

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**SPOUSAL COMMUNICATION IN JUO AND JOA COMMUNITIES IN THE
NANUMBA-NORTH MUNICIPALITY-BIMBILLA**

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Mohammed Alidu declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:

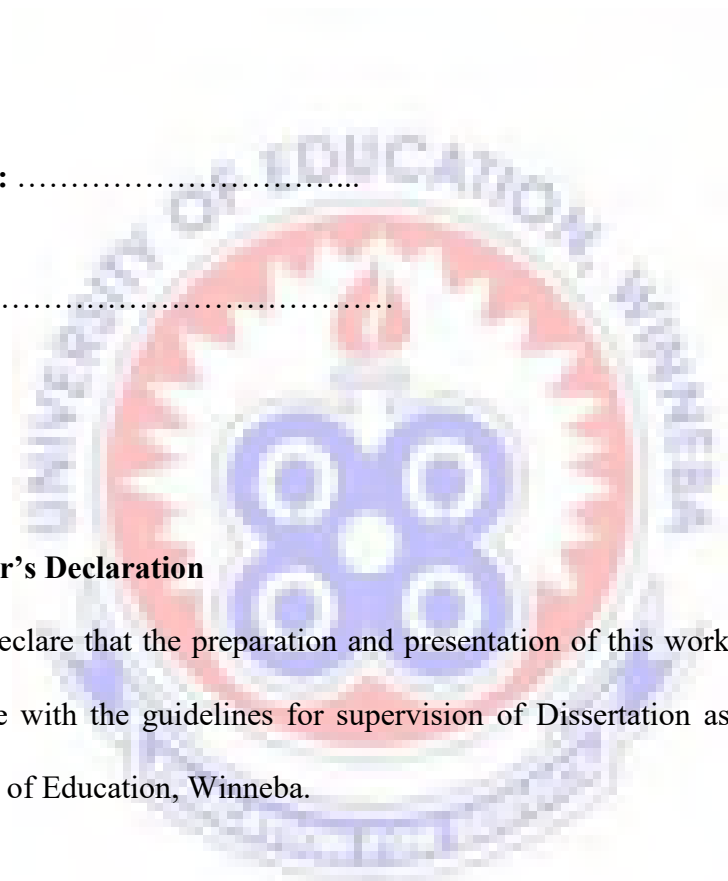
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of Dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Albert Agbesi Wornyo

Signature:

Date:.....



DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents and sister who made my dream a reality.



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ABSTRACT

This study examines factors that account for spousal communication in Juo and Joa communities in the Nanumba-North Municipality. The study also examined how spouses communicate and how spousal communication can be enhanced. A case study research design was adopted while in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and non-participant observation were used to gather qualitative data. Twenty married couples were sampled for the study. Data were analyzed thematically and explained using communication theories (interpretive and interaction Theories) and Social exchange theory as the theoretical basis. The findings show that infidelity, inadequate sexual role, infertility, performance self-responsibility, affection, and tolerance are factors that account for spousal communication. It was also found that couples communicate verbally and non-verbally through words and proxemics (distance), facial expression, paralanguage (manner of communication), eye contact, personal attire, hand gestures, body position, posture, head movement, material gifts, silent protest, physical assault, avoidance, responsibility taking, engagement, sexual denial and adequate sexual role respectively. The study concluded that spousal communication can be enhanced through decision-making, affection, engagement, responsibility taking, adequate sexual role and tolerance.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The word Communication is derived from the Latin word 'Communis' which means to make common, to transmit, to impart, or to share between two or more persons or groups Peters (2008). Communication is the natural aspect of man's life (Parikh, 2000). Communication is as old as human because human being himself starts communicating from birth (Parikh, 2000). When a baby cries it is communicating its need for attention or milk, when it gurgles, it is expressing its sense of satisfaction (Parikh, 2000). Man has always tried to share his thoughts, experiences and feelings with others through speech and gestures. We achieve our goals according to our ability to communicate effectively. Communication is the basis of all socio-economic, political and cultural activities. There can be no society without communication (Parikh, 2000).

Communication is used usually to mean speaking or writing or sending a message to another person (Parikh, 2000). Communication is any process in which people share information, ideas and feelings which involve not only the spoken and written word but also body language, personal mannerisms, and style (Hybels & Weaver, 2001). This means that communication can take the form of phone call or face to face interaction, text, body language and sign depending on the situation. Matthews (2015) defines Communication as the process by which one person receives messages from another. It is the sharing of messages, ideas, attitudes, and feelings resulting in a degree of understanding between a sender and a receiver. This means that for communication to achieve its intended purpose, there must be understanding and a feedback.

Communication is really much more than just the flow of information. Mastering the communication process goes beyond viewing a short YouTube clip. Otherwise, it would have been easy getting our message understood. Unfortunately, much of popular culture tends to minimize the challenges associated with the communication process. In the 21st century, people believe communication skill was important because one need only to peruse the content of talk shows, dating apps, advice columns, and organizational performance reviews to be recognized as good communicator. Communication skills can make or break an individual's personal and professional life. Companies want to hire and promote people with excellent communication skills (Beaton, 2017).

Communication is perceived as a magical elixir, one that can ensure a happy long-term relationship and guarantee organizational success. Yet, despite lauding communication as the sine qua non of contemporary success, the secret to that success is treated superficially at best in our modern information environment.

According to Parikh (2000), communication process is complex. Good communication means different things to different people in different situations. Accordingly, simply adopting a set of particular skills is not going to guarantee success. Genuinely good communicators are those who understand the underlying principles behind communication and are able to enact appropriately and effectively, particular communication skills as the situation warrants. According to Brown (1991) Communication is transfer of information from one person to another, whether or not it elicits confidence. But the information transferred must be understandable to the receiver. Meyer (1991 p.1) defined communication as “the intercourse by words, letters or messages, intercourse of thoughts or opinions. It is the act of making one's ideas and opinions known to others.”

From the definitions of communication, it means that it is difficult to give an exact definition to the term communication. A good definition should not only give the precise meaning but also throw light on the scope of the word. Thus, communication includes giving, receiving or exchanging ideas, information, signals or messages through appropriate media, enabling individuals or groups to persuade, to seek information, to give information or to express emotions. It also includes body-language, skills of speaking and writing. It outlines the objectives of communication. It emphasizes listening as an important aspect of communication. It involves a number of choices and decisions that are natural and unnoticed in informal situations. For instance, it does not follow any pre-defined channel for the transmission of information.

Ledermann et al (2010) reported that spousal communication is a constant exchange of information or messages between the two spouses by speech, letter writing, talking on the telephone, the exhibition of bodily or facial expression, and other methods as well as verbal and non-verbal. So far as it is essential for communication to occur when there is a cooperation between two parties, one active or at the giving end and the other passive or at the receiving end, spouses engage in continuous interactions to bring about marital satisfaction. It means that the happening between couples, and within couples can lead to marital satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It also means that on day to day basis, couples share their anxieties, exhibit their ego, and take of roles and responsibilities to bring satisfaction or dissatisfaction thereby stabilizing or destabilizing a marriage relationship.

Indeed, communication has long been established by researchers as the backbone of all relationships (Kittson, 2002; Van Pelt, 1997). The importance of communication in marriage is often not taken seriously as many couples tend to think that the daily conversation or lack of it does not affect them on a day to day basis. But the fact is that

love, trust, honesty, and other important characteristics of a strong marriage are not meaningful in themselves. It is rather the expression of these things that produces a marriage worthy of emulation.

A study by Suleman and Antinkut (2010) on the factors for couple communication and marital stability among adults in Assela town, Oromia region, Ethiopia revealed that females are better in spousal communication than males. This results were consistent with the findings of Esere, Yusuf and Omotosho (2011) who found that there is significant difference in the perception of the influence of spousal communication based on gender. Also, this result was supported by a study of Warner (2013) who found that women are better communicators than men in marriage. Warner (2003) also suggested that women's capacity to listen with empathy was superior to being more prone to wait and let men finish their sentences without interruption.

Also, Sulemana and Atinkut (2018) revealed that educational background has a significant effect on spousal communication. The result of Sulemana and Atinkut (2018) was pertinent with the findings of Olson and Fowers (1993) and Usoroh, Ekot, and Inyang (2010) who identified higher education as a factor contributing to effective communication that facilitate marital stability. Other studies with similar findings are Heaton (1989) and Goodwin, Mosher and Chandra (2010). These studies confirmed that the more years of schooling, the lower the divorce rate found.

Period of stay in marriage was also found to have a significant effect on spousal communication. That is, long-married couples are better able to manage their emotions such that, on the whole, they experience less distress and greater marital satisfaction than younger and middle-aged couples (Sulemana & Atinkut, 2018). This result was consistent with the findings of Esere, Yusuf and Omotosho (2010) who found that there

was a significant difference in the perception of spouses on the influence of spousal communication on marriage by length of years in marriage. However, this result was inconsistent with the findings of Usoroh, Ekot and Inyang (2010) who found that length of stay in marriage does not significantly influence spousal communication. The research findings concluded that there is strong positive relationship between couple communication and marital stability.

Uwom-Ajaegbu, Ajike, and Fadolapo (2015) conducted an empirical study on the causes and effects of communication breakdown in marriages and found that lack of sincere forgiveness by partner, impatience, constant nagging and sexual denial are factors that cause communication breakdown in marriage. The multiplier effects of these findings on marriage are couple sorting after undue privacy, unnecessary silence, unresolved issues, unnecessary distance, unfaithfulness (if issues are not resolved on time), misunderstanding, lack of trust, selfishness, self-righteousness, fights and quarrels, separation and divorce. This could be the reason why Esere, Yusuf & Omotosho (2010) citing Van Pelt (1997) said that the happiness of a couple depends largely on the effectiveness of their communication. This means that how a couple communicates can make or mar their relationship. Communicating effectively will allow the couple to negotiate problem areas, fulfil needs, avoid misunderstandings, and develop intimacy over the years. Divorces occur because spouses believe they no longer communicate (Dutihl, 2011).

A study on interpersonal communication between married couples on Planned Parenthood by Sarwatay and Divatia (2016) showed strong evidence of various independent variables such as suitable time in life, family economic status, mental preparedness, castes, religion, and education affecting effectiveness of communication and the latter, in turn, affecting decision of planning or not planning parenthood. This

study clearly showed how important interpersonal communication between married couples on Planned Parenthood was.

The current study investigates spousal communication in two communities in Nanumba District-Juo and Jua in the Northern Region of Ghana – typical traditional societies where culture is revered and greatly cherished. Gender inequality highly prevails in these communities. According to Reeves and Baden (2000) the defense of culture and tradition is often used by men to rationalize practices that limit women's engagement in the wider societies and the families in rural communities. Also, Reeves and Baden (2000) stated that gender roles reinforced by dominant rural beliefs and practices affect the way spouse communicate to each other in rural communities and efforts to challenge power imbalances are often denied legitimately, or where an international agency is involved, denounced as western interference or cultural imperialism. Paechter (2003) asserts that in order to sustain gender power differentials in families and communities, males and females are required to behave in particular ways and they are recompensed or punished for conformity to, or deviance from the norm.

