and Ganong's (2000) effort reflects a more nuanced understanding: 'Unrealistic relationship beliefs are predispositions that bias a person toward interpreting intimate relationship events in an irrational manner' (p.71). According to some scholars, this may be the first step toward identifying the unconscious and emotional processes that influence the establishment and advancement of expectations about marriage. (Arond & Pauker, 1996; Ruszczynski, 1995; Clulow, 1993; Eichenbaum & Orbach, 1982; Dicks, 1967).

According to my perspective, marital expectations emerge and grow within a developmental environment of shifting relational experiences beginning in childhood through observation and interaction with main

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caregivers. Thus, marital expectations may include both conscious and unconscious components, as well as intellectual and emotional components. For the purpose of this study, I will define expectations of marriage as the conscious and unconscious mental constructions of preferences or desires to be given or received in marriage. It also seems reasonable to side with Azzorpadi (2007) who defines expectations of marriage as "The conscious and unconscious sentiments, concepts, ideals, fantasies, desires, hopes and dreams one has about one's future marriage, its structural and functional spheres, as well as one's relationship with the outside world based on one's experiences, contexts and constitution" (p. 27).

Factors Influencing Marriage Expectations

The views and qualities that each partner brings to the relationship have the potential to have an impact on the couple's future together (Azzorpadi, 2007). According to Azzorpadi 2007, this set of views and qualities should have a consistent impact on people's expectations about marriage and the process of entering into a relationship in the vast majority of circumstances. Expectations and capacity to sustain marriages may be influenced by a variety of factors, including the parents' race and ethnicity, socioeconomic level, living conditions as a child, the ages of the couples, and the number of children they have with other partners, among others (Cherlin, 1992; Ellwood & Jencks, 2002). Every couple enters into marriage with a unique set of experiences and expectations. These ideas are not viewed as personal ideals, opinions, or viewpoints but rather as the truth and reality of the world around them (Solomon, 1988). In the form of marital expectations,

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it is commonly accepted that these truths are the product of the person's interactions with a variety of circumstances.

For the purpose of this research, I will focus on both the internal (personal attributes) and external (ecological) originations of marriage expectations. Huston (2000) as well as Sprecher and Felmlee (1992) pleaded with researchers to shift their focus from partners' personal attributes into considering the ecological context influencing couples' relationships. In response to their plea, Azzorpadi 2007 narrowed his focus on ecological context influencing couples' relationships, narrowing his search further to consider family, media and religion. This study therefore combines the two (personal attributes and ecological context) to unwrap up the origins of marital expectations.

Marital expectations originating from personal attributes

According to Hills and Todd 2008, an individual can look within himself/herself and develop expectations for his/her preferred spouse based on the attributes the individual possesses. As soon as an individual reaches reproductive age, he or she begins scanning the population for people who share at least a few characteristics with him or her. Individuals set their satisfaction level at its highest point in expectation of finding the 'best' possible match - a mate who matches them on all their traits (Hills & Todd, 2008). Typically, with this, individuals look within themselves, consider their personal attributes and carve expectations of a partner that will best suit the traits or attributes they already possess whether similarly or differently. With regard to similar traits, individuals are most likely to choose partners or would like to be in a relationship with others like themselves. According to Buston &

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Emlen (2003); Byrne (1997), a person's attractiveness rises when they share traits with another person. For example, a person's beauty and desirability as a partner is rated higher if they have comparable tastes, attitudes, descriptions of items, and social networks. With regard to desiring different traits, a person who is for instance, outspoken or noisy will desire to get a partner who is quiet and reserved in order to compliment his/her trait (Foley & Fragomeni, 2019).

Marital expectations originating from ecological context

Pertaining to the external or ecological influences of one's marital expectations, there are various areas that can be made mention of such as the family, media, religion, tradition, peers, various institutions such as the schools and workplaces and many others. This study however focuses on the most relevant and common contexts which influence the origin and formation of marital expectations namely; family, media and religion (Azzorpadi, 2007).

The family's influence on marital expectations

Heim and Heim (2000) believe that where you come from and your family history underpin almost every difficulty you will confront during your marriage - not only in the first year. This implies that one's family of origin has a great influence on one's marriage. Learning about marriage begins in one's own home, as parents demonstrate to their children what it is like to be in a partnership by modeling their own marital relationship (Azzorpadi, 2007). According to several researches, children of divorced parents have a poor perspective of marriage (Kelly, 1981; Long, 1987), perform worse in numerous elements of their development (Dowling & Gorell-Barnes, 1999; 2000), and are scared and nervous about their own future marriage (Schwartberg, 1981; Sorosky, 1977). It is common for children of divorced

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parents to be less interested in marriage and carve low or unrealistic expectations for their own marriages (Long, 1987).

Separation and divorce of parents may influence children's expectations of marriage, but family integration appears to have a greater impact (Ganong & Coleman, 1984). It has been discovered that inter-parental antagonism and conflict has a significant impact on young people's expectations of marriage, as evidenced in studies conducted by Kalter (1987), Grych and Fincham (1990), and Markland and Nelson (1994). Children or young adults who are therefore exposed to such conflicts end up carving negative impressions about marriage, and their expectation in effect become low. In their study, Muench and Landrum (1994) found comparable outcomes and concluded that the dynamics of a person's family are more important in the development of marital expectations. Despite the fact that some people's expectations of happiness and success in marriage may have been polluted by earlier experience (divorced parents), they nevertheless passionately aspire to have a healthy marital and family connection. (Jones & Nelson, 1997).

The influence of media on marital expectations

In terms of beliefs, media influences our ways of thinking and living; it also fosters personality development and the construction of new beliefs through the monitoring of education, information dissemination, and other means. (Narayan, 2021). Undoubtedly, so much involvement with the media has influence on various aspects of our lives. Segrin and Nabi (2002) looked at the connection between watching television and having high expectations about marriage. They discovered that when it comes to unrealistic marital expectations, television consumption is not the best predictor, yet, 'those

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whose television viewing patterns included a large quantity of romantically themed programming were more likely to hold idealistic views of marriage' (p.260). Ward, Gorvine, and Cytron-Walker (2002) discovered that gender had a significant role in the influence of media on marital expectation. Watching television and having conservative views on relationships were more common among women than among men. With television not being the only form of media, it is worth mentioning that other forms of media, especially social media have developed and increased over time and different types of shows have added greatly. The changing storylines in movies, TV shows, and social media have had a significant influence on how people view interpersonal relationships. It is common for people to assume that what they see in the media is what they can expect in their married lives (Narayan, 2021).

Religion as an influence on marital expectations

Religion is so complex and multifaceted that a single measure of religion is insufficient to describe it. Involvement in religious activities such as membership in a specific church or synagogue, participation in religious services, belief in religious teachings, and individual spirituality are all examples of a person's religious experience (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1993). The level of religious commitment among people can have a significant impact on their expectations for their own future spouses. Researchers believe that young people who are religiously engaged are more likely to prioritise marriage as a personal goal than others, based on prior theories and data (Ellison, Burdette & Glenn, 2011). According to Ellison, Burdette, and Glenn (2011), religion is an exceptionally important predictor of marital expectations, much more so than normal sociodemographic characteristics.

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Their study on Religion, Family Background and Marital Expectations revealed that subjective religiosity is a significant predictor of both attitudes toward marriage as a goal and expectations regarding the time of marriage. Although they managed to draw a positive link between religion and marital expectations, their findings were not clear on how religion influences marital expectations. Also, they looked at expectations of marriage in general, not considering the expectations of individuals concerning their to-be spouses. For many people, religious education is a key source of moral prescriptions and normative expectations (Heaton 1986; Thornton and Camburn 1989). Religiously sensitive unmarried people tend to wish for traits that have a close relation to their religious beliefs (Juvva & Batti, 2006). Particularly, people expect to marry people who belong to the same religion as them; Christians will expect to marry a Christian and Muslims will expect to marry a Muslim. Typically for Christian men and women, the first expectation that most of them have for a spouse is for him or her to be God fearing, then other morally accepted traits of a Christian follow (Batti, 1993). In line with that, Christian men will expect to marry a woman who is submissive, and a Christian woman will expect to marry a man who will love her because these are clearly spelt out in their holy book (Bible).

Types and kinds of Marital Expectations

For the sake of clarity and conciseness, different types of expectations are provided in this section, each of which may be easily distinguished. *Prescriptive* expectations are what couples feel should occur in a relationship, whereas *predictive* expectations are what partners believe will most likely occur (Kelley & Burgoon, 1991). *Normative or prescribed* expectations refer

to cultural expectations towards marriage. They are socially created discourses that include both explicitly and implicitly communicated expectations about gender roles, romantic relationships, communication patterns, power, control, and authority, and extended family relationships, among others. *Ascribed* expectations relate to those that have developed through time as a result of the partners' talks. These expectations may contribute to marital adjustment and stability in part (Azzorpadi, 2007). Marriage expectations can be both *conscious* and *unconscious*. As illustrated by Clulow and Mattinson (1989), "often we do not know about our expectations until they are disappointed and realise that something we had hoped for is missing" (p.23). Orbach (1995) clarifies this further when she writes: "We go mad in marriage because our expectations and hopes conflict deeply with our experience. We imagine, dream of, and anticipate a relationship with one set of parameters; we discover that we are enmeshed on one whose parameters are foreign" (p.108).

Numerous expectations people have regarding their prospective marriage frequently go unspoken. Even in one's own knowledge, *unconscious* expectations frequently fail to manifest clearly (Arond & Pauker, 1987). Sabatelli and Pearce (1986) recognise the unconscious's influence in marital expectations in an indirect manner. While they are primarily concerned with the *cognitive* element of expectations, they distinguish between *realistic* and *unrealistic* expectations, the latter of which are comprised of aspirations, dreams, and wishes. Individual expectations based on prior life experiences are referred to as *cognitive* expectations (Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986). Sabatelli and Pearce talk about the baggage each person brings with them when they

start a new relationship as containing 'experience and knowledge concerning other relationships based on observation of appropriate people' (p. 307).

Various kinds of marital expectations can come around the areas of performance of roles, communication, relationship with third parties, ways of showing love and affection, character, emotional support, finances and even procreation (Azzorpadi, 2007). Would be spouses consciously or unconsciously expect to be in one form of communication or the other with their partners during marriage and even before the marriage (Gonczarowski, Nisan, Ostrovsky, & Rosenbaum, 2019). A very important expectation for marriage across many countries now seems to be love (Tokuhiro, 2010). Several people now make their choices of spouses with love as an influential drive for such choices. In the study by Tran (2018) on romantic love in Vietnam, he indicates that these choices are influenced by exposure to Western ideas of love and romance. Gary Chapman (1992) typically introduced five love languages as 'quality time', 'physical touch', 'receiving gifts', 'acts of service', and 'words of affirmation' which reflects the marital expectations people have on the show of love and affection.

The areas of expectations of marriage have been studied variously by the above authors. To reveal deeper realities regarding this topic, further analysis would be a blessing. From existing literature, it is a fact that expectations of marriage are a combination of conscious and unconscious, prescriptive, predictive and normative, as well as ascribed components. In my point of view, the level at which one will be in the known of such complication in a way lies in the person's association with related contents or one's private and social enhancement.

Expectations as a Trigger to Marital Stability and Instability

In several studies, it has been demonstrated that couples' expectations of marriage have an impact on how they evaluate each other's relationships. (McNulty & Karney, 2004; Fletcher, Simpson & Thomas, 2000; Stanley, Blumberg, & Markman, 1999; Knee, 1998; Downey, Freitas, Michaelis, & Khouri, 1998; Baucom, Epstein, Rankin, & Burnett, 1996).

The research findings on marital expectations are contradictory. Many studies have shown expectations to be a cause of dissatisfaction and instability in marriages; nevertheless, other studies have demonstrated that expectations of marriage may strengthen spousal devotion and serve as a driving force in the fulfilment of a relationship's potential, hence maintaining marital stability. (Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986; McNulty & Karney, 2004).

Expectations of marriage tend to be favourable when they operate as 'goal structures,' since they encourage behaviours and perceptions that validate expectations (McNulty & Karney, 2004). On the other side of the coin, couples that are unable to fulfil their marital expectations may suffer personal or structural impediments (Brown 2004)

Unrealistic expectations are in most cases unmet and end up resulting in dissatisfaction and instability in most marriages. Expectations that are met also foster happiness in marriage and a resulting stability in marriage (Azzorpadi, 2007). Despite the fact that unrealistic expectations might contribute to marital misery and instability, they cannot always be regarded the direct cause of the problem.

One significant drawback of the preceding study is the conglomeration of conceptually diverse events into a single explanation, namely expectations.

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Furthermore, it is uncertain what defines high, low, and unrealistic expectations, which are highly reliant on a variety of contextual elements. The researches above also make it clear that expectations; whether met or unmet can lead to marital stability or instability but as to how this happens remains a mystery. I believe some focus have to be diverted to seeking to know what happens in these marriages when the expectations are either met or unmet, hence, the relational dynamics in marriage.

Relational Dynamics in Marriage

Linda Carroll, a licensed marriage and family therapist indicates that there are five stages of every relationship. These are the Merge, Doubt and Denial, Disillusionment, Decision, and Wholehearted Love stages (Carroll, 2021). According to Carroll, every single relationship moves through these five stages not only once, but in an eternal cyclical manner. I believe that these five stages are broad descriptions of the relational dynamics in the marital relationship.

From Carroll's analysis, the first stage of a relationship is the 'Merge', which is also known as the honeymoon phase. When a couple first meets, they are generally consumed with the initial, enthralling romance. This involves an overwhelming sense of pleasure when they are in the company of their spouses, as well as ravenous, passionate sex (Carroll, 2021). Deducing from Carroll's findings, in this stage of a relationship, it is common for people to believe that they have discovered their 'perfect match,' 'ideal mate', or someone who is eerily similar to them and very compatible with their values and expectations. As a result, the borders between the two of them frequently dissolve. There is a sense that the two are merging, or at the very least, that

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they are eager to (Knudson-Martin, 2013). Contractions by Lavner et al., (2012) also shows that in the honeymoon period challenges and conflicts can still arise during. According to them, as the relationship progresses, couples may need to navigate differences, resolve conflicts, and establish routines, which can affect the initial euphoria of the honeymoon phase.

Doubt and Denial, the second stage of a relationship, occurs when we begin to recognise the differences between ourselves and our partners (Carroll, 2021). Carroll indicates that in the midst of one's euphoria, one wakes up and finds himself or herself annoyed by the same features that earlier appeared flawless. (His dependability now appears inflexible; her generosity appears reckless; and their adventurous attitude appears to involve unneeded risk.) As a result, there is bound to be some friction when they come into contact with their differences. As the power struggle intensifies, they tend to be astounded by the shift in their partner's personality (Knudson, 2013). A mixture of love and annoyance accompanies the feelings of romance. At this stage, the relationship may not be as wonderful as they expected (Carroll, 2021). According to Carroll (2021), as their disappointment grows, so do their bodies' coping mechanisms when faced with a stressful situation. As a result of their personality and circumstances, they may choose to fight or retreat. For example, the drive to defend principles may translate into a desire for total control over one's life (Harris, 2012). Resultantly, many may wonder, "Why aren't you like me?" despite the fact that expecting another person to be the same as yourself makes no sense (Carroll, 2021).

