

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS MEDIATING  
MARITAL COMMITMENT AMONG MARRIED COUPLES.  
A CASE STUDY OF TAIFA CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH  
GHANA.**

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**BY**

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**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
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## DECLARATION

I, Richardson A. Andam (Very Rev), do hereby declare that this thesis is a result of original research undertaken as a student of the faculty of social studies, Methodist University College Ghana (MUCG), and that this work has never been submitted in whole or in part for any purpose in this institution.

This thesis was written and produced under the supervision of Professor S.A. Danquah of the Methodist University College, Ghana and Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph K. Ghunney of the Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana. All references to the work of all other people as well as that of organizations have duly been acknowledged.



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## **DEDICATION**

To my wife Mercy and children Alfred, Emmanuel, Richardson, Philomena (Sarbah) and Paul (Nana Baah)



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## ABSTRACT

This thesis looks at the socio-economic and psychological factors mediating marital commitment among married couples in the Taifa Circuit of the Methodist Church Ghana, in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Attention was paid to the nature of the socio-economic and psychological factors that influence marital commitment in the Ghanaian context. Many marriages have suffered difficult situations such as deep regrets by spouses, depression, divorce etc all due to low level of marital commitment.

The methodology for this thesis is quantitative in nature. A survey design was used for the study. Here the Rev Ministers of the various branches of Methodist Churches in the Taifa Circuit were interviewed verbally to know their findings concerning the topic under study. This is because they interact with married couples in the church during programmes such as family life, marriage counselling, pre-marital counselling, couples meetings and resolution of marital issues. The research instrument used was questionnaires namely International Personality Item Pool and, Personal Relation and Marital Happiness Scale. Five hypotheses were tested and supported by the use of the chi square. The study investigated the link between personality, marital happiness and commitment. The link between socio-demographic factors and marital commitment was also assessed. The results revealed that, in the aggregate more married females show higher marital commitment level than their male counterparts. It also revealed that a lower commitment level in marriage was not attributed to respondent' education. The analysis showed that those with agreeable personality trait have a higher marital commitment than those with extraversion personality trait.

**CHAPTER ONE****INTRODUCTION****1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Many marriages have suffered difficult situations such as deep regrets by spouses, depression, divorce etc all due to low level of marital commitment and happiness. It is uncommon to find people who have not been affected by the pain of divorce, whether in their own life or a life of someone close to them, a relative etc. A research conducted at the Accra Metropolitan Assembly on Marriage Statistics from year 2006 to 2011 was given as follows:

<b>PARTICULARS</b>	<b>YEAR-JANUARY TO DECEMBER</b>					
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Customary Marriage	3,443	1,541	2,087	2,309	3,426	4,082
Customary Dissolution	633	618	566	409	455	504
Ordinance Marriage	1,784	1,779	1,624	2,187	2,047	2,533

For the researcher to have the underground information about the causes of low commitment of married couples which eventually leads to divorce further investigation was conducted at the Accra High Court Registrar on divorced cases. Some of the reasons given him from samples of dockets include the following: Respondents show disinterest

in the marriage and therefore did not stay together as husband and wife. For others too there were violence threats in the marriage.

Below is a table of collated cases from the department

**INFORMATION ON DIVORCE CASES AT THE ACCRA HIGH COURT FROM  
YEAR 2009 TO 2011.**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NUMBER OF DIVORCE CASES</b>	<b>YEAR OF MARRIAGE</b>	<b>YEAR OF DIVORCE</b>	<b>REASONS FOR DIVORCE FROM TWO DOCKETS OF ALL CASES</b>
2009	287	1994	2004	Respondent shows disinterest in the marriage. The couples claim they do not live together as husband and wife.
		1984	2009	There are violence threats in the marriage.
2010	324	1999	2010	Sexual activities has ceased between the respondent and petitioner. They sleep in separate rooms.

2011	330	1998	2011	Respondent has caused the petitioner much distress
		1978	2011	Respondent fears to live under the same roof with the petitioner.

In the pastoral duties of the researcher, he has come across many broken marriages, children from single parents and homes, and these raise the concern about how to deal with marital relationship problems in these times. Divorce in Ghana and the world at large is seen by many as a change of heart or the loss of love feeling. Marriage is important to the church as it is allegorical to Christ and the church but also a means of deep, intimate relationship that are vital to the church. But the church today has not been immuned to the increase of failed marriages and has divorce rates not too different from that of non-Christians. Divorce is an issue confronting the church today greatly and the church must rise up to that challenge and actively address it before it gets out of hand. To control the issue, an effective solution must be sought and considered in a socio-economic environment of the married couples.

Since the 1960s, the Ghanaian family has come under intense stress as a result of contact with the outside world. For example, the increasing level of education and urbanization has come to increase the nuclear form of marriage common in this part of the world (Oppong 1983). Marriage becomes very important when both couple is needed to play

their individual roles in the household, particularly with children. There is a growing concern among Ghanaians about the increasing rate of divorce cases in the country particularly among the youth. Meanwhile, the level of perception and comprehension among the ordinary Ghanaians about the law governing divorce and the court procedures are very low. Most people become conscious of these only when they decide to end up the relationship in divorce and do not know what to do next. The research is not intended to give solution to the divorce problems but an attempt to enlighten the reading public on the socio-economic factors as well as the psychological factors that affects marital commitment, and other related issues of interest. Fundamentally, it is important to understand what marriage is, the reasons for which people marry and the general causes of divorce today.

The reasons for marriage within different societies and cultures is attributed to the basic social and personal functions it performs such as – procreation, provision for sexual gratification, care of children and their education, socialization, economic production and consumption, provision for affection, status and companionship.

The search for solutions to problems facing the Ghanaian family has arrived at the doorstep of marriage. Efforts of the 1990s emphasized financial independence through work, and family services to promote children's well-being. In the face of continuing high levels of non-marital childbearing and divorce, attention has turned to relationships between married couples. Policy makers are asking how government can promote the well-being of children by strengthening marriage and, where marriage is not feasible, by strengthening relationships between unmarried parents. The commitment of married couples is of vital interest to this researcher because it will take a good commitment for a

marriage to survive the kind of stress the institution of marriage is facing in the country in these times.

### **1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In performance of his duty as a reverend Minister and a professional counsellor the researcher has met with many couples who have low level of marital commitment. These people always contemplate divorce or separation. Many of such people were Christians. It suggests that they had gone through pre-marital counselling which is a prerequisite for church members contemplating marriage. The purpose of pre-marital counselling is to work out any problem that may result in lack of marital commitment among couples contemplating marriage.

The church does pre-marital for would be couples before they marry yet there are breakdown in marriages. The statistics provided in the background to this research supports the assertion that many marriages are dissolved in our society. It is upon this disturbing issue that the researcher sort to find out what might be the possible causes of such problems. And he does that by investigating into the influence of socio-economic and psychological factors on marital commitment.

One effective way of decreasing marital distress is to identify factors that most likely lead to later discord. There is a growing concern among Ghanaians about the increasing rate of divorce cases in the country particularly among the youth. Recently The Chief of Kokote in the Offinso district of Ashanti Region, Nana Poku Asiedu II, urged marriage counselling units in churches and other religious organizations to guide the youth in their relationship with their partners. He was commenting on the increase in

the number of reported cases of divorces among married couples, especially the youth in an interview with the Ghana News Agency at Kokote. He mentioned some major causes of the increased divorces as economic, mistrust, moral weakness, jealousy, unfaithfulness, disrespect and misunderstanding (Ghana News Agency June, 2011).

Marriage is said to be an institution ordained and ordered by God (Al Janseen, 2001). The Bible talks about 'marriage' in Genesis 2; 24: "therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Mathew 19:4-5). From the scriptural perspective therefore God intended man and woman to be joined together in marriage and not joined outside of marriage.

Legally, marriage is the legal relationship between a husband and a wife. According to the Ghanaian Matrimonial Clauses Act (1971), "except as otherwise provided in section 41 of this Act 'marriage' means a monogamous marriage and does not include a potentially polygamous marriage". According to the decision in *Hyde v. Hyde* (1866) LR 1 P&D 130, marriage is a "voluntary" union for "life" between "a man and a woman" to the exclusion of all others. This definition therefore has certain features and the first is that, the union is "voluntary" one. This implies that marriage is a consensual relationship between two individuals and therefore implicitly excludes such forced unions as betrothal and other forced marriages. The Criminal Offences Act of Ghana (compulsion of marriage) identifies causing someone to marry under duress or against that person's will as misdemeanour (Section 109). The Ghanaian courts will even decline to recognise a customary marriage under any immoral circumstances such as abduction from lawful care or in violation of the person's human rights.

In this study, the potential correlates of the socio-economic and psychological factors that influence marital commitment were explored in an effort to better understand the marital dyad, especially variables that contribute to its success. The variables of study were outlined, and past literature regarding their relationships to marital commitment were explored. This was followed by an explanation of the methodology of the current study, a discussion of the findings, and directions for future research in the area of marital commitment was dealt with.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The role of the church is to help its members have a holistic fruitful lifestyle spiritually, physically, materially etc. The institution of marriage is one area the church needs to look at since the family makes up the church. The purpose of this research is to bring to the fore the socio-economic as well as psychological factors that influence marital commitment among married couples using married couples in the Taifa circuit of the Methodist Church of Ghana as a case study.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Over the last four decades, much research has been conducted on marriage. The focus of previous research ranges from general findings on the effects of marriage to more specific findings comparing different relationship statuses. Previous research consistently shows the positive effects of marriage on men; however, findings vary in regards to women. Additionally, much of this research focuses on economically stable partners living in sub-urban areas. The objectives of this research are:

1. To determine the socio-economic and psychological factors that influence marital commitment among married couples
2. To identify the causes and effects of marital divorce on the couples which hinder marital happiness.
3. To identify the counselling needs of married couples especially in the church and particularly the Methodist Church Ghana. This will also take the needs of Pre-marital counselling into consideration.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of the research will help to improve marriages as couples who hitherto had no idea of what constitutes marital commitment, would be made aware. The post marital counselling manual that the researcher shall prepare will be used to achieve this aim. This would change the attitude and the mentality of married couples and make them behave better towards each other. The next group of people to benefit from the results of this study would be professionals such as marriage counsellors, men and women of the clergy, who could use the findings to facilitate counselling of couples.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH OUTLINE**

To ensure logical and systematic flow of ideas, the study was arranged in five chapters as follows:

Chapter One: Is the introduction, which covers the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and the research outline.

Chapter two: Covers the review of related literature

Chapter three: Covers the methodology and procedure applied for the research

Chapter four: Covers the results and analysis

Chapter five: Covers the summary of major findings, conclusion/suggestions, recommendation, limitation recommendations for future study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, much research has been conducted on marriage. The focus of previous research ranges from general findings on the effects of marriage to more specific findings comparing different relationship statuses. Previous research consistently shows the positive effects of marriage on men; however, findings vary with regard to women. Additionally, much of this research focuses on economically stable women living in suburban areas.

The studies of economically unstable mothers and psychological well-being that were done consisted of mothers living in urban cities, suburban areas, farm towns, or unidentified areas and focused on psychological health with regard to socioeconomic status and geographic location (Amato & Zuo, 1992; Brown, Brody, & Stoneman, 2000; Dooley & Prause, 2002; Hoyt, Conger, Valde, & Weihs, 1997; Murry, Brody, Brown, Wisenbaker, Cutrona, & Simons, 2002).

Much research has been done on marital commitment which also focused on the types of marital commitment that leads to marital satisfaction. Researches has also been done on marital status and poverty; marital status and race/ethnicity; social and educational campaigns to limit marital abuse due to low marital commitment; medical and psychiatric treatment of the after effects of abuse; marital status and psychological well being, influence of religion as a social category on marital commitment etc. Little work has been done on the attitudinal change of couples that influences marital commitment. Again not much work has been done on the socio-economic and

psychological factors mediating marital commitment as we look at people's personality traits posited by the Trait theorists with their 'BIG FIVE' dimensions of personality.

## **2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1.1 Marital commitment and what it means.**

Commitment has been a major field of inquiry in many disciplines and professions ranging from success in sales, careers, educational achievement, human development, overcoming obstacles, organization stability, to the linkage between beliefs and behaviour (Becker, 1960; Kanter, 1968; Kiesler, 1971; Leik & Leik, 1977). Serious study of commitment mechanisms in relationships and marriages began in the 1970's.

There are understandably several different ways of conceptualizing marital commitment. Several scales of marital commitment have been developed (Clodfeter, 1977; Johnson, 1973; Stanley, 1986; Wyatt, 1983; among others).

There essentially two major types of marital commitment mentioned by the researchers: *personal commitment* – a psychological or intrapersonal construct reflecting a personal dedication to the continuation or completion of a line of action (the “want to” in commitment); and *constraint commitment* – various social or relationship factors which lead to the continuation of a line of action regardless of personal preference (often referred to as “have to” in commitment).

Perhaps the major problem with this literature is the apparent correlation between marital commitments (whether measured by “have to” or “want to” indicator) and both marital stability and satisfaction. *Personal* commitment is likewise strongly associated with marital satisfaction and marital stability. Spouses who are happy in their marriage

are more likely to think about permanence. They invest more of themselves and give up personal priorities in their partners' interest.

Such persons with marital commitment; involve strong dedications to their marriages, change their unwanted behaviour to sustain permanence of marriage. On the contrary, it must be assumed that spouses with lower marital commitment may end their marriage abruptly.

The problems of marital commitment issues leading to divorce or separation in marriage have attracted many contributions. One such contribution is that of Georgetown Law Faculty Publication in March 2010 entitled "law, Marriage, and Intimate Commitment by Million C. Regan, professor of law. Regan (1991) asked 'does society have any interest in the stability of marriage per se-that is, apart from any concern about the spouses? Should law try in any way to reinforce an ethic of commitment in marriage as a good in and of itself?

To answer this question, Regan (1991) gives the following illustration in a story of Alex and Caitlin as his introduction. They meet when he is a twenty-seven year-old engineer at a telecommunications start-up and she is an associate at a law firm? They fall in love. Alex feels that Caitlin helps him break through the emotional barriers that he constructed to deal with growing up as the oldest child in a household with an alcoholic father. Caitlin finds that Alex shares her strong political commitments, and that he is willing to drop everything and really listen to her when something is on her mind. They both believe in marriage as an expression of their mutual commitment, so they marry, promising to stay together until "death do us part."