Per the tradition of the people in Dagombas/Nanumbas communities, women are not allowed to speak while their husbands are speaking or attempt to challenge their husbands even if it is against their rights and women who are found in this condition are often regarded as disrespectful (Mahama 2003:288). Also, women are regarded as witches and naughty by nature and they can plot evil to turn the fortunes of their husbands to ruin. In terms of conviction, less talk about women and so, men do not share their secrets with them or engage them in conversation to the extent that men are not supposed to stay in the same room to prevent any unlikely circumstance of a secret being leaked out to a spouse. The belief is that, as much as couples stay together in the same room automatically communication will take place and possibility of sharing

secrete information is high. A man who is found of sitting or chatting with his women is often regarded as hypocrite and such a man is shun in public gathering and kept away from all secrete. Communication therefore, is only limited to request by both partners (Information from preliminary visit to the field). Effective spousal communication goes beyond just greeting in the morning, and making some remarks at the dinner table or a request. The happiness of a couple depends largely on the effectiveness of their communication (Van Pelt 1997). This present study examines the factors that account for spousal communication in Jou and Jua communities in the Nanumba North Municipality-Bimbilla.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There are various traditions in Ghana that promote stratification of gender roles and are reinforced by passing these traditions from one generation to the next (Boateng et al., 2006). Rural households in Ghana are therefore shaped by several factors because they are complex, culturally varied, and guided by dynamic institutional arrangements (MOWAC, 2012). In Ghana, culture plays an important role in the organization of domestic and communal activities. The behavior of males in their families is influenced by expectations of their fellow men about what it means to be a man in the community in which they live and conformity with certain norms and practices and these expectations perpetuate masculine tendencies among boys and men (Boateng et al 2006). Additionally, in order to ensure that males and females recognize and respect their appropriate gender positions in society, proverbs are often used in daily discourse to explain, describe and reinforce stereotypes about men and women (Adomako-Ampofo, 2001; Boateng et al).

In the economic and social spheres, men are often assigned responsibilities that involve leaving home and the emphasis in their training is on public activities while girls' tasks

are home-based (Bacon, Barry, Boateng et al., 2006; & Child, 1973; Nabila, 2001). As Boateng et al (2001) argued, girls are taught to look up to men and boys as stronger, wiser, and more responsible and boys are socialized to lead and control women. In view of this, girls carry the greater burden of domestic work and boys are permitted more time for play and to be away from home.

These gender roles embedded in culture underpin the notions and expectations regarding household chores, responsibilities and decision making in families (Bandiaky, 2008). The assigned male and female roles that are expressed in community norms and values are often used to maintain social control by males over females.

The culture of a particular group of people has a significant influence on their lives and the way they conduct their social, economic, religious and political activities (Belshek, 2006). Inferring from the assertion of Belshek (2006), actions and inactions of a group of people are directed and informed by their culture and spousal communication in societies is influenced by the position culture holds for them in that society.

The Nanumbas, Dagombas, and Mamprusi in the Northern Region and the Mossi in Burkuna Faso all belong to the Mole- Dagbani which is a sub- group of the Gur (Aswelve 2013). The Dagombas, Nanumbas, and Mamprusi claim descent from a common ancestor. Even though, these groups today constitute three apparently distinct ethnic groups, their people still identify with each other and the bond is strongest among the Dagombas and Nanumbas who speak dagballi as a common language. These two ethnic groups share a common sociocultural, economic, religious and political activities. They are patriarchal societies; authority at the highest levels of the society is vested in male chiefs and at the lowest levels in male household heads. (Aswelve 2013).

The Dagombas/Nanumbas hold strong views about differences between males and females, and on the basis of these views and beliefs they assign different roles and statuses to males and females. They believe that these differences transcend the anatomy of the body to differences in their mental abilities, their psychological state, the value of their roles in society, and even in their linguistic behavior.

For instance, the Dagombas/Nanumbas generally hold the view that women are more talkative than men, and that, much of their talk is about trivial things or about themselves and other people. In addition, it is a widely held view among the Dagomba/Nanumbas that women have abrasive tongues. This view is expressed in the saying *payaba mali zilima* (women have tongues). The word *zinli* (pl. *zilima*) means 'tongue', but it also means abuse, chastising, ridicule, mockery or insinuation (Mahama 2003:288). In fact, literature shows that similar claims have been made in many other languages, but have either been found to be mere generalizations, or have been largely contradicted by empirical evidence (James & Drakich 1993). Nevertheless, there are, in Dagbanli/Nanunli some linguistic forms which can empirically be shown, to be used differently by males and females. These are command-response forms and speech forms.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) have observed that conversation is structured on a principle of speakers taking turns, and that the basic structural unit in conversation is a string of at least two turns. Some turns are more closely related than others and occur as sequenced pairs, or adjacency pairs. The production of a particular type of utterance, a first pair part, by one speaker requires the production of a related type of utterance a second pair part by a second speaker; thus, a question requires an answer, a complaint an apology or justification, and a summons a response or answer (Salifu 2010:, Hudson

2001). Though this principle may not occur in normal conversation across cultures, as Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) have observed in some African contexts, it is noticeable in at least the summons and response sequences in Dagbanli/Nanunli, where a summons must obligatorily be answered. Salifu (2010), considers summons as one of the ritualistic aspects of language, like greetings, and forms of address. It occurs regularly in conversation, and because it also serves as a starter, like greetings and address forms, summons can function as tone setters and controllers of interaction.

In the Dagombas/Nanumbas societies the husband-wife relation does not accord status parity. A husband uses the response form *ẽẽ*, to answer his wife's call, but the wife must answer *náá* when the husband calls. The use of non-reciprocal responses reflects the different statuses assigned to husband and wife (Mahama 2004).

By the norms of culturally acceptable behavior among the Dagombas/Nanumbas, a wife cannot order, command or give instructions to her husband. A man summons his wife and expects her to present herself before him, but a wife cannot summon her husband. A wife must avoid explicit directives and employ what is called strategies of indirection (Salifu 2010). If a woman wants to talk to her husband, she walks up to him, kneels down and politely tells him what she has to say. Where the husband is out of sight, a wife may call out his name and he will respond, and the wife will walk up to him. Neither of them will expect the husband to proceed to the wife, unless there are peculiar circumstances that make it necessary for him to do so.

A wife does not address or refer to her husband by name alone; she must qualify the name with a kin term or a title if he has one; e.g. *M be' Amadu* (my elder brother Amadu). The choice of kin term is variable, but the commonest term used is *beli* 'elder brother', as in the above example. Even where a husband is younger than his wife, she

is required to address him as 'elder brother', or else risk the social stigma of a disrespectful wife (Mahama, 2004). Where a husband is much older, as may often be the case where a man can marry a woman as young as some of his senior children, the wife may address him as 'father'. A husband, on the other hand, addresses his wife by name only just as a superior in age or status addresses an inferior. The non-reciprocal address form between husband and wife is informed by the Dagombas/Nanumbas view of the husband-wife relation as one of an unequal relationship: a superior-inferior, super ordinate-subordinate relationship. There are several dimensions and conceptions of this inequality; the foremost being that the husband is the "senior" and the social superior.

The picture of spousal communication in Jou and Joa communities is gloomy as the situations of spousal communication is not better than the above, as these cultural attitudes towards the role of women deny them of their privilege and equal opportunity to assert their rights.

The cumulative effect of this is what whips up the interest of this research to examine spousal communication in Juo and Jua communities in the Nanumba North Municipality-Bimbilla. In this study area, researchers have observed that communication problem have been highly prevailing and produces undesirable effects on the society. Due to this, spouses in Juo and Joa communities especially women have faced severe challenges in expressing their feelings and anxieties. Lack of enough attention to this problem of spouses can result in a long-term, far-reaching negative consequences for the community and the nation at large. For this reason, the present research examines the factors that account for spousal communication in Juo and Joa communities in the Nanumba-north Municipality.

1.3 Objective of the Study

This research seeks to examine the causes of spousal communication and how it can be improved. Based on this, the objectives of the research are:

1. To examine factors that account for spousal communication among the people of Juo and Joa.
2. To examine how couples communicate among the people of Juo and Joa.
3. To examine how spousal communication can be enhanced among the people of Juo and Joa.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions developed to guide this study are;

1. What factors account for spousal communication among the people of Juo and Joa?
2. How do couples communicate among the people of Juo and Joa?
3. How can spousal communication be enhanced among the people of Juo and Joa?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The result of this study would be useful to all married couples and even youths who are about to get married or who may want to learn how to keep their families together for peaceful coexistence. The ultimate result would be peaceful coexistence in the family and in the world as a whole. After all communication is the yardstick for peace and development.

It will keep marriage couples up and doing and make couples, especially the youth who are yet to marry prepare very well before they get married. Undoubtedly, it is crucial to finding possible enlightenment to ignorance about the need for effective spousal communication among the rural folk.

Spousal communication is a social research which is critical to societal development. It generates knowledge, provides useful information, and helps policy makers in decision-making regarding policies that can help demystify the myths that have bedevil people of the area concerning spousal communication among others. This study will inform government campaigns on the importance of effective interpersonal communication between couples in the Dagonba/Nanunba areas. The role of counselling at urban health centers and government hospitals in this regard would be invoked. Finally, it may help government curriculum division to adjust the courses in schools, colleges and universities to meet current demands in the marriage institution.

1.6 Delimitation

This research is taking place in Juo and Jua communities- sister communities in Bimbilla and intends to cover a sample of 20 married couples of varying age. The study area is indeed very typical traditional area and the people regard the traditions seriously that they will not want to open up to certain secrets of the area regarding themselves. They are the custodians of tradition within the Nanumba kingdom and have high regards for the tradition in the area. Practices and behaviors that are no more considered as sacred or important in parts of the municipality especially the District capital due to secularism, diffusion of culture and the phenomenon of mass culture are still considered as sacred and revered in these communities.

The sampling strategy is purposive, and the research deals with couples. The participants are married. Moreover, majority of participants in the area are illiterates and mainly farmers.

1.7 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter which is the introductory chapter comprises the background of the study, objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, scope, and organization of the study. The second chapter

focuses on the literature review and the theoretical framework underpinning the study. The third chapter highlights the processes and procedures of collecting and analyzing data. It is the embodiment of the research approach and design, sample and sampling technique, data collection instrument, processes of data collection and data analysis. Chapter four dwells on the findings and the analysis of the data collected. The issues are presented in themes and explained by the use of the theoretical framework and the concepts of the literature review. The final chapter summarizes the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations for future studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter brings together relevant literature on the concept of spousal communication, the role communication plays in marital stability and marital satisfaction and cultural practices that serve as barriers to effective spousal communication in Ghana. It also reviewed literature on variables that are related to communication and the correlation of these variables to communication are presented.