In a romantic relationship, the 'Disillusionment' stage is the third one to go through. According to Carroll (2021), this is the time when some couples

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may feel like they've reached the end of the road. As a result, the power struggles in the relationship will now be in plain view, and the troubles the couple have been trying to hide will suddenly be exposed. At this stage, some people are always on high alert, ready to spring into action at the first sign of trouble. Other couples may gradually drift away as they stop devoting as much time and effort in their relationship and instead focus on other pursuits. The couple's first experience with intense love is typically a distant memory by the time they reach this point in their lives. Returning to the "I" gives them a much more secure sense of self than their previous happy experience of "we." In any case, some couples may not question their commitment, but rather interpret it to mean that things need to change (Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan & Pape Cowan, 2002).

The fourth stage of a relationship is referred to as the Decision because couples reach a tipping point (Carroll, 2021). Many couples suffer from emotional breakdowns and engage in self-protective measures like leaving the house for hours after a quarrel (Worrell, 2019). According to Carroll (2021), one is said to have entered this stage of the relationship when they begin to actively consider and even make arrangements for ending it. In this stage, the prospect of a new beginning with a new individual may make one feel excited and ready. At this point, a choice has to be made; whether to go, stay and do nothing despite how miserable the situation may be, or stay and actively work on healing the relationship.

The fifth stage of a relationship is 'Wholehearted Love', which is when the partnership is at its healthiest and most enjoyable state (Carroll, 2021). Carroll makes clear that during this time, the results of a couple's effort are

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ready to be enjoyed. Here, couples learn to embrace their own imperfections, as well as those of their partners. They also learn that there is no such thing as "the ideal mate" as earlier expected. In the fifth stage of a relationship, Carroll believes that there is still work to be done, but the difference is that couples know how to listen well and lean into tough conversations without feeling threatened or attacked. Couples begin to play together again at this point. Both of them are able to enjoy each other's company to the fullest. As each individual rediscovers themselves in ways that allow them to fall in love with each other all over again, they can also experience some of the amazing passion, delights, and sex. Satisfaction is clearly predicted by the presence of intimacy. Marital pleasure appears to be influenced by expectations regarding the depth of communication, amount of affection and the level of conversational interaction (Cano & Vivian, 2001).

Carroll's fifth and last stage paints a picture that all marriages end in happiness and stability but Gottman and Levenson (2000) think otherwise and have identified four destructive behaviors even in the last stages of marriage known as the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse". These are: criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling, which are predictors of marital instability and divorce.

Carroll's stages of every marital relationship poses to be the image of the dynamics that take place in marital relationships. But the causes of such dynamics, not being exposed by Carroll remain a mystery to her findings. As to whether these relational dynamics are as a result of met or unmet expectations is yet to be revealed in the findings of this study.

Theoretical Review

Thomas Jefferson noted that, "the moment a person forms a theory, their imagination sees in every object only the traits that favour the theory" (quoted in Matthews 1984, pi). That is to say, theories help us to explain or describe facts that we already know. One of the primary tasks of social research is to establish theoretical perspectives to illuminate the social world as it is experienced on a daily basis (Sparks, 1996). Here, a variety of theoretical perspectives were investigated for their significance in rendering plausible the expectations of would-be spouses and their relational dynamics after marriage based on the expectations they had prior to marriage. In this view, the study moves along with Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory that exposes us to unconscious expectations that people have before they approach marriage. The conscious bit of the expectations is also covered by the Filter Theory of mate selection which was first introduced by Kerchoff and Davis in 1962. The study also advances George Homan's Social Exchange Theory to explain how met or unmet expectations can lead to positive or negative relational behaviour.

Psychoanalytic Theory (Internalisation)

The psychoanalytic theory was propounded by Sigmund Freud. According to Brenner (1974), the unconscious mind, rather than the conscious mind, is the emphasis of this approach. It is based on the premise that one's behaviour is determined by past experiences that are ingrained in their unconscious mind. (Rusczcynski, 1995).

The psychoanalytic importance stems from its two basic postulates: the first being that interactive childhood experiences shape one's perceptions

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of oneself, others, and the world, and the second being that such memories are maintained in the unconscious and are safeguarded by defence systems (Brenner, 1974; Freud, 1966; Rusczcynski, 1995). From the standpoint of marital expectations, these two postulates connect the origin of expectations to their advancement in courting and marriage (Azzorpadi, 2007).

A typical proposition of psychoanalytic theory that specifically deals with past experiences being lodged in one's unconscious mind is internalisation. In psychoanalytic theory, internalisation is a process involving the formation of the super ego (Solms & Lechevalier, 2002).

Internalisation refers to the typical process through which children acquire and absorb (internalize) knowledge and norms about the world through social context rather than being explicitly taught (Clulow & Mattinson, 1989). Internalisation is a concept used in sociology and other social sciences to refer to an individual's unconscious embrace of a system of norms and values (constructed by others) through socialisation. Internalised norms are thought to be a part of a person's identity and may be seen in their moral acts (Solms & Lechevalier, 2002).

The roots of marital expectations are understood as the unconscious internalisation of one's interactions within one's initial intimate relationships, according to psychoanalytic theory (Clulow & Mattinson, 1989). Their roots can be traced back to one's "forgotten past" of childhood events (Rusczcynski, 1992), which are unconsciously reproduced in one's current marriage (Dicks, 1967; Clulow, 2001). Unconscious expectations of marriage, according to Orbach (1995), are a repository of experiences originating from what one has

witnessed of the parental marriage and from one's first love relationship with mother.

Specifically, for this study, the psychoanalytic theory was prudent, such that it adequately explained the unconscious expectations couples internalise unknowingly before they enter into the institution of marriage. It also helped to understand and know where such unconscious expectations originated from depending on where and how the individual was socialised.

Although the psychoanalytic theory explained the origins and nature of expectations people carry before they enter into marriage, it only focused on unconscious expectations that people imbibe during their childhood stage and failed to cover the conscious expectations people may have before marriage. For this reason, the filter theory of mate selection was introduced to fill that gap by looking at the conscious expectations people may have before getting married.

Filter Theory of Mate Selection

Most individuals tend to spend their lives around numerous people with varied social and cultural backgrounds yet, in most cases, they decide to foster an intimate relationship with another person whom they regard as 'soulmate' Schaie and Willis (2002). This conundrum raises the question of how we choose the individual with whom we want to have a long-term relationship. Indeed, there is no single social theory purported to delineate relationship development in relation to mate selection. However, considering the strands of theoretical contributions to this knowledge by social scientists, this study anchors on the Filter Theory of Mate Selection to elucidate the underlying conditions pertaining to mate selection. Here, Lykken, Bouchard,

McGue, and Tellegen (1992) define mate selection as "choosing who we hope will be our life's companion, the person who will provide half of our parenting and half of our DNA for our children's windows of chance for genetic immortality."

The filter theory of mate selection was first introduced by Kerchoff and Davis (1962) to explain the particular spousal characteristics that one considers for a successful marital relationship. In addition, it emphasizes one's personality needs as the basis for the identification of eligible characteristics (personality) from which he/she chooses a mate to complement on the personality level. Kerchoff and Davis (1962) insist that the process of filtering for an eligible spouse is not synonymous to discrimination, rather an intended attempt by an individual to choose a mate for a successful marital relationship. More so, the theory also translates that the most successful marital unions are the ones that considered similar ideals throughout the filtering process prior to marriage. According to Schaie and Willis (2002), the scope of filtering is innovative such that it implicitly and explicitly enables one to screen out unacceptable candidates across the life course of the individual's relationship. Besides, the implicit and explicit nature of filtering permits the view as conscious and unconscious. Thus, an individual either consciously or unconsciously would be expected to select a companion like themselves to suit their similar ideals. For instance, a Christian man would preferably choose a woman who is also a Christian to be companions with.

In light of filter theory, the current study utilises the deliberate or conscious selection bit where individuals consciously lay down what they expect from their future partners and choose a husband or a wife based on

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those expectations. According to this idea, the process of mate selection is understood as a succession of "filters" that screen out undesirable candidates at various phases of a relationship (Cate & Lloyd, 1992; Feingold, 1992; Udry, Bauman & Chase, 1971; as cited in Schaie & Willis, 2002).

The proximity filter is the first filter and it screens all potential dating partners based on their geographical proximity. Thus, two possible partners who share same interests (for example, school or job) and who are also geographically close to one another (Schaie & Willis, 2002) may be more likely to meet and date, fall in love and eventually marry. (Rauch & Scholar, 2004)

The second filter is the attractiveness filter, which eliminates physical appearance and ethnicity as the most accessible characteristics of another individual. Among other things, age might be seen as a subtle physical component that enters the selection process (Kazmi, Singh & Jaiswal, 2019). The cross-cultural conformity that the groom should be slightly older than the bride exists, according to Schaie and Willis (2002), and this conformity has been based on the major conception that the man is the 'breadwinner' of the family and that he should therefore become stable and established before taking on the young, dependent bride as his wife.

The third filter selects people based on their social background, which is comparable to the concept of homogamy in that people tend to marry those who are similar to them in terms of religion, political affiliation, education, employment, and social status, among other characteristics (Kazmi et al., 2019). Schaie and Willis (2002) indicate that characteristics such as education

and occupation have a significant influence, and so it should be highlighted that both education and occupation are strong indications of like-mindedness.

   Aside the above mentioned series of filter, the filter theory is much opened in such a way that every individual is at liberty to select a spouse based on what he or she expects or admires. For this study, it can therefore be noted from the filter theory that individuals go through the filtration process based on their conscious expectations for a future spouse. Therefore, I only choose the one who falls within my expectations or criteria out of the lot.

   In as much as the filter theory completes the understanding of expectations of marriage for this study by highlighting the conscious ways of selection, it does not make mention of the behaviour or relational dynamics of the couples after they select their spouses and begin the marriage process. The filter theory turns a blind eye to the later occurrences after the spousal selection process. It is for this reason that the social exchange theory was introduced to throw light on the occurrences after the mate selection process which was based on various conscious and unconscious expectations.

Social exchange theory (Aggression/ Approval proposition)

   The social exchange theory, first proposed by George Homans in 1958, is a framework for understanding society as series of exchanges that take place between individuals based on their assessments of rewards and punishments (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017). Our relationships, according to this viewpoint, are dictated by the benefits or penalties we expect from others, which we assess using a cost-benefit analysis model (whether consciously or subconsciously) (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017).

The exchange theory of George Homans is founded on a series of fundamental premises. While some of his assertions include at least two interacting persons, Homans was careful to emphasise that they are founded on psychological principles (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017). They are psychological in nature, according to Homans, for two reasons. To begin with, "they are often claimed and empirically tested by self-identified psychologists" (Homans, 1967 p39-40). Second, and perhaps most significantly, they are psychological in nature due to the level at which they address the person in society: "They are assertions about the conduct of individual human beings, not about groups or societies in general; and the behaviour of individuals as men is widely regarded as the realm of psychology." (Homans, 1967, p40). Although Homans argued for psychological principles, he did not believe in solitary people. He understood that individuals are social creatures that spend a significant amount of time engaging with one another (Homans 1967). Homans' argument or beliefs about individuals as social creatures that spend time interacting with others is one reason why this theory a better option for the study, since it covers up for spouses as individuals who act as social beings through interaction with each other.

Homans (1967) developed several propositions of the Social Exchange Theory such as the Success Proposition, the Stimulus Proposition, the Value Proposition, the Deprivation-Satiation Proposition, the Aggression-Approval Proposition, and the Rationality Proposition (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017). For the purpose of this study, one proposition will be the best suit.

Narrowing down to Homan's Aggression–Approval proposition of exchange theory, Homans divided his propositions into two parts; proposition A and proposition B. According to Homans, Proposition A describes a situation where a person's action does not receive the reward he/she expected, or receives punishment he/she did not expect, he/she then gets furious; he/she becomes more likely to perform aggressive behaviour, and the outcomes of such behaviour become more desirable to him/her. (Homans, 1974).

For instance, when a young unmarried man expects to marry a woman who is very attractive and submissive, such a person will definitely choose a beautiful woman and also someone he sees to be submissive based on his expectations. On the other side of the coin, if this same man expects to be a very loving husband and a husband who is very responsible, he will do everything humanly possible in order to meet this expectation. So if it happens that such a person gets married and realises during the marriage that his wife is not as beautiful as expected but rather looked beautiful before marriage due to artificial make ups, and also realises that she is not submissive as he expected and she does not appreciate whatever he does although he is playing his part well as a loving and responsible husband, such a person will become frustrated and will begin to act differently such that he may stop playing his roles well as a loving and responsible husband. This may affect communication and other aspects of the marriage, and may result in marital instability. Typically, with Homan's proposition A, this man did not receive the reward he expected, which is beauty and submission, and he is rather getting the punishment he didn't expect which is lack of appreciation of his efforts. Due to that, this man

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becomes furious and abandons his roles as a husband, and such behaviour now becomes valuable to him.

Proposition B states that when a person receives the reward he/she anticipated, particularly a greater reward than anticipated, or does not receive the punishment he/she anticipated, he/she will be pleased; he/she will become more likely to engage in approving behaviour, and the results of such behaviour will become more valuable to him/her (Homans, 1974).

For instance, (using the same scenario as that of Proposition A), when a young unmarried man expects to marry a woman who is very attractive and submissive, such a person will definitely choose a beautiful woman and also someone he sees to be submissive based on his expectations. On the other side of the coin, if this same man expects to be a very loving and responsible husband, he will try to do everything humanly possible in order to meet this expectation. So if it happens that such a person gets married and realises during the marriage that his wife is still as beautiful as he married her even after childbirth, and also realises that she has been very submissive right from the onset as he expected and even does more than he expected although he is not playing his part well as a loving and responsible husband, such a person will be pleased and will be more likely to change his ways and become the loving and responsible husband he expected to be. This change will positively affect the marriage and will result in marital stability. Typically, with Homan's proposition B, this man received the reward he expected which is beauty and submission and even received more than he expected. He also did not receive any punishment for not playing out his roles well as a loving and responsible husband. Due to that, this man becomes very pleased and changes

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his ways by engaging in approving behaviour which is proper performance of his roles as a husband and such behaviour now becomes valuable to him.

Proposition A on aggression approval refers only to negative emotions (frustration which may lead to instability), whereas Proposition B deals with more positive emotions (satisfaction which may lead to stability). This theory adequately explains the relational dynamics which the earlier theories did not do. The relational dynamics here is basically the actions or behaviour the spouse plays out when his/her expectations are met or unmet. These behaviours or relational dynamics are either negative when the expectations are not met (as in the case of proposition A) or positive when the expectations are met (as in the case of proposition B). In both cases, the former may lead to marital instability and the latter to marital stability.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has explained the concept of marriage, narrowing it down to the Ghanaian perspective which happens to be the focus of this study. It has gone further to give detailed explanation on expectations of marriage, exposing readers to its origin being personal attributes and ecological context (family, media and religion), as well as its types. This chapter has also been able to empirically draw a link between expectations and marital stability, as well as marital instability. Also, using Carroll's stages of marriage and other relating and contradicting literature, the chapter has adequately reviewed relational dynamics in marriage for better understanding and appreciation.