Three years later, things do not seem so rosy. Alex derives great satisfaction from his work but finds that he cannot talk to Caitlin enough about it because she seems neither to understand it nor appreciate its importance. Indeed, she barely seems able to operate her computer for simple word-processing tasks. Furthermore, she displays little enthusiasm for his musings about launching his own company someday. Caitlin begins to worry that Alex possesses neither the sensitivity nor the sense of responsibility she had originally thought he had. She feels that he spends long hours at work, or in front of the computer at home, engaged in activity that he takes no time to explain to her. She finds it difficult to make conversation with her colleagues at law firm functions, and recently simply stopped going to them. (Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Centre. Hein Online -- 9 Va. J. Soc. Pol'y & L. 117 2001-2002 *2001J Law, Marriage, and Intimate Commitment* 117) Alex talks about starting his own firm, apparently without any thought to how that might make it far more difficult to afford to have children any time soon. Who became disenchanted first is unclear, as is whether one's disaffection is a reaction to the other's discontent, or whether either might stay in the marriage if the other one relented. In any event, each has come to believe that the best thing for them now might be to go their separate ways. They have comparable incomes and no children. Should we care whether they stay married? If they want to end their marriage, should they be able to do so just by sending a notice to the county clerk? Is their divorce simply their own business?

Society does have some interest in whether they remain married, and in the ease with which they can obtain a divorce. I want to explore why some resistance to this

conclusion exists, and why such resistance is misguided. Two social trends make this a timely issue.

First, is the steady erosion of the link between marriage and procreation over the last generation. More married couples do not have children; one or more children are born outside of marriage.

A second trend is the rise of unmarried cohabitation over the same period. This second development requires careful thought about whether law should continue to favour married over unmarried couples in the provision of many state benefits. If not then this research finding out the influences of the suggested factors mediating marital commitment might be of great help.

In a research conducted by Murat Iyigun (June 2009) on marriage, cohabitation and commitment, the main findings that emerged are as follows:

In all equilibria, some married couples are able to cooperate and operate efficiently, but some married and all cohabiting couples act with limited commitment and non-cooperatively. When spousal marital commitment costs are gender symmetric, there is pure-sorting equilibrium in which all partners who prefer to act with commitment in the marriage are matched with someone who has same preference. In such equilibrium the benefits of marital commitment accrue to both partners.

The important implication of this is that when there is a mixed matching equilibrium with say, committed husbands in short supply, men's marital commitment incentives will be higher because committed women compete more intensely for committed husbands. Alternatively, an excess supply of men who prefer marriage not

only reduces the marriage incentives of men and raises those of women, but also the marital commitment accrue only to those men and women who are in short supply and a shortage of men (women) who can martially commit makes all women (men) worse off and materially indifferent between marriage or cohabitation. Hence, even though allocations and outcomes in uncommitted partnership are mostly unresponsive to market forces, the degree to which the institution of legal marriage manifests spousal commitment and cooperation is driven b individual attitudes towards marriage and spousal as those are manifested in market dynamics.

On marital commitment Murat Iyigun(2009) suggests that each partner who lives together with someone takes an action, such as deciding how much to work at home and in the labour market or how much time to allocate to childrearing. The actions of each partner influences the surplus a married couple could generate jointly.

We now need to specify the outcome of the partnership of a committed and an uncommitted individual. His research suggests that the committed spouse would be willing to marry and choose the action that maximizes the material surplus while the uncommitted spouse would maximize only his/her own material utility subject to his/her spouse's participation constraint. Hence, marital surplus rises with the commitment level of both partners.

Commitment is a step in which the will is involved.

In this life for everything to be done effectively, one needs commitment. According to Frances S. webb, Eleanor N. Whitney, Linda K. Debruyne (1999) "Commitment to a behaviour depends on continued rewards from it. Anyone choosing to have a long-

term monogamous relationship must do something extraordinary—make a commitment to another person”.

On the question, what does hold a partnership together? Frances S. webb et al, (1999) quotes the psychologist Carl Rogers who put it this way “we each commit ourselves to working together on the changing process of our present relationship, because that relationship is currently enriching our love and our life and we wish to grow”

Love requires each partner to commit and work together, to accept change in the current relationship, and to be enriched by it.

“The idea that marriage will magically make people happy is probably the most destructive idea that partners can have. The celebration of marriage is never the end of the story, as in fairy tales. It is only the beginning. There should be a form of commitment in the marriage; a relationship based on two(2) ideas i.e.

- First, the relationship is permanent, or at least permanence is something the partners will work for.
- Second, the partners will be most important to each other. No other relationship with another person will take a higher place” Frances S. webb et al (1999).

To support the writers above, these ideas must be seen as pivotal in promoting commitment. These idea of permanence in marriage suggest that partners should cope with situations to make a successful marriage. What it means is that, expectations before marriage, may not be met, yet marital life continue effectively. And this is calls for commitment.

And I believe that this is where attitude that is learned and unlearned as discussed above, come to play in marriage.

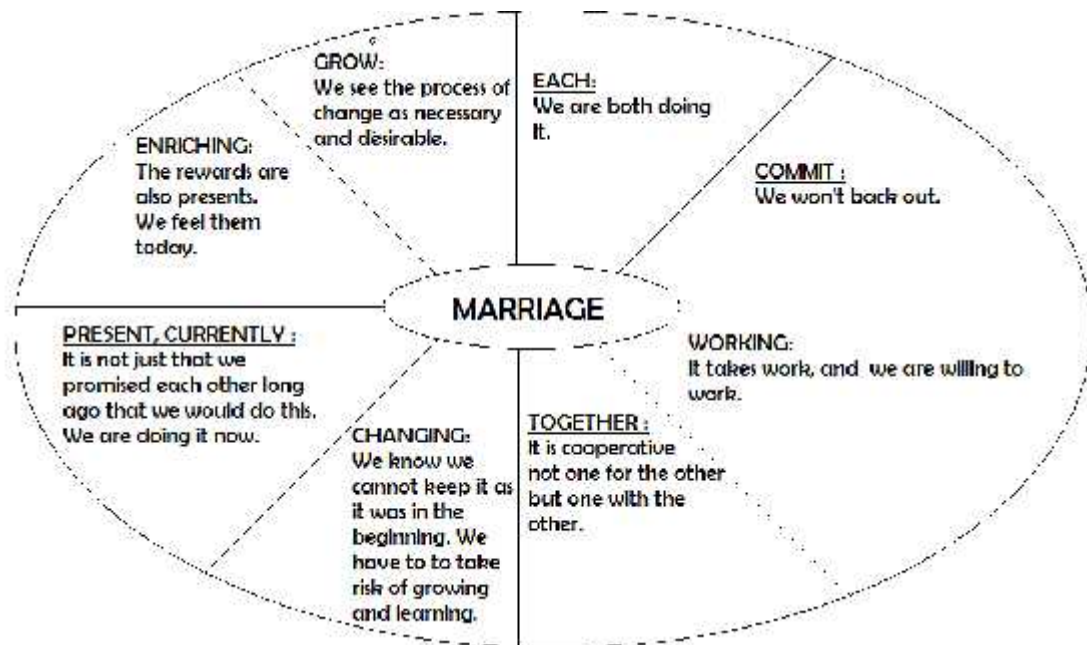
Formed attitude before marriage needs to be unlearned to help couples achieve permanence in their marriage.

“Love requires each partner to commit and work together to accept change in the current relationship and to be enriched by it”. Frances S. webb et al(1999).

Carl Rogers, a client centered Therapist who posited that “every person is good” i.e. the basis of his assumptions, gave the following as events of partnership in marriage in the diagram below:

The diagram below is Carl Roger’s contribution to marital commitment and permanence with the need of attitudinal change leading to growth in Marriage.

In the diagram he gives the following as the element of partnership in marriage: Each Commit, Working, Together, Changing, Present or Currently, Enriching and Grow.



### 2.1.2 ATTITUDES

In social psychology, attitudes are defined as learned, global evaluations of a person, object, place, or issue that influence thought and action. Put more simply, attitudes are basic expressions of approval or disapproval, favorability or unfavorability, or as Bem (1970) put it, likes and dislikes. Examples would include liking chocolate ice cream, being against abortion, or endorsing the values of a particular political party. (Perloff, 2008).

Social psychologists have studied attitude formation, the structure of attitudes, attitude change, the function of attitudes, and the relationship between attitudes and behaviour. Because people are influenced by the situation, general attitudes are not always good predictors of specific behaviour. For a variety of reasons, a person may value the environment and not recycle a can on a particular day. Attitudes that are well

remembered and central to our self-concept, however, are more likely to lead to behaviour, and measures of general attitudes do predict patterns of behaviour over time. (Bem, 1970).

Large amount of recent research on attitudes is on the distinction between traditional, self-report attitude measures and "implicit" or unconscious attitudes. For example, experiments using the Implicit Association Test have found that people often demonstrate bias against other races, even when their questionnaire responses reveal equal mindedness. One study found that explicit attitudes correlate with verbal behaviour in interracial interactions, whereas implicit attitudes correlate with nonverbal behaviour. (Heider & Skowronski, 2007). Attitudes are also involved in several other areas of the discipline, such as the following; conformity, interpersonal attraction, social perception, and prejudice.

Theories of attitude change underpin this research work. It is argued that theories of attitude change can be used in designing programmes and measuring their success. As the study is about educating people on wife abuse and its effects, it is appropriate to look at social learning theory (Bandura 1997) 'The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others'. Bandura states: Learning would be exceedingly labourious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them on what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modelling: from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action".

Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. The component processes underlying observational learning are:

First, Attention, including modelled events (distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence, functional value) and observer characteristics (sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, past reinforcement).

Second, Retention, including symbolic coding, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, motor rehearsal).

Third, Motor reproduction, including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, accuracy of feedback.

Last, Motivation, including external, vicarious and self reinforcement.

Because it encompasses attention, memory and motivation, social learning theory spans both cognitive and behavioural frameworks. Bandura's theory improves upon strictly behavioural interpretation of modeling provided by Miller & Dollard (1941). Bandura's work is related to the theories of Vygotsky and Lave, which also emphasizes the central role of social learning.

### **SCOPE/APPLICATION**

Social learning theories have been applied to the understanding of aggression (Bandura, 1973) and psychological disorders, particularly in the context of behaviour modification (Bandura, 1969). It is also the theoretical foundation for the technique of behaviour

modelling which is widely used in training programmes. In recent years, Bandura has focused his work on the concept of self-efficacy in a variety of contexts (e.g. Bandura, 1997).

## **PRINCIPLES**

- The highest level of observational learning is achieved by first organizing and rehearsing the modelled behaviour symbolically and then enacting it overtly. Coding modeled behaviour into words, labels or images results to better retention than simply observing
- Individuals are more likely to adopt a modelled behaviour if it results in outcomes they value.
- Individuals are more likely to adopt a modeled behaviour if the model is similar to the observer and has admired status and the behaviour has functional value.  
(<http://tip.psychology.org/bandura.html>)

This study is about training couples on how to achieve marital commitment and that requires some change in attitude. It is needful to look at two important and critical areas: First, cognition which relates to how people describe and think about what they do and how they adjust their minds on issues.

Second is the context which relates to the cultural, social, physical, emotional and psychological environment that shape people and the factors that can facilitate change. It is not possible to use single theory to understand behaviour as human behaviour itself is complex.

It is important therefore to understand what attitude actually is within the context of the marital commitment. According to Burton(1976), attitude implies all physical acts performed by individuals. Behaviour, for Behavioural theorists, is induced by cognition ie. mental processes of a person. It is noted that formal and informal education can affect cognition which often influences behaviour (Bandura 2000). Behaviour is said to be learned and unlearned. Learned behaviour that can mar marital commitment must be unlearned. It calls for change of attitude through education be it formal or informal.

The modern practice of adult education has been used on the term or concept Andragogy, i.e. the art of helping adults to learn – this theory was first proposed by Knowles, in 1980 with five assumptions but has now been developed into six core adult learning principles which include: the need to know, learner's self-concept, the role of the learner's experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation (Knowles, Holton and Swanson, 1998:64-68). They describe adults learning as a process of self directed inquiry. Knowles, Holton and Swanson noted that, adult have a need to know why they should unlearn something before they take time to learn. The need to know could include benefits to be gained from knowledge acquired or skills learnt and negative effect for not learning new skills. The six principles of Andragogy are as follows: need to know, learners' self concept, the role of the learners' experience, readiness to learn and orientation to learn (motivation)

As posted by Carl Rogers in the elements of partnership in marriage, changing attitude is curial for the development of marital commitment. According to Carl Rogers in the diagram above, for change of attitude to be achieved, spouses should know they cannot

keep attitude as it was in the beginning. They have to take the risk of growing and learning.

In the process of attitude change, the below literature is of great use.

### **2.1.3 PROCESSES OF OPINION CHANGE**

One way of changing people is to change their attitudes and opinions. Attitudinal change or opinion change is a type of change in which the change agent exercises social influence. This social influence can be a very superficial thing where the subject merely says what he thinks the change-agent would like to hear or it may be profound where the subject endorses and takes as his own the attitudes of the change-agent. Kelman distinguishes three ways or processes of social influence: compliance, identification and internalization. These processes are not presented by Kelman as though one were 'better' than another; they are stated simply as ways of exerting social influence. The ways of influencing will depend on (1) the importance that the subject attaches to opinion-change as a means of attaining his goal; (2) his readiness or unreadiness to accept this particular opinion; and (3) the power of the influencing agent.

It must be noted that Kelman consistently used the phrase 'opinion change' rather than 'attitude change' in his study of processes. However since an opinion is an expressed attitude, his remarks on opinion change have relevance to modification in attitude.

#### **Compliance**

According to Kelman, compliance is said to occur "when an individual accepts influence from another person or group because he hopes to achieve a favourable reaction from the other."<sup>16</sup> The typical situation is where a person expresses a "correct" opinion because it

is what is expected of him or because he believes that it is expected of him. The characteristic of compliance is that opinions are only expressed when the person's behaviour is observable by the influencing agent who has the means-control and who is seen as limiting the choice of behaviour. The subject is concerned with the effects of his behaviour. (R.S. Lifton, "Thought Reform of Western Civilians in Chinese Communist Prisons/ *Psychiatry*, 19 (1956), pp. 173-195 and Kelman, "Processes...", in Bennis, Benne, and Chin, *op. cit.*, p. 511.)

### **Identification**

"Identification can be said to occur when an individual adopts behaviour derived from another person or a group because this behaviour is associated with a satisfying self-defining relationship to this person or group."<sup>19</sup> This is the most elusive of Kelman's concepts. Identification contains at least three components:

- (1) Identification is defined in terms of behaviour, the verbal and nonverbal behaviour of the individual. Identification of the subject with the change-agent is inferred from what the subject does or says.
- (2) This behaviour is linked up with how the subject *sees* himself (the self-image) in relation to the change-agent.
- (3) This relationship is all important to the client, precisely because it gives him a sense of identity. This is what is meant by a self-defining relationship. (L. Empey and J. Rabow, "The Provo Experiment in Delinquency Rehabilitation," *American Sociological Review*, 26:5, October 1961, pp. 679-695 and (R.C. Sarri and R.D. Vinter, "Group Treatment Strategies in Juvenile Correctional Programs," Unpublished paper, University

of Michigan, 1963 and Kelman, "Processes...", in Bennis, Benne and Chin, *op. fit.*, p. 511.)