Finally, this chapter reviewed relevant literature in consonance with the objectives of the study. The review starts with the theoretical framework, theoretical perspectives and ends with review of empirical literature that are relevant to the study.

2.1 Theoretical Perspectives of Marriage

Marriage is one of the most popular institutions found among human beings. Although historically marriage can be traced only to a few thousand years in the past, many sociologists agree that in one form or another marriage had always existed in human society.

Askari, Noah, Hassan and Baba (2012) assert that marriage is a foundation in every society. Citing Olson and Olson (2002) added that marriage can be the most nourishing and enduring asset in human relationship.

Marriage is the state of being united with a person as husband or wife. It is the day-to-day interactions in which married couples of the opposite sex are joined. From a societal level of analysis, the institution of marriage represents all the behaviors, norms, roles, expectations, marital separation, divorce, and remarriage which is in a particular kind common in all over the world and one of the factors responsible for these anomalies is

effective communication problem which couples encounter some years after the inception of the union (Maciver, 2004). Though marriage has clear implications for individuals' general sense of well-being, the essence of the marital relationship lies in founding and maintaining a family (Muna and Atinkut 2018).

Undiyaundeye (2006) defines marriage as the coming together of two persons in love with consent of parents, guardians and witnesses for the purpose of procreation and companionship. Traditionally there are different kinds of man-woman relationship on which marriage and family life are based.

However, the one which is widely practiced today all over the cultures is monogamous marriage (Nukunya, 1992). By the very fact that human beings are bisexual in nature, the complementary male-female relationship is mutually enriching. Although there is a growing trend for a single life, single parenting and same-sex marriages among a small minority of the population, this does not shake the foundations of marriage.

According to Sakmar (2010), marriage is a social institution which constitutes the fundamental and basic community of humanity. Two individuals differing in sex are mutually attracted by a mysterious force of instinct and love and commit freely and totally to each other to form a creative dynamic unit; a micro-community called family. Sakmar (2010) defines marriage as, a socially legitimate sexual union, beginning with a public announcement and undertaken with some idea of permanence; it is assumed with a more or less explicit marriage contract, which spells out the reciprocal rights and obligations between the spouses and future children. These definitions bring out a few basic components that constitute a marriage, namely, social integration of persons, commitment, and public acknowledgment, the assumption of performance, procreation, reciprocal rights and obligations. Marriage

is, therefore, more than physical attraction, biological union and social integration; it involves total commitment, total self-donation of one another and taking responsibilities that lead to mutual wellbeing.

Sakmar (2010) cites the following factors in the beginning and development of any love relationship that leads to marriage. a) Physical attraction b) Satisfaction of certain personality needs like: someone to understand; to respect the ideals; to appreciate what one wishes to achieve; to understand the moods; to help one make decisions; to stimulate the ambition; to give self-confidence; to look at; to appreciate and admire; to back in difficulties; to relieve the loneliness, c) Sharing together the special interests and cares and d) Same life goals. Marriage is a complex phenomenon in today's changing society. People marry for various reasons. Besides sex and sexual attraction which are primary considerations, love, economic security, companionship, protection, emotional security, escape from loneliness and unhappy home situation, the adventure of common interests, and children are the few other reasons that may constitute a person's disposition for marriage. Some psychologists talk about homogamy in marriage. They argue that people unconsciously tend to fall in love and marry those who gratify their needs. Present day changes in the values and social consciousness influence the traditional understanding of marriage and family.

Today all over the world, there is a modern trend that considers marriage and family life as a non-essential element in fulfilment and maintenance of human life. Single parenting, test tube babies and other scientific inventions to the brim of cloning are part of human life and evolution that moves the society towards a new understanding of family ethics.

Nukunya (1992), sees the present day changes in marriage as a positive trend towards greater freedom of the spouses. Because, the emotional, psychological, intellectual and the physical needs of the partners are given higher priority over mere permanence as understood by traditional marriages. The purpose of marriage and family in the preservation of species as understood traditionally is debated by some sociologists today. Animals have no family and yet they survive and safeguard their species. Today, all over the world, the influences of western culture, the diffusion of mass media, increasing population, industrialization and urbanization have changed people's way of life. New sexual ethics and sexual permissiveness affect the segments of marriage and family. The adherence to traditional moral values, patriarchal family system, and the idea of having many children has slowly vanished from the scene. Instead, separation and desertion, premarital sex, abortion illegitimacy, prostitution, marital unfaithfulness have crept into the social system. These influence the relationships of couples and their marital adjustment, although the main function of the family has not changed. Years back, once couples were married, they had to live with each other whether they were well matched or not. This is true even today in societies where traditional values are respected. It is relatively difficult to characterize Ghanaian marriage under one set of procedures.

Marriage customs and laws vary from group to group, and may show significant variations even within groups. However, it is possible to analyze those aspects which are common to most marriages, whether contracted under customary law, Church marriage or Ordinance marriage in Ghana.

Firstly, most marriages irrespective of the education, age, and income of the spouses are preceded by some form of custom. The most basic step therefore is to announce

your intention to marry and to perform the necessary customs demanded by the women's kin in asking for the hand of their daughter. This custom may involve a relatively inexpensive ceremony of local drink and gifts to a more expensive ceremony of imported drinks and gifts, depending in most cases upon the circumstances of the man and his kinsfolk. Once this basic custom has been performed, several alternatives are open to the couple, and these seem to be more conditioned by means and status rather than any fundamental change in attitude or beliefs on the part of Ghanaian in marriage. The couple in a majority of cases will try first and foremost to fulfil the customary procedures prescribed by their kinsfolk. In a number of cases however the customary ceremonies may have the additional feature of the Christian church ceremony, depending upon whether the couple are Christians or not. The additional feature of the Church ceremony in marriage has not fundamentally changed or altered the form of marriage—the marriage is still a customary marriage governed first and foremost by customary law and not Church law.

Another alternative is that after the performance of custom the couple registers their marriage under the ordinance and celebrates it with an elaborate church wedding. The incidence of this type of wedding is far scarcer than the former two ceremonies. First, because of the sheer cost, many cannot possibly afford such a display. Secondly, and even more important, is the fact that marriage as a mere civil contact between two persons has not gained wide acceptance in Ghana and is not likely to do so for some time. The attitude that one's choice of partner is an individual concern, has little meaning for the average Ghanaian. Marriage encompasses the much wider network of friends, relatives and kinsfolk. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand the slowness in embracing this custom. A most appropriate description in this instance is the following by Nukunya (1992) in which the author vividly describes the social

atmosphere that surrounds a customary Anlo Ewe marriage ceremony. The elaboration of the marriage ceremony and the large number of kinsfolk taking part in the proceedings bring home to the couple and the relatives the seriousness of their undertaking; and at every stage the ancestors are invoked adding supernatural authority. This together with the high moral code of the past; the punitive measures of the traditional authorities and the strong parental authority, provide a suitable environment for marital stability. A third and equally important factor is that most couples subscribe to the rights and obligations prescribed by customary law and not civil law irrespective of the procedures of marriage, and rarely wish to build their marriages on the English precepts (except where it seems socially expedient). Thus the motivation to contract a purely English type of marriage is still relatively small in Ghana.

One must ask, what percentages of all marriages performed in the society are contracted under the Ordinance, under customary law, under church law? In most cases, the marriage will be customary marriage, but in a smaller number of instances there will be a combination of custom with a Christian church ceremony, and in a still smaller number of marriages, one finds all three features combined, that is, where the couple perform the customary ceremony and in addition they register their marriage under the Ordinance and have it blessed with a church ceremony. However, it should be noted that where the marriage is registered and celebrated in the church, the ceremonies often do not coincide in time. Some may perform the necessary custom and wait sometime before performing either the church wedding or the Ordinance marriage.

In any case, when the individuals have performed the necessary customary rites they are allowed to cohabit as man and wife. This pattern is particularly common and important in the urban settings (among the more affluent) where weddings have become

not only fashionable but a status symbol in themselves-individuals often perform the necessary custom and then plan an elaborate wedding at some future date.

From the above argument therefore, it seems, that the fundamental basis for marriages for the majority of Ghanaians is in the customary law and not civil law. However, because aspects of church law and civil law affect the institution of marriage and are expected to influence the patterns of marriage and divorce in Ghana, there is need to integrate and reflect the indigenous laws and practices into these procedures. Nevertheless, discrepancies, confusion, and controversy between the civil/church law and customary law in marriage practices make it difficult to reconcile these disparities. For example, Christian churches in Ghana still expect church marriage to precede customary marriage (however, in rare cases is this born out in practice).

Secondly, the Christian church attaches undue legal credence to their procedures. Church law states that marriages registered under church law must be monogamous. Again, this is an anomaly in Ghana, since the prevalent form of marriage in the population is customary marriage which is potentially polygynous. When we therefore consider these facts, we see that a large part of the population is excluded from the rights, obligations and protection that are embodied in civil/church laws.

Thus the very law that should be expected to influence and shape the institution of marriage in Ghana (for the most part) stands apart from the main stream of Ghanaian life.

Despite these gaps and inconsistencies between the law (church/civil) and practice (custom), there are factors that are likely to narrow the areas of contention, and influence these spheres moving closer together over time. Communication is crucial to

the social phenomenon, which is a requirement from birth and which assists a range of interactional skills for adulthood (Dwyer, 2000).

Lederer and Jackson (1990) in the mirages of marriage gives a workable definition of spousal communication as a constant exchange of information or messages between the two spouses by speech, letter writing, talking on the telephone, the exhibition of bodily or facial expression, and other methods as well.

This underscores that communication can be verbal and non-verbal. Jent (2014) went further to identify some ways to communicate nonverbally: proxemics (distance), facial expression, paralanguage (manner of communication), eye contact, personal attire, hand gestures, body position, posture, and head movement. He states however that the most common are facial expression and hand gestures.

Verbal communication is mainly with words. Nonverbal communication may replace the verbal when there are no spoken words as in the case of facial expressions, proxemics, and body language. Nonverbal communication may reinforce verbal communication when in agreement with the verbal, or it may contradict the verbal.

According to Sulemana (2014), communication in marriage is like a life giving river. When husband and wife cannot communicate, a huge dam is built stopping the flow of water. This causes everything around them to suffer and slowly die. Seeds that were once planted cannot grow and both spouses develop a strong inward thirst for their unmet needs, eventually causing multiple cracks throughout the relationship. Many promising marriages have fallen in to ruin simply because of lack of communication. Matthews (2015) states that if love is the heartbeat of a marriage, communication is its lifeblood. He further adds that “many research studies of family strengths found

communication to be a common thread in keeping family relationships strong and viable. A marriage will be made or broken to the degree a couple learns and practices effective communication skills, a challenging task indeed.