This chapter has further reviewed relevant literature on theories and concepts and provided empirical evidence on the subject. Theories relevant to the study (psychoanalytic theory, filter theory and social exchange theory)

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have been explained in great detail in connection to the topic under study. Psychoanalytic theory adequately explained the unconscious expectations couples internalise as a result of their childhood socialisation before they enter into marriage. To cover the short falls of the psychoanalytic theory, the filter theory of mate selection was introduced to cater for the conscious selection of marital expectations through filtrations which are based on individual desires. The social exchange theory on the other hand handled the relational dynamics that exists between couples when their expectations are either met or unmet.

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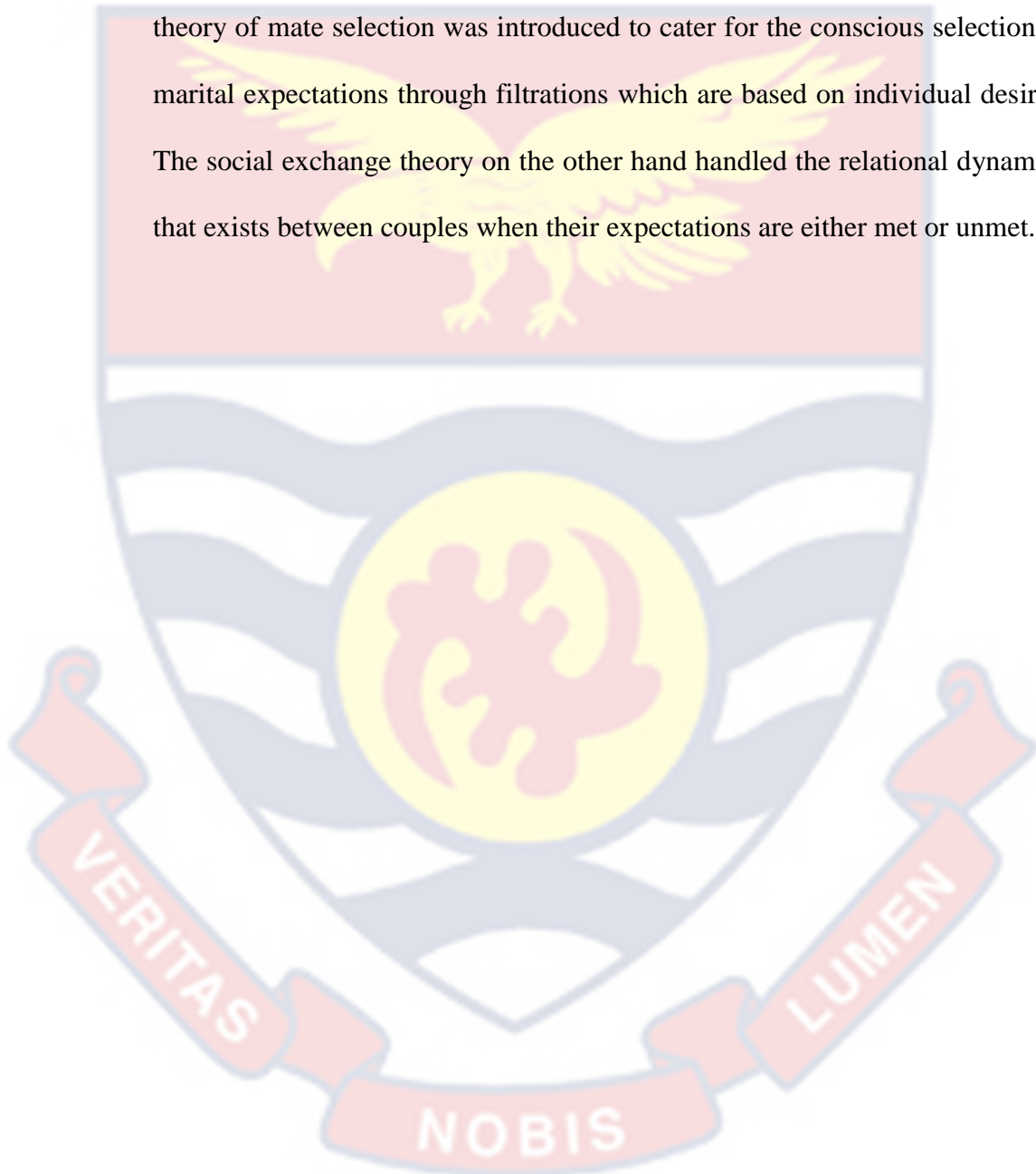
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter gives a detailed explanation of the research methodology. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001), research methodology constitutes approaches undertaken to execute a research. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009) assert that research methodology comprises systematic approaches within which an empirical inquiry is conducted. The chapter provides the methods that I used to conduct the study. It describes the research design, the study areas, the study population, the sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis as well as the chapter summary.

Research Design

According to Malhotra and Birks (2006), a research design specifies the details of the procedures needed to solve a specific research problem. That is to say, the design provided specific procedures that I needed to go through to elicit the information required to solve the research problem. Here, Kuada (2015) believes that the research design serves as a road map for the research. Other scholars believe that the choice of a particular research design influences subsequent research activities such that it manipulates what data should be collected and how it should be collected (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Strange 2020; Kornhauser & Lazarsfeld, 1955). These priorities are further revealed in the type of research design – whether exploratory or descriptive (Ghauri, Gronhaug & Strange 2020). Considering this, the study employed an exploratory research design.

Malhotra and Birks (2006) indicate that, an exploratory research design denotes flexible approaches to understanding set of events that are difficult to measure. Exploratory design is also noted for providing constructive ways for finding out phenomena that are uncertain, yet ought to be explained in a new light (Saunders et al., 2009). Despite that, Amaratunga, Baldry, Sarshar and Newton (2002) argue that an exploratory design is an intensive study that involves having a close interaction with a small purposive sample; geared towards enhancing understanding of a particular phenomenon based on the subjective meanings of the research participants (MacDonald & Headlam, 2008). The exploration design was chosen for this study because the feelings and marital experiences of people are difficult to measure (Malhotra & Birks 2006), and mostly uncertain because of individual differences. The use of exploration is therefore prudent to constructively discover and explain these in a new light (Saunders et al., 2009). Again, there was the need to have close interactions with a small purposive sample to enhance my understanding of their marital expectations and relational dynamics (Amaratunga et al., 2002), hence my choice of explorational design.

The use of the exploration design was much more convenient with the help of the qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach is primarily an exploratory design that seeks to provide insight and understanding using small samples without necessarily being structured (Malhotra and Birks, 2006). It has been claimed that qualitative research methodology lacks the ability to enhance the generalization of research findings. In fact, the problem of generalization does not apply here since the study was mainly on elucidating contextual issues pertaining to the marital

relations and experiences couples find themselves in; as a result, less generalizable but rather can be transferred to a similar context.

The design is however associated with some weaknesses. Among them are its time consuming nature and the difficulty in getting responses to unravel unknown phenomena (Creswell, 2009) which may be a drawback for some researchers (Orina, Mwangi, Sitati & Nyabola, 2015).   Despite its shortcomings, the exploratory design was the most appropriate, since it helped me to gain new insights, discover the experiences and relational dynamics of couples that were hidden and mostly not spoken about and draw meaningful conclusions from the data obtained (Burns & Grove, 2010).

Study Areas

As already indicated, the study's main objective is to examine the relational dynamics among married couples within the context of their expectations before the marriage and the realities faced within the marriage. To achieve this objective, two research locations were purposefully selected: Madina and Ashiyie; both communities in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. There is no doubt to the fact that married couples, being the target population can be found all over Ghana, hence every Region or community in Ghana qualify to be a study area for this research, however, my choice of Madina and Ashiyie as study sites were motivated by the fact that out of all the towns in Accra or Ghana, I have lived in these areas, made certain close observations on the married couples in these areas for a period of time and have come to the realization that there are certain peculiar dynamics that play out among the married couples in each of the sites (Madina and Ashiyie). Growing up as a young person in these two areas, I saw and admired so many

couples based on how they portrayed their marriages outside or in public. This made me assume that their marriages were rosy, satisfying and stable, but the interesting dynamics I witnessed was that, these same couples who looked happy from the outside used to visit my father (a marriage counselor), looking sad and stressed to seek for help in solving numerous problems in their marriages. As these contradictions occurred from time to time, my curiosity increased as well as my motivation to base my study on these two areas. Selecting these areas will therefore help me to get a detailed discovery of the relational dynamics that play out in their marriages. Also, Madina and Ashiyie are places that are diversified in terms of population. In these two areas, there is a wide range of cultures, a wide range of religion, a wide range of beliefs, norms and values which will make the data for this study rich with diverse ideas and thoughts.

Madina

Madina is a suburb of Accra and in the La Nkwantanang Madina Municipal District, a district in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. It is a fast-developing settlement situated on the Accra plains some ten miles northeast of Accra on the Accra - Dodowa Road and some two miles north of the University of Ghana, Legon. Currently, Madina is the twelfth most populous settlement in Ghana with a population size of 137,162 (www. all_populations.com). Today, Madina is the largest and the highest ranked community in the Municipality with the most basic facilities and services. (Agyei, Awuah & Oduro-Kwarteng, 2011).   Madina functions as a commercial center because of its threshold population that can support almost all economic activities. (Antwi Adjei et al 2012)

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According to Zaami (2020), Madina is a heterogeneous society comprising people from different social, religious and ethnic backgrounds. The ethnic composition of Madina includes migrants from the Northern Regions, Ga- Adangbes, Ewes, Akans and non-Ghanaians from Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, and Nigeria. Religious groups in Madina include Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion (Zaami, 2020). Due to the differences in religious and ethnic groups found in Madina, Zaami, 2020 believes that different types of marriages are present in Madina. These include marriages that were contracted the customary way, those that went through ordinance and also the Mohammedan kind of marriages. There also exist monogamous marriages, as well as polygamous ones. Thus, this makes Madina an ideal site for the study.

Ashiyie

Ashiyie on the other hand is a community in the Adentan Municipality in Accra, Ghana. Ashiyie is a fast developing peri-urban community with a population of about 4,200 (7th populous in the Municipality) with 561 houses and 1,082 households as at 2010 (Offei, Lengoiboni, & Koeva, 2018). The 2021 Population and Housing Census will present the true population when it is officially announced by the government statistician. Demographics compose of low and medium income households with Ga-Damgbe's being the main inhabitants (Offei, Lengoiboni, & Koeva, 2018). Historically, Ashiyie was a small settlement, inhabited by subsistence farmers from the Ga communities of La and Teshie, who cultivated crops such as maize, cassava, yam and vegetables (Moller-Jensen, Agergaard, Andreasen, Oteng-Ababio & Yankson, 2020). According to Moller-Jensen et al., (2020), these families

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were later sub-divided into clans and became owners of the Adentan lands, with the head of family of each clan serving as the traditional ruler. Currently, many people from across Ghana and outside Ghana have migrated to Ashiyie due to many factors such as education, employment, easy means of transport to Accra Central, marriage, and others (Teye, 2019). Due to these, Ashiyie also has inhabitants from different ethnic groups and religions just like Madina. Notable among them are the Fulanis who have settled at a particular stretch in the Ashiyie Community which is now called Ashiyie Fulani. With the existence of all these varieties of inhabitants, and my experience and familiarity as a resident of Ashiyie, it became an ideal site for this study.

On the next page is a map of a part of the Greater Accra Region, locating the study areas; Madina and Ashiyie.
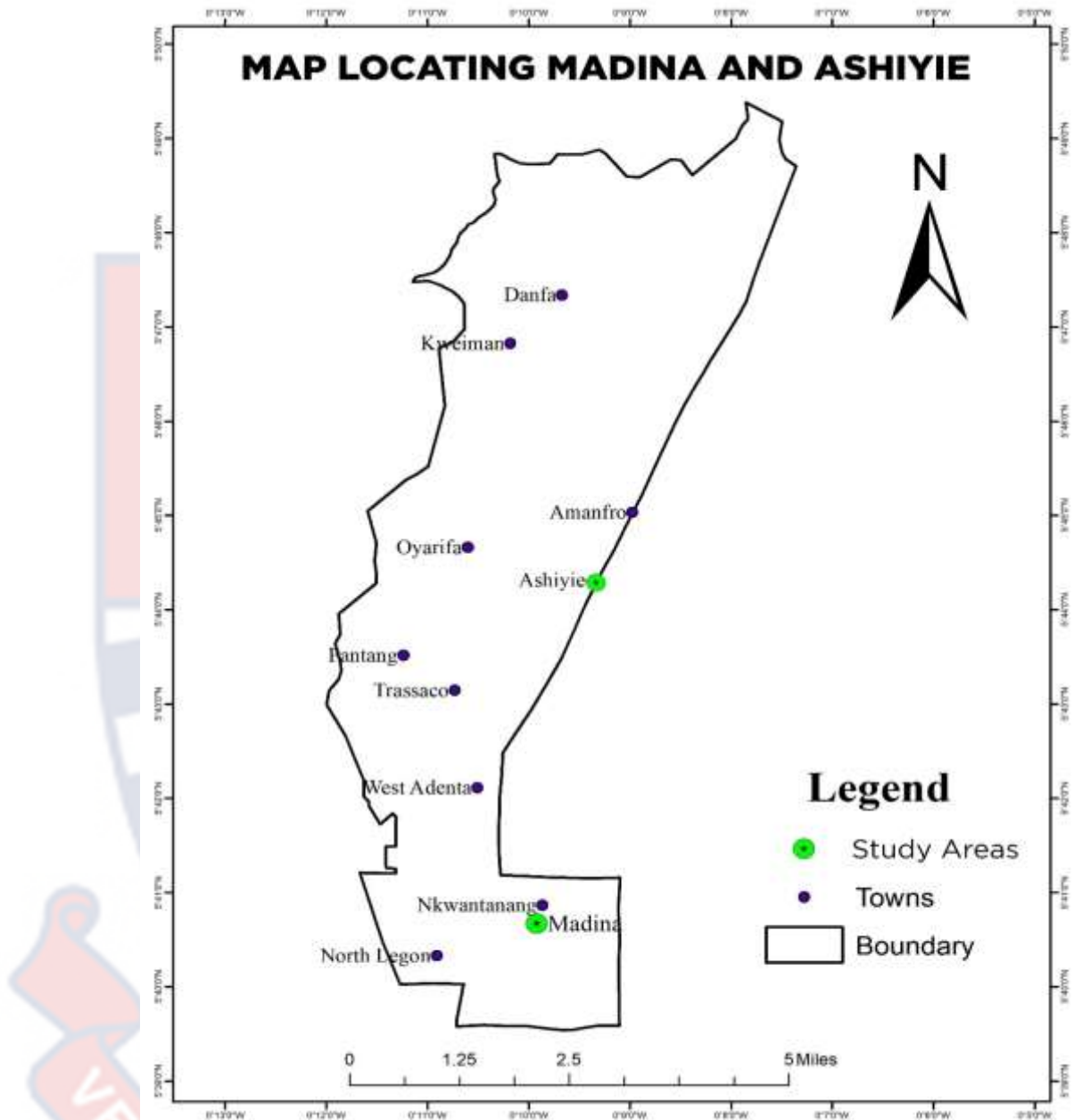
Figure 1: Map Locating Madina and Ashiyie

Source: CERGIS (2019)

Study Population

Babbie (2008) explains research population as the bringing together of various components from which a sample is drawn. Indeed, the main focus in scientific research concerned with the collection of individuals is referred to as population. Here, the individuals are identified to possess similar traits or

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characteristics. For this reason, the population for this research was all married couples in Ashiyie and Madina involving both the wife and husband. However, the study chose to concentrate on couples who live together under one roof. The choice of this target group was motivated by the fact that the relational dynamics between couples are perceived to be clear when couples live together than when they are apart. This enriched the research with variety of views regarding the expectations they had before marriage and the relational dynamics.