### **Internalization**

Kelman states that internalization occurs "when an individual accepts influence because the induced behaviour is congruent with his value system." The characteristics of the change-agent do not play an important part in internalization, for the important factor is the agent's credibility. Kelman does not analyze the concept of credibility, though he draws attention to its complexity. As for internalization in group work, it is clear that internalization does take place in a group setting. The group member adopts attitudes because perhaps they are seen to work in and out of the group or because these attitudes fit in so well with his values.

#### **2.1.4 ATTITUDE CHANGE AND MARITAL COMMITMENT.**

All the above literature reviewed on attitude change and marital commitment suggests to the researcher and the readers of this research that the two are inseparable. For marital commitment to be achieved to enhance permanence in marriage as stated above, spouses should change their opinions or attitudes to suit one another.

## **2.2 MARRIAGE**

Marriage according to one French essayist, Montaigne (1582) is like a cage; "one sees the birds outside desperate to get in and those inside equally desperate to get out". Does this assertion imply that there is a hidden factor in marriage which can only be felt by those

who experience it? Marriage forms part of an intimate relationship. The term “intimate relationship” is used here to be maximally inclusive of any romantic and/or sexual relationship between two non-biologically related people who live together in the same household. Ideally, such relationships are loving and supportive, protective of and safe for each member of the couple. Unfortunately, some people while fulfilling this nurturing, positive needs of their partners at least some of the time and early in their relationship’s development also behave abusively, causing their partners (and often as well) substantial emotional and /or physical pain and injury. In extreme cases, abusive behaviour ends in the emotional and /or physical pain and injury. It sometimes ends in the death of one or both partners and sometimes other people as well. Non-lethal abuse may end when a relationship ends. Frequently however, abuse continues or worsens once the relationship is over. This can happen when the relationship is ended by one of the partners or seemingly by mutual consent

Despite its prevalence, abuse against women has remained invisible for long time. One reason for this is the lack of statistics for the issue. In addition, since such acts are often confined to “privacy” and “sanctity” of the home, they are predominately treated as ”private” and natural, and not deserving public attention, and they are therefore accorded less importance than other forms of violence. Furthermore, for some years now, the argument of cultural sovereignty contributed to making gender violence less visible and politically difficult to handle.

As a result of national and international level of advocacy carried out by women’s rights activists, and with the passing of the Convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW, 1993) and the declaration on the Elimination of

Violence Against Women (DEVAW, 1998), gender violence has gained increase recognition and attention worldwide and serious efforts are being made to address it at all levels in communities, nationally and internationally. (*Journal of American Medical Association*. 273, 1763-1767)

### **2.2.1 MARRIAGE IN THE GHANAIAN CONTEXT**

Scholars tend to remark that in developing societies (such as that of Ghana) where socio-economic life is characterized to a large extent by poverty, personal strivings of marriage partners seem to be geared more towards material realities than the fulfillment of the psychological needs of marriage where personal relationship to a partner produces the companionship, deep levels of communication and sharing (Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1985; Klomegah, 1997). Such experience might be culturally grounded and reinforced by stereotypic systems of gender role. In West African societies, men are generally the „champions (hunters, workers, kings, opinion leaders, etc). This gives rise partly to the prevalence of polygamous marriage systems in which affluence is the fundamental qualification (besides other factors such as religion and education) by which men in society take on more wives. As Klomegah (1997) reported, in Ghana (and other West African societies), polygamy is very common. In the typical rural communities where farming is the main occupation, having many wives is of economic benefit to the men since the wives (and their children) constitute the labour force on the farms. In accounting for aspects of Ghanaian culture, Sarpong (1974) outlined the important

reasons why polygamous marriage is prevalent in Ghanaian (and African) cultures. These are summarized below:

1. In the traditional African understanding, menstruating women are considered as unclean and unworthy. They therefore cannot be in the company of men, especially their husbands; they cannot assist them in their work or even cook for them. For this reason, sexual intercourse is prohibited between the husband and wife during the menstrual period, thus necessitating the presence of another wife to whom the man turns in rotation.
2. Sexual intercourse between husband and wife is avoided between three months and two and a half years (depending on health and practical factors such as the need for helpers) after birth. Sometimes the woman has to go and stay with her mother (or mother-in-law) for the first few months after child birth, and this applies more especially to young mothers (wives). The solution for this sexual deprivation and loss of the normal services of a wife (for the man) is to have another wife to turn to for the gratification of his sexual and social desires.
3. Just like other human societies, in African societies, the human world “belongs” to the man. The man therefore, unlike the woman, has the prerogative to marry as many women as he desires or has capacity for.
4. Women outnumber men in African society, as in other societies. Historical and ethnographic evidence is adduced to explain this demographic trend in terms of men in the past having engaged in more dangerous activities (such as hunting, fishing and warfare). This relatively reduced the male population. Thus polygamy carries the social benefit of getting lonely, unsupported women in society to be absorbed into marriage.

5. Social reputation and memorial for men is defined by having a large number of descendants. This serves as a strong incentive to polygamy.
6. Economic consideration is another factor underlying polygamy, especially beyond the last two decades, and presently in rural communities where arable farming is a main economic activity. A man with many wives and children hopes to be wealthier than a man with only one wife, because his wives and children will help him in his occupation. It is quite interesting to find that sometimes, women in African society seriously and genuinely advise their husbands to “find other wives so that the household and family activities may become lighter for them” (Sarpong, 1974: 78). Such causal factors of polygamy pertain to most African cultures, not excluding those of Ghana, regardless of tribal plurality. Having large families is therefore „designated“ as success and power for men in such societies (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974).

Further, in Ghanaian (or African) cultural experience, marriage is not merely a relationship between two individuals (man and woman) who are in love. Rather, marriage is a union between the families of the couples. The marriage contract on the surface appears to be between two individuals but in reality, the contract is between the lineage groups of both the man and woman. This however does not necessarily imply a constant future invasion of the privacy of the couple by family members of the two lineages in the contract. (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974; Tettey, 2002).

In typical African traditions, the individual being a composite part of his community does not have absolute autonomy in the choice of marriage partner. Gyekye (1996:79) notes about African marriage: “Marriage is contracted only after each lineage group has satisfied itself of the worthiness or suitability of the man or woman. The

marriage ceremony itself involves not just the couple, but an entire retinue of immediate and distant relatives, as many of the members of the lineage groups as can attend – plus neighbours and friends.” This *socio-centric* ontology is characteristic of all typical African marriages, and in Ghana, all the various tribal traditions generally follow this path. Such experience is uncharacteristic of the western reality of marriage represented by theory and research in social psychology.

The socio-cultural systems of Ghana have undergone considerable change in the past three decades. The major engines of change include education, religion, politics, urbanization and transport and communication technology. For example traditional African religion, Islam and the mainline Christian churches (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian) predominated until the early 1970s which saw the upsurge of independent Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian churches. These are radical Christian denominations with large memberships and very fast growth rates with a fundamentalist adherence to basic Christian doctrines such as monogamy. Members of such groups are converts from both traditional African religion and the mainline churches, and sometimes Islam and other religions. The religious education offered by such independent churches is an accelerator of westernization in cultural terms, as many of the traditional African cultural practices are frowned upon and seen as typically „unchristian“ (cf. Assimeng, 1989).

For example the validity of the marriage on the basis of only family recognition is questioned by some Christian churches who insist that the marriage gifts be passed through the church elders, in addition to the families (Gyekye, 1996; Vallenga 1983). Here, the powerful influence of collectivistic syndromes on marriage is evident, drawing a clear distinction between marital experience in such collectivist cultural settings and

that of atomistic, individualist cultural settings. In individualist cultures marriage offering is made directly to the target woman or lady while in collectivist cultures the marriage offering is given through a network of relatives and church elders.

With rapid social change and change in the security of the lineage system, many women in Ghanaian society want a stronger emphasis on the conjugal bond (Vallenga, 1983). However, though the lineage system may not provide the strong security of the past, many of its forms still linger on. As Vallenga puts it, “polygamy in one form or another is still widespread, but again without the security of former times” (Vallenga, 1983:152).

As mentioned above, (e.g. Gyekye, 1996; Vallenga, 1983) traditionally, marriage in Ghana (as in other non-western cultures) involves rites performed together by the two lineage families, which takes the form of exchange of items and money, and an intense celebration that binds the two parties and lineage groups together. These social ties remain relatively strong and serves as the social legitimacy for the marriage. Thus marriage at the traditional level is socially recognized and legitimate in Ghanaian society, both rural and urban. However, since there is usually no documentary evidence in the form of a court deed or a church certificate, it is becoming increasingly fashionable to precede beyond the traditional marriage rites to secure such documentary evidence by having a church wedding or a court deed.

### **2.2.2 MARRIAGE FORMS IN GHANA**

There are several issues that affect marriage registration in Ghana. Three different forms of marriages are recognized in Ghana, and there is in existence three different laws under which a person can legitimately get married or divorce. Each form of marriage has its

essential elements as well as incidence. Furthermore, there are issues arising relating to the implications of celebrating more than one marriage type in terms of which becomes subsumed under the other. Furthermore, there are several people in Ghana who simply cohabit without celebrating any marriage form and issues arise as to the legal implication of such union.

### **2.2.3 LAWS REGULATING MARRIAGES IN GHANA**

Ghanaian laws (1992 Constitution) indicates that male and female adults ages 18 years and above who are not closely related by blood or thorough marriage can lawfully enter into a marriage provided that other laws in force does not prohibit the relationship. The three laws governing marriages in Ghana are as follows:

- Customary Law marriage as celebrated under customary law and could be registered in the customary marriage and divorce registration law 1985 (PNDCL 112) at district assemblies
- Marriage under the marriage ordinance (Cap 127) enacted in 1884 as reviewed- this enables a man to marry only one woman and is based on Christian principles of monogamy. Such a marriage must be celebrated by an authorized person in a licensed place.
- Marriage under the Mohammedan's ordinance (Cap 127) enacted in 1907. This is based on Islamic rule and potentially polygamous since it enables a Moslem to marry up to four women at a time and to register such marriages at designated government offices.

Closely linked to the issue of marriage is that of divorce where the laws in existence are also plural in nature. More over in addition to the different laws regulating marriage forms in Ghana one of the incidents of some of the marriage forms is that they are potentially polygamous. Furthermore even though there is a lot of cohabiting couples, there is no clear legislation given rights to them and this is problematic and usually results in women in particular suffering a lot of injustice Each form of marriage as well as the issues raised will be examined in detail below.

#### **2.2.4 CUSTOMARY LAW MARRIAGE**

At customary law it has been indicated that marriage is not a union of one man to another woman to the exclusion of all others as it is under English common law. It is rather a union between the family of the man and that of the woman, with the man reserving the right to marry other women. In *Yaotey v. Quaye* Ollennu J, as he then was, stated the issue as follows: One peculiar characteristic of our system of marriage which distinguishes it from the system of marriage in Europe and other places is that it is not just a union of this man and the woman: it is a union of the family of 'this man' and this 'woman'. The actual rite for the celebration of a customary law marriage differs from one ethnic group to the other even though there are some common features running through them. Text writers like Sarbah, Danquah and Rattray have documented the customary rites relating to marriage in some communities in present day Ghana. With regard to the age of marriage traditionally there was no age limit and therefore girls in particular could be married off any time after they reach the age of puberty. However current legislation has curtailed this trend and makes it an offence to marry a person below the age of eighteen (18) years under any form of marriage including customary law marriage.

## 2.2.5 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF CUSTOMARY LAW MARRIAGE

The courts have tried to distil the essential elements of customary law marriage in a number of cases. The case that sets out the classic elements of a customary law marriage is the 1061 case of Yaotey v. Quaye where Olennu J. (as he then was) listed the following essentials of customary law marriage:

- i. Agreement of the parties to live together as husband and wife
- ii. consent of the family of the man that he should have the woman to his wife; that consent may be indicated by the acceptance of a drink from the man or his family or merely by the family of the woman acknowledging the man as the husband of the woman;
- iii. Consent of the family of the woman that she should be joined in marriage to the man; that consent is indicated by the acceptance of a drink from the man or his family or merely by the family of the woman acknowledging the man as the husband of the woman; and
- iv. Consummation of the marriage, i.e. the man and the woman are living together in the sight of the entire world as man and wife.

The essentials as set out above have been challenged by people who are of the opinion that there is the need for more flexibility in determining whether or not customary marriage actually exists or not instead of applying the so-called essentials. Olennu J., disagrees with the essentials laid down by the courts and suggest that the muddle and uncertainty on the issue of whether or not the relationship between two consenting adults can be classified as a marriage or not have largely been generated through over reliance

on formality instead of content. He critically examined each of the essential elements articulated by Ollennu J. following research he conducted in selected towns in the Central and Brong Ahafo regions and concluded his article by identifying a number of factors that should guide a court in arriving at a finding or otherwise of a customary marriage:

- i. The length of time the couple have lived together and have held themselves out as husband and wife, the equivalent of the common law repute and co habitation;
- ii. Closely related to the above, what their community thinks about that relationship;
- iii. Absence or presence of issues of the relationship;
- iv. Common ventures such as farming or trading enterprise undertaken in the belief that they are married;
- v. How much they have commingled their money and property, for example in a common budget or a money savings plan;
- vi. Whether they hold themselves bound to attend and pay for funeral expenses upon death occurring in each other's family and;
- vii. Perhaps among the more educated, enlightened and "westernized" once, if they submit income tax returns claiming for themselves benefits to which only the married are entitled; if they hold bonds and shares in their joint names and if they name each other as beneficiaries in their individual wills and any other death benefits to which they may be entitled.
- viii. To him these are more reliable indicators that the parties intend a more permanent relationship than say concubinage and a determination based on

them has a more solid foundation in present day circumstances than the present method which seems to put a premium on formalities instead of realities.

In recent case, it was acknowledged by the courts that where a man makes a woman pregnant and present drinks to the woman's parents, cohabits with her and performs the duties which a husband is normally expected to perform and the parents acquiesce to this a valid customary marriage exists. Even though this is what the case law suggests, in most communities it has been indicated that unless all the rites relating to the marriage as outlined by Ollennu J. have been performed, a valid customary rite marriage cannot be said to exist.