Effective communication is vital in marriage relationship and ineffective communication can lead to numerous family problems, including excessive family conflict, ineffective problem-solving skill, lack of intimacy, weak emotional bonding and so on (Esere, 2002, 2006). Likewise, poor communication style is also associated with an increased risk of divorce and marital separation (Esere, 2008). Communication processes within couples are considered to be crucial for the positive or negative development of dyadic relationships over time and to be a key determinant of relationship functioning (Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Schmitt, Kliegel, & Shapiro, 2007).

Colon (2015) states that communication is effective when interactions between spouses are open, honest and conscious and when what spouses express both verbally and nonverbally is in line with what they truly think and feel. It also requires that spouses truly listen to one another and feel that they are heard, understood, and respected by each other.

Olson and Defrain (2000) have considered communication as the heart of intimate human relationship and the foundation on which all other relationships built; they also assert that it is the key to a successful couple relationship. In fact, the ability and the willingness to communicate have been found to be among the most significant factors in maintaining a relationship (Ekot & Usoro, 2006; Anyakoha & James, 2004).

More and more marital failures are blamed on the inability of couples to communicate effectively (Orthner, 1975).

2.2 Review of Empirical Literature on Marriage.

This section reviews empirical literature on the role of communication in marital stability-satisfaction and the factors that serve as barriers to effective spousal communication. The review focuses on very current cited literature. Again, the review places emphasis on cultural practices (gender roles) that serve as barriers to effective spousal communication as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) interventions to enhance spousal communication. The review is not limited to any country but across the globe. Even though there might be contextual differences, the issue of spousal communication and the role communication plays in marital stability-satisfaction bear resemblance in most instances.

Studies conducted to examine the role of communication on marital stability-satisfaction has a long and well-documented history but the consistently high divorce rates illustrate that still too little is known about ways to achieve and maintain a sufficient level of marital satisfaction to assure marital success.

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

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

The high rate of marital disruption, combined with an increase in births outside marriage, means that about half of all children will reside at least temporarily in single-parent households, usually with their mothers. Because of remarriage, about one in seven children currently lives with a parent and stepparent and about one in three children will live with a stepparent for some time prior to reaching age 19 (Bumpass, 2003). Observers have attributed this change to a number of factors, including the increasing economic independence of women, declining earnings among men without college degrees, rising expectations for personal fulfillment from marriage, and greater social acceptance of divorce. Remarriage following divorce is common, and nearly one-half of current marriages involve a second (or higher order) marriage for one or both partners. Second (and higher order) marriages, however, have an even greater likelihood of dissolution than first marriages. As a result, about one out of every six

adults endures two or more divorces. The shift from a dominant pattern of lifelong marriage to one of serial marriage punctuated by periods of being single represents a fundamental change in how adults meet their needs for intimacy over the life course (Cherlin, 1992).

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

Marital stability, as an index of continuity and perpetuation of nuclear relations of mutual dependency, trust, and friendship remains a measure of prediction of more or less happy marriage (Cattell 1970). Spousal communication and marital stability-satisfaction are positively related.

Partners who master the ability to communicate softly without being highly aggressive, contemptuous, or insulting, are more likely to get positive rather than negative responses. Those who use gentle humor and playfulness in their efforts and liberally sprinkle it throughout their interactions are more likely to have quality relationships that last (Driver and Gottman 2004).

Contemptuousness and criticism are highly predictive of relationship instability (Gottman1994). The amount of positive affect partners show one another, especially during conflict situations, is highly predictive of happy and stable relationships (Gottman et al. 1998).

Research reports greater success in relationships where there is more positive bidding and more positive responding (Driver and Gottman 2004). A bidder who gets a positive response is more likely to bid again than one who does not. It is clearly a case where more is better (as long as these are positive). Those who are more attentive or mindful in their relationships are likely to have more success than those who simply allow life to flow unheeded around them.

Research indicates that couples have happier and more stable marriages when husbands are more accepting of influence from their wives (Coan, Gottman, Babcock, and Jacobson 1997; Gottman & Carrere, 1998). In other words, they are more likely to use turning toward responses and be open to and accepting of the wife's ideas. Thus, it is important for couples to feel comfortable and practice mutual influence in order to feel accepted and understood.

Avoidance or withdrawal occurs when one partner shows they are unwilling to start or continue an interaction. This pattern is also called "stonewalling" (Gottman and Levenson 1992) and occurs when one partner just "checks out" of the conflict while the other remains or wants to remain engaged. Also, most couples will experience anger and distress in their relationships, and these are not predictive of separation or divorce (Gottman and Levenson 1992). Healthy couples usually know how to repair relative minor damage in a way that keeps them together and happy.

Gottman (1994) found that the four negative behaviors that most predict divorce are criticism of partners' personality, contempt (from a position of superiority), defensiveness, and stonewalling, or emotional withdrawal from interaction. On the

other hand, stable couples handle conflicts in gentle, positive ways, and are supportive of each other.

According to Karney and Bradbury's model (1995), the ways in which couples deal with the life events they encounter are the key contributors to the couple's perceptions of the quality of their marriage.

As Sanders, Halford and Behrens (1999) points out, life events can have both negative and positive effects on a relationship depending on the strength of the couple's adaptive processes.

A couple's accrued experience in dealing with difficult or stressful circumstances will alter spouses' perceptions of the quality of their relationship and vice-versa: satisfaction with the marriage is likely to lead to more positive interactions and behaviors, while engaging in positive interactions and behavior is likely to enhance marital satisfaction and perceptions of quality.

Alternatively, unrealistic expectations or dysfunctional patterns of communication may increase the likelihood of relationship problems and declines in satisfaction over time (Olsen and Fowers 1986; Olsen and Larsen 1989; Sanders, Halford and Behrens 1999).

2.3 Factors for Marital Longevity

Marital stability and marital satisfaction are closely linked to marital longevity. Mackey and O'Brien (1995) identified factors that appeared to be important to marital longevity which include: mutuality of decision-making: Couples who reported higher levels of joint decision-making also reported significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction, relational values of trust, respect, understanding and equity, sexual and psychological intimacy: Mackey and O'Brien (1998) viewed intimacy as a composite of mutual understanding, acceptance, trust, and respect based on being open and honest about one's feelings and reflected both physically and psychologically, containment of

conflict, and quality of communication: couples reported that over time they became more open and expressive with each other, characteristics associated with higher levels of satisfaction.

Hammerschmidt and Sharlin, Kaslow (2000), in referring to very difficult times in their relationship, most couples, whether currently happy or unhappy, reported that honoring their commitment to a lifelong partnership and their sense of responsibility towards their children were the prime reasons for seeing the marriage or relationship through the stressful periods. Satisfied couples also cited the motivating power of their love for their spouse or partner, but for dissatisfied couple's forces external to the couple such as children and religious beliefs exerted greater influence on their decision to remain in the marriage.

Karney and Bradbury's (1995) review of longitudinal studies on marriage also showed that marital satisfaction was more strongly related to marital stability than most other predictor variables.

Positive and negative affect have been measured in marital interactions, and a higher exchange of negative emotions associated with a low degree of positive emotions is characteristic of both unstable and unsatisfied couples (Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995; Gottman, 1994; Gottman, & Carrere, 1998; Gottman & Levenson, 1992).

Argyle (1983) has argued that a close, trusting relationship is the best basis for a happy marriage. This view is supported by Bee, (1994) and Rutter and Rutter (1993).

One overall finding about marriage and satisfaction/happiness has suggested that a marriage starts off with high levels of positive emotions, but these levels drop in mid-adulthood. They then pick up again in late adulthood (Bengston et al. 1990). Bee (1998) has confirmed this model of a U-shaped satisfaction curve.

It has also become clear that marital satisfaction and stability are not synonymous (Fowers, 1990; Gottman, 1991; Heaton & Albrecht, 1991; White & Booth, 1986). Although the majority of satisfactory marriages are stable, marital dissatisfaction does not always lead to marital instability (Johnson et al., 1986). Two recent studies (Gottman, 1991; Gottman & Levenson, 1992) found that marital dissatisfaction did not adequately predict separation or divorce among couples because many dis-satisfied couples stayed married.

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

Unfortunately, each spouse has a tendency to expect others to act, think, and desire things the way they do (Knapp & Vangelisti 1996). They focus on how they would like to receive affection. As a result, husbands and wives tend to express love to each other the way that they would like to receive it, thus neglecting to express love the way that the other person would feel the most loved. Examples of this confusion include a wife who feels love through the reception of gifts and who, in turn, gives gifts to her spouse to express affection to him. But he most feels loved through words of affirmation and encouragement. What should have been a positive moment turns into a negative one when a fight ensues because “You don’t sing me love songs” Consequently, spouses become dissatisfied and the relationship dissolves without either party really knowing what happened. Their main explanation is that they no longer feel loved.

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

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

Marriage has been documented in every known culture (Brown, 1991). More than 90% of the world's population will marry at least once (Rankin-Esquer, Burnett, Baucom, & Epstein, (1997)). Most societies also have instituted divorce procedures (Brown, 1991). The ubiquity of marriage and divorce suggests the potential utility of an evolutionary perspective for understanding marital satisfaction.

From an evolutionary perspective (Buss, 1989), marital satisfaction can be viewed as a psychological state regulated by mechanisms that monitor the benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The costs and benefits are gauged psychologically, but the mechanisms that gauge them have been forged over the vast expanse of evolutionary time. At an ultimate level, therefore, these mechanisms monitor what would have been costs and benefits in ancestral times. Infidelity, therefore, can be expected to lower the partner's marital satisfaction because marital satisfaction monitors costs of this sort. Marital dissatisfaction might function to motivate the individual to attempt to change the existing relationship, or to seek another one that may be more beneficial (Buss, 1989).

This research intent to place emphases on the cultural barriers to effective spousal communication (i.e. non-satisfaction of the marriage) rather than the numbers or percentages of divorces.

The impact of divorces has dire effects for the couples involved, including poorer health and increases in accidents. There are strong negative consequences to separation and divorce on the mental and physical health of both spouses, including increased risk for psychopathology, increased rates of automobile accidents, and increased incidence of physical illness, suicide, violence, homicide, significant immunosuppression, and increased mortality from diseases (Gottman, 1994). Divorce not only involves the couple but most devastatingly, their children. "In children, marital distress, conflict, and disruption are associated with depression, withdrawal, poor social competence, health problems, poor academic performance, and a variety of conduct-related difficulties" (p. 169). "Divorce pushes many families into poverty. Children of divorce are less likely to graduate from high school, and they are more likely to get pregnant as teenagers; they are more prone to depression and even joblessness" (Talbot, 1997, p. 32).