Sample size and Sampling Procedure

When conducting research, finding the right individuals to interview can be challenging without careful and strategic planning, mainly because people are reluctant in disclosing information to strangers who they barely trust. Vernoy and Kyle (2002), explained a sample to be a small group that represents a larger population of the study. Here, it was not practical to involve every individual in the population in the study due to time and resource constraint.

Particularly, the criterion purposive sampling technique was used to recruit participants for the study. According to Neuman, Nardi, Berg, Jackson, Varberg, Robson and Turner (2011), a criterion purposive sampling technique involves the search for particular individuals who meet certain conditions. White and McBurney (2013) reiterated that the criterion purposive sampling is used in times when the researcher uses his discretion and judgment in selecting participants with the specific characteristics.

To this end, couples who had been legally married for more than a year and were living together under one roof were selected with the help of

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gatekeepers. Reeves (2010) urged that it is prudent for researchers to use "gatekeepers", as individuals to help recruit participants. On that basis, I carried out the fieldwork with the help of two gatekeepers; a woman from Madina and a young man from Ashiyie. The gatekeepers were selected based on their availability and personal contact. Couples were selected rather than individuals in order to make the relational dynamics clearer. This was done to better understand each spouse's feelings and thoughts based on the knowledge from the information gathered from the other spouse.

Myers (2000) intimated that a small sample in qualitative research is practically adequate to provide in-depth data to advance the research. This is because the focus of a qualitative study is more on the adequacy of the information rather than the size of the sample (Bowen, 2008), as any sample size is adequate to provide answers to the research questions (Marshall, 1996). Again, Creswell (2003) recommends that a qualitative researcher conducts between five (5) and twenty-five (25) interviews. Hence, in this study a number of twenty (20) participants were interviewed. 5 couples, summing up to 10 participants were selected from Madina and 5 couples, summing up to 10 participants were selected from Ashiyie.

Data Collection Instrument

For qualitative research such as this, the use of an interview, with the help of an interview guide was employed. Specifically, a semi-structured interview guide was used because although it has a set of drafted questions, it allows for the exploration of new developments in the cause of the interview (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). This study happening to be an exploratory study

was better off with a semi structured interview despite its time consuming nature.

Semi-structured interviewing, according to Russel Bernard (1988), is best used when you will not get more than one chance to interview someone. Typically, in this case, I only had a chance to interview each participant due to the limited time on my side and the side of the participants. Although an interview is criticized for lacking objectivity due to potential human interference (Kvale, 1996), the instrument was useful in exploring views and developing ideas about the research questions from the participants rather than gathering facts and statistics as in the case of a questionnaire. It also made it possible to respond quickly to what the participant said by tailoring subsequent questions to the responses provided (Mack, 2005).

The interview guide was designed by me as the principal investigator and it covered questions that were based on the study objectives. Questions were as open as possible in order to get participants to express their ideas in their own words and to raise additional issues. The interview guide was written in the English Language and the questions in the interview guide were divided into four parts. The first part which was labelled "Part one", covered the background information of the participant. The second part which was labelled "Part Two" covered the marital expectations before marriage. This part was divided into two labelled "A" and "B" to denote the roles of the two theories (Psychoanalysis and Filter Theory of Mate selection) in marital expectations. The Part Two A covered the Psychoanalysis theory and narrowed down to internalization proposition whiles the Part Two B covered the filter selection and marital expectations. The third part which was labelled

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"Part Three" covered the influence of marital expectations on spousal relational dynamics and asked questions under communication, the show of love and affection, as well as character/change in character of the spouse. The final part which was labelled "Part Four" covered questions under the influence of spousal relational dynamics on marital stability or instability. The various parts of the interview guide fulfilled the research questions in such a way that, apart from the Part One that sought for general background information, the Part Two was appropriate to find information for the first research question. Likewise, Part Three was linked to the second research question and the Part four was also linked to the third and final research question.

Albeit the interview guide was very detailed and was worthy of soliciting all the information needed for the study, its weakness was that, it was somewhat bulky and some participants raised a few concerns about that.

Pre-Testing of Research Instrument

The interview guide was pre-tested in Cape Coast, Amamoma, which drew my attention to some questions that were not relevant. For example, "Generally, have the expectations you had before marriage been met?". Such questions were not relevant because, before they were asked, they had been answered indirectly by participants based on the earlier questions and probes. There was therefore the need for some necessary deductions to be made in the guide. The initial interview guide before pre-testing as well as the finalized interview guide after pre-testing have been provided in the appendixes. The finalized interview guide was used for another pre-test in Ashiyie and it was very useful and devoid of repetitions.

Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process lasted for about eight (8) to nine (9) weeks. Although I live in Ashiyie and had lived in Madina, there was the need for me to get gatekeepers from both sites because, during the pre-testing session, it came to my realization that couples who were familiar with me were not comfortable talking about their marital issues or problems. This influenced my decision to interview only couples who were not familiar with me. The main aim of getting gatekeepers was therefore for them to lead me to couples I didn't know. Prior to the actual interview sessions, there were briefing sessions for each of the couples. Briefings in both places (Ashiyie and Madina) were done at different times; briefing in Ashiyie was done first, followed by the interview in Ashiyie, then briefing in Madina was done after the Ashiyie interviews and was followed by the interview session in Madina. The couples were informed about the interview, and they selected their preferred day, time and language for the interviews. I initially had the intention of hiring a translator in case any couple selected a language I was not familiar with. But fortunately for me, I am good in the languages all couples chose to be interviewed in. Eight (8) couples were comfortable with the English language and two (2) couples were comfortable with Twi (Ghanaian Language). As a result, I conducted all interviews by myself without the presence or influence of any third party, which helped to ensure confidentiality. All interviews were face-to-face.

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Ethical Issues

In Qualitative research, it is prudent to protect human subjects through the application of appropriate ethical principles (Arifin, 2018), therefore, the following ethical principles were considered in the data collection procedure:

1. Prior to the data collection process, I conformed to the principles of the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and attained ethical clearance for field work. (See after appendices).

2. Safe places were chosen for the interview process; most of which were their homes and a church auditorium.

3. Respect for the participants was highly prioritized. Full informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to the interview.

4. Measures to guard myself and participants against Covid'19 were highly put in place. For instance, the use of nose masks and hand sanitizers was highly encouraged.

5. The protection of the privacy of the research participants, the anonymity of the participants, and the full confidentiality of the research data were ensured.

6. All communications in relation to the research was done with honesty and transparency.

I started the interviewing at Ashiyie and ended at Madina. I began in Ashiyie because, my position as an insider made it easier to find a gatekeeper for the sampling. In the process of getting participants from Ashiyie and also in the process of conducting the Ashiyie interviews, I got ample time to find a suitable gatekeeper from Madina. This procedure helped me to save time and also helped the continuous flow of interviews without unnecessary delays.

The Ashiyie Data Collection Experience

Prior to the interview sessions, I got a trusted young man called Mr. Opoku (pseudonym) who had lived in Ashiyie for long and was well known by many of the residents of Ashiyie as my gatekeeper. With the help of Mr. Opoku, I was able to purposively select 5 couples from Ashiyie. The selected couple met the criteria I was looking for (legally married couples who have been married for more than a year and live together under one roof).

Together with Mr. Opoku, I used the first week to introduce myself to the couples and educate them about what the research was about and the nature of the research. The couples were then allowed to choose a specific day and time that was suitable for them to grant the interview.

When the time was due to conduct each of the interviews, I went alone. The couples had the liberty to choose the place they wanted the interview to be held. Apart from one couple who requested to be interviewed at their church due to their busy schedules throughout the week days and also for the fact that their home was not conducive for the interview, all other four (4) couples granted the interviews at their homes. Typically for the first couple who requested to be interviewed in church, I had to attend their church that Sunday, and wait after the close of service for them to be interviewed. Couples were not interviewed together; the husband and wife took different turns in getting interviewed. This was because, I wanted each of them to freely share his/her feelings and experiences without intimidation by the presence of the other.

In Ashiyie, I spent three (3) weeks collecting the data; the first week was for the briefing, the second week was used to interview two (2) couples, and the third week was used to interview three (3) couples. With the consent

of each participant, the interviews were audio recorded to facilitate transcription. Each interview lasted for an average of fifty minutes. For anonymity's sake, the names of the participants were not recorded. I chose to give each participant a pseudonym. All ten interviews were conducted in English.

The Madina Data Collection Experience

In Madina, I got a beautiful woman called Mrs. Ajiba (pseudonym) to be my gatekeeper. With Mrs. Ajiba's help, I went through the same process just like Ashiyie by selecting five (5) couples who fit into my criteria and used the fourth week for the briefing. In the fifth week, only one couple was interviewed, in the sixth week, two couples got interviewed and the final two were interviewed in the seventh week. Six of the interviews were conducted in the English language while four were conducted in Twi.

Each interview lasted for an average of 60 minutes. It was observed that older couples spent more time than younger couples because the former had much experience to share and advice to give in most cases. Just like the Ashiyie procedure, audios were recorded with the consent of the participants. For anonymity sake, the names of the participants were not recorded. I chose to give each participant a pseudonym.

There happened to be some occurrences that are worth remembering; in one instance, I helped a wife to pound fufu as I waited for her husband to return from where he had gone to. I was also blessed to sit and eat with the family after all the interviews and the cooking had been done. In another instance, a couple, upon seeing me with a camera, asked me to do a photo shoot for their baby as a way of paying for the time they spent in granting the

interview. Before I left that house, I had done shoots for the whole family. These things built some form of trust among us and made me bond very well with both families as they shared their thoughts and experiences freely with me.

Challenges encountered on the field

Albeit the data collection ended well in Ashiyie, I encountered few challenges. First of them all, I spent much time than expected on the days of the interview. For instance, after interviewing one spouse, say the husband, I had to wait for over an hour for the wife to get ready for her turn. Also, the couple I interviewed at church gave me 1pm as their preferred time to be interviewed. Due to that I attended their church, and waited for them to close at 12pm. But surprisingly, I had to wait even longer till 4pm until they were ready for me. Other participants also had to make me pause the interview from time to time so that they could attend to something else; this was very particular with the wives as they got so many interferences from their children. This in a way changed the initial mood and flow of information after each pause and also delayed other interviews. Other interviews had to be rescheduled to different times. As a result, explanations were made and apologies were rendered to participants whose interviews were delayed and rescheduled to ensure trustworthiness and a good rapport was built before the interviews. Again, the pausing of the interviews did not affect the information gathered so much because after each pause, I briefed the participant on the information he or she had given so far in order to bring him or her back on track. This helped to keep the flow of information intact and accurate as before.

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I faced even difficult challenges than the case of Ashiyie. In the course of the eighth week, I lost the audios taken from two different couples due to a fault I developed on the phone I used. I therefore had to make a quick arrangement with Mrs. Ajiba to link me to two new couples who agreed to grant me an interview in the ninth week. This, to me, remains a challenge and disadvantage to my study because, data collected in the new interviews were not as detailed as the lost ones.

Data Processing and Analysis

This study employed Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. According to Smith and Osborn (2015), "interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative approach which aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience. It produces an account of lived experience in its own terms rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions and it recognises that this is an interpretative endeavour as humans are sense-making organisms." Due to the nature of this research, where the expectations and experiences are highly present in the data, this analytical process was the best suit.

After reviewing the existing literature on marital expectations and marital relational dynamics, it became clear that a more thorough knowledge of marriage expectations would be a helpful addition to the present inconclusive research. The goal of the IPA is to "examine the participant's vision of the world" (Smith, 1996), which is compatible with the idiographic position adopted in this study to investigate relational dynamics as a result of marital expectations. IPA is interested in both the unique tales of individuals as well as the similar experiences and patterns shared by all participants

(Azzorpadi, 2007). It acknowledges the researcher's role in the production of meaning and co-construction of the emergent research story and recognizes and legitimizes the interactive and dynamic character of the participant-researcher interaction (Chapman & Smith, 2002). The comprehensive methodological technique used by IPA matches the introspective approach used in this study.

Smith, Jarman, and Osborn (1999) proposed procedural guidelines which guided this analysis. Reading and re-reading the transcripts to familiarize myself with them was the first step in the analysis. In a separate notepad, I wrote notes on especially important and interesting comments as well as significant themes for the specific transcript.

Lower-order themes were discovered after further study of the transcripts. The transcripts were used to double-check the validity and consistency of the emerging themes. Once a transcript was deemed to be devoid of any further themes, a new one was analyzed using the same method. The transcripts were all analyzed in the same way.

Themes were cross-referenced for similarities and/or differences after all the transcripts had been examined, and a better understanding of the linkages between the transcripts and the themes was established. Throughout the process, I double-checked the themes to make sure they were grounded in the text. The transcripts were constantly checked to verify that they still mirrored the raw data (Azzorpadi, 2007).

Finally, the interpretive process progressed to the creation of an overarching theme that connected all of the recognized themes. The overarching theme was selected as an exploration narrative (Raval & Smith,

2003) that best reflected the identified themes and aided in the creation of a cohesive interconnectivity between all of the themes. The transcripts were used iteratively throughout the analysis to ensure that themes, groupings, and the overarching theme were all anchored in the raw data (Azzorpadi, 2007).

Chapter Summary

To achieve the core objective of this study, an exploratory research design was employed as the best fit. This was done at Ashiyie and Madina which involved all legally married couples as the population. Using the criterion purposive sampling procedure, 10 legally married couples living under one roof who had been married for more than a year were selected as the sample. I conducted these interviews using a semi structured interview guide as my instrument and consciously made it a point to go through all necessary ethical principles. After all the data was collected, the use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was of importance in analysing the data for findings that are capable of filling the lacuna in the literature of marital relational dynamics. To a large extent, the entire modus operandi for this study was good and produced the expected positive results.

Notwithstanding, there were some limitations that may have trivially affected the process. Firstly, there was difficulty in getting the data. Secondly, due to the fact that both couples needed to be interviewed on the same day to get the needed results, it ended up being very challenging. Thirdly, there was difficulty convincing some of the participants to answer honestly which ended up making some of the information less needed. Finally, the audio recorded from earlier interviews accidentally got lost and were unable to be retrieved so

extra time and resources were used to get new participants to cover up for the lost data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents and discusses research results on the relational dynamics of the married, laying emphasis on the marital expectations they had before marriage and the realities they face during the marriage. The study is exploratory and makes use of qualitative data hence, using one-on-one in-depth interviews in gathering data. Just like any qualitative data, the views presented and discussed in this study reflect those of the married people in Ashiyie and Madina who served as participants in this study. The chapter begins with the presentation of background information of the participants after which results pertinent to the study will also be presented based on the three research questions; 'What are the expectations of couples before marriage?', 'In what ways do one's expectations influence the relational dynamics in his or her marriage?' and 'How do the relational dynamics lead to stability or instability in marriage?'. Also, a discussion of the findings will be done, aligning it with the existing empirical literature.