#### **2.2.6 CELEBRATION OF CUSTOMARY LAW MARRIAGE**

The actual rite for the celebration of a customary law marriage differs from one ethnic group to the other even though there are some common features running through them. Writers like Sarbah, Danquah and Rattery have documented the customary right pertaining to marriage in some communities in present day Ghana. His book, Fante customary laws, J. Sarbah(1968) describes the rights related to the celebration of a customary marriage as follows briefly stated: When a man desires to marry a woman he goes personally or sends someone to her parents or family for her hand. If his proposal is agreeable to the family and he receives their consent the consawment money or token valuing as much as he can afford, is sent to them. That is all that is necessary to constitute the marriage tie.

Steps for customary marriage among most Akan groups could be summarized as follows: A man wishing to marry a girl sends some relatives to the girl's parents to ask for her hand in marriage. They go with a bottle of Schnapps and some money as the knocking fee. This rite is known as Abisa i.e knocking. If they agree to the request, the messengers thank them with another bottle of Schnapps. The Ewes, including the Anolos have a similar ceremony called Vofofu. Some people regard this ceremony as the engagement stage. It is also a period when both families conduct investigations into the background of the respective parties to the marriage. The next rite is the actual marriage ceremony where "Ti Sika" or head money for the girl is paid and other presents are given including a gift for the girl's father (Agya nabua) a gift for her mother (Ena ne tambaba). On this day some refreshment is given to the visitors by the girls' relations. The Ewes refer to this stage as the Tabiabia.

The next step is called Nhyaie that means taking the girl to the man. Some presents are represented to the girl by the man's messengers. On this day the bride's brothers demand compensation which is called Akonta sika before they allow the messenger to take her away to complete the whole process.

It should be noted that whilst the payment of what is sometimes referred to as Bride Price or dowry in most parts of southern Ghana is in the form of Drinks and money. Within parts of the three northern regions, the dowry is more substantial and is in the form of the cowries, cola nuts, cows, sheep and other live stock. Furthermore, in modern Ghana apart from the items traditionally required by the different ethnic groups, certain items like the presentation of a bible and engagement rings which are associated with western engagement has led to a situation where the whole customary marriage rites are

sometimes wrongly referred to as an engagement. In *Afrifa v. Class – Peters* the courts had the opportunity to consider this issue and held that the gifts of a ring and bible are significant for rings and bibles are unknown in customary marriages. They are essentially Christian symbols which denote an intention to marry in a Christian monogamous fashion. These two items have currently become a normal feature in the celebration of most customary law marriages reason the presumption that most of such marriages would be followed by the celebration of a Christian monogamous marriage under the marriage ordinance.

### **2.2.7 FEATURES OF CUSTOMARY LAW MARRIAGES**

One common feature of a customary law marriage is that it is potentially polygamous. The husband is entitled in law to marry more than one wife. Another feature is existence of essential elements making the marriage valid. Furthermore in all customary law marriages, the parties must have a capacity to marry. Sarbah puts it as follows in his *Fanti Customary Laws*. In order to be valid, a man must not be in violation of any rule as to tribal relationship or consanguinity. A man may not marry his uterine sister, His father's sister, mother's sister, brother's daughter or mother's sister's daughter. A man can marry his father's sister's child. An adopted son or daughter falls within the same rules both in his adoptive and natural families and the same rule applies to their issues. Sarbah's list of prohibitions differs from that of other communities, particularly those from patrilineal lineages. For some of these ethnic groups like the Dagaba, Isala and Nankese the restrictions include the prohibition of people marrying from the same clan and a person marrying his father's sister's child .similar prohibitions exist among the Gas.

### **2.2.8 DISSOLUTION OF CUSTOMARY LAW MARRIAGE**

Customary law allows parties to a marriage to dissolve it. There are procedures for the dissolution of customary marriages in each ethnic group. Grounds for the dissolution of a customary law marriage vary but there are some grounds that are common to most ethnic groups in Ghana. Both male and female partners to a marriage can take steps to initiate divorce proceedings at customary law. According to Sarbah, adultery on the part of the wife is ground for divorcing her since at customary law a man can marry several women but a woman cannot at the same time have more than one husband. Such a husband can divorce her and refuse her any maintenance. According to this writer, witchcraft on the part of the wife is also another ground for a man to divorcing his wife. When a man divorces his wife on grounds of adultery or witchcraft, he can claim from her family the consowment and any other expenses.

Although men also suffer from domestic abuse and violence, women are five to eight times more likely than men to be victimized by an intimate partner because men are more often the abusers. It was believed that women were opposite of men, incapable in function and charged with emotion. This made people to look down on women as inferior and deficient in function to perform on the job. Relegation of women to the background and subsequent abuse can be traced in the ancient times. It was believed that God created men first so men had the right to dominate and control women. Even in our communities when a child is born, the child bears the name of the father indicating the supremacy of the man as being the final authority even in marriage. The result of technological advances such as the inventions of the wheels, Mathematics, expansion of metals were all carried out by men.(Elia 1997). It produced social inequality where people who were able

to produce more food than others, assumed positions of relative power, privilege and prestige. This was in favor of the men. (Elia, 1998). One finds peace, security and shelter, where harmony prevails. Researchers like (Koam 1999), however pointed to the fact that the family may be a cradle of violence and females within the home are the ones subjected to violence in the family. Rosa (1982) gives explanation to the family as the most violent group in the society with the exception of the police and the military.

### **2.3 MARITAL ABUSE**

Abuse is a complex psychosocial problem that affects large numbers of adults as well as children throughout the world. It is listed in the Diagnostic and Statistic Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR, 1994) under the heading of “Other Conditions That May Be a Focus of Critical Attention”. Although abuse was first defined with regard to children when it first received sustained attention in the 1950s, clinicians and researchers now recognized that adults could suffer abuse in a number of different circumstances. Abuse refers to harmful or injurious treatment of another human being that may include physical, sexual, verbal, psychological/emotional, intellectual, or spiritual maltreatment. The cost of abuse to society runs into billions of dollars annually in the world. They include not only the direct costs of immediate medical and psychiatric treatment of abused people but also the indirect costs of learning difficulties, interrupted education, workplace absenteeism, and long-term health problems of abuse survivors. ([www.minddisorders.com/A-Br/Abuse](http://www.minddisorders.com/A-Br/Abuse), 29/06/2011)

## **Social and Educational**

The cognitive and emotional after effects of abuse have a powerful impact on adult educational, social, and occupational functioning. Children who are abused are often in physical and emotional pain at school; they cannot concentrate on schoolwork, and consequently fall behind in their grades. They often find it hard to make or keep friends, and may be victimized by bullies or become bullies themselves. In adult life, abuse survivors are at risk of repeating childhood patterns through forming relationships with abusive spouses, employers, or professionals. Even though a survivor may consciously want to avoid re-abuse, the individual is often unconsciously attracted to people who remind him or her of the family of origin. Abused adults are also likely to fail to complete their education, or they accept employment that is significantly below their actual level of ability.

## **Treatment**

Treatment of the after effects of abuse must be tailored to the needs of the specific individual, but it usually involves a variety of long-term considerations that may include legal concerns, geographical relocation, and housing or employment as well as immediate medical or psychiatric care.

## **Medical and psychiatric**

In addition to requiring immediate treatment for physical injuries, abused children and adults often need long-term psychotherapy in order to recover from specific mental disorders and to learn new ways of dealing with distorted thoughts and feelings. This approach to therapy is known as cognitive restructuring. Specific mental disorders that

have been linked to childhood abuse include major depression, bulimia nervosa , social phobia , Munchausen syndrome by proxy, generalized anxiety disorder , post-traumatic stress disorder , borderline personality disorder , dissociative amnesia , and dissociative identity disorder . Abused adults may develop post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression, or substance abuse disorders. At present, researchers are focusing on genetic factors as a partial explanation of the fact that some people appear to react more intensely than others to being abused.

### **Legal Considerations**

Medical professionals and, increasingly, religious professionals as well, are required by law to report wife abuse to law enforcement officials, usually a protection agency. Physicians are granted immunity from lawsuits for making such reports. Adults in abusive situations may encounter a variety of responses from law enforcement or the criminal justice system. In general, cases of wife abuse, stalking, and sexual abuse by professionals are taken more seriously than they were two or three decades ago. Many communities now require police officers to arrest the aggressor in domestic violence situations, and a growing number of small towns as well as cities have shelters for family members fleeing violent households. All major medical, educational, and legal professional societies, as well as mainstream religious bodies, have adopted strict codes of ethics, and have procedures in place for reporting cases of abuse by their members. Abuse in the workplace, however, is still a relatively new area of concern, and people affected by it have relatively few legal protections or resources as of Wu Z. & Hart R. 2002. (The Matrimonial Causes Act, 1971, Ghana)

## **Prevention**

Prevention of abuse requires long-term social changes in attitudes toward violence, gender roles, and the relationship of the family to other institutions. Research in the structure and function of the brain may help to develop more effective treatments for the aftereffects the development of the brain as well as produce such dietary deficiency diseases as rickets. In both children and adults, repeated trauma produces changes in the neurochemistry of the brain that affects memory formation. Instead of memories being formed in the normal way which allow them to be modified by later experiences and integrated into the person's ongoing life, traumatic memories are stored as chaotic fragments of emotion and sensations that are sealed off from ordinary consciousness. These traumatic memories may then erupt from time to time in the form of flashbacks.

## **Cognitive and emotional**

Abused people develop distorted patterns of cognition (knowing) because they are stressed emotionally by abuse. As adults, they may suffer from cognitive distortions that make it hard for them to distinguish between normal occurrences and abnormal ones, or between important matters and relatively trivial ones. They often misinterpret other people's behaviour and refuse to trust them. Emotional distortions include such patterns as being unable to handle strong feelings, or being unusually tolerant of behaviour of abuse and possibly new approaches to help break the intergenerational cycle of abuse. At present, preventive measures include protective removal of children or elders from

abusive households; legal penalties for abusive spouses and professionals; and educating the public about the nature and causes of abuse.

## **2.4 MARITAL SATISFACTION**

Marital satisfaction, to me, is defined simply as being content and happy within one's marriage. However, after saying "I do" obtaining this is not so simple. There are many factors influencing marital satisfaction. Such factors include demographics, individual factors like attachment security or alcoholism, marital interactions like the husband's contribution to household labour or intimacy goal, and also the influence of external stress. Most specifically I intend to look at the role that depression plays in married couples.

One demographic factor is religious heterogamy. According to Williams and Lawler (2003) both communication and parenting variables were strong predictors of marital satisfaction. Their study involved comparing same-church and inter-church Christian couples on a variety of relationship variables. The two groups did not differ on non-religious variables or on levels of marital satisfaction, but they did differ on religious variables.

The other demographic factors influencing marital satisfaction concerns issues of race, class, and gender differences. Dilloway and Broman (2001) studied 492 individuals from dual-earning couples. Their study also involved questions regarding division of household labour. Their findings reported that blacks were generally more dissatisfied in their marriages than whites. Men reported a higher level of satisfaction than women.

There was no significant difference in satisfaction for variables of age, education, employment, etc. The authors of this study feel that the effect of class on marital satisfaction is more complex than their study can explain. Another factor involving race is the idea of interracial marriages. Xuanningfu, Tora, and Kendal (2001) looked at levels of marital satisfaction in interracial and intercultural marriages. Those who were in both an interracial and an intercultural marriage reported the lowest levels of marital satisfaction. When only one of the two was present there was no statistical significance.

There are also other individual factors that do not involve demographics. One individual factor is mood and social comparison. In this study (Buunk and Ybema, 2003) 135 women examined the effects of comparing their marriage with other women's on mood, identification, and relationship evaluation. Either upward or downward targets were selected along with high or low effort. High effort and upward target led to positive mood and increased marital quality. Another individual factor is attachment security. In a study by Cobb, Davila, and Bradbury (2001), 172 couples were surveyed within six months of marriage and again one year later.

Questions involved attachment security, perceptions about partner's security, and marital satisfaction. Supportive behaviours were also videotaped in the initial screening.

Positive perceptions of partner's security were associated with supportive behaviour which predicted increased marital satisfaction. The next pair of individual factors is personality and temperament. In this study 166 couples were administered marital satisfaction and Pleasantness Arousability-Dominance temperament scales. Marital satisfaction correlated positively with couples who had similarity in pleasantness and

dominance. People who were more pleasant reported being happier in marriage and vice versa (Blum and Mehrabian, 1999). Pregnancy and its interaction with depression and perfectionism is also a factor. Dimitovsky, Levy-Shiff, and Schattner-Zanany (2002) studied the relationship between depression and perfectionism and marital satisfaction in 100 women who were in the last trimester of their first pregnancy and 50 married women who had not yet been pregnant. Pregnant women had lower introjective depression. There were no differences in perfectionism. Introjective depression was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction. For pregnant women there was a negative relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and marital satisfaction.

The final individual factor regards alcoholism and treatment. The sample for this study by Kelly, Halfork, and Young (2000) included 32 women with marital and alcohol problems. After one month of treatment, the women reported lower levels of depression and alcohol use as well as higher levels of marital satisfaction. There are many individual factors that influence marital satisfaction. These include such things as a person's demographic information, mood, attachment styles, or temperament. There are also interactional factors. These are factors where both members of the couple are involved.

The first interactional factor is therapy. In this study by Denton, Burleson, Clark, Rodriguez, and Hobbs (2000) half of 40 couples attended weekly sessions of emotion-focused therapy for eight weeks, and half were placed on an eight week waiting list.

Participants from the treatment group reported higher levels of marital satisfaction. The next factor involves the husband's contribution to household labour. In this study (Allen and Webster, 2001) 319 couples where the wife had developed a physical impairment

were found doing more chores at follow-up than those who were unhappy or had traditional views.

Another factor looks at the relationship between marital characteristics, marital interaction processes, and marital satisfaction. In this study 201 participants in their first marriage took various inventories measuring marital characteristics and processes to see the effect on marital satisfaction. Six processes were seen to be significant when mediated by three latent factors (love, loyalty, and shared values) and two moderating variables (length of marriage and gender) (Author unknown, 2004).

The next factor looks at whether marital satisfaction is a product of individual factors or the dyadic environment. Johnson and Booth (1998) studied people married in 1980 in a longitudinal study to see if personal traits or dyadic properties brought marital stability. Data highly suggests dyadic properties, but some individuals carry qualities that influence marital quality.

Whisman and Delinsky (2002) focused on an information processing measure of partner-schemas using incidental recall. Such tasks involve being asked about positive or negative adjectives to describe the partner. Correlations between the measure and marital satisfaction were significant as long as depression was surveyed at baseline and five years later.