Healthy relationships, overall, tend to last longer, are generally happier, and tend to give each individual a meaningful, rich life that all tend to want. Marriage is an intrinsic part of our contemporary conception of a meaningful, rich life (Flowers, 1998, p. 531). Marital happiness is still the largest contributor to overall happiness for married individuals and is strongly associated with physical and psychological well-being (Reynolds, Remer, & Johnson, 1995, p. 156). The unhealthy relationships that either lack these aspects or possess deficits in certain parts are typically the ones that end in divorce because they don't fulfill the happy, long lasting, meaningful criteria for a rich life.

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

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

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

defensible interventions for adults that prevent (Gottman, Notarius, Gonso, & Markman, 1979)) or alleviate marital distress and divorce.

2.4 The Effects of Gender Roles, beliefs, Practices on Spousal Communication

In Ghana, the social and material circumstances women find themselves constraint them of control over the conditions of their lives; gender relations define their responsibilities while at the same time withholding the control and resources they require in order to achieve a measure of economic independence and predictability.

There is ample empirical evidence showing that conflicts between a head and his spouse(s) over the distribution of resources and labor are common. Wives generally have less bargaining power than their husbands, although they often bear the brunt of economic and domestic responsibility in their household (Cate, Lloyd, Henton, Larson, 1982; Avotri and Walters, 2001).

Women face economic uncertainty and discrimination in their access to jobs, lands and credit (Avotri & Walters, 2001). The women in rural areas are likely to be held back by limited control over resources and unequal property rights. In such rural areas, patriarchal relations are strong and men continue to control most productive resources such as land, livestock, tools and means of transport. They retain most of the proceeds of their work while expecting their wives to meet most of their family needs through food production and earnings from income generating activities (Avotri & Walters, 2001).

These factors make women less supportive to their husband financially. Research has shown that supportive spouses approach one another in attempts to elicit support and respond to the request of each other more positively (Heffner, Kiecolt-Glaser, Loving, Glaser & Malarkey, 2004, p. 250). Feeling heard and validated by a spouse helps to increase the support felt by each spouse.

The nature of sociopolitical setup of rural communities in Ghana does not give equal opportunity to women to express themselves as compared to men. In many societies in Ghana, traditionally men are expected to protect their families by being strong even in the face of adversity. As Boateng et al (2006) argue, male characteristics that are respected and encouraged in Ghana include virility, strength, establishing authority, power and leadership qualities, the ability to offer protection and the ability to bear physical and emotional pain.

These gender roles are established in language of the people to the extent that proverbs are often used to explain, describe and hold in place stereotypes about women and men (Boateng et al 2006). For instance, the proverb that, 'when gun lets bullets, they are received by men chest' and 'the hen knows daybreak, but allows the cock to announce it'. These assertions suggested that compared to women, men are honored and revered in the rural community.

Reynolds and Herman-Kinney (2003) observed that the sheer amount of talk in a situation and the object of the speaker indicate who is important and who is not. The disparity in power and social status pose a big challenge to effective spousal communication in those communities.

The education of the girl-child has suffered many setbacks both in the past and at present. As a result, some girls are denied access while others are forced to drop out of school especially in rural Ghana. Exchange, Betrothal and Traditional Boy/Girlfriend Relationship or preferred marriage arrangements all have negative effects on girl-child education. The roles girls played at home, during funerals and festive occasions also overburdened them and affected their attendance rate and performance in school.

Also, socio-economic and demographic variables such as poverty, large family sizes and distance to school among other factors posed challenges to girl-child (Mabefam

2013) education. Most notably, Avotri and Walters (2001) indicated that the roles assigned to women placed heavy demands upon them, constrained them, limited control over their lives, and robbed them of access to health and economic resources. Women spend more time in reproductive and household work, including time spent obtaining water and fuel, caring for children and the sick (Ghana Health Service Report, 2011). Women are expected to provide for their families, yet they face economic uncertainty and discrimination in their access to jobs, lands and credit (Avotri & Walters, 2001). The women in rural areas are likely to be held back by limited control over resources and unequal property rights. As a result, parents see girl-child education as a higher risk for investment because the girls would end up being married to someone with no direct benefit to them (Mlana, 2001; Bista, 2004). This shows that the factors that contribute to low enrollment of girl-child in school in most developing countries including Ghana are multifaceted and complex.

In view of the above, there has always been a gender gap between girls and boys in the various levels of education in Ghana as well. At the primary and Junior High School levels, the Gender Parity Index in terms of education was in-balanced, unfavorable to girls as their ratio to boys was lower than expected. For instance, the ratio when balanced stands at 1 but in 2006/07 academic year the Gender Parity Index (GPI) was 0.96 and remained the same for the 2007/08 academic year whilst at the Junior High School level the Gender Parity Index retrogressed from 0.93 in the 2005/06 academic year to 0.92 in 2007/2008 academic year (NDPC & UNDP, 2010). This is very unfortunate because, it is expected that the Gender Parity Index should have been narrowed. Despite these national Gender Parity Indices, there are regional differences

with Northern Region obtaining the least index of 0.81 which fell below the national average of 0.94 in the 2008 academic year (ActionAid Ghana, 2011).

The above situation raises concern about the future of human resource development of Ghana. Should things continue this way, Ghana will not be able to harness the full potential of its citizenry. It is therefore important to ask questions and seek answers to the wide gender gaps that exist between girls and boys in schools especially in the Northern Region which had the least Gender Parity Index of 0.81 in Ghana.

Contrary to the strongly held beliefs above, educating the girl-child exposes the girl-child and the whole society to so many advantages (Annan, 2003). This is reiterated by the human capital theory which stipulates that education is an investment that yield returns for the individual and for society at large (Schultz, 1961). In addition to that Colclough (1982) makes the point that, educating children has both economic and social benefits.

These benefits are derived from cognitive skills as well as non-cognitive abilities gained and which are reflected in the person's ideas, perceptions and attitudes (Colclough, Rose, & Tembon, 2000). It also brings about awareness of people to issues surrounding them and how to advance development and the welfare of people in the nation (Sengupta & Guha, 2002). This implies that educating the girl-child avails opportunities to the girl-child which can help empower her. In the same line of thought, limiting the girl-child's access to education denies her the same advantages that would have been accrued if she had been educated. Even though, there have been Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) intervention such as Action Aid Ghana, and Asongtaba who provide economic support to women in the locality and assist them in attaining their rights, the situation of poor spousal communication still prevails in these localities.

2.5 Individual Variables Related to spousal Communication

Empirical studies on the effects of sociodemographic factors on marital communication both developed and peripheral countries revealed that sex, educational status, length of stay in marriage, and age are significant predictors of spousal communication (Muna, & Atinkut, 2018).

First and foremost, there are inconsistent findings in literature about the relationship between sex and spousal communication, nonetheless, Lundgren and Rudawsky (2000) investigated sex patterns in communication and found that women tend to be more conforming in their interactions with others and more positive in their individual reactions.

A study of Muna and Antikute (2018) revealed that female participants were better in marital communication than males. This result was consistent with the finding of Esere, Yusuf & Omotosho (2011) who found that there was a significant difference in the perception of participants in the influence of spousal communication in marriage by gender. Also, this result was supported by the study of Jon Warner (2013) who found that women were better communicators than men in marriage.

Warner (2013) also suggests that women's capacity to listen with empathy was superior to men's capacity on average, with females being more prone to wait and let men finish their sentences, not interrupt so often in general and better paraphrase and summarize what has been said, as appropriate. Comparably, Wood (2011) and Holmstrom's (2009) claimed that females are always worrying about how the other person will feel during their interaction, while males typically care only about their social status. Muna & Atinkut (2010) affirms that male communication is geared toward instrumental ends, while females communicate for emotional connections with others. Even though it contradicts the findings of Usoroh, Ekot, & Inyang (2010) that sex of participants do

not significantly influence communication styles which is subject to criticism since the findings has a limited in-depth experience of participants because quantitative approach was employ in the study. Moreover, Gottman, (1994)) indicated that in relationships women are more demanding and men are more withdrawn. Christensen and Heavey (1990), demonstrated that males tend to show more avoidance and withdrawal from communication than females. Inconsistently, in Malkoç's study (2001), it was found that among males and females, there is no difference in usage of constructive, destructive, emotional-logical and aggressive communication patterns and this is consistent with the findings of Sakmar (2010) who indicated that married individuals, both with and without children, and cohabiting individuals do not differ in their communication patterns in terms of destructive, constructive, emotional-logical, and aggressive communication patterns.

With regards to age as a demographic variable associated with communication, Dwyer, (2007) showed that younger individuals reported having more effective communication style than older individuals. However, Bodenmann et al. (2010) indicated that increase in age is associated with mutual avoidance of communication. Older age couples tend to express more distant and avoiding communication styles. According to Muna & Atinkut (2010) early adulthood period of couple is associated with high risk of marital instability. To them, early adulthood is a sensitive period and importance is placed on supporting and strengthening the modalities for the marital relationship.

Some studies have shown that communication behavior differs across age groups. For instance, findings indicate that older couples, compared to middle-aged couples, express less negative emotions, are more affectionate, and are less physiologically aroused during discussions (Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994; Carstensen, Gottman, & Levenson, 1995).

Furthermore, there seems less potential for conflict and more potential for pleasure in older couples than in middle-aged couples (Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1995). This outcome was similar to the study of Vakili, Baseri, Abbasi & Bazzaz, (2014) who admitted that age of participants was identified as predictors of marital instability.

Hence, the previous studies showed the marriage age as an affecting factor in the marital stability, which the age groups of 20-40 years were more susceptible to marital instability (Kulu 2014).

However, this result was not consistent with the previous research outcome of Hill (2008) who argued that there was no relationship between age and marital stability.

The length of relationship are some indicators for communication and levels of intimacy. To add to this, for duration of relationship, Malkoç (2001) reported that the increased length of relationships is associated with a lower level of constructive communication.

Moreover, Bodenmann et al. (1998) indicated that longer relationship couples mutually avoid communication. In the study of Muna, & Atinkute (2010) indicated that early married couples were highly vulnerable to marital instability than long stayed married couples. This is consistent with the findings of Esere, Yusuf & Omotosho, (2011) that there is variation between spouses who were long married and recently married because the first two to five years are the most critical period in which couples begin to learn about their differences.

Similarly, in the study of Muna and Atinkut (2018) showed that marital communication decreases as we go from early adulthood to late adulthood. It means that as a person moves to old age their communication become less but they live a stable life and this means that they increase in positive communication and decrease in negative

communication. This may be partly because they have learned to soften conflict with affection, and partly because, over time, some conflicts either resolve themselves by disappearing, or they lose their power to threaten or arouse strong emotions. The need to resolve every issue may also diminish over time as spouse's priorities and behavior change in light of approaching old age and that leads to marital satisfaction.