Presentation of Findings

Background Information of Participants

This section shows the background characteristics of the participants interviewed. Special references are made to data concerning the participant's age, the number of years in marriage, ethnicity, religion, occupation, level of education, and the number of children they have. The following is a tabular presentation of the mentioned variables.

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Table 1: Background Characteristics of Participants

PSEUDONYMS	AGE	NUMBER OF YEARS IN MARRIAGE	ETHNICITY	RELIGION	OCCUPATION	LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
Mr. Nanor	60	30	Krobo	Christian	Technician	Tertiary	6
Mrs. Nanor	52	30	Larteh	Christian	Seamstress	Basic	6
Mr. Duah	30	2	Akyem	Christian	Driver	Tertiary	1
Mrs. Duah	29	2	Krobo	Christian	Accountant	Tertiary	1
Mr. Mensah	38	6	Ewe	Christian	School Manager	Tertiary	2
Mrs. Mensah	28	6	Akyem	Christian	Nurse	Tertiary	2
Mr. Odoi	46	16	Ga	Christian	Pastor	Tertiary	6
Mrs. Odoi	36	16	Asante	Christian	Teacher	Tertiary	6
Mr. Obeng	75	50	Asante	Christian	Rtd. Policeman	Secondary	6
Mrs. Obeng	60	35	Fante	Christian	Trader	No formal education	6
Mr. Muniru	58	30	Fulani	Muslim	Banker	Tertiary	3
Mrs. Muniru	55	30	Ga	Muslim	House wife	No formal education	3
Mr. Awudu	36	7	Frafra	Muslim	Administrator	Tertiary	3
Mrs. Awudu	34	7	Fulani	Muslim	Mid-wife	Tertiary	3
Mr. Boateng	44	14	Asante	Christian	Headmaster	Tertiary	0
Mrs. Boateng	43	14	Akuapim	Christian	Business Woman	Secondary	0
Mr. Seidu	54	23	Hausa	Muslim	Building Contractor	Secondary	4
Mrs. Seidu	54	23	Ga	Muslim	Caterer	Basic	4
Mr. Rahman	72	44	Hausa	Muslim	Rtd. Medical Officer	Tertiary	7
Mrs. Rahman	67	40	Hausa	Muslim	Trader	Basic	5

Source: Fieldwork, (2022)

Ten (10) married couples took part in the study. This summed up to a total of twenty (20) participants for the study, comprising ten (10) males or husbands as well as ten (10) females or wives. The ages of the participants ranged from 20s to 70s. Two (2) participants were in their 20s, five (5) participants were in their 30s, three (3) participants were in their 40s, five (5) participants were in their 50s, three (3) participants were in their 60s and two (2) were in their 70s. The number of years couples had spent in marriage differed from couple to couple. The participant who had spent the least years in marriage had been in the marriage for 2 years whiles the participant who had spent the most years had 50 years of marital experience. All participants belonged to various ethnic groups in Ghana. Three (3) participants were Gas, three (3) were Asantes, two (2) were Krobos, two (2) were Akyems, two (2) were Fulanis, two (2) were Hausas, one (1) was a Larteh, one (1) was an Ewe, one (1) was a Fante, one (1) was a Frafra, and the last was an Akuapim. Also, all participants were either Muslims or Christians. Specifically, twelve (12) participants were Christians whiles eight (8) participants were Muslims. Apart from two (2) retired husbands, all other husbands were actively employed. Also, all wives had one occupation or the other apart from one (1) who was recorded to be a house wife. With participants' educational levels, twelve (12) had education to the tertiary level, three (3) had their education to the secondary level, three (3) had theirs to the basic level and two (2) had no formal education at all. Finally, apart from one couple who didn't have any child, all other participants had either a child or children; the least being one (1) child and the most being seven (7) children.

Findings under Research Question One (1): What are the Expectations of Couples before Marriage?

Before the expectations couples had before marriage were deduced, participants were able to identify the things that influenced those expectations. From the data gathered, it was clear that participants' marital expectations before marriage was influenced or brought about by their *past experiences* or *socialization processes* which were mostly unconscious (Solms & Lechevalier, 2002), by their *exposure to the media space*; be it social media, print media or broadcast media (Narayan, 2021) and also by their *involvement with religion* (Ellison, Burdette & Glenn 2011). All expectations recorded in this study therefore were influenced by one or more of these institutions mentioned earlier. The expectations gathered from the data can be categorised under communication, the show of love and affection, and the character of spouses.

Expectations on communication

Communication matters very much in marriage as it keeps the relationship going, but communication without understanding, where couples disagree with each other often creates obvious issues in marriage (Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Murphy, 1984). Every would be couple consciously or unconsciously expects to be in one form of communication or the other with their partners during marriage and even before the marriage. It looks unlikely for a marriage to be whole without any form of communication (Gonczarowski, Nisan, Ostrovsky, & Rosenbaum, 2019). Participants generally spoke about the kind of expectations they had before getting married

and communication happened to be running through almost all participants' expectations. Out of the lot, these three narratives expose some of the expectations participants had concerning communication.

> *Mr. Odoi: As a child, I didn't see my parents communicating often, so I wanted to change the narrative. I wanted a woman I can easily communicate with and share ideas with. I was expecting that she will share everything she's going through with me so that we can go through it together. I also expected to get more time to sit and chat with my wife. I pictured something like that where we always talk and laugh and have fun at home. As a pastor, you can hardly share your problems with your members so I wanted my wife to be that person who will always give me a listening ear and encourage me when I need it.*

> *Mrs. Awudu: I knew my husband was going to live far away from me even before we got married because of where he works and where I work, so I really paid attention to how he prioritized communication. I wanted someone who will value communication in our marriage because I know that strong communication makes every marriage strong. I didn't have hope that we will physically see each other and communicate everyday so my only hope was the phone. I expected that I will hear from him at least three times a day through audio calls, video calls as well*

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as other chatting platforms. I expected that we will build
that strong form of communication so that our marriage
bond will still be firm.

Mrs. Duah: When we were dating, we used to talk a lot on
phone and chat with each other at all times because I was
not in Ghana by then. I like talking and my husband likes
to chat on social media so we used to blend the two. I was
therefore expecting that it will continue in marriage. I
expected that we will talk face to face when at home, talk
and chat on phone when we are at work or apart, and even
communicate through signs when we don't want others to
know what we're talking about.

Although participants were already in a form of communication with their partners before getting married, they still had high expectations for communication in their marriages. From the narratives, it is clear that every participant wanted a better and stronger form of communication in the marriage. The narratives give clear explanatory instances to the filter theory of mate selection that indicates that every individual is at liberty to select a spouse based on what he or she expects or admires (Kazmi et al, 2019). Mr. Odoi who didn't want to be like his parents consciously filtered and chose a wife based on his desires of getting a woman he can easily communicate with. The filter theory explains particular spousal characteristics one considers for a successful marital relationship (Kerchoff & Davis, 1962). In this case, that particular characteristic is the good communication skills that participants sort for.

Knowledge of the expectations couples had before marriage has now become clear specifically with communication. Couples expected to have face to face interactions with each other when they are together, sit, talk and laugh together and even do sign communication when they don't want a third party to understand. They also expected to talk on the phone (both audio and video calls) when they were apart, and also exchange text messages and have social media chats. In all these, the goal was to build strong communication between themselves.

Expectations on the show of love and affection

A very important stimulus for marriage across many countries now seems to be love (Tokuhiro, 2010). Several people now make their choices of spouses with love as an influential drive for such choices. In the study by Tran (2018) on romantic love in Vietnam, he indicates that these choices are influenced by exposure to Western ideas of love and romance. In this study, all participants admitted that they married their spouses because they loved them and were in great expectation for massive show of love and affection before they finally got married. Although all participants almost sang the same song, they had different views in terms of how they expected love and affection to be shown in their marriages. Mrs. Mensah among many other participants expected to be provided for in terms of the show of love and affection. She had this to say:

> Hmmm… as for me, all I expected my husband to do was
> to shower me with a lot of gifts and to buy nice clothes and
> wigs for me. I just wanted him to show love and care by
> providing all my needs.

Whiles Mrs. Mensah's expectations of the show of love and affection had to do with gifts and other material things, others saw the show of love and affection from different lenses, typically from the lens of intimacy. Some writers had similar thoughts by saying that in selecting spouses, people should have a freedom of choice based on romantic love, emotional closeness and expressions of attachment and intimacy that emphasise individual fulfilment and satisfaction (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008; Amato, 2004). Mrs. Odoi and Mr. Awudu in line with this prioritised intimacy as a form of showing love in marriage. In Mrs. Odoi's words:

> *I really love physical touches. I expected that me and my husband will always have body contacts, make love often, you know what I mean right? I wanted us to hold hands when walking in public, hug ourselves and caress each other when we are indoors and do several other affectionate and intimate things I may not mention.*

> *Mr. Awudu: I like everything about love…. hahahahaa. I wanted a naughty kind of woman when it comes to intimacy. I always desired frequent and wild love making. Kissing, fondling, and intimate stuffs in general are the things I expected to be doing often in my marriage.*

There was also this group of participants who didn't want to be shown love through gifts or intimacy but rather through spending time with their partners and doing things together. Mr. Boateng felt that showing love and

affection is all about sacrificing your time for your loved one. He explained this by saying:

> *If you don't spend time with your partner, how will she know you love her? For me, making time for each other, encouraging and assisting each other with various works makes the relationship romantic. We were doing that before we got married; we visited each other often, she was helping me with my side business when I was in Legon, she used to cook for me, escort me to places, she was actually with me all the time. So I loved it and was expecting it to continue and get even better in marriage.*

Mrs. Duah on the other hand wanted to experience love and affection in marriage through sweet and soothing words. According to her, when someone truly loves you, he/she won't ever get tired of saying it. She said:

> *The easiest and cheapest way to show love and affection to your partner is by simply telling him/her how much you love and adore them. For me, if you constantly remind me of your love, I keep it deep down within me and it keeps me moving. I didn't have too high or unrealistic expectations for love but just the mere verbal assurance of love every day.*

All participants held love and affection in high esteem when it had to do with the expectations they had before marriage. At a point, I positioned myself to believe that no one enters the institution of marriage without any feeling of love. Kerchoff Davis has therefore been proven right for saying that

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people select their spouses on the basis of love and other things they desire to see or have in marriage (Kerchoff, 1962). Mrs. Odoi drew my attention to "The Five Love Languages" which was written by Gary Chapman in 1992. She said:

> *"I read about the five love languages and realised that mine was physical touch and words of affirmation. So it's not surprising that how I wanted love and affection to be in my marriage was around these two areas."*

Going back to glance through these five love languages which are *quality time*, *physical touch*, *receiving gifts*, *acts of service*, and *words of affirmation*, it came out clear that all the expectations my participants had concerning the show of love and affection fell under these five love languages. *Quality time* features the likes of Mr. Boateng who expected to spend more time with their spouses. *Physical touch* features the likes of Mrs. Odoi and Mr. Awudu who expected to get more and more intimate with their spouses. *Receiving gifts* features the likes of Mrs. Mensah who expected to be showered with gifts and have all their needs catered for. *Acts of service* features the likes of Mr. Boateng who expected to be getting assistance from each other with their various works or responsibilities, and *words of affirmation* features the likes of Mrs. Duah who feels affectionately loved with sweet and soothing verbal pronouncements like "I love you". Mr. Boateng having two different love languages prove that one individual can have more than one love language.

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Expectations on the character of spouses

In his book titled "Character", Joel J. Kupperman indicated that character involves habits and tendencies of thought and action that are not, or at least need not have been original to a person (Kupperman, 1995). Although it is not entirely possible to know the complete character of a person for reasons such as character change (Reich, 1980), people still have in mind desired characters that they look out for in choosing their spouses. And when such desired characters are seen, the carrier of that desired character becomes a preferred candidate for marriage. Most participants talked about their expected character traits. Four of them said:

> Mr. Nanor: throughout my life, I try to be at peace with everyone. I like peace so I always prayed for a peaceful woman. A woman who will be humble and understanding enough. A God fearing and peaceful person was my priority in terms of character.

> Mrs. Obeng: A God fearing man who has a good heart. With that I mean a man who is not stingy. I expected that he will freely give without difficulty. I didn't want to force him before he provides my needs so I always yearned for a kind man.

> Mrs. Duah: Someone who was God fearing, someone who had a teachable spirit, someone who was humble and someone who had a person of higher authority or a person he revered to account to. Realistically, I was very

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particular about the God fearing and teachable spirit aspect because most men have ego which sometimes doesn't help. Even when they go wrong, they refuse to accept it. So I didn't want to get a man who will be too firm with his decisions and wouldn't want to learn from his wife.

Mr. Rahman: I expected to have a submissive and obedient wife. A woman who will be caring and very attentive to my needs, a woman who is respectful not to me alone but to my family and friends as well and a woman who can keep things like marital problems to herself.

It ran through my data that all Christian participants have "God-fearing partner" as one of the characters they were looking for in a spouse before marriage. This corroborates the third instance of the filter theory of mate selection which selects persons based on their social background, which is comparable to the concept of homogamy in that people tend to marry those who are similar to them in terms of religion, political affiliation, education, employment, and social status, among other characteristics (Kazmi et al, 2019). In this case, participants desired to marry spouses from their religion hence, looking out for characters that are valued in their religions.

These character expectations of having God fearing spouses, peaceful spouses, kind spouses, humble spouses, spouses with teachable spirits, respectful spouses, submissive spouses and the like were all conscious, carefully planned and selected for various reasons. But on the other side of

the coin, some participants found themselves expecting some characters that were not conscious to them before they got married. A case in point is that of Mr. Seidu. He says:

> *"I didn't really look out for any character before marrying my wife. I was deeply moved by the fact that she rejected her religion to join mine. It was after marriage that I expected her to treat me like the way my mother treated my father but she was rather being a different woman of her own. My mother used to worship the grounds my father walked on. She never talked until my father asked her to. But my wife mostly treats me as her friend and can sometimes talk to me as she pleases. I don't know if it's because we are of the same age but I sincerely didn't expect this character".*

This is undoubtedly psychoanalysis at play here. The Psychoanalytic theory as explained in my earlier review is based on the premise that one's behaviour is determined by past experiences that are ingrained in one's unconscious mind. (Rusczcynski, 1995). According to this theory, interactive childhood experiences shape one's perceptions of oneself, others, and the world. Such memories are maintained in the unconscious and are safeguarded by defence systems (Brenner, 1974; Freud, 1966; Rusczcynski, 1995). This explains why Mr. Seidu didn't realise that he expected such character from his partner until it began to discomfort him. His expectations were unconsciously built from childhood socialisation as Orbach, 1995 rightly said that unconscious expectations of marriage, are a repository of experiences

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originating from what one has witnessed of the parental marriage. At this stage, the realities and discomfort made it clearer to him although they were unconscious.

Findings under Research Question Two (2): In What Ways Do One's Expectations Influence the Relational Dynamics in His/her Marriage?