The next factor we look at is partner-schemas. In this study Whisman and Delinsky (2002) focused on an information processing measure of partner-schemas using incidental recall. Such tasks involve being asked about positive or negative adjectives to describe the partner. Correlations between the measure and marital satisfaction were significant as long as depression was controlled for.

One obvious interactional factor is intimacy. Sanderson and Cantor (2001) look at 44 couples who completed measures examining their own intimacy goals, their perception of their partner's goals, marital interaction patterns like social support or time spent together, and marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction was associated with the intimacy goals of both partners. It was also found to be mediated by the perceptions of both spouses. The final interactional factor has to do with recreation and role support. This particular study by Baldwin and Baldwin (1999) has to do with running. The article discusses the need for recreation and role support within the marriage. The study sampled runners and their commitment to running, as well as role support and marital satisfaction. Role support and marital satisfaction were positively correlated. It wasn't essential to have shared recreation as long as the partners supported each other's choices.

One additional factor that doesn't fall into any of the previous groups is external stress which can come from a variety of sources including work or other family members. The article by Neff and Karney (2004) addresses the ways in which external stress influences marital quality. It examines relationship cognitions that might mediate stress over time. Stress negatively influences marital perception and the way the spouse interprets that perception.

There are many factors which influence marital satisfaction. There are demographic factors like race or religion. There are individual factors like temperament, and there are couple factors like intimacy. Stress levels also play a role. The next major factor which we will focus on primarily is depression. One big factor that can affect levels of marital satisfaction is when one of the spouses is clinically depressed. Current research focuses

mainly on the relationship between the coping strategies used by the non-depressed spouse on the impact on them. Spangenberg and Theron (1999) did a study on the relationship between the coping used and the levels of anxiety, depression, and marital maladjustment in the non-depressed spouse. They report that according to Coyne et al (1987) and Merikangas, Prusoff, Kupfer, and Frank (1985) that when someone is married to a clinically depressed person that stress is inherent. They further report that according to Hinchcliffe, Hooper, Roberts, and Vaughan (1975), the future quality of the marriage is dependent on how the non-depressed spouse deals with the stress that is brought on by their partner's depression.

Halgin and Lovejoy (1991) indicate that there is a reciprocal relationship between depression in a spouse and maladjustment in the marriage. The depressed spouse may have little interest in social relationships of the couple thus causing the nondepressed spouse to feel more isolated, and this can cause further deterioration in the marriage (Halgin & Lovejoy, 1991). The study by Spangenberg and Theron (1999) consisted of 50 non-depressed spouses of patients who were receiving some form of treatment for major depressive disorder. The breakdown of the sample included 33 husbands and 17 wives ranging from age 31 to 80. All participants had from one to four children, an income ranging from \$2,500 to \$20,000 per month, and education levels ranging from the completion of grade 10 to having some postsecondary education. They used a five part questionnaire containing biographical information, "The Coping Strategy Indicator", "The Beck Depression Inventory", "The S-scale of the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory" and "The Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test." A positive correlation was found between an avoidant coping strategy and levels of depression, and a negative correlation was found between levels of depression and a problem-solving strategy. There was no

correlation between depression and the social-support strategy. Anxiety levels correlated positively with avoidant strategy, and there were no other significant correlations for anxiety levels. The only significant correlation for marital adjustment was negative with the avoidant strategy although the other two leaned in the positive direction. Spangenberg and Theron (1999) suggest that the anxiety levels in the non-depressed spouse make it harder to give proper support to the depressed spouse, and according to Brown and Harris (1978) the poor support can in turn aggravate the depression. It is clear that the avoidant coping strategy is not the way to go. Cognitive-behavioural group programs are recommended as a way of developing effective coping strategies that will find way of confronting and managing emotional and practical problems brought on by the depression rather than just avoiding it (Spangenberg & Theron, 1999).

It seems as though if you are in a loving relationship with somebody who suffers from depression that you would do everything within your power to help them. Halgin and Lovejoy (1991) state that this is not always the case because although the spouse might be in the best position to help the depressed person they will often become angry, frustrated, and confused.

This leads to conflict which only furthers the depression thus creating a vicious cycle. There are problems on a domestic level as well Halgin and Lovejoy (1991) state that according to Targum et al. (1981) there are monetary problems in such households. The depressed person is usually less able to complete their domestic responsibilities such as housework or caring for the children, which places added burdens on the non-depressed spouse (Halgin & Lovejoy, 1991). The research by Halgin and Lovejoy (1991) also focuses on the use of coping strategies. They discuss three strategies that were proposed by Bilings and Moos (1984). The first is appraisal-focused coping, which tries

to understand and define the symptoms of the depressed spouse. The next is problem focused coping, where the non-depressed spouse tries to control many environmental factors so that there will be as few stressful situations as possible.

Finally, there is emotion focused coping. Here, the partner will try to regulate the destructive emotions that come out of the oppressive environment. The finding was that problem and emotion strategies can result in lowering the depression where avoidance and emotional outbursts from the spouse will cause the depression to be higher. Halgin and Lovejoy (1991) feel that the two keys to having success in this situation are managing the stress of the environment and having a good understanding of the origins of the depression.

Halgin and Lovejoy (1991) also tell the story of Katherine, a 37-year-old woman whose husband had developed signs of depression. They had been married for ten years, and then her husband, Bill, was laid off from his job. When he developed symptoms of a deep depression and refused to get help, Katherine became frustrated and angry. She often found herself taking her frustration out on the children and wondering if she was to blame for her husband's depression. When she sought the help of a therapist, she was also found to be exhibiting depressive symptoms. They go on to discuss what steps could have been taken to prevent Katherine from being overcome by Bill's depression.

It is necessary to seek the help of a therapist in order to find ways to reduce stress and limit counter therapeutic interaction with the depressed spouse. It is also necessary to gain accurate knowledge about the condition of the depressed spouse. Katherine's belief that Bill's depression could have only come from dissatisfaction with her as a partner was false. The partners should interact in ways that will not further the depression. The non-depressed spouse needs to be constructive and not destructive. They should balance

between recognizing the pain that their loved one is in and trying to help find ways to move past the pain. The goal should be to reduce tensions at home, and family and friends should not be avoided. The non-depressed spouse should try to think optimistic thoughts. It isn't entirely clear to me whether this is based on literature or on their own opinion. However, before stating this they do cite Arieti (1979) and Torrey (1983) just prior to these statements, so I believe it to be based on that at least in part. They go on to say that sometimes the non-depressed spouse will put out mixed signals by indicating their desire to help but visually disapproving. This can worsen the depression.

We have seen that there are many factors influencing marital satisfaction and commitment. There are demographic factors and individual qualities that influence it. There are interaction processes that have an effect. External stress also has a role. Most importantly we saw that depression affects marital satisfaction and hence the commitment of the partners. There are a variety of coping strategies that should be used by the non-depressed spouse so that the depression will not be furthered and so that the spouse will not begin to become depressed themselves. Some of the best ones were problem and emotion-focused coping. Avoidance and emotional outbursts were found to be bad ways of coping. As we saw in the case of Katherine, it is important for the non-depressed spouse to try to limit stress, learn as much about the depression as possible, and possibly seek the advice of a therapist.

## **2.5 MARITAL STATUS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

Research suggests that marital status and psychological well-being are closely associated (McGrath et. al, 1990). Marital status refers to the various relationship configurations

(married, separated, and cohabiting) or the lack there of (never married, divorced, and widowed). Over the last four decades, much research focused on marriage (Gove et al., 1983; Horwitz & White, 1991; Kessler & Essex, 1982; Lee et al., 1991; Lorenz, Simons, Conger, Elder, Jr., Johnson, & Chao, 1997; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Simon, 2002; Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Williams, 1988). The focus of previous research ranges from general findings on the effects of marriage to more specific findings of comparing different relationship statuses.

### **2.5.1 MARITAL STATUS AND RACE/ETHNICITY**

Race and ethnicity are important considerations when determining effects of marital status on psychological health. Studies show that Latin Americans value marriage as something that is essential for achieving a meaningful life. Despite economic disadvantage, high rates of marriage exist for Latin Americans (Tucker, 2000). Additionally, Latin Americans desire marriage more than whites and blacks. Studies find that in comparison to Caucasians and Latinos, African Americans desire marriage the least (Oropesa & Gorman, 2000), are more likely to divorce, and are least likely to marry (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1998; Tucker, 2000).

Researchers find such low desire for marriage to be attributable to the belief by African Americans that marital success depends on economic security, which is perceived by African Americans as a factor that can be achieved by living together with someone (Tucker, 2000). Studies also suggest that the increased divorce rate and low marriage rate among African Americans is a result of a shortage of men, which is referred to as a sex-ratio imbalance (Tucker & Mitchell-Kernan, 1998). In addition to higher rates of divorce and separation, African Americans also possess a high rate of delayed marriage and unmarried cohabitation (Taylor, 2000).

As implied by high divorce and separation rates among African Americans, race has been found to be a significant risk factor to marriage dissolution (Kposowa, 1998). Kposowa (1998) found that almost half (47%) of unions among African American women were expected to dissolve by the end of 15 years of marriage, compared to an expected seventeen percent of unions among white women ending after 15 years of matrimony. Kposowa explained African American marital dissolution as an effect of socioeconomic status. The association between economic status and marital status is that low income suggests a lack of economic resources, which is a known source of stress (1998). With an income that is insufficient for meeting a family's needs, feelings of deprivation are more likely, which may create marital conflict and tension. Such problems within a marriage decrease the satisfaction and happiness experienced within the union, which can ultimately lead to separation and/or divorce. Such an explanation is pertinent to African Americans because being black is strongly associated with low socioeconomic status (Kposowa, 1998).

### **2.5.2 MARITAL STATUS AND POVERTY**

As stated above, through the presence or absence of essential resources, economic status affects marital status. Along with affecting the likelihood of marriage, poverty is also linked to increased separation and divorce rates (Rank, 2000). Rank (2000) concluded the lower likelihood of marriage among the impoverished to be attributable to a shortage of marriageable partners. Economically secured partners are desired and considered marriageable partners. However, poverty weakens the possibility of uniting with a financially stable person, thereby weakening the chance of marriage among the poor

(Rank, 2000). Marital satisfaction is negatively affected by the financial stress experienced by impoverished married couples and often contributes to separation and divorce. Married couples in poverty often lack the resources that could be helpful in dealing with a strained marriage such as access to funds needed to alleviate the financial strains or to counselling/therapy to deal with the marital problems. With such limited resources, increased chances of divorce and separation exist for married couples with low socioeconomic status (Rank, 2000)

## **2.6 MARRIED PERSONS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING**

Research suggests that marriage contributes to an overall healthy well-being (Gove & Shin 1989; Lamb et al., 2003; Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990). Married people enjoy the benefits of social support, immediate intimate emotional support, and economic support (Waite, 2000), as well as having lower morbidity and mortality rates (Coombs, 1991; Ross et al., 1990). Marriage is a legal, formalized relationship that facilitates association in a network that could potentially provide social support and influences one's well-being (Cotton, 1999). Intimate emotional support, provided by a partner, is characterized as a sense of being cared about, loved, esteemed, valued as a person, along with having a confidante (Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Joseph, & Henderson, 1996; Ross et al., 1990). Married people report higher degrees of intimate emotional support and also tend to report lower levels of depression (Stack & Eshleman, 1998). But is this true for all socioeconomic levels? Marriage is assumed to be economically beneficial because it most often results in higher household incomes, which helps to potentially circumvent possible economic stresses and helps to provide for higher quality living, such as better housing, food, and services. The improved standard of living and lower risk of

impoverishment contributes to a better overall psychological health (Gove & Shin, 1989; Stack & Eshleman, 1998).

While some studies show that married men and women experience improved holistic health (Waite, 2000), other studies find marriage to be emotionally disadvantageous for women and particularly beneficial to men (McGrath et al., 1990; Simon, 2002). Being married not only directly protects and improves men's physical and psychological health, but such a committed state also reduces risky behaviours (Ross et al., 1990; Waite, 2000; Wu & Hart, 2002). Men's lives are enhanced because they have someone who, by nature, is often nurturing and observant, thus directly paying service to his needs. For women, marriage is indirectly beneficial through the social assumptions of financial and emotional security and immediate social support. What happens when marriage does not provide these benefits? Research further suggests that marriage, alone, is predictive of healthy psychological well-being (Acock & Demo, 1994; Kessler & Essex, 1982; Kim & McKenry, 2002). However, most research shows marriage to be beneficial in comparison to people who are not currently married (Gove, Hughes, Style, 1983; Horwitz & White, 1991; Kim & McKenry, 2002; Mastekaasa, 1994; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977; Stack & Eshleman, 1998; Williams 1988; Williams, Takeuchi, Adair, 1992), in terms of marital satisfaction (Waite, 2000), and with regards to what marriage provides.

After reviewing all the mentioned literature and looking at the problems in marital relationship, the research seeks to check the socio-economic and psychological factors that influence marital commitment and come out with an informed document to address these problems.

## 2.7 STATEMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

2.7.1 Females are more committed in marriage than their male counterparts

2.7.2 There is significant positive correlation between educational status and marital commitment

2.7.3 There is significant positive correlation between marital happiness and commitment to one's marriage.

2.7.4 Married people with extraversion personality trait will exhibit lower marital commitment than those with agreeable personality traits.

2.7.5 Married couples with conscientious personality trait will show better marital commitment than those with neurotic personality traits.

These hypotheses were tested and analysed with different techniques based on the response of the targeted respondents to the questionnaire and interviews. Responses from married couples in the Taifa circuit of the Methodist church were used to prove or disprove these hypotheses.

## 2.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this study some words and phrases have been used which need clarification because they might not have been used in conventional sense.

**Abuse** is the misuse, excessive use or improper use of a person or object.

**Spousal abuse:** This is a form of abuse in which someone targets his or her spouse with the goal of creating and demonstrating control.

**Domestic abuse:** This is the misuse or mistreatment of a spouse or mate. It encompasses many types of abuse.

**Abusive relationships** are defined as “asymmetrical relationships characterised by an imbalance of control and severe acts of violence that were not reciprocated” (Olson, 2002, p.122)

**Social support:** Social support is the knowledge that one is loved, cared for, valued and included in a network of mutual concern (Cobb 1976). To explain further, sources of social support include friends, spouses, lovers, children, church members, even club members. In this research, a source of social support is from the couples themselves.

**Domestic violence:** this refers to a pattern of behaviour used to establish power and control over a partner in an intimate relationship.

**Aggression represented acts of** “acts of low to medium aggression, including verbal to non- contact physical acts” (Olson, 2002, p.116)

**Physical Aggression:** an act that has the intent (or perceived intent) of causing physical harm to another. It is synonymous with the term “violence” as it is used in family violence research (Stets, 1990).