These results fall in line with the study of Orden and Bradburn, (1968); Ogidan (1991); Karney & Bradbury (1995); Carstenson, Graff, Levenson & Gottman (1996). However, the above results yielded contradiction with the previous research findings conducted by Jose & Alfons (2007) which stated that there was no significant difference between marital stability and length of stay in the marriage. Besides, Guo and Huang (2005) study result claimed that length of stay in marriage was unrelated with marital satisfaction and stability.

A study of Muna and Atinkut (2018) revealed that educational status of couples had significant effect on marital communication. The result of this study was pertinent with the finding of Olson and Fowers (1993) and Usoroh, Ekot, & Inyang (2010) who identified higher education as a factor contributing to effective communication that facilitated marital stability. Congruently, this study yields a consistent result with previous research findings of Blood and Wolfe (1960), Heaton (2002) and (Mosher & Chandra, 2010). These previous study confirmed that the more years of schooling, the lower the divorce rate found.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

2.6.1 Theories that Support spousal Communication

1. Social exchange theory
2. Communication theories (Interpretive and Interactivity Theories)

2.6.2 Social Exchange Theory

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

Shared activities are described as a form of “marital capital.” The language of exchange theory is fundamental in this assumption of Kalmijn and Bernasco (2001): “The way couples organize their leisure depends in part on the costs and benefits involved in developing a joint lifestyle” (p. 641). If researchers are already using the language and concepts of exchange theory, it is likely that this theory might offer a valuable perspective through which family scientists can view this leisure and marital satisfaction. The major premise that “humans avoid costly behavior and seek rewarding statuses, relationships, interaction, and feeling states to the end that their profits are maximized or their losses are minimized” (Nye, 1979, p. 2). According to social exchange theory, “give and take” forms the basis of almost all relationships though their proportions might vary as per the intensity of the relationship. In a relationship, every individual has expectations from his/her partner. A relationship without expectations is meaningless.

According to Social Exchange theory feelings and emotions ought to be reciprocated for a successful and long lasting relationship. Relationships can never be one sided. An individual invests his time and energy in relationships only when he gets something out of it. There are relationships where an individual receives less than he gives. This leads

to situations where individual starts comparing his relationship with others. Comparisons sometimes can be really dangerous as it stops individuals from putting their best in relationships. Do not always think that you would have a better relationship with someone else. Understand your partner and do as much as you can for him/her. Do not always expect the other person to do things first. Take initiative on your own and value partner.

Exchange theory holds excellent potential for the present study for several reasons. First, the theory is especially useful in analyzing dyads. Since the data in the present study related specifically to marital dyads, exchange theory is a fitting perspective. Another beneficial aspect of exchange theory is the focus on individual perceptions. Supporting this theory, Bernard (2002) emphasized a relativistic approach which suggested that a marital relationship is successful if rewards to both partners are greater than the cost and it is preferable to any other alternative. She illustrates her stance thus; 'If A & B do not like one another, they get on another's nerves; the costs of remaining married are great in frustration and loneliness. But the rewards are great also, together they can afford a lovely home; they have high status in the community; the children are protected from scandal; the church approves of them'.

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

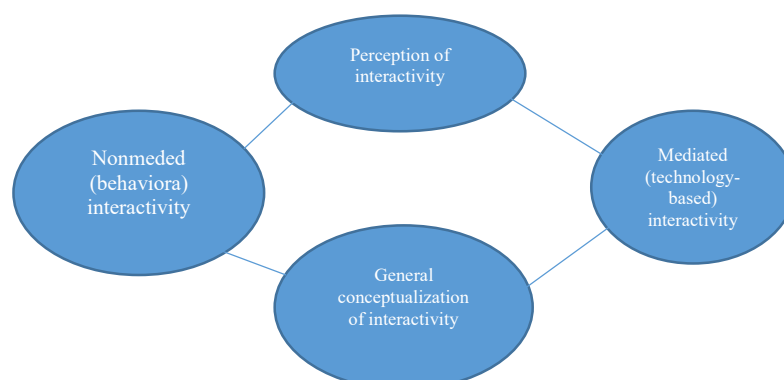
satisfaction in its turn depends on what values the couples have which are generally shaped by the individual's psychological, sociological and religious exposures.

2.6.3 Communications theories (interpretive and interactivity theories)

Interpretive theory understand meanings in different ways. They can be expressions of, for example, reason, intentions, beliefs, the unconscious or a system of signs (Bevir, M. & Rhodes, 2003). Interpretation plays a key role; that is in analysing the ideas and language conventions that underpin social practices (Koselleck 1998; Richter 1995).for instance, when a priest pronounces a couple married, for example, they become married only because of settled conventions about the legal authority of the church, the religious nature of marriage and the binding-power of contracts. To understand and explain what happens at such times, we have to grasp the relevant conventions and beliefs. A marriage can be neither contracted nor conducted without a structure of meanings stemming from theology, law, morality and custom. We can study the statistical rises and falls in the number of marriages only after we are able to take for granted a whole series of interpretations.

The interactivity theory on the other hand, is one aspect of richness of information; it refers to dialogue as opposed to monologue (Evans, & Thomas, 1997). According to Evans and Thomas (1997), interactivity is the extent to which an actor involved in a communication episode perceives the communication to be reciprocal, responsive, speedy, and characterized by the use of nonverbal information.

General Conceptualization of Interactivity



Evans and Thomas (1997), identified four facets that constitute interactivity as a conceptual framework. These are reciprocity, responsiveness, the speed of response, and the extent to which the communication is perceived to be characterized by nonverbal information. Variance in interactivity is caused by changes in the levels of the four facets, and not the other way around. For example, a message with a high number of nonverbal elements leads to perceptions of that message being more interactive. So far as spousal communication is a constant exchange of information through verbal and non-verbal means, these four facets can be justified as contributing to interactivity between spouses and assisting in understanding how spouses communicate and show spousal communication can be enhanced.

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

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

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

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

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

In so far as refusing to talk to one another conveys a message, Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) assert that silent treatment is a way of showing hostility and anger instead of a desire to work through the problem or what counselors call 'crazy making behavior'. It could also happen that a person's body language conveys a message contradicting the

person's verbal message. For instance, a husband who says there is nothing that matters but his non-verbal behavior such as long face, pouting, sighing with eyes directed upwards indicate that he is terribly displeased (p. 388).

Holman and Larson (1994) commented that marital communication suffers among couples with unemployed husbands. This is true because where husbands are inadequate providers, wives tend to be unduly critical of them. When this happens, communication between the spouses become inflammatory and characterized by anger. In the same vein could it therefore be extrapolated that when wives (especially those who do not contribute to the family budget) become a drain on the household budget, communication between them and their husbands could suffer the same fate?

On decision making in the household Schandorf and Kwarfo (1990) contended that in most traditional Ghanaian communities women did not take part in decision making. They however, quoted Ainsworth (1985) who has suggested that the roles of women in the division of labor and decision making in the family were determined by the quality of education they had received. Schandorf and Kwarfo quoted Asante (1989) who on his part added that occupational status and the age of the spouses were important factors in decision making. Asante (1989) further argued that decision-making was more likely to be autocratic where the husband had a higher level of education and occupational status than the wife.

2.7 Relevance of the Theories to the Study

These theories enriched the findings of previous researchers whose works have been reviewed in this study. The theories show that relationships grow, develop, deteriorate, and dissolve as a consequence of an unfolding social-exchange process, which may be conceived as a bartering of rewards and costs both between the partners. The findings

of the literature reviewed showed that accomplishment of partner's expectations and effective spousal communication are the yardstick of couple's interaction and bring satisfaction to both spouses self-interest. The literature reviewed equally showed that marriages will fail when couples expectations of the relationship lessen and the alternatives outside of the relationship are appealing. Based on the above findings, the social exchange theory guided this study in answering research question one which has to do with factors that accounts for spousal communication.

The communication theory of interpretive and interaction theories guided the study in understanding and analyzing how couples communicate and how spousal communication can be enhanced. Thus, justifying the effects of spousal communication on couples' relationship.

2.8 Summary

From the literature, it is clear that both marriage couples have responsibilities over each other and these responsibilities are prescribed by the society based on gender roles, beliefs, and practices. It is evident from the literature that irresponsibility, gender roles, beliefs and practices are inimical to effective spousal communication. Literature also revealed that marital longevity is closely linked to marital satisfaction and mutuality of decision-making, sexual and psychological intimacy, and quality of couples' communication are factors that appeared to be important to marital longevity. More so, empirical studies revealed that sex, educational status, length of stay in marriage, and age are significant predictors of spousal communication. Finally, this study is guided by the social exchange theory and the communication theory of interpretive and interactivity theories which both emphasized on reward and cost as the basis of marital relationship and relevant meanings of beliefs, ideas or discourses of couples respectively.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures employed to conduct the study. It also discussed the principles and assumptions that underpin the methods and procedures of data collection as well as the rationale behind their selection. The data collection aspect examines the research design, the area of study, sample and sample procedures and tools for data collection.

3.1 Research Approach

The approach of the research is qualitative method. Qualitative approach is the approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals ascribe to social problems. The process of qualitative research involves “emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant setting and analyzed inductively, building from particulars to general themes, and researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data” (Creswell, 2013, p. 3).

Qualitative research also involves the adoption of an interpretive and naturalistic approach to research. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2000 p.3). This research is conducted in the Nanumba North Municipality which is the indigenous setting of the targeted participants to examine spousal communication in the home of the people and how spousal communication can be enhanced.

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002) qualitative research seeks to reserve and analyse data in situated form, content and experience of social action rather than subject data to mathematical or formal transformations. This helps the researcher to get an in-

depth knowledge of the issue rather than codes and frequencies as with quantitative research, which is subjected to statistical and frequency interpretations and does not allow the participants to recount their experiences that will enable the researcher to get in-depth knowledge on the issue.

3.2 Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), the research design can be described as a strategy, plan and structure of conducting a research project. He argues that the selection of a research design is mostly dependent on the nature of the research problem being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences and audience for the study. This informed the adoption of case study design based on the nature of the topic and the participants of the study.

3.3 Case Study

Case study design is used to guide this research. This research design gives an in-depth, and detailed examination of a subject of study and it allows the researcher to use more than one method of data collection. According to Yin (Yin, 2002, p. 3) "case study is a social sciences research design dominated by texts, analyze data, or even minimize the problems of composing the case study report."

The rationale that underpins the choice of case study design for this study is the fact that it is basically used for qualitative research which is the approach to this study. Qualitative research begins from an ontological foundation that defines reality as some type of projection of imagination, the point of view of at least one actor, or at best a social construction, which can be explored through a science of meanings, phenomenological insight and subjective processes.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

Qualitative researchers use a sampling strategy that guides their choices of what to observe or whom to interview. To say one will engage in purposive sampling signifies that one sees it as a series of strategic choices about with whom, where, and how a particular research is being carried out (Palys, 2008). This implies that the way a particular research is being carried out must be tied to the research objective. It is worth to note that researchers in qualitative studies are less often interested in asking about central tendencies in a large group and much more interested in case study analysis - why particular people feel particular ways, the processes by which these attitudes are constructed, and the role they play in dynamic processes within the group. The idea imbedded in this is the fact that who a person is and where that person is located within a group is important, unlike other forms of research where people are viewed as essentially interchangeable. Research participants are not always created equal-one well-placed articulated informant will often advance the research far better than any randomly selected sample beyond one person. Therefore, what this research seeks to accomplished makes purposive sampling technique appropriate for this research.