Azzorpadi (2007) argues that marital dissatisfaction arises when partners' expectations are not satisfied, while expectations that are realized help spread joy inside a couple's union. Similarly, proposition A of Homan's Aggression – Approval proposition of exchange theory describes a situation where a person's action does not receive the reward he/she expected, or receives punishment he/she did not expect, he/she then gets furious; he/she becomes more likely to perform aggressive behaviour, and the outcomes of such behaviour become more desirable to him/her. (Homans, 1974). On the other hand, Proposition B states that when a person receives the reward he/she anticipated, particularly a greater reward than anticipated, or does not receive the punishment he/she anticipated, he/she will be pleased; he/she will become more likely to engage in approving behaviour, and the results of such behaviour will become more valuable to him/her (Homans, 1974). These propositions give us a clear picture of how marital expectations can be linked to the relational dynamics in marriages.

Relational dynamics in marriage can be in different forms in different marriages because no two marriages are the same. Also it can be underestimated or less attended to if care is not taken. Therefore, for clarity sake, this research looked at couples' relational dynamics based on the three

areas of their expectations before marriage namely; communication, the show of love and affection, and character.

Influence of met Expectations on Communication in Marriage

Several scholars have made it known that when expectations of marriage are met, it results in happiness in marriage and stability in the long run (Azzorpadi, 2007; Brown, 2004; McNulty & Karney, 2004; Baucom, Epstein, Rankin, & Burnett, 1996; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986). What happens therefore in the course of the happiness remains unknown. In this section, I sought to explore how communication in marriage turns out when a spouse's expectations are met. In my quest to get information on this, I asked participants various questions such as: "Could you please tell me about how you communicate as married couples? (How often do you communicate with your spouse? what is the nature of communication, the quality of communication, etc.)", "In what ways do you feel your expectations regarding communication and the current nature of communication differ?", "What do you think caused the change?", "How have the changes in communication influenced the way you relate with your spouse?" and many others. I probed as well to get various experiences such as these:

> *Mrs. Nanor: The way we used to communicate hasn't changed. Even how I expected us to communicate is different, we communicate more now than when we were courting. We talk all the time. Even when he's at work, he will send messages and call when he goes for break. When he comes home, we go for walks and talk about almost*

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everything. So my expectations are met and it makes the flow of communication A1.

Mr. Odoi: I am the type who doesn't like talking much. I was bad when it comes to communication so I was even expecting my wife to have a problem with that and complain but she rather taught me ways through which we can have effective communication both when I'm away and when I'm home. She marvels me with the way she has a solution to every problem. Currently, we call and text each other every day, at least "how are you? just checking up on you" goes a long way to help. Because I'm a busy man, we mostly talk about issues when I'm driving. She will bring up the things for us to talk about and on, on we go.

Mrs. Rahman: I am happy in this marriage so as for communication, I cheerfully communicate with my husband. He does everything I need and even takes care of my family so there's no way I will be angry with him or talk harsh to him. I sit with him and talk and laugh. Whenever he comes to my shop in the afternoon, you will think we are children …hahahaaa… I tease him and we laugh and play as a couple. Before marriage, I didn't expect that we will communicate cheerfully all the time because I was coming into the marriage as a second wife, but things are different.   If all your needs are met in marriage, there is no way your communication with your

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husband will be affected. You will be cheerful all the time.

It is when he doesn't meet your needs that you will

complain and that will affect the way you two

communicate with each other. But in my case, we are

always happy with each other because I do what he wants

and he does what I want.

It is evident from the narratives that, when one's needs or expectations are met in marriage, it positively affects communication. When one's expectations are being met or if one's expectations are met beyond what he or she expected, there will be no cause for anger and harsh tones as rightly explained by Mrs. Rahman. Met expectations therefore cause cheerful and peaceful communication resulting in happiness in marriage as rightly discovered by Azzorpadi 2007 and rightly explained by proposition B of Homan's social exchange theory.

Influence of Unmet Expectations on Communication in Marriage

Just as scholars have discovered that met expectations result in happiness in marriage (Azzorpadi, 2007; Brown, 2004; McNulty & Karney, 2004; Baucom, Epstein, Rankin, & Burnett, 1996; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986), same scholars have also added that when marital expectations are not met, it results in marital distress and instability in the long run (Azzorpadi, 2007; Brown, 2004; McNulty & Karney, 2004; Baucom, Epstein, Rankin, & Burnett, 1996; Sabatelli & Pearce, 1986). Undoubtedly, in this study, met expectations have proven to result in positive or healthy communication and happiness in marriage but I cannot say the same for unmet expectations and negative or unhealthy communication patterns until the voices of participants

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confirm it. These are what three of the participants had to say concerning their unmet expectations and how it has affected communication in their marriages:

> *Mrs. Mensah: Now I believe that it's not good to have expectations when you're about to marry cos men can really disappoint. I really had a lot of expectations as I told you earlier but I can say more than 50% of them have not been met. It has affected our relationship so much that we sometimes don't talk to each other for days. We give each other silent treatments and all that. He also claims I've not met his expectations so it's [draw draw], same for both of us. When it happens like that, he doesn't even ask me for food oo, because he feels defeated when he comes to talk to me first.*

> *Mrs. Boateng: In our case, it's not my fault that our expectations are not met, neither is it my husband's fault. I actually don't know where the fault is from but we've been expecting the fruit of the womb since we got married and all to no avail. It has affected my marriage so much starting from communication. Now we don't talk happily with each other like we used to. When I talk to him or ask him something, he only replies with one or two words. I don't feel loved like before.*

> *Mr. Awudu: I know very well that I'm not meeting all my wife's expectations. That's because she's also not meeting*

mine. She nags too much and it hardens me rather than softening me. Now we don't even end one conversation or phone call without quarrelling about something. It's always this or that and it frustrates me. Because of this, I don't call her as often as I used to and I come home after every two weeks or three weeks as compared to previous times when I used to come home every weekend. I just try as much as possible to avoid her nagging and complains so communication has really been reduced and not often enjoyable to me.

According to Veroff, Kulka, and Douvan, 1981, relationship problems are the most prevalent reasons individuals go for professional help-seeking. And breakdown in communication happens to be the relationship problem that couples report as commonly occurring in their relationships (Broderick, 1981). Therapists who work with married couples report that dysfunctional communication is the issue that they see most frequently and that does the most harm to the couples they treat (Geiss & O'Leary, 1981).

The experiences shared above have revealed that all these communication dysfunctions do not just come about but as a result of unmet expectations. When the expectations of couples are not met, it affects communication negatively and causes frustration and marital distress. Proposition A of the Aggression- Approval exchange theory throws more light on how individuals get frustrated when their expectations aren't met and end up putting up aggressive behaviours that are desirable to them, in this case,

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harsh tones, silent treatments, arguments, straight forward responses and many other negative forms of communication are exhibited.

Influence of met Expectations on the Show of Love and Affection in Marriage

It appears that love has become a significant factor in marriage decisions throughout the world (Wiik, Bernhardt & Noack, 2010; Allan & Crow, 2001). According to Vu (2021), the primary motivation for marriage amongst young people is romantic love. Many people base their marriages on the concept of companionate and egalitarian relationships, and they also assert that love, affection, and mutual disclosure are the fundamental components of their marriages. Vu (2021) suggests that most couples highly expect to show and receive love as well as romance and affection in their marriages. These love and affection according to Jamieson (1999), are most often characterized by acts of care, such as watching over, looking after, providing practical assistance, or experiencing attachment and fondness for another. It is not surprising though that participants of this study had similar thoughts in relation to the show of love and affection in their marriages. Nevertheless, whether these acts of love change or remain the same depends on some triggering factors such as met or unmet expectations. The following are some experiences of three participants concerning the show of love and affection in their marriages when their expectations are met:

> *Mr. Obeng: I must say that my greatest expectation was to have children which my first wife re-used to give me because of her wayward life of alcoholism and drugs. But I now have 6 children and it has made me love my wife even*

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more and more. I buy her gifts to show my love, I give her attention whenever she wants to have her lengthy talks, I massage her when she's tired and try my best to make her happy because she has made me a happy and fulfilled man. … Yes, she also cares for me so much and gives me all I need as a man.

Mrs. Nanor: I sometimes encounter problems but as soon as I complain to my husband, he finds solution to them so to me, my expectations are always met. When he comes from work, there is so much joy at home. I hug him, remove his tie and shoes and socks, we sometimes even kiss. I cook his favourite meals and we even go for walks sometimes. He also gets me gifts sometimes. I can say that there is joy at home. We show each other love as much as possible.

Mr. Duah: my wife is actually the best. Although we have faced some challenges in the past, I see myself as the cause and I'm righting my wrongs by meeting her expectations. The response of my effort from her is amazing. She calls me sweet names, she cooks special meals with dessert, we make love often, and exchange gifts often. I know she loves sweet words so I say some to her all the time. Even when we're praying before going to work, we hug each other.

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The show of love and affection keeps growing and I think

it's all because I'm now meeting her expectations.

Jamieson's instances of showing love and affection which are; watching over, looking after, providing practical assistance, or experiencing attachment and fondness for another (Jamieson, 1999) play out accurately in the above narratives and even more only because the expectations of these participants are met. It has therefore become clear that when a couple's expectations in marriage are met, they tend to show each other much love and affection in the form of exchanging gifts, making love, assisting each other, doing things together, and making several body contacts to express their happiness in the marriage. This validates proposition B of Homan's Aggression-Approval theory and also throws more light on Gary Chapman's five love languages.

Influence of Unmet Expectations on the Show of Love and Affection in Marriage

There is currently no doubt to the fact that when a couple's expectations are met, they show immense love and affection to each other through love making, the exchange of gifts and many others. Will the show of love and affection in marriages be the opposite of the above if the expectations of spouses were to be unmet? This remains a mystery until the voices of participants confirm it. These two participants shared experiences concerning their unmet expectations in marriage and how it has affected their show of love and affection.

Mrs. Boateng: we don't even make love like before. I

personally don't enjoy sex anymore because he does it with

no passion and we kind of have the unconscious mind-set

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that nothing positive will come out of it. He used to call me pet names but now I hardly hear them. I can't even remember the last time we prayed together or ate together or even the last time he bought me gifts. We live under one roof but on our own. I don't blame him entirely because he's being pressured by his family.

Mr. Muniru: ever since the children came into the picture, my wife changed. She's always busy with something relating to the children and not me. When I even want to make love to her, she sometimes tells me she's tired meanwhile I've not given her any work to do. One day we quarrelled because of that and I ended up beating her. The show of love and affection is now on and off cos we quarrel a lot. ... yes, because she's not meeting my expectations, she has turned me into a wife beater.

Affirmatively, the show of love and affection dies down or turns sour when couples' expectations are not met. From the narratives, it is clear that the previous show of love and affection either begins to dwindle or is cut short the moment couples realise that their expectations are not being met. When one partner's expectations are not met, it affects both couples because the show of love and affection is a two-way affair. This confirms proposition A of Homan's Aggression-Approval Theory.

Contradictorily, not all unmet expectations lead to an undesirable or negative shows of love and affection. Some couples continually show love and

affection even in the midst of unmet expectations. Mrs. Seidu and Mr. Mensah had this to say:

> *Mrs. Seidu: my husband doesn't meet all my expectations but I still show him love and care. There are so many things he's doing that I really dislike but it doesn't affect how we show love to each other. I mostly pretend I'm okay just because I don't want to give him any reason to leave me or marry another wife. So I pretend and show him love and affection just as he does.*

> *Mr. Mensah: For the sake of the children and her family, I do my best to swallow all ill feelings and show her care and love as much as I can. But truthfully speaking, she doesn't meet my expectation even up to 40%. But who am I to react? I live in her father's house and aside that, the kids need to see me as a good husband and father so most of the time, I see but I just keep quiet and play my part as a good husband.*

The narratives above show that some couples show love and affection to their spouses although their expectations are not met. This contradicts the findings of some researchers like Azzorpadi (2007) and Brown (2004) who asset that unmet expectations lead to undesirable experiences and instability in marriages. Although these accessions by Azzorpadi, (2007) and Brown, (2004) are valid and have been confirmed by my earlier findings, I can say it is not so in all cases based on the above narratives. These narratives also

contradict proposition A of Homan's Aggression-Approval theory which states that "when a person's action does not receive the reward he/she expected, or receives punishment he/she did not expect, he/she then gets furious; he/she becomes more likely to perform aggressive behaviour, and the outcomes of such behaviour become more desirable to him/her." In this very instance, the findings of my research prove that not all people become furious and become more likely to perform aggressive behaviour when their expectations are not met. In some cases, (as proven earlier), people get furious and get aggressive when their expectations are not met, which is a confirmation of Homan's Aggression-Approval proposition. But in other cases like this, people don't act aggressively although their expectations are not met. Therefore, in as much as the theory has been proven right, it doesn't apply to all cases.

It is also worth noting that several factors influence the pretence of showing love and affection even amid unmet expectations. Fear of replacement or eviction (in the case of Mrs. Seidu), presence of children and influence of third parties like in-laws (in the case of Mr. Mensah) are some of such factors. Based on these or more, some couples may show love and affection to save their marriages or to gain good names but in the clothes of pretence.

Influence of met Expectations on Character of Spouses

Character strengths of spouses are reportedly major issues in marital relationships, which requires a great deal of nurturing, as stated by Shiri and Ghanbaripanah (2016). Characteristics such as kindness, love, fairness, personalized control, generosity, and acknowledgements were found to have a

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negative correlation with marital conflict and emotional divorce by Naeim (2008). My study has revealed that such character traits indeed bring happiness to the marital home and are mainly brought about by met expectations. These two narratives confirm that when marital expectations are met, couples portray positive and desirable character towards each other as a reflection of their happiness in the marriage or as a way of showing appreciation to their spouses.

> *Mr. Odoi: I made it my aim to make my wife happy at all cost and I'm seeing the impact of that. She is very submissive, she is kind to me, always smiling and making sure the atmosphere around the house is a happy one, she's hardworking too and never allows me to ask for food before she feeds me. I think she's trying her best and giving off all she has because she has realised that I'm also working hard and doing my best to meet her expectations and that of the kids.*

> *Mrs. Rahman: at first I was just living my normal life as a wife and I did the things I could do and didn't stress myself over the things I couldn't do. But when I realised that my husband never goes wrong and does all he can to meet all my needs and expectations, I took a step and learnt how to make my husband happy. I changed my character to please him. I asked him what he wanted and what he didn't want,*

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so now I'm doing all the things my husband wants as a

way of saying thank you for being a good husband.

Homan's proposition B of the Aggression-Approval theory was right when it said that when a person receives the reward he/she anticipated, particularly a greater reward than anticipated, or does not receive the punishment he/she anticipated, he/she will be pleased; he/she will become more likely to engage in approving behaviour, and the results of such behaviour will become more valuable to him/her (Homans, 1974). Typically for Mrs. Rahman, she's putting up a desirable character because she is receiving more than she expected from her husband or in other words, she is not receiving a negative character in return as a result of her previous negative character. Therefore, just as Homans said, she is pleased and is now engaging in more approving behaviour. This can also mean our met expectations, which causes us to put up desirable characters can be linked to a cost-benefit analysis, whether consciously or unconsciously (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017).