**Cognition** refers to what and how people think. Thus, all mental processes of an individual: knowledge, attitude, values, attribution, believe perception, perceived cultural truths and memory are all components of cognition.

**Commitment** is remaining steadfast to a promise something or to support something or somebody. It calls for faithfulness, loyalty and integrity.

**Marital Commitment:** This is the ability for a couple to remain steadfast. It should be a social structure in which a couple can move to ever deeper levels of intimacy. It calls for sustenance of unconditional, sacrificial and other-centered love attitude.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher introduces the research design for the study including the setting, recruitment of the participants, and data collection instruments. The researcher also discusses the choice of quantitative research design, and the characteristics of case studies, individual in-depth interviews, and a focus group meeting, which are central to this study's methodology. The main sources of data collection for the study are a questionnaire, and Rev. Minister's in-depth interviews, reflective journals, and field notes.

To achieve validity, the researcher used these methods to triangulate the data that was collected and analyzed. Later in this chapter, the researcher discussed ethical issues, generalisability, reliability, validity, the researcher's role as the sole researcher, and the writing process. As Denzin and Lincoln (2003) stated, the researcher's choice of research method depends on the research questions. For this study the researcher has determined that both qualitative and quantitative research design is best suited to providing data that answers the research hypotheses and also the researcher to informed suggestion to help improve marital commitment of couples.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Both qualitative and quantitative survey design was used to collect the needed data. Qualitative data is generated through questionnaires, observation and interviews. Here the Rev Ministers of the various branches of Methodist Churches in the Taifa Circuit were

interviewed verbally to know their findings concerning the topic under study. This is because they interact with married couples in the church during programmes such as family life, marriage counselling, pre-marital counselling, couples meetings and resolution of marital issues. On the quantitative survey design, which is the major design for this work, Interview questionnaires were designed to meet all the classes of society in the study area i.e. according to their socio-economic environment to determine their various living standards.

### **3.2 TARGET POPULATION**

The target population consists of the couples in the Taifa Circuit of the Accra Diocese of the Methodist Church Ghana.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

A sample frame of 100 couples were drawn from the Taifa Circuit; based on the personal judgment of the researcher, the classes of the living standards of the couple were determined. Fifty couples in the high class and then 50 couples each within the lower and middle class will be chosen to make up the 100. The technique used here was ‘Random Sampling’

### **3.4 MATERIAL**

The research instrument that was employed by the researcher to find information from the couples was the questionnaire while the officiating ministers were interviewed verbally.

The questionnaire consists of four main sections. Section A elicited information on the demographic background of participants. These include sex, age, occupation, education,

age of spouse among others. Section B was a scale called Personal Relationship Questionnaire designed by the researcher. It consist of 12 items with a Crombach Alpha Coefficient of 0.75. Section C was also a standardized scale called Marital Happiness scale. This questionnaire was designed by Evans (2002). It contained 10 items and its validity was quoted as 0.78. The final section (D) was also a standardized scale referred to the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) by Goldberg, et al (1999). This questionnaire consist 50 items and its validity co-efficient (Cronbach Alpha) was quoted as 0.91.

### **3.5 PROCEDURE**

Piloting was carried out on twenty couples from the Taifa Circuit that did not form part of the study group in order to ensure that the instrument satisfy the law of reliability and validity, before the actual field work was carried out. Subjects were assigned in the groups and filled the instruments (questionnaire) used.

Data was gathered by the researcher by contacting the selected respondents for their consent. Immediately after this the questionnaires were administered to them to complete in 30 minutes after which they were collected.

### **3.6 VALIDITY/ RELIABILITY**

During the administration of the questionnaires, the researcher paid particular attention to the respondents carefully and observed how they answered the questions. When the researcher did not understand what they wrote, they were asked to clarify or explain their views to the researcher. Before the end of each interview, the researcher made each of the

respondents verify the summary comments of their points because the researcher tried at best to make the results trustworthy and valid.

Merriam (1998) stated that internal validity “deals with the question of how research findings match reality” (p. 201). External validity is “concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (Merriam, 1998, p.207) which the concept is similar to generalization. There are strategies to achieve validity, for example providing rich and correct description, so the readers are able to match any other situations of interest to the findings of the case. This was done critically in this study.

Merriam (1998) reported that reliability refers to “the extent to which research findings can be replicated” (p. 205). However, she stated that “the question then is not whether findings will be found again but whether the results are consistent with the data collected” (p. 206). In this current study the researcher ensured that the results were dependable. The questionnaire he used were standardized tools. And the systematic manner in which the researcher prepared the Personal Relationship questionnaire which has correct reliability co-efficient make the information reliable.

As quoted under material on page 60 of this current research, the law of reliability has been satisfied because the reliability co-efficient of the instrument used are from standardized scales. The personal relationship questionnaire designed by the researcher consisting of twelve items had a Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient of 0.75. The research can therefore be replicated by future researcher.

### **3.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

As for analysis, Wolcott (1994) reported that “the goal is to make sense of what goes on, to reach out for understanding or explanation beyond the limits of what can be explained with the degree of certainty usually associated with analysis” (Pp. 10-11).

Therefore in this current study, the researcher analyzed the data immediately after the collection of questionnaires that were filled by the respondents. This was done to make sure that the information given by respondents were accurately taken for analyzing the results.

Researchers need to not only consider the intensity (i.e speed, volume of tones, emotion, and emphases of certain words) of a focus group participant but also pay more attention to specific and personal experience than to vague impersonal responses from a focused group participants. When analyzing, Krueger(1998) remarked that he will focus on meaning instead of words because some focus group participants might be better at the usage of words than others.

The researcher read all the answers for one question and looked for trends, patterns and themes in the answers. The results were compiled in chapter four of this research material.

### **3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES**

A researcher’s biases, honesty in collecting, interpreting, and reporting the findings all are ethical issues. Agar (1980) wrote “people must be informed of your role, “who you are” and “what do you want” (p. 55). Therefore, the researcher of this study, introduced

himself to the respondents about ‘who he is, what he is doing around their offices, churches, houses and about the topic of the study’. Guided by the ethics of research, the researcher made sure that the information taken from respondents was handled as confidential. The introductory part of the questionnaires assured the respondents about the ethic confidentiality.

### **3.9 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

The researcher’s job is to record and interpret the participants’ personal experiences. In doing this he/she must be aware of his or her biases so that results will not be influenced. It is essential for “an enormous tolerance of ambiguity” (p. 20), “sensitivity” (p.21), to be “a good communicator” (Merriam, 1998, p. 23) and listener.

In this current study, the researcher satisfied his role by recording and interpreting the participants’ personal experiences without his biases. He constructed the knowledge of the case under study and provided correct descriptions to participant’s in unique cases.

The researcher needs to be flexible and patient during the process of collecting the data. The sensitivity to the contexts, participants, other people, their non-verbal communications, and body language was observed and also the biases of the participants. The researcher demonstrated all these skills to be able to come up with this research material.

The Reverend Ministers who were interviewed agreed to do their research in their congregation to ascertain more information about marital commitment and socio-economic as well as psychological factors. This was because the interview questionnaire was an eye opener for the about marital commitment.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

The study investigated the link between personality, marital happiness and commitment. Five hypotheses were stated and results obtained on demographic background of the participants and the hypotheses are presented in this chapter.

#### 4.1 Demographic Background Table 1. Demographic Background of Participants

<b>Married Couples (n = 100)</b>				
<b>Demography</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Deviation</b>	<b>Freq</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Age of Participants	42.28	11.32	-	-
Age of Participants' Spouse	40.54	10.38		
<b>Sex</b>				
Male			61	61
Female			39	39
<b>Type of Marriage</b>				
Customary			37	37
Ordinance			63	63
<b>Belongingness to same Ethnic Group</b>				

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Yes	47	47
No	53	53
<b>Education</b>		
No formal education	1	1
J.H.S/Elementary	16	16
S.H.S/Tech./Voc.	20	20
Tertiary	63	63

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Results in Table 1, showed that a significant proportion of participants were males 61(61%) with their female counterparts representing 39% of the total sample. Meanwhile, the youngest participant was 25 years old with a spouse 22 years. The oldest and the spouse were 70 and 73 years old. The participants have been in marriage for a mean number of years of 13.78 years with a standard deviation of 10.48 (Max. = 47 years, Min. = 1 year). Findings further revealed that 94% of the sample had children between 1 – 7 children (Mean = 2.92, Std. Dev. = 1.40). Most participants had Ordinance marriage 63% as compared to those with Customary marriage 37%. Married couples who belong to the same ethnic group were 47 in number (47%) while those whose spouses belong to other ethnic groups were 53(53%). Table 1 further revealed that only one participant had no formal education. Those with JHS/Elementary, Secondary/ technical/vocational and tertiary education were 16(16%), 20(20%) and 62(62%) respectively. A significant number of participants reported they stay in the same house with their spouses 93% and

that their monthly salary helped them meet the needs of the family 59% out of which fifty four (92%) spouses also earned monthly income.

#### 4.2 Testing Hypotheses

Hypothesis one states that “Females are more committed to their marriage than their male partners”. Relevant information on this is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent Samples Test on Marital Commitment of Male and Female Participants

	Male Couples (n=61)		Females Couples (n=39)		
Gender of Couples	Mean	Std Dev.	Df	t	Sig
Male Couples	50.66	6.13			
Female Couples	48.79	7.12			
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.93</b>	<b>6.56</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>1.390</b>	<b>.084</b>

Results in Table 2, showed that mean marital commitment score recorded by male couples was 50.66 with a standard deviation of 6.13. Their female counterparts recorded mean marital commitment score of 48.79 with a standard deviation of 7.12. These marital commitment means were subjected to the independent samples t test and results showed that no significant difference existed between the marital commitment of male and female

couples [ $t_{(98)} = 1.390, p = .084$ ]. This means that the first hypothesis as stated above was not supported by the results of the analysis.

Hypothesis two states that “There is a significant positive correlation between educational status and marital commitment”. Relevant information on this is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Spearman’s Correlation between Education and Marital Commitment of Participants

<b>Participants (n= 100)</b>					
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev.</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Marital Commitment	49.93	6.56			
Education	-	-			
<b>Total</b>			<b>100</b>	<b>-.119</b>	<b>.118</b>

Results in Table 3, depicted that mean marital commitment score recorded by the participants was 49.93 with a standard deviation of 6.56. Their education status ranged from no formal education to tertiary education. The educational background of participants as ranked was correlated with their marital commitment with the Spearman’s correlation. Results as shown in Table 3, revealed that negative correlation exist between educational status and marital commitment of the participants. Thus those with less

education showed higher commitment compared to those with higher education though this is not significant [ $r_{(100)} = -.119$ ,  $p = .118$ ]. This indicates that the second hypothesis was also not supported by the results of the analysis.

Hypothesis three states that. “There is a significant positive correlation between marital happiness and commitment to ones marriage”. Relevant information on this is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Pearson’s Correlation between Marital Happiness and Marital Commitment of Participants

<b>Participants (n= 100)</b>					
<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev.</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Marital Commitment	49.93	6.56			
Marital Happiness	41.46	6.16			
<b>Total</b>			<b>98</b>	<b>.577</b>	<b>.000</b>

Results in Table 4, depicted that mean marital commitment score recorded by the participants was 49.93 with a standard deviation of 6.56. Mean score of marital happiness recorded by the participants was 41.46 with a standard deviation of 6.16. The means were correlated with the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and results revealed that a significant positive correlation exist between marital happiness and marital

commitment [ $r_{(98)} = .577, p = .000$ ]. This means that the third hypothesis was supported by the results of the analysis.

Hypotheses four and five states that “Married people with extraversion personality trait will exhibit lower marital commitment than those with agreeable personality trait” “Married people with conscientious personality trait will show better marital commitment than those with neurotic personality trait”. Relevant information on these hypotheses is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Analysis of Variance and Effect Size of Marital Commitment of Participants Categorized by Personality

	<b>Extraversion (n=20)</b>	<b>Agreeableness (n=21)</b>	<b>Conscientiousness (n=21)</b>	<b>Neuroticism (n=15)</b>	<b>Openness (n=23)</b>			
Personality	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>Eta<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Sig. Bonferroni Comparison</b>	
Extraversion	46.85	7.20						
Agreeableness	49.48	5.55						
Conscientiousness	49.41	8.89						
Neuroticism	48.60	4.66						
Openness	54.22	4.32						
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.93</b>	<b>6.56</b>	<b>4,95</b>	<b>3.794</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.513</b>	<b>5&gt;2=3=4&gt;1</b>	

*1=Extraversion*

*2=Agreeableness*

*3=Conscientiousness*

*4 =Neuroticism*

*5=Openness*

Results in Table 5, revealed that mean marital commitment score recorded by participants with extraversion personality trait was 46.85 with a standard deviation of 7.20. Those with agreeable and conscientious personality traits were 49.48 and 49.41 with standard deviations of 5.55 and 8.89 respectively. Participants with neurotic personality trait recorded mean marital commitment score of 47.60 with a standard deviation of 4.66 while those with openness personality trait recorded mean marital commitment score of 54.22 with a standard deviation of 4.32. One-Way Analysis of Variance of these means revealed that a significant difference existed in the marital commitment of participants with extraversion, agreeable, conscientious, neurotic and openness personality traits [ $F_{(4,95)} = 3.794, p = .000$ ]. Bonferroni Multiple Comparison analysis showed that those with agreeable personality trait recorded higher marital commitment (Mean = 49.48) compared to those with Extraversion personality trait (Mean = 46.85). This means that the fourth hypothesis as stated above was supported by the results of the analysis. Further, results from Bonferroni Multiple Comparison showed that those with Conscientious personality (Mean = 49.41) did not differ significantly from those with neurotic personality trait (Mean = 48.60). Thus the fifth hypothesis was not supported.

### **4.3 Other Findings**

The link between socio-demographic factors and marital commitment was also assessed and results obtained on this are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis on Relationship between Socio-demographic Factors and Marital Commitment

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**Married Couples (n = 100)**

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<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Marital Commitment	-	-	-	-
Age	-.074	-.127	-.570	.570
Age of Spouse	.076	.120	.516	.607
Duration of Marriage (years)	-.012	-.122	-2.559	.011
Type of Marriage	.835	.062	.568	.571
Similarity in Ethnicity	2.935	.224	2.059	.042
Staying in the same Home	-3.296	2.682	-.129	.222
Monthly Salary Meeting Family Needs	.178	.013	.127	.899
Child Status	-1.872	-.068	-.628	.532

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Results in Table 6, showed that duration of marriage significantly and negatively correlates with marital commitment of the participants [ $t = -2.559$ ,  $p = .011$ ]. Thus those who have married for few years expressed higher commitment than those who have been in marriage for many years. It was also found that coming from the same ethnic group as

a spouse results in higher marital commitment as opposed to coming from different ethnic groups. Other factors such as age of spouse, type of marriage and monthly salary meeting family needs positively predicts marital commitment though the relationship was not significant. Other factors such as age of participant, staying in the same house and having children negatively predicts marital commitment. However, this correlation was not significant.