According to Patton (2015), the logic and power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. These information-rich cases are those from which the researcher learns a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the study, thus the term purposive sampling. In Patton's (2015) view, all types of sampling in qualitative research may be encompassed under the broad term of purposive sampling. He states that qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases, selected purposively. Bernard (2002) described purposive sampling as a non-random technique where the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide information by virtue of knowledge experienced. Creswell (2013) simply defines

purposive sampling as the selection of sites or participants that will help the researcher to understand the problem and the research question.

This research purposively sample couples in the sister communities-Jou and Joa in the Nanumba Municipality for the study. The same technique also guided the study to identify couples who understood the phenomena of spousal communication based on their experience and were ready to help in the research. This sampling strategy allows the participants to recount their experiences thereby giving this study information-rich for in depth study and this is in line with Patton (2015, and Creswell, 2013).

After visiting the two communities for quite a number of times, the researcher got to know who to sample for the purpose of the study taking into consideration time, location, events, and people. Also, age, gender, status, role, education, and ideology form bases for the choice of purposive sampling technique for this study. The sample is limited to spousal communication in Jou and Joa communities because they are the custodians of tradition and the people are not in any way being influenced by secularism. The choice of location and participants is the prerogative of the researcher as in line with (Creswell, 2013).

3.5 Sample and Sample Size

Qualitative research experts argue that there is no straightforward answer to the question of 'how many' and that sample size is contingent on a number of factors relating to epistemological, methodological and practical issues (Res Nurs Health 1995 p. 36). Sandelowski (2000) recommends that qualitative sample sizes are large enough to allow the unfolding of a new and richly textured understanding of the phenomenon under study, but small enough so that the deep case-oriented analysis of qualitative data is not precluded. Morse (1991) posits that the more useable data are collected from each person, the fewer participants are needed. Morse (1991) invites researchers to take into

account parameters such as the scope of study, the nature of topic (i.e. complexity, accessibility), the quality of data, and the study design. Indeed, the level of structure of questions in qualitative interviewing has been found to influence the richness of data generated, and so, requires attention. Empirical research shows that open questions, which are asked later on in the interview tend to produce richer data. Beyond such guidance, specific numerical recommendations have also been proffered, often based on experts' experience of qualitative research. For example, Green and Thorogood (2004) maintain that the experience of most qualitative researchers conducting an interview-based study with a fairly specific research question is that little new information is generated after interviewing 20 people or so belonging to one analytically relevant participant 'category' (pp. 102–104). Ritchie et al. (2003) suggest that studies employing individual interviews conduct no more than 50 interviews so that researchers are able to manage the complexity of the analytic task. Similarly, Britten notes that large interview studies will often comprise 50 to 60 people. Wolcott (1994) also asserts that the wish for a large sample size is rooted in quantitative research where there is a need to generalize. He maintains that rather than enhance qualitative research, a large sample may actually harm it, as the research is likely to lack the depth and richness of a smaller sample.

In line with recent findings, Lindlof and Taylor (2002) argue that sample size is the terra incognita of qualitative sampling strategy. No test or coefficients exist to tell researcher when the sampling is big enough. Kuzel (1999) posits that there are no rigid rules or guidelines for sample size; generally qualitative sampling consists of small sampling units studied in depth. Daymon and Holloway (2011) indicated that with qualitative studies the sample size does not necessarily determine the quality of the study. To have in depth coverage of the phenomena being studied, Ritchie, Lewis and

Elam (2013) argue that it is better to retain depth data of a data collection rather than breadth in terms of sample size. Small sample allows the researcher to capture participants' specific responses and individual interpretations. This aspect is often lost when large sample are used (Daymon& Holloway, 2011).

Creswell (2014) states that as a general rule of thumb, qualitative sample for a single study involving individual interviews usually lie at under 50. Following the above studies, a sample size of 20 males and females participant were selected for the study; 10 each from the two sister communities-Jou and Joa in the Nanumba North Municipality- Bimbilla. Out of this number fourteen (14) of the participants's age (40) and above years and the remaining (6) participants aged below (40). When purposive sampling is implemented, the researcher has a specific purpose and often a specific predefined group in mind (Trochim, 2006). This sample size is manageable to give the researcher the opportunity to easily record participant's responses and interpretations of the phenomena.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

A Qualitative research provides a complete and detailed description of a subject without limiting the scope of the participants' answers (Hussey, 1997). Basically, the data is in word or narrative form, and it is subjective depending on the participants' point of view about a subject (Langkos, 2014).

Qualitative data are analysed and elaborated on personal's experiences, opinions, and meanings such as they are not supposed to match to the pre-existing philosophies (McCarthy, 2014). Non-numerical data utilized in this research allows the researcher to discover the quality and nature of people's actions, practice and comprehension Oppenheim, (1992). Individual understanding of happenings is very important and this can be obtained through in-depth interviews (Langkos, 2014). For data gathering,

interview was used, as it served as a key of qualitative data gathering method commonly applied in performing field studies (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Also, this study made use of non-participant observation in other to gather data concerning the behavior of participants with respect to the objectives of the study.

3.6.1 Interviews

In-depth interviews are personal and unstructured interviews, whose aim is to identify participant's emotions, feelings, and opinions regarding a particular research subject. The main advantage of personal interviews is that they involve personal and direct contact between interviewers and interviewees, as well as eliminate non-response rates, but interviewers need to have developed the necessary skills to successfully carry an interview (Fisher, 2005). More so, unstructured interviews offer flexibility in terms of the flow of the interview, thereby leaving room for the generation of conclusions that were not initially meant to be derived regarding a research subject. However, there is the risk that the interview may deviate from the pre- specified research aims and objectives (Lindlof & Taylor 2002).

Creswell (2014) further stipulates that in qualitative interviews, the researcher conducts face-to-face interviews with participants, telephone interviews, or engage in focus group interviews with six to eight interviewees in each group. These interviews involve unstructured and generally open-ended questions that are few in number and intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also postulate that qualitative interview is an event in which the interviewer encourages others to freely articulate their interest and experiences and further allows the interviewer to gather information, gain insight and understand the participants' perspectives and experiences that cannot be observed effectively by other means. These

literature review justify the choice of interviews as data collection method for this study.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

FGD is a form of interview that a researcher conducts with a group of people who come together to discuss issues on a particular topic and where the participants in the group usually range from 4 to 10 in a single meeting (Ritchie, 2003). FGD according to Ritchie (2003) provides a social context for which the researcher is able to explore and interrogate how people think and talk about a topic, how their ideas are shaped, generated and moderated through interaction with them as a group. Fant (2008) adds that “the hallmark of focus groups is the explicit use of the group interaction to generate data and insights that would be unlikely to emerge without the interaction found in a group” (p. 11).

3.6.3 Non-participant Observation

Researchers collect data by observing behavior without actively interacting with the participants. Often, non-participant observation is used to level out researcher biases in other methods and to reveal differences between what people say and what they actually do. Non-participant observation is a research technique whereby the researcher watches the subjects of his or her study, with their knowledge, but without taking an active part in the situation under scrutiny. Even though this approach is sometimes criticized on the grounds that the very fact of their being observed may lead people to behave differently, thus invalidating the data obtained. Often, non-participant observation is used to level out researcher biases in other methods and to reveal differences between what people say and what they actually do. In contrast to participant observation, researchers take a more distant role in non-participant approaches and do not interact with the research subjects.

3.7 Data Collection Process

The data collection procedure basically looks at the various steps, ways and means through which the researcher applied the various data collection instruments to gather data for the research study.

3.7. 1 Interview

For the purposes of this research, in depth interviews were used to solicit participants' experiences and opinions towards the objectives of this study. The interview for this research was unstructured. Questions that participants can answer easily were asked first to help put participants at ease and build up their confidence and rapport and then generated rich data that subsequently developed the interview further to more difficult or sensitive topics. To establish if the interview schedule is clear, understandable and capable of answering the research questions, and if, therefore, any changes to the interview schedule are required, the interview schedule was piloted on several participants prior to actual data collection. The length of interviews lasted between 5 to 20 minutes. All the interviews took face-to-face format and were performed one-off without any change over time. Before any interview took place, participants were informed about the study details and given assurance about ethical principles such as anonymity and confidentiality. This gives participants some idea of what to expect from the interview, increased the likelihood of honesty and formed a fundamental aspect of the informed consent process. The interviews were conducted in participants' homes where they considered most suitable and free from disruptions. For flexibility and openness sake, all the interviews were conducted in Dagbani which is the native language of the people and since all the participants understand the language, it made the questions asked free of ambiguities and gave room for participants to also bring on new ideas. Participants also had the free will to seek clarifications on questions that were not properly understood and further explanations were given. The planned

interviews were conducted sometimes at scheduled times and agreed places mostly at homes of participants and guided by a set of unstructured questions and without any disruptions. The interviews took into consideration the demographics of the interviewees including age, ethnic background, educational background, and profession. Keen attention was placed on the interviewees' mannerisms and reactions during the interviews.

3.7.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

For the purpose of this study, two FGDs were organized in each community. One group for married men (10 participants), and the other group for married women (10 participants). The researcher settled on men and women and who are married for the FGD because, they were directly linked with the issues of culture and spousal communication in Jou and Joa. This enabled the researcher to gather and record information from the groups pertaining to gender roles and how they affect spousal communication in these communities. All the FGDs were held in serene and conducive atmospheres that were devoid of interruptions from other people. This was possible as a result of the sitting habit of the participants. The people normally sit at a particular ghetto in groups according to their age difference to enjoy leisure after the long day's work. This facilitated the FGD as there was not difficult to bring the participants together. On the part of the women, the women leader who is popularly known as Gazia (Hausa borrowed) and who knows almost all the women in the community sent for the participants to gather in a classroom which they chose within the community for all the discussions.

Each of the groups had their discussions at different times scheduled by participants to avoid any inconvenience. The information gathered helped in cross validating and triangulation of data gathered from other methods especially those of individual interviews. Each of the FGD lasted between an hour and two hours. All interviews were

conducted in Dagballi, the local language of the inhabitants of the people. The researcher recorded the interviews and focus group discussion with audio recorder. The researcher also used field note book to note some key information as back up to the audio recordings.

3.7.3 Non-Participant Observation

Depending on accessibility and legal regulations on number of observations and research objective, 4 weeks observation was used and 2 weeks follow-up following the collected data type and the amount of data. Data were collected using notebook, photo camera, video camera, and voice recorder, taking into accounts legal agreements consent and confidentiality agreement. Because of the difference between what people say and what people do, triangulation was used to cross-check findings between methods and differentiate between concrete observations and interpretations. By so doing, in-depth in-interviews were combined with the other methods to debrief afterwards and learn the different perspectives and hidden agendas of couples in their various homes and meeting places. This method of data collection gave the researcher the opportunity to observe not only what people are doing (for example, by interpreting their body language and gestures), but also what people are not doing, perhaps ignoring instructions or refraining from asking for help or assistance. Based on your research question, observation was carried out in homes of participants during the early and later part of the day in a form of casual visit to participants. These hours were chosen because most of couples' interactions take place in the morning when everything is been set for the day's work and in the evening when couples are returned from work. It often takes two-minute observations at a specific moment.

3.8 Data Analysis

According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), "data analysis is the process of labeling and breaking down raw data and reconstituting them in patterns, themes, concepts and

propositions” (p. 210-211). In line with this, content analysis was used to analyze the data gathered from personal interviews. According to Moore & McCabe (2005), this is the type of analysis whereby data gathered is categorized in themes and sub-themes, so as to be able to be comparable. A main advantage of content analysis is that it helps in data collected to be reduced and simplified, while at the same time producing results that may then be measured using quantitative techniques.

Moreover, content enables researchers to structure the qualitative data collected in a way that satisfies the accomplishment of research objectives. However, human error is highly involved in content analysis, since there is the risk for researchers to misinterpret the data gathered, thereby generating false and unreliable conclusions (Krippendorff & Bock, 2008).

As a result of this tendency, much time was devoted to transcribe the interviews conducted to identify descriptive issues. Thematic analysis method was employed to put the transcript into themes. According to Braun and Clark (2006), thematic analysis is “a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail” (p. 6). The inductive type of thematic data analysis where the researcher does not try to fit the data into any form of preconceived analysis or pre-existing coding frame (Braun & Clark, 2006) was used for this study. Findings were then interpreted using concepts and theories to draw meanings from responses from the participants.

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations

The current study was subject to certain ethical issues. All participants reported their written acceptance regarding their participation in the research, through a signed and thumb printed (for those who cannot sign) consent and Briefing Letter. At the same time, sample members were asked to sign a Debriefing and Withdrawal Letter. The aim

of both letters was to reassure participants that their participation in the research is voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from it at any point and for any reason.

Next to this, participants were fully informed regarding the objectives of the study, while they were reassured that their answers were going to be treated as confidential and used only for academic purposes and only for the purposes of the particular research. Participants were not harmed or abused, both physically and psychologically, during the conduct of the research. The researcher attempted to create and maintain a climate of comfort.

3.8.2 Credibility and Trustworthiness

A study is worthy if the research value and process support clarity maintained throughout the study (Cope, 2014). Establishing trustworthiness and validity of a research is crucial as it provides the basis for replicability of the research by future researchers who would be interested in the similar topic or anyone who would like to expand one of the objectives in another study (Cope, 2014). The trustworthiness of the study was established through by verifying the findings with the participants involved, providing rich quotes from the interview to support the interpretation, and by considering data saturation in conducting the interviews. Also, members of the communities were ensured that they have established a rationale for the study, a solid account of data collection, data analytic methods, and a viable interpretation of the data.

Credibly on the other hand is the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings. Credibility establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views. Participants validation and triangulation were used to ensure credibility through lasting presence during observation of long interviews and long-lasting engagement in the field with

participants. Investing sufficient time to become familiar with the setting and context, to test for misinformation, to build trust, and to get to know the data provided rich data for the study. Also, describing not just the behavior and experiences, but their context as well, so that the behavior and experiences become meaningful to an outsider also ensure the credibility of the data. Feeding back data, analytical categories, interpretations and conclusions to members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained strengthens the data, especially because researcher and participants look at the data with different eyes. Finally, when coding the narratives and creating themes, reflexivity was ensured and themes discussed until consensus was reached in order to enhance credibility.

3.8.3 Triangulation of Findings from Multiple Qualitative Methods

The researcher employed different qualitative research methods such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions and non-participant observation in collecting the qualitative data. These methods ensured triangulation of findings from the different methods. According to Patton (2002 p.556) triangulation “pays off by providing diverse ways of collecting data on the same phenomenon and adds credibility by strengthening confidence in the conclusions drawn”. This assertion by Patton (2002) suggests that triangulation is significant to qualitative studies if its credibility is to be established. The researcher therefore compared the data from the three methods and drew conclusions from them due to the resemblance of the emerged themes.

3.8.4 Triangulation of Findings from Different Participants

The researcher also recruited different research participants and involved them in the qualitative data collection. The analysis of data from these different participants also helped triangulate the findings and common themes as presented in the findings section emerged. The commonness of the themes emerging from these different research

participants re-established the reality of spousal communication in Jou and Joa. Thus the trustworthiness and the credibility of the findings were justified.

3.8.5 Member Checking

The researcher also employed member checking as a way of establishing credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative data. Lewis and Ritchie (2003, p. 276) state that member checking “involves taking research evidence back to the research participants to see if the meaning or interpretation assigned is confirmed by those who contributed to it in the first place.” The researcher did this in two ways. The first was during the process of the interviewing or data collection. During the process of data collection, the researcher summarized and repeated the conclusions drawn to the research participants. The research participants had the opportunity on the spot to correct or confirm the summary and conclusion drawn by the researcher. The second was after the data were analyzed, the researcher shared the findings with some selected research participants. The sharing of the findings with selected participants was to ensure that their findings were the exact information given by the research participants and captured by the researcher and thus, the conclusions reached on them are credible.

3.9 Summary

The chapter stated and justified the approach used to carry out this study. Case study design was adopted as a guide to the study and followed with the sampling strategy and sampling size. The study employed multiple data collection methods- interviews including focus group discussion and non-participant observation to collect data from the field. Again, each data collection method chosen was justified in this chapter. Finally, this research was subjected to legal, ethical, trustworthiness, and confidentiality agreements which were needed in advanced based on the focus of this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study from the data collected from the participants through interviews including focus group discussion and non-participant observation on spousal communication in Juo and Joa communities in the Nanumba North Municipality. Data was collected focusing on the objectives of this study to examine factors that accounts for spousal communication, how spouses communicate and how spousal communication can be enhanced. The data was thematically analyzed to come out with themes to establish the key findings. These themes were discussed thoroughly using social exchange theory and communication theory of interpretive and interactivity.

4.1 Demographics

Demographic characteristics of the participants

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the participants by sex, age, duration in marriage, educational level, ethnicity and occupation.

Variables	Categories	Frequency
Sex	Male	10
	Female	10
Age	18-29 years	4
	25-40 years	4
	30-50 years	6
	Above 65 years	6
Duration in	0-10 years	4

marriage	10-20 years	4
	20-30 years	6
	30-40 years	6
Educational status	Basic education	1
	Secondary education	5
	Tertiary education	2
	No education	12
Ethnicity	Nanumbas	14
	Komkombas	5
	Fulani	2
	Anifus	1
Occupation	Farming	13
	Teaching	2
	Tailoring	2
	Trading	3

As can be seen from the above table, the demographics point out that the numbers under the various demographical categories vary. The participants in the research study cut across all the categories (sex, age, duration in marriage, educational level, ethnic affiliation and occupation). The demographics also indicated that though the age range of the informants cut cross, the ages were evenly distributed with most of them falling within the ages of sixty-five (65) and above and between thirty and fifty (50) years. This gives a fair participation of participants in the research thus contributing to the outcome of the study.

4.2 RQ 1: Factors that accounts for spousal communication

The central research question of this research is, “what factors account for spousal communication”. Drawing from the data gathered through interviews, focus groups discussions, and non-participant observation with the people in the two communities, six (6) main themes came up in responding to the question what factors accounts for spousal communication. These were inadequate sexual role, infidelity, infertility, performance self-irresponsibility, affection and tolerance.

To better answer this questing, the theory of social exchange states that a relationship between two persons will be formed and maintained if, for each person, the reward from the interaction are greater than the cost. A variation on the social-exchange theory, called equity theory, shifts the emphasis from the individual to that of the factors of mutual costs and benefits where a group of people can maximize their outcome in any interaction situation by working out an arrangement for equitably dividing the benefits and costs among group members.

Again, Social exchange theory is a theory of economics that has been adapted to understand human interactions (Donovan & Jackson. 1990). According to social exchange theory, people assess the costs and benefits of their relationships and make decisions about their relationships based on those assessments. When people evaluate the cost of staying in a relationship as greater than the rewards, they will be more inclined to terminate that relationship. Social exchange theory guided the development of the marital Comparison Level Index (assessment of expectations) and is the most useful theory for understanding the concepts of this study. Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) cited several core assumptions of social exchange theory. In order to understand why social exchange theory has the best fit for this study. Those core assumptions are outlined as:

- 1). Social exchanges are characterized by interdependence: That is, the ability to obtain profits in a relationship is contingent on the ability to provide others with rewards.
- 2). The emergent experiences of relationships guide subsequent exchanges.
- 3). Social exchanges are regulated by norm of reciprocity.
- 4). Social exchanges are regulated by norms of fairness.
- 5). The dynamics of interaction within relationships and the stability of relationships over time results from the contrasting levels of attractions and dependence experienced by the participants in the relationship. Further. Spouses' level of fulfillment of expectations will be determined on the basis of whether they are experiencing more or less of a behavior than anticipated. Therefore, the evaluation of level of fulfillment of marital expectations will be based on their perceptions of costs and benefits from the marriage relative to their investment. According to Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) the higher the level of fulfillment of marital expectations the more likely the couple is to experience marital satisfaction. If people are experiencing less than expected on a majority of the issues, they will have an unsatisfactory marital experience. The opposite is true if people are experiencing more than they expected on a majority of marital issues. A satisfying marital relationship has been one in which a person has a high level of rewards and a low level of costs for being in the relationship. As stated earlier, expectations of costs and benefits are related to the way couples communicate. Perceptions of costs or benefits in relation to expectations are commonly examined in research on role expectations (Donovan & Jackson. 1990; Sabatelli, 1984, 1988). This cost/benefit way of viewing a relationship is most closely related to the core ideas of social exchange theory.

4.2.1 Sexual role

This is the key theme that came up according to the participants interviewed. According to participants, sometimes they do not get the required sex that they desired and these normally brings about some misunderstanding. Such was the concern of one female who said:

“.....I cannot remember the last time I step foot into my husband room. He does not give me the chance to pass the night with him. The situation became worst when he recently married additional wife. Now he feels that I am not fresh as the recently married lady forgetting that she will also grow old”.

Another male participant said: “.....my wife is not sexual strong and that has been my main problem with her. I have sexual affair with