Influence of Unmet Expectations on Character of Spouses

Shiri and Ghanbaripanah (2016) believe that character qualities of spouses are essential for a successful marriage, therefore observing or enhancing some of these traits may lower the occurrence of marital dispute and emotional or legal divorce. In agreement with that, I also believe that these character traits can be enhanced if only the causes of their deterioration are known. What causes spouses to mete out negative characters towards each other? This question may be answered after this session if only unmet expectations qualify to be the cause of negative characters of spouses. Upon

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probing the influences of unmet expectations on the character of spouses, two participants shared experiences as these:

> *Mrs. Muniru: he complains that I give our children so much attention than him but you're a woman and you know that the children need that attention. I expect him to understand but he doesn't and he has changed a lot ever since he started such complains. Now he doesn't stay at home often and we quarrel often which causes him to beat me sometimes. His character has changed greatly from good to bad and from bad to worse all because he claims I'm not meeting his expectations.*

> *Mr. Awudu: My wife easily gets angry now a days and she's no more generous to me like she used to. She nags all the time and gives me unnecessary excuses when I need her to help me with something. My character has also changed towards her because that's the result of what she's doing. She's suspecting that I'm cheating on her at the north [where I work] that's why she changed all of a sudden. I've also not been the husband she wants me to be because she doesn't do what I want. She always does the opposite of what I want her to do.*

Before entering into the institution of marriage, one may have several positive characters that may even be the source of attraction for his/her partner. But these good character traits according to my findings may change

to become undesirable due to the challenges of unmet expectations. In the cause of reacting to an unmet expectation from a spouse, one may end up putting up some characters that were not earlier associated with him/her. Now, to answer the question; What causes spouses to mete out negative characters towards each other? The answer should be the presence of unmet expectations. When a partner's expectations in a marriage are not met, he/she may consciously or unconsciously have a change of character towards his/her partner in the negatively if only he/she chooses not to pretend.

Findings under Research Question Three (3): How Do the Relational Dynamics lead to Stability/Instability in Marriage?

This study revealed three groups of people in the circumstances of marital stability and instability. The first group consists of those whose marriages are stable and peaceful. The second group consists of those whose marriages are unstable or shaky but are still hopeful for stability and happiness in the future. The third group also consists of those whose marriages are unstable and are ready to give up the marriage and even wish for divorce but still find themselves in the marriage because of some reasons. The subsequent sections expose us to all these groups for better understanding.

1. **For better, for better (Positive relational dynamics and marital stability)**

In his study on Factors Contributing to Marital Stability, Heaton (2002) came up with so many factors such as orientation and experiences in one's family of origin, women's educational attainment, no sexual experience before marriage, age at marriage and few others. In an attempt not to dispute

but to add up to his findings, positive relational dynamics pose to be one major factor that contributes to marital stability. And clearly from earlier themes in this study, it is evident that met expectations fuels positive relational dynamics. The following narratives clearly shows how positive relational dynamics lead to stability in marriages:

> *Mrs. Odoi: We are conscious of what we want our marriage to be so we relate well with each other, we love and care for each other and we always work together to make our marriage stable, enjoyable and enviable. I cannot say we have never had misunderstandings. We sometimes do but we settle it as early as possible and instil peace once again. Our marriage has been very good because we take the Bible as our guide. I can say that a greater portion of our expectations have been met and we are still working on meeting others.*

> *Mr. Nanor: If I'm to change something in my marriage, it will never be my wife. My wife has been very supportive and submissive. She takes care of me, feed me, do all house chores and treats me like a king. She gives me everything I expect from her and even more. So my marriage is peaceful and very stable. ……. Yes, I will choose her over and over again and will want to live with her forever.*

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> *Mr. Rahman: If we treat each other well with respect and we both play our roles well as expected of us, there will definitely be peace and happiness in the marriage and that will also make the marriage stable and fruitful. That's exactly what my wife and I do. One other secret of our stable marriage is forgiveness. Marriage is hard work so you need to have patience and a good heart to prosper in it.*

One thing that runs through all three narratives is "peace". This clearly shows that peace is a reward for positive relational dynamics between spouses and that, peace becomes an assurance of marital stability and vice versa. Although no marriage is without challenges as Mrs. Odoi rightly said, couples who are enjoying peace and stability in their marriages are the ones who have been able to survive the bitter stages of marriage and have seen themselves to the stage of wholehearted love (Carroll, 2021).

Inasmuch as met expectations causes positive or desirable relational dynamics which also leads to stability, peace and happiness in marriages, it is also worth noting that meeting expectations need a conscious effort from both spouses. The B part of Homan's Aggression-Approval propositions confirms how people consciously engage in approving behaviours to make their marriages happy and stable. In the case of Mr. and Mrs. Odoi, they know what they want and consciously worked at it. Mr. Rahman also sees marriage to be hard work which tells us that for stability to be attained in marriage, work has to be done.

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2. For better, for worse (Marital instability but still hopeful)

Three participants who happen to be among the people in the second group have unstable marriages but hope for things to get better.

> *Mrs. Muniru: For the past few years, things have not been going well for us at all. The marriage is now on and off, we have few happy moments and a lot of quarrels and fights. Just this year, I have reported him to our families on 3 different occasions and we have even seen a counsellor once. Things are not too good but I'm praying and hoping that things will go well. I can't lose my marriage at this point in my life because I have sacrificed a lot for it. So I will stay, and do my best to make it work.*

> *Mr. Boateng: the challenges are hitting harder than I expected but I'm still very hopeful. Sometimes it drains me so much and takes a greater part of my love and attention away but I'm a man and I need to stand strong. I know my marriage has not been a happy one as at now but with God on our side, we will surely rejoice one day.*

> *Mrs. Boateng: Yes, I will say my marriage has not been stable at all. Things keep changing gradually from good to bad and I don't like the current state of this marriage. But I haven't stopped praying and I know my God will surely give me what I've always been crying for. I haven't forgotten the vows I took, 'for better for worse'. So no*

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> *matter the circumstance I will still stay and fight it.*
>
> *Divorce is never an option for me.*

This circumstance has a great link with the Disillusionment stage of marriage according to Carroll (2021). In explaining this stage, Carroll makes clear that some couples may gradually drift away as they stop devoting as much time and effort to their relationship and instead focus on other pursuits. The couple's first experience with intense love is typically a distant memory by the time they reach this point in their lives. Returning to the "I" gives them a much more secure sense of self than their previous happy experience of "we." This means doing things individually becomes more valuable than doing things together.

In any case, some couples may not question their commitment, but rather interpret it to mean that things need to change (Mikulincer, Florian, Cowan & Pape Cowan, 2002). It is obvious from the above narratives that when things start turning sour and bitter in marriage, couples tend to get hopeful and begin to rely on their God for a change. Here, the religious beliefs of the couples involved becomes valuable to them and they actively get involved in diverse ways of communicating to their God for a change or the hope of a better marriage.

3. **At the verge of collapse (Wishing for divorce)**

This category happens to be the third group of people in unstable marriages. Here, there is a strong urge to call for a quit. People in this category seem fed up and wish for an end. Although they wish to end their marriages, they don't seem to have the courage to do so based on some factors. Mrs.

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Mensah and Mrs. Awudu share their feelings and tell why they are still in unstable marriages although they want to exit.

> *Mrs. Mensah: Yes!!! Sometimes that thought comes. I ask myself why I rushed to marry at an early stage like that. When it happens like that, I regret for even getting married. I know he's trying his best but his best is not enough. Eeiiii because seeing 'Americanas' [people from America] and other better people coming, if I get the least chance, I will flee from him papa. The only thing keeping me in the marriage is because I'm a Christian and they say Christians don't divorce and because of my father. He will be disappointed in me.*

> *Mrs. Awudu: Absolutely! As I'm here with you now, I'm just finding out ways and means of dissolving this marriage without causing any chaos and public attention. I had wanted to get divorced long ago but I changed my mind because of the kids. But currently, I realise I have to think about myself too. Staying in this marriage will not make me live long. It's either I leave physically or stay physically but leave mentally, which I'm currently doing.*

Some of the factors or reasons that are keeping these people in the marriages although they wish to be out are religion, the reaction from third parties like parents and the community, and the presence of children in the marriage. Affected couples weigh the costs and benefits of divorce with these factors in mind and decide to stay although their wishes are to exit. In this

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situation, couples will only be in the marriage as unhappy people and will find individual activities to happy themselves.

This corroborates with the Decision stage of marriage (Carroll, 2021) where couples reach a tipping point. Here, many couples suffer from emotional breakdowns and engage in self-protective measures like leaving the house for hours after a quarrel (Worrell, 2019). According to Carroll (2021), one is said to have entered this stage of the relationship when one begins to actively consider and even make arrangements for ending it. In this stage, the prospect of a new beginning with a new individual may make one feel excited and ready. At this point, a choice has to be made; whether to go, stay and do nothing despite how miserable the situation may be, or stay and actively work on healing the relationship.

I enquired from these participants the reasons why they have such thoughts of divorce or what got them to this stage in their marriages, and these were their responses:

> *Mrs. Mensah: My husband has become the opposite of what I saw in him before marrying him. He is now quick tempered, he doesn't give me the things I ask for anymore, and is always saying he doesn't have money. He embarrasses me by insulting almost every driver on the road when he's driving, and he enjoys staying outside than coming home to his family. I'm just fed up with all that.*

> *Mrs. Awudu: He used to come home every weekend but now he comes once in two or three weeks or even once in a*

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month. He is cheating on me and I confirmed it on his phone and also from a friend who works with him. Because he's cheating, he doesn't care about us anymore. Even when he comes, we hardly communicate. Every communication I try to initiate turns into a quarrel. we actually live like strangers in our home.

All these boil down to the fact that the expectations of these wives have not been met. Unmet expectations make marriages unstable and are capable of building up thoughts of divorce (Azzorpadi 2007).

Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed in detail the research results. For better apprehension, the background of all twenty participants have been provided indicating their pseudonyms, ages, number of years in marriage, ethnicity, religion, occupation, level of education as well as number of children. The research results have been discussed based on the three research questions; What are the expectations of couples before marriage? In what ways do one's expectations influence the relational dynamics in his/her marriage? And how do the relational dynamics lead to stability or instability in marriage? All discussions were done with the help of the three theories (psychoanalytic theory, filter theory and social exchange theory) and other relevant literature. Findings either corroborated with theories and literature or contradicted them in some cases. The summary of findings from this chapter has been produced in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine the relational dynamics among married couples within the context of their expectations before the marriage and the realities faced within the marriage. Having knowledge and understanding of this area will fill the lacuna in literature and serve as a road map for family experts, marriage practitioners and counsellors in the discharge of their duties. In this chapter, a summary of significant findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research are presented.

Overview of the Study

This study used exploration as a research design and sought to delve into the relational dynamics of married couples and bring out the realities they face in their marriages as a result of the expectations they had before getting married. Semi structured interviewing method was used and all ethical principles of the UCC IRB were conformed to including confidentiality and anonymity. Data were analysed using Thematic Analysis as well as Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis with the help of relevant theories (Psychoanalytic Theory, Filter Theory and Social Exchange theory). This qualitative study is expected to fill the lacuna in literature and serve as a road map for family experts, marriage practitioners and counsellors in the discharge of their duties.

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Summary of Research Findings

Summarized findings under research question one (1): What are the expectations of couples before marriage?

Before marriage, couples had various expectations that were categorised under *communication*, *the show of love and affection* and *character* among others.

Under communication, couples expected that when they marry, they will continually have face-to-face interactions. They also expected to have audio and video calls on phone, as well as text messages and social media chats.

Under the show of love and affection, couples expected to exchange gifts, become intimate with each other, spend quality time with each other, exchange sweet and romantic words, and also care for and assist each other.

Under character, spouses expected to marry partners with good character traits like being God fearing, peaceable, kind, humble, respectful, submissive and also having a teachable spirit.

Summarized findings under research question two (2): In what ways do one's expectations influence the relational dynamics in his/her marriage?

Couples in this study revealed that relational dynamics in their marriages are positive and desirable when their expectations in the marriage are met or when they receive better treatment from their spouses than they expected.

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These were found to be evident in marriages that had their expectations met:

- Effective communication

- Maintenance of a happy environment

- Exchange of gifts

- Increased intimacy

- Peace of mind

- Usage of pet names

- Proper performance of duties

On the other hand, when a couple's expectations are not met in marriage, it has a negative effect on communication, the show of love and affection as well as their character in the marriage.

These were also found to be evident in marriages that had their expectations unmet:

- Silent treatments

- Little or no communication for days

- Frequent quarrels

- Nags

- Little love making with no passion or joy

- Doing things separately

- Physical abuses

- Frequent anger

- Frequent excuses

- Neglect of duties

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Conversely, it was revealed that some couples pretend to show love and affection in their marriages although their expectations are not being met due to external factors.

Summarized findings under research question three (3): How do the relational dynamics lead to stability/instability in marriage?

This study discovered three kinds of couples; couples who were in peaceful and stable marriages, couples who were in unstable marriages but still hopeful for a positive change, and couples who were in unstable marriages and wishing for divorce.

It was discovered that positive relational dynamics results in happiness and peace in marriage, hence, marital stability.

Finally, negative relational dynamics were found to be the cause of unhappiness, and instability in marriages.

Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from the study:

- Expectations couples had before marriage are mostly on communication, the show of love and affection and character of partner among several others.

- When couples' expectations of marriage are met, it has a positive influence on their relationship and makes relational dynamics between them positive and desirable. On the other hand, when those expectations are not met, it has a negative influence on the relationship and makes relational dynamics negative and undesirable.

- Couples enjoying positive relational dynamics consciously work towards meeting their partner's expectations in order to maintain a stable marriage. On the other hand, couples going through negative relational dynamics are in unstable marriages and are either hoping for a change or wishing for divorce.

Recommendations

Given the research findings and conclusions deduced from this study, the following recommendations are being made:

- Religious leaders should organise marriage seminars from time to time to treat areas pertaining to marital expectations, stability and instability in marriage in order to get religious couples on their toes.

- Couples should be encouraged to discuss their expectations for marriage and what each partner looks out for prior to the marriage.

- Couples should also seek professional help when challenges beyond them sets in.

Suggestions for Further Research

First, this study revealed that some couples pretend to show love and affection although their expectations are not met. Future research can explore more into this area and even look at how the pretence affects the couples involved whether socially, emotionally or psychologically.

In addition, future research should look at relational dynamics in marriage with focus on other areas apart from the influences of met and unmet expectations. The other areas can be the influence of third parties, finances, the presence of children among others.

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Lastly, mixed-method approach should be employed in the future as this study could not be generalized since it employed a qualitative research approach only.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has concluded the study by giving a brief overview and also summarizing all research findings in plain language. Summary of research findings have been grouped under the three research questions (What are the expectations of couples before marriage? In what ways do one's expectations influence the relational dynamics in his/her marriage? And how do the relational dynamics lead to stability or instability in marriage?) for better comprehension. Conclusions have also been drawn from the findings of this study. These conclusions have helped to come up with various recommendations that will not help married couples alone, but institutions and also the nation at large. Finally, some suggestions for further research have been provided for all researchers who may be interested in such areas.

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APENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

M.PHIL. SOCIOLOGY

(INTERVIEW GUIDE)

Pre-Interview Guide

1. Spend some time introducing yourself to the participants and ask the participants to do same.

2. Proceed to the version of the following script:

   "I'm glad you've agreed to be interviewed. I'm a 2nd year Sociology M.Phil. student of University of Cape Coast conducting a survey as part of my theses on the topic: ***"Relational Dynamics of the Married: Expectations before and Realities during Marriage''.*** I want to explain how this will work. I will do about 45 minutes to an hour interview that will be recorded both on paper and on phone. All responses from you will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for academic purposes.''