The link between socio-demographic factors and marital happiness was also assessed and results on this are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Standard Multiple Regression Analysis on Relationship between Socio-demographic Factors and Marital Happiness

<b>Married Couples (n = 100)</b>				
<b>Variables</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Marital Happiness	-	-	-	-
Age	-.105	-.192	-.934	.353
Age of Spouse	-.046	-.078	-.362	.718
Duration of Marriage (years)	.038	.065	.290	.773
Type of Marriage	.632	.050	.498	.620
Similarity in Ethnicity	2.995	.224	2.429	.017
Staying in the same Home	-6.529	-.272	-2.815	.006

Monthly Salary Meeting Family	-1.433	-.115	-1.180	.241
Needs	-2.272	-.088	-.881	.381
Child Status				

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Results in Table 7, revealed that marrying from the same ethnic group positively and significantly predicted marital happiness. Staying in the same house with ones spouse negatively and significantly predicted marital happiness. Factors such as child status, age of spouse, monthly salary meeting family needs, age of spouse and age of participant negatively predicted marital happiness though these predictions were not significant. Duration and type of marriage positively correlated with marital happiness however, this was not significant.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSIONS

#### 5.1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The primary purpose of this study was to find out the marital commitment level of married couples (husband and wife or male and female) and what psychological factors mediate the marital commitment. This study was conceived against the background of increased divorce rate in the country and seemingly low level of marital commitment.

One hundred (100) married Ghanaians in Taifa Circuit of the Methodist Church Ghana, who reported marital commitment were between the ages of 25years – 75years for males 25years – 78years for female respondents to the questionnaire used for the research (see appendix). The researcher used t- Test, Spearman's correlation and Pearson's correlation to analyse the data. The main results of the study are discussed below.

#### 5.1.1 Marital Commitment Level of Spouse

Firstly, in the aggregate more married females show higher marital commitment level than their male counterpart. The first hypothesis stated that females or wives are more committed in marriage than their male counterpart. This means that they will score higher on the marital happiness scale.

This means that hypothesis one was not supported. Males and females do not differ significantly in their marital happiness. This means that both males and females were similar in their commitment to their marriages. This finding contradicts the assertion by Vallenger (1983) that many women often put more emphasis on conjugal bonding and

commitment than males. One reason for this finding is the high emotional, social and economical cost associated with divorce. When couples divorce through lack of commitment to their marriages, the cost implications are high for both males and females. This may be the reason why both males and females were committed to their marriages in a similar manner.

This conclusion in the current research supports the earlier literature in the research on marital Commitment conducted by Murat Iyigun (June 2009).

Murat found out that when spousal marital commitment costs are gender symmetric, there is a pure-sorting equilibrium in which all partners who prefer to act with commitment on marriage are matched with someone who has the same preference. For Murat in such equilibrium, the benefits of marital commitment accrue to both partners.

In this work the researcher's first hypothesis which stated that married females show higher marital commitment level than their male counterparts was not supported.

The issue of marital commitment therefore is the concern of both partners.

### **5.1.2 Education and Marital Commitment**

The second hypothesis stated that there is significant positive correlation between educational status and marital commitment. The result of the findings did not support this hypothesis as stated in Table 3 of the above chapter.

The findings of this research support an earlier study by Bumpass and Sweet (1972). They found out that the inverse correlation between marital instability was not attributed to respondent's education. The findings also contradicts the findings of Kelly et

al(2000) who found that there are many individual factors such as age, sex and education that influence marital satisfaction and commitment. Meanwhile, a crucial analysis of the sample studied reveals that a significant proportion had secondary and tertiary education. As a result just a small number had no education on marital commitment of the participants.

### **5.1.3 Socio – economic and Marital Commitment**

With reference to Chapter two (*page 54*), on marital status and poverty, ( Rank 2000) is of the view that marital satisfaction is negatively affected by the financial stress experienced by impoverished married couples and often contributes to separation and divorce. But findings of this current study indicate that higher level of socio- economic factors of the married couple does not lead to higher level of marital commitment. Spouses with higher socio-economic status who have higher income earnings did not show better commitment than the spouses with low income earnings. This is seen in the analysis of table 3 in the above chapter.

One reason for this is the fact that socio-economic status is a difficult valuable to measure. Other valuables such as education, occupation, position among others all form part of socio-economic status. Thus measuring this is difficult therefore for the researcher who concentrates on only one of the indicators of socio-economic status may not find what earlier researcher found. This is a possible reason accounting for the current finding

#### **5.1.4 Ethnic Relation and Marital Happiness or Commitment**

Even though this was not a tested hypothesis the demographical factors of influencing marital commitment concern the issue of ethnicity. This research has shown that couples of the same ethnic group with the same cultural lifestyle normally show higher level of marital commitment. For instance it is likely that a spouse (i.e. the husband and wife) from Ewe or an Akan background may report higher marital commitment than spouses from two different languages or ethnic groups.

This supports the earlier literature by Tucker, (2000) and Oropesa and Gorman (2000) which asserted that people with different ethnicity are more likely to divorce and are least likely to marry. As stated in Page 53 by Kposowa (1998) different race have been found to be with significant risk factor to marriage dissolution. The research was based on the high divorce and separation rate among Africans. Kposowa (1998) found that almost half (47%) of union among African women were expected to dissolve by the end of fifteen (15) years of marriage, compared to an expected 17% of union among white women who were expected to dissolve by the end of fifteen years of marriage.

#### **5.1.5 Extroversion Personality Trait and Marital commitment**

Trait theory is concerned with the basic component of personality (i.e. fundamental elements of personality). According to Guilford (1959) a trait may be defined as ‘*any relatively enduring way in which one individual differs from another*’.

To some degree, trait theory matches our everyday experiences according to Cysenck's dimension of personality – the 'BIG FIVE'.

1. Extroversion: socially active, assertive, outgoing, talkative, fun-loving (the opposite of shy)
2. Neuroticism: Emotionally unstable, anxious, worried, fearful, distressed, irritable, hypersensitive (the opposite of well-adjusted)
3. Agreeableness: helpful, cooperative, friendly, caring nurturant (the opposite of hostile and self centered)
4. Conscientiousness: Achievement-oriented, dependable, responsible, prudent, hardworking, self-controlled (the opposite of impulsive)
5. Openness to experience: Curious, imaginative, creative original, intellectually adventurous flexible (the opposite of rigid)

The analysis showed that those with Agreeable personality trait had a higher marital commitment than those with Extraversion personality trait. The results indicate that the fourth hypothesis was supported by the results of the analysis. The results also revealed that those with Conscientious personality did not differ significantly from those with neurotic personality trait. The fifth hypothesis was also supported in the research that was conducted.

This findings supports the findings of Johnson and Booth (1998) who found out that personal traits brought marital stability. Personality traits and characteristics described by theorists such as Eysenck indicates that some traits required of the issues. Getting committed to a unison labelled as life long (marriage) needs a thorough thought and decisive decision making. This is a feature of some personalities such as conscientious

individuals. As it is an automatic part of certain personalities and it is not something they have to learn, one expects personality traits to influence marital commitment. This is exactly what the current study found.

## **5.2 CONCLUSIONS/SUGGESTIONS**

The purpose of this study was to bring to fore the socio-economic and psychological factors mediating marital commitment among couples.

The data from the hypothesis tested has been analyzed with the results in chapter four and findings indicated that on socio-economic factors, education level, social status and economic level of spouses do not matter so much, in bringing about marital commitment.

This research has also brought to light that, females and males are in equilibria when it comes to marital commitment. The hypothesis that “females are more committed to their marriage than their male partners” was not supported by empirical study in this research.

Another revelation was that personality trait mediate marital commitment. And that Married people with extraversion personality trait are likely to exhibit lower marital commitment than the couple with agreeable personality trait. Furthermore people with conscientious personality trait will show better marital commitment than those with neurotic personality trait.

As stated in Eysenck’s dimension of personality found in page 86 of this research material, persons with agreeableness personality trait are helpful, cooperative, friendly, caring nurturant (i.e the opposite of hostile and self-centered).

The findings of the research indicated that such persons will have higher marital commitment.

Persons who have also learnt behaviours that do not promote marital commitment need to have behavioural change in altitude. The altitude of marital satisfaction of one's marriage will also improve marital commitment.

The researcher is of the view that, marital commitment can come out of marital counselling and a very good pre-marital counselling. Since marriage is an institution, continued education is very important and through marriage counselling or marital counselling, couples will be able to understand themselves better. This can also be deduced from the literature by Collins (2007).

According to Pauwels (2009), one of the factors that promote marital satisfaction is a good interpersonal relationship. Commitment is a promise to do something or to support something. It also calls for faithfulness i.e. steadfast to the promise of doing something. In this, marital satisfaction and marital stability are often seen as two (2) important variables in the study of family institution. Most studies stated various conditions and situations that lead to marital satisfaction. A high proportion of marriage couples experience an erosion of positive qualities over time such as lifelong companionship, romance, social support, sexual fulfillment and commitment. When satisfaction erodes to intolerable point, the relationship is thus terminated. In some cases the existence of some social barriers of separation and perceived absence of alternatives have results in the remaining unhappy married couples to continue with the relationship under such circumstances. (Frank, 1992)

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study supported the hypothesis the agreeableness traits of a spouse and conscientiousness promote marital commitment. People with such traits can also change their altitude when they are educated to become conscious of themselves. Education that can lead to change of altitude as it has been discussed from *Pp 18-23* in this research material must be implored in the counselling sessions of married couples in attempt to promote marital commitment.

In the study, the researcher reviewed extensive literature on behavioural theory and social group work on attitudes. This was done because the matter of shaping behaviour is very important and relevant to the discussion under study in building higher marital commitment. Couples who are not able to change some unhealthy behaviour in their marriage may not be able to show higher marital commitment. This function of attitude has relevance in the realm of behavioral theory and social group work. For instance, the matter of “shaping behaviour”; it follows from the nature of the adjustive function of attitudes that the clarity, consistency, and nearness of rewards and punishments as they relate to the individual’s attitudes and goals are important factors in the acquiring of new utilitarian attitudes. This must be taken into account in shaping new habits.

Based on the findings analyzed in the earlier chapter, the following recommendations must be looked at:

1. Regular Marriage seminars should be organized for couples in the church. In fact marriage as an institution should receive continued education. And it is such seminars that will inform the married people to know more about marriage and behave well in order to attain fuller satisfaction leading to marital commitment.

2. Pre-marital and marital counselling should be made a bedrock of the church's marital procedures. Couples and people who are yet to marry should be counselled and taken through behaviour modification programs to help them develop personality traits associated with agreeableness and openness since these traits help in marital commitment leading to marital happiness.
  - Couples should be encourage and counselled to create happiness in their marriages. This should help improve marital commitment.
  - Couples should also endeavour to stay in the same home in order to improve marital commitment.
3. Topics at such seminars may include: Infidelity, God honours marriage. Refer Gen 2:18-24; Matthew 19:3-6; Eph 5:31; monogamy versus polygamy- ideal is monogamy Gen. 2:24; 1Tim 3:2-12; 1 Cor. 7:1-7; Marriage must be honoured Malachi 2:14-15; Hebrews 13:4; Marriage is union for life Romans 7:2-3; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:3-6,9; Purposes of marriage- to inspire human happiness Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 5:15-20 care, helpfulness companionship and support understanding social support of the couples.
  - **Infidelity:** Infidelity is a willful sexual intercourse with some other than one's husband or wife. It is also called adultery in the Bible. Ex 20:14 says you should not commit adultery.  
  
Under Mosaic Law, when a couple was caught in the act of adultery, both parties were to be killed. Deut. 22:22 says if a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall be killed. But now because we live in the grace period of Jesus Christ, people indulge in adultery and go scot free. In John 8: 3-9 The record of the woman taken in

adultery- who according to Mosaic Law should have been stoned to death.

The woman received grace from Jesus. Jesus forgave her of it and warned her against continuing in adultery.

According to Paul infidelity is a sin which will also exclude a person from the Kingdom of God 1 cor. 6:9.

Infidelity breaks down marital commitment. People who indulge in marital infidelity do not stay committed to their spouse. This does not ensure Peace, happiness and marital satisfaction in the marriage. Why because infidelity destroys trust from the inside out.

The adulterer maintains a several relationship outside of his/her marriage, lying to the wife or husband consistently just to cover it up.

In the case of the men adulterers, they financially support that outside relationship. Such act reduces the man's financial commitment to the house. Housekeeping money, Children's school fees, feeding, clothing are reduced.

Such actions create a lot of problems in the marriage. To re-establish the built up trust in your marriage becomes a difficult thing to do, if care is not taken your spouse will never trust you again.

Solutions to the problem: Marital counselling should therefore include such topic as infidelity and the problems it bring to the marriage and how it breaks marital Commitment. Leading to mistrusting, chaos, unhappiness and marital dissatisfaction.

4. Couples outing should be organized annually. Where couples will stay together and renew their love relationships annually. This might be a quality time together.

God wants Christians to have good peaceful marriages. He also wants us to have Christians home life and it is such peaceful marriage that can maintain this aim.

Other ways to keep oneness in marriage has to do with working together

Husbands and wives can work well together. They should work hard.

They should work hard to keep their oneness. This is taught in many verses of the bible. God wants husbands and wife to enjoy life together. Three steps a husband and wife can take to keep their oneness.

Who must work hard to keep their oneness? the husband and wife must do this

- Talk plainly with each other.

When they disagree on something, they must share their thoughts. They should not keep silent about their plan. Some people make plans but never tell their husband or wife. They do not give their reason for doing things. They want to get their own way without thinking what the other wants,

How should too talk together if they want oneness? They should talk plainly

- They should talk plainly.