3. Once they agree to be interviewed, explain to the participant that the interview will be divided into four roughly equal parts. (1) background information of the participant, (2) Marital Expectations, (3) Influence of Marital Expectations on Spousal Relational Dynamics and (4) Influence of Spousal Relational Dynamics on Marital Stability or Instability.

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Interview Questions

<u>Note</u>: The following description of process and questions is presented as a guide. Except for the background questions, you are unlikely to ask every question in every interview. Further, the conversation should flow according to the four main sections (background first, then the marital expectations, then the influence of marital expectations on spousal relational dynamics and finally, the influence of spousal relational dynamics on marital stability or instability). The questions within each section do not need to be asked in the order listed. Rather, they should follow the flow of the conversation as naturally as possible. It may be helpful to think of the interchange as a structured conversation with someone whose story you are interested in learning, rather than as a formal interview.

Pseudonym: …………………..   **Researcher**: …………………..
Date: ……………

Start Time: …………………...   **End Time**: ……………………

Part One: Background Information of the Participant

1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Prompt: age, occupation, years of marriage, educational level/status, religion, ethnic group etc.)

2. How many times have you been married? [Probe further]

3. For how long have you been in this marriage? [If possible, record wedding date and calculate exact number of days and probe further]

4. Do you have children? If yes, how many? [Probe]

Part Two: Marital Expectations (Before Marriage)

A. Internalization (Psychoanalysis)

1. As a child, who was/were the influences in your personality?

2. Tell me about how you were brought up/socialized [allow participant to narrate everything that comes into remembrance and probe further]

3. What are the positive and negative things you observed in your socialization process? (In case participant doesn't mention them in his/her earlier narration)

4. What is your understanding or point of view about the things you observed in your socialization process?

5. In which ways have your socialization experiences influenced the socialization of your children? [Probe]

B. Ideal Mate Selection & Marital Expectations

1. Share with me the escapades leading to your current relationship. [Probe]

2. Before marriage, what were the specifications for your ideal mate? [Probe]

3. How did you conceive all these specifications or criteria? (Through books, movies, social media, peer influence, religion, family, societal influence, etc.) [Probe]

4. Before settling with your spouse, did you have several options to choose from? [Probe]

5. What influenced your choice for your current spouse? [Probe]

6. Before marriage, what were the things you were expecting to see or experience in marriage? (In terms of performance of roles, communication, relationship with third parties, ways of showing love and affection, character, etc.) [after participant tells about his/her expectations, be guided with the issues in bracket and probe further]

Part Three: Influence of Marital Expectations on Spousal Relational Dynamics

1. Could you please tell me about how you communicate as married couples? (How often do you communicate with your spouse? what is the nature of communication, the quality of communication, etc.) [Probe]

   a) In what ways do you feel your expectations regarding communication and the current nature of communication differ?

      i. What do you think caused the change?

      ii. How has the changes in communication expectations influenced the way you relate with your spouse?

      iii. How has it impacted your marital relationship?

   b) If your expectations and the current situation are same, tell me how you both achieved that (were any measures put in place?)

2. Could you please tell me about how you show love and affection to each other? [Probe]

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     a) In what ways do you feel your expectation regarding how you show each other love and affection changed?

        i.   What do you think caused the change? [Probe]

        ii.   How has the changes influenced the way you relate with your spouse?

        iii.   How has it impacted your marital relationship?

        iv.   Do you wish to get more love and affection from your spouse than you are getting? [Probe]

     b) If there have been no changes, tell me how you both achieved that consistency.

     c) How has it impacted your marital relationship?

3. What are your roles as a husband/wife and a mother/father (if there are children) [Probe]

What are your spouse's roles? [Probe]

     a) In what ways do you feel your expectations regarding role performance and your current roles differ?

        i.   How has it influenced the way you relate with your spouse?

     b) Were your roles discussed prior to or in the course of the marriage, or were they enforced?

     c) Assess yourselves (you and your spouse) in terms of role performance.

4. What do you consider as the qualities of your spouse?

     a) In what ways do you feel the qualities of your spouse prior to the marriage and his/her current qualities differ? [Probe]

        i.   How has it influenced the way you relate with your spouse? [Probe]

5. How do both of you show appreciation to each other?

    a) Do you wish to be appreciated in a different way? [Probe]

    b) How do you react whenever you are appreciated the way you want? [Probe]

    c) How do you react whenever you are appreciated the way you don't want?[Probe]

    d) Does showing of appreciation matter so much in your relationship?

        i. If yes, how does it influence the way you relate with your spouse? [Probe]

6. Generally, have the expectations you had before marriage been met?

    a) If yes, did you have to put in any effort to achieve that or they were met without your efforts? [Probe]

        i. If you made efforts, what practical steps were taken to ensure that they were met? And how did your partner react towards that? [Probe]

    b) If no, which ones haven't been met? And how does that affect the relationship with your spouse? [Probe]

7. Do you think you have been able to meet all your spouses' expectations?

    a) If yes, what shows? Or how can you tell? [Probe]

    b) If no, why? And how is your spouse reacting to that? [Probe]

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Part Four: Influence of Spousal Relational Dynamics on Marital

Stability/Instability

1. Has there ever been a misunderstanding or quarrel that affected your relationship greatly? Tell me about it. [Probe]

2. Has there ever been a case where the services of a mediator or counsellor was needed in settling issues in your marriage? [Probe]

3. Have you ever wished you hadn't married him/her?

   a) If yes, what caused the regret? And what did you do after having that feeling? [Probe]

4. Currently, how do you feel about the marriage? (Do you wish it was better? Or are you happy with the way it is?)

5. If you were given the chance to change something in your marriage, what will that be? Why? [Probe]

6. If you were at liberty to choose the number of years, months or days you want to spend with your spouse, how long will you choose?

7. If you were to be single like before, will you wish to get married?

   a) If yes, why? And who will you choose as a spouse?

   b) If no, why

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COPERTAION!

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APENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

M.PHIL. SOCIOLOGY

(INTERVIEW GUIDE AFTER PILOTING)

Pre-Interview Guide

1. Spend some time introducing yourself to the participants and ask the participants to do same.

2. Proceed to the version of the following script:

   "I'm glad you've agreed to be interviewed. I'm a 2nd year Sociology M.Phil. student of University of Cape Coast conducting a survey as part of my theses on the topic: ***"Relational Dynamics of the Married: Expectations before and Realities during Marriage''.*** I want to explain how this will work. I will do about 45 minutes to an hour interview that will be recorded on phone. All responses from you will be treated confidentially and will solely be used for academic purposes.''

3. Once they agree to be interviewed, explain to the participant that the interview will be divided into four roughly equal parts. (1) background information of the participant, (2) Marital Expectations, (3) Influence of Marital Expectations on Spousal Relational Dynamics and (4) Influence of Spousal Relational Dynamics on Marital Stability or Instability.

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Interview Questions

Note: The following description of process and questions is presented as a guide. Except for the background questions, you are unlikely to ask every question in every interview. Further, the conversation should flow according to the four main sections (background first, then the marital expectations, then the influence of marital expectations on spousal relational dynamics and finally, the influence of spousal relational dynamics on marital stability or instability). The questions within each section do not need to be asked in the order listed. Rather, they should follow the flow of the conversation as naturally as possible. It may be helpful to think of the interchange as a structured conversation with someone whose story you are interested in learning, rather than as a formal interview.

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1. Could you please tell me about yourself? (Prompt: age, occupation, years of marriage, educational level/status, religion, ethnic group etc.)

2. How many times have you been married? [Probe further]

3. For how long have you been in this marriage? [If possible, record wedding date and calculate exact number of days and probe further]

4. Do you have children? If yes, how many? [Probe]

Part Two: Marital Expectations (Before Marriage)

A. Internalization (Psychoanalysis)

1. As a child, who was/were the influences in your personality?

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2. Tell me about how you were brought up/socialized [allow participant to narrate everything that comes into remembrance and probe further]

3. What are the positive and negative things you observed in your socialization process? (In case participant doesn't mention them in his/her earlier narration)

4. What is your understanding or point of view about the things you observed in your socialization process?

5. In which ways have your socialization experiences influenced the socialization of your children? [Probe]

B. Filter Selection & Marital Expectations

1. Share with me the escapades leading to your current relationship. [Probe]

2. Before marriage, what were the specifications for your ideal mate? [Probe]

3. How did you conceive all these specifications or criteria? (Through books, movies, social media, peer influence, religion, family, societal influence, etc.) [Probe]

4. Before settling with your spouse, did you have several options to choose from? [Probe]

5. What influenced your choice for your current spouse? [Probe]

6. Before marriage, what were the things you were expecting to see or experience in marriage? (In terms of communication, ways of showing love and affection, character, etc.) [after participant tells

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about his/her expectations, be guided with the issues in bracket and probe further]

Part Three: Influence of Marital Expectations on Spousal Relational Dynamics

1. Could you please tell me about how you communicate as married couples? (How often do you communicate with your spouse? what is the nature of communication, the quality of communication, etc.) [Probe]

   a) In what ways do you feel your expectations regarding communication and the current nature of communication differ?

      i. What do you think caused the change?

      ii. How has the changes in communication expectations influenced the way you relate with your spouse?

      iii. How has it impacted your marital relationship?

   b) If your expectations and the current situation are same, tell me how you both achieved that (were any measures put in place?)

2. Could you please tell me about how you show love and affection to each other? [Probe]

   a) In what ways do you feel your expectation regarding how you show each other love and affection changed?

      i. What do you think caused the change? [Probe]

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     ii. How has the changes influenced the way you relate with your spouse?

     iii. How has it impacted your marital relationship?

     iv. Do you wish to get more love and affection from your spouse than you are getting? [Probe]

   b) If there have been no changes, tell me how you both achieved that consistency.

   c) How has it impacted your marital relationship?

3. What do you consider as the character of your spouse?

  a) In what ways do you feel the character of your spouse prior to the marriage and his/her current character differ? [Probe]

    i. How has it influenced the way you relate with your spouse? [Probe]

4. Do you think you have been able to meet all your spouses' expectations?

  a) If yes, what shows? Or how can you tell? [Probe]

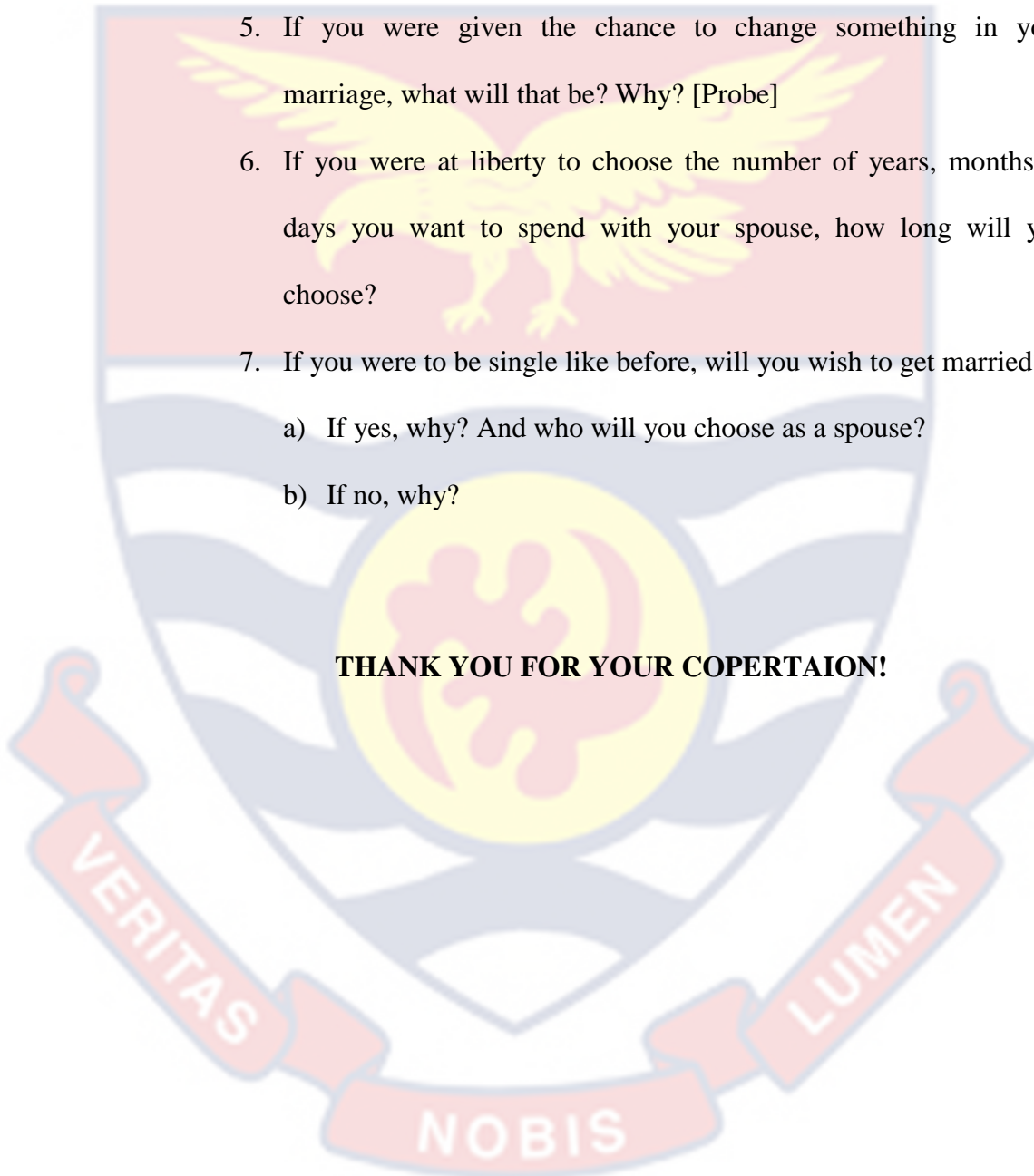 b) If no, why? And how is your spouse reacting to that? [Probe]

Part Four: Influence of Spousal Relational Dynamics on Marital Stability/Instability

1. Has there ever been a misunderstanding or quarrel that affected your relationship greatly? Tell me about it. [Probe]

2. Has there ever been a case where the services of a mediator or counsellor was needed in settling issues in your marriage? [Probe]

3. Have you ever wished you hadn't married him/her?

    a) If yes, what caused the regret? And what did you do after having that feeling? [Probe]

4. Currently, how do you feel about the marriage? (Do you wish it was better? Or are you happy with the way it is?)

5. If you were given the chance to change something in your marriage, what will that be? Why? [Probe]

6. If you were at liberty to choose the number of years, months or days you want to spend with your spouse, how long will you choose?

7. If you were to be single like before, will you wish to get married?

    a) If yes, why? And who will you choose as a spouse?

    b) If no, why?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COPERTAION!

APPENDIX C

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

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30TH AUGUST, 2022

Ms. Abigail Mamle Tetteh
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
University of Cape Coast

Dear Ms. Tetteh,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CHLS/2021/67)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research **Relational Dynamics of the Married; Expectations Before and Realities during Marriage.** This approval is valid from 30th August, 2022 to 29th August, 2023. You may apply for a renewal subject to submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

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

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,

Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD

UCCIRB Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

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