Each must tell clearly his real thoughts and plans. Remember that husband and wife are one body before God. Think what would happen in your own body if one part tried to hide things from one another. If the arm tried to deceive the head, there would be trouble. If the head tried to deceive the body, there would be pain. A doctor would say that the body was very sick if one part hid things from another part. This is an exhortation on Romans 12:4 about parts of the human body and this function

- They should accept others thought

5. Couples who complain of non-satisfaction can be given a counsellor who must understand their needs and take them through marital counselling to address the issues they are facing
6. ISSUES NEEDED TO CONSIDER FOR POST MARITAL COUNSELLING.  
Marital counselling may be explained as an on-going family life educational programme that provide a continued education and information on marriage life for a married couple to be able to make decision on their own, change unhealthy behaviours , and to solve their interpersonal conflicts that will disturb their marriage and the family.
7. Some pertinent issues that need to be looked at during marital counselling will include Anger, Anxiety, Loneliness, Depression, Guilt and Forgiveness, Abuse and Neglect of sex, Crises period Management of crises eg. financial crises, disrespect, lack of inter-personal dialogue, sexual dysfunctioning, marital infidelity, domestic violence and abusive behaviours, drug usage especially alcohol

#### **5.4 LIMITATIONS**

Although the current study provided an important contribution to literature in the area of socio-economic and psychological factors mediating marital commitment among married couples, there are a number of limitations that need to be considered. First, it is important to note that this study involved few participants which makes it difficult to do generalization.

The study did not investigate the experiences of couples in childless marriage that may also contribute to lack of marital commitment therefore only available variables could be used to examine the relationships between marital commitment, socio-economic, education, ethnicity and personal traits.

Furthermore, the study did not include information about marital quality and sources of social support, making it difficult to draw conclusions about how marital quality and social support which may have mediated marital commitment. The failure to find a link between past, current, and change in marital commitment and psychological well-being may be due in part to the fact that current marital quality including the quality of relationship and personal feelings give no indication of when or for how long a participant has had a particular marital happiness or how satisfied a participant has been within her particular marriage that may contribute to marital commitment.

Additionally, couples may be more inclined to exhaust all sources of social support once they have lost the intimate support, thereby increasing their levels of frustration, and subsequently affecting his or her marital commitment. Unfortunately, without this information, it is difficult to make such inferences

## **5.5 FUTURE RESEARCH**

The limitations and findings discussed here suggested a number of possible directions for future research. First, this study highlights the need for more research in the area of marital quality and marital status, social support, and psychological wellbeing. The lack of empirical studies pertaining to such areas in this research leaves a great deal to be learned about couples. While this study focused on socio-economic and psychological factors mediating marital commitment among married couples, it would be helpful to

conduct similar research comparing across rural and non-rural samples as well as with a randomized sample. Additionally, greater knowledge of the challenges and circumstances that are unique to married couples eg childlessness, lack of social support, marital quality etc, is necessary to help in broad generalizations to more informed findings.

Future researchers interested in marital commitment and happiness should recruit a larger sample so as to enable generalizability of the findings.

Findings from this study also highlight the need for more research examining the causes of change in psychological health and how marital status and social support can be helpful or a hindrance. Specifically, consideration of other factors that may mediate the relationship between marital status and socio-economic outcomes could shed further light on the process. Other considerations from the biblical point of view eg infidelity, religious status and affiliations need to be considered by future Christian researchers who might investigate into marital commitment.

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**Appendix – A****METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, GHANA****M' PHIL IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING****VERY REV. RICHARDSON A. ANDAM****QUESTIONNAIRE****A.1**

**You are invited to participate** in a study examining the **SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS MEDIATING MARITAL COMMITMENT AMONG MARRIED COUPLES**. The results of the study will inform researchers of important areas of exploration during the course of couple therapy. Men and women are eligible to participate in the study if they are at least 18 years old, are currently married, and have been married to their current partner for at least six months. The study will occur manually, as you will be requested to complete three brief questionnaires. The study will take 15-20 minutes for you to complete. There are few minimal risks participants may be exposed to by their participation in the study, and the study does not require you to provide your name or any other identifying information. **If interested and eligible to participate in the study, please proceed with the study:** If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email at [andamre@yahoo.com](mailto:andamre@yahoo.com) or Tel: 020 839 7174 Sincerely, Rev Andam, Accra

**PART I****Demographic Information Questionnaire**

1. Sex:

Male Female 

Age: .....

2. How old is your spouse

.....

3. How long have you been in this marriage (Years):

.....

4. Type of marriage: ... Customary / Ordinance

5. Do you and your spouse come from the same ethnic group / tribe?

Yes No 

If no do you speak a common

language?.....

6. What was your highest level of education at the time of your current marriage?

None J.H.S/elementary S.H.S/Technical/Vocational

Tertiary

7. Currently what is your highest level of education?

None

J.H.S/elementary

S.H.S/Technical/Vocational

Tertiary

8.

Occupation.....

9 .Do you stay in the same home/ house with your spouse?.....

10. Does your monthly Salary help you to meet the needs of your Family?

Yes  No

11. If No, how do you support your Family?

.....

12. Does your partner earn monthly income?

Yes  No

13. Do you have a child / children in this marriage?

Yes  No

If yes to the above, how many children?.....

8. Approximately what time do you each come home from work?

Husband:.....

Wife:.....

### **The Personal Relationship Questionnaire and Marital Commitment**

The following questions ask about certain aspects of your relationship with your spouse.

Please answer these questions for the present time in your relationship. Circle the number which best represents your view of your marriage. Ranging from ‘not at all’ to ‘very much’ on the scale of 1-5. As follows: not at all-1, rarely -2, not always -3, much – 4, very much -5.

<b>SRN</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Not Always</b>	<b>Much</b>	<b>Very Much</b>
<b>Q1</b>	<b>To what extent do you have a sense of “belonging” with your partner</b>					
<b>Q2</b>	<b>To what extent do you reveal or disclose very intimate things about yourself or personal feelings to your spouse</b>					
<b>Q3</b>	<b>I view my commitment to my spouse as a solid one</b>					
<b>Q4</b>	<b>I cannot imagine ending my relationship with my spouse</b>					
<b>Q5</b>	<b>I am certain of my love for my spouse</b>					

<b>Q6</b>	<b>I view my relationship with my spouse as permanent</b>					
<b>Q7</b>	<b>To what extent do you feel that your relationship is special compared with others you have been in?</b>					
<b>Q8</b>	<b>How committed do you feel toward your spouse?</b>					
<b>Q9</b>	<b>How close do you feel to your spouse</b>					
<b>Q10</b>	<b>To what extent do you feel that your spouse demands or requires too much of your time and attention?</b>					
<b>Q11</b>	<b>How much do you need your spouse</b>					
<b>Q12</b>	<b>How much do you tell your spouse what you want or need from the relationship</b>					

**QUESTIONNAIRE A.2****MARITAL HAPPINESS SCALE****BY PETER EVANS (2002)**

This scale is intended to estimate your current happiness with your marriage on each of the ten dimensions listed. You are to select from the options beside each marriage area. The options from the left end of the five-unit scale indicate some degree of unhappiness and checks toward the right end of the scale reflect varying degrees of happiness. Ask yourself this question as you rate each marriage area: "If my partner continues to act in the future as he (she) is acting today with respect to this marriage area, how happy will I be with this area of our marriage?" In other words, tick any option from (completely happy to completely unhappy) to match exactly how you feel today. Try to exclude all feeling of yesterday and concentrate only on the feelings of today in each of the marital areas. Also try not to allow one category to influence the results of the other categories.

<b>SRN</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Completely Unhappy</b>	<b>Unhappy</b>	<b>Neither Unhappy / Happiness</b>	<b>Happiness</b>	<b>Completely Happiness</b>
<b>Q1</b>	<b>Household Responsibilities</b>					
<b>Q2</b>	<b>Rearing of Children</b>					
<b>Q3</b>	<b>Social Activities</b>					
<b>Q4</b>	<b>Money</b>					
<b>Q5</b>	<b>Communication</b>					
<b>Q6</b>	<b>Sex</b>					
<b>Q7</b>	<b>Academic (or</b>					

	<b>occupational progress)</b>					
<b>Q8</b>	<b>Personal Independence</b>					
<b>Q9</b>	<b>Spouse Independence</b>					
<b>Q10</b>	<b>General happiness</b>					

## A.3

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON PERSONALITY TRAITS.****(FROM IPIP- INTERNATIONAL PERSONALITY ITEM POLL)**

Please, with the following 50 questions, describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age, so that you can describe yourself in an honest manner. Your responses would be kept in absolute manner. Indicate for each statement whether it is 1. Very Inaccurate, 2. Moderately Inaccurate, 3. Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate, 4. Moderately Accurate, 5. Very Accurate, as a description of you.

SRN	Statement	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate Nor Inaccurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
Q1	Am the life of the party					
Q2	Feel little concern for others.					
Q3	Am always prepared					
Q4	Get stressed out easily					
Q5	Have a rich vocabulary					
Q6	Don't talk a lot					

Q7	Am interested in people					
Q8	Leave my belongings around .					
Q9	Am relaxed most of the time.					
Q10	Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.					
Q11	Feel comfortable around people.					
Q12	Insult people					
Q13	Pay attention to details					
Q14	Worry about things					
Q15	Have a vivid imagination					
Q16	Keep in the background					
Q17	Sympathize with others' feelings.					
Q18	Make a mess of things					
Q19	Seldom feel blue (sad)					
Q20	Am not interested in abstract ideas.					

Q21	Start conversations					
Q22	Am not interested in other people's problems					
Q23	Get chores done right away					
Q24	Am easily disturbed					
Q25	Have excellent ideas.					
Q26	Have little to say					
Q27	Have a soft heart					
Q28	Often forget to put things back in their proper place					
Q29	Get upset easily.					
Q30	Do not have a good imagination.					
Q31	Talk to a lot of different people at parties.					
Q32	Am not really interested in others.					
Q33	Like order					
Q34	Change my mood a lot.					
Q35	Am quick to understand things.					
Q36	Don't like to draw					

	<b>attention to myself</b>					
<b>Q37</b>	<b>Take time out for others</b>					
<b>Q38</b>	<b>Shirk my duties.</b>					
<b>Q39</b>	<b>Have frequent mood swings.</b>					
<b>Q40</b>	<b>Use difficult words</b>					
<b>Q41</b>	<b>Don't mind being the centre of attention</b>					
<b>Q42</b>	<b>Feel others' emotions.</b>					
<b>Q43</b>	<b>Follow schedule.</b>					
<b>Q44</b>	<b>Get irritated easily</b>					
<b>Q45</b>	<b>Spend time reflecting on things.</b>					
<b>Q46</b>	<b>Am quiet around strangers</b>					
<b>Q47</b>	<b>Make people feel at ease.</b>					
<b>Q48</b>	<b>Am exacting in my work</b>					
<b>Q49</b>	<b>Often feel blue (sad)</b>					
<b>Q50</b>	<b>Am full of ideas.</b>					

**1= EXTRAVERSION (SURGENCY)**

**2= AGREEABLENESS**

**3= CONSCIENTIOUSNESS**

**4= NEUROTICISM (EMOTIONAL STABILITY)**

**5= OPENNESS (INTELLECT OR IMAGINATION)**

**SCORING KEY**

+ KEY (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) [Add and divide by 5]

- KEY (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) [Add and divide by 5]

**For example: 5+5 =10 OR 3+4=7**

**APPENDIX B.2****METHODIST UNIVERSITY COLLEGE GHANA****MPHIL IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING**

STUDENT: VERY REV. RICHARDSON A. ANDAM

Please, with the following 50 questions, describe yourself as you generally are now, not as you wish to be in future. Describe yourself as you honestly see yourself in relation to other people you know of the same sex as you are, and roughly your same age, so that you can describe yourself in an honest manner. Your responses would be kept in absolute manner. Indicate for each statement whether it is 1. Very Inaccurate, 2. Moderately Inaccurate, 3. Neither Accurate nor Inaccurate, 4. Moderately Accurate, 5. Very Accurate, as a description of you.

	Very Inaccurate	Moderately Inaccurate	Neither Accurate	Moderately Accurate	Very Accurate
			Nor Inaccurate		
1. Am the life of the party.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (1+)
2. Feel little concern for others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (2-)
3. Am always prepared.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (3+)
4. Get stressed out easily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (4-)
5. Have a rich vocabulary.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (5+)
6. Don't talk a lot.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (1-)
7. Am interested in people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (2+)
8. Leave my belongings around.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (3-)
9. Am relaxed most of the time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (4+)
10. Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (5-)
11. Feel comfortable around people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (1+)
12. Insult people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (2-)
13. Pay attention to details.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> (3+)

14. Worry about things.	O	O	O	O	O (4-)
15. Have a vivid imagination.	O	O	O	O	O (5+)
16. Keep in the background.	O	O	O	O	O (1-)
17. Sympathize with others' feelings.	O	O	O	O	O (2+)
18. Make a mess of things.	O	O	O	O	O (3-)
19. Seldom feel blue (sad).	O	O	O	O	O (4+)
20. Am not interested in abstract ideas.	O	O	O	O	O (5-)
21. Start conversations.	O	O	O	O	O (1+)
22. Am not interested in other people's problems.	O	O	O	O	O (2-)
23. Get chores done right away.	O	O	O	O	O (3+)
24. Am easily disturbed.	O	O	O	O	O (4-)
25. Have excellent ideas.	O	O	O	O	O (5+)
26. Have little to say.	O	O	O	O	O (1-)
27. Have a soft heart.	O	O	O	O	O (2+)
28. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.	O	O	O	O	O (3-)
29. Get upset easily.	O	O	O	O	O (4-)
30. Do not have a good imagination.	O	O	O	O	O (5-)
31. Talk to a lot of different people at parties.	O	O	O	O	O (1+)
32. Am not really interested in others.	O	O	O	O	O (2-)
33. Like order.	O	O	O	O	O (3+)
34. Change my mood a lot.	O	O	O	O	O (4-)
35. Am quick to understand things.	O	O	O	O	O (5+)
36. Don't like to draw attention to myself.	O	O	O	O	O (1-)
37. Take time out for others.	O	O	O	O	O (2+)
38. Shirk my duties.	O	O	O	O	O (3-)
39. Have frequent mood swings.	O	O	O	O	O (4-)
40. Use difficult words.	O	O	O	O	O (5+)
41. Don't mind being the centre of attention.	O	O	O	O	O (1+)
42. Feel others' emotions.	O	O	O	O	O (2+)
43. Follow schedule.	O	O	O	O	O (3+)

44. Get irritated easily.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (4-)
45. Spend time reflecting on things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (5+)
46. Am quiet around strangers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (1-)
47. Make people feel at ease.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (2+)
48. Am exacting in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (3+)
49. Often feel blue (sad).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (4-)
50. Am full of ideas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	O (5+)

*1= EXTRAVERSION (SURGENCY)*

*2= AGREEABLENESS*

*3= CONSCIENTIOUSNESS*

*4= NEUROTICISM (EMOTIONAL STABILITY)*

*5= OPENNESS (INTELLECT OR IMAGINATION)*

### **SCORING KEY**

+ KEY (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) [Add and divide by 5]

- KEY (5, 4, 3, 2, 1) [Add and divide by 5]

**For example: 5+5 =10 OR 3+4=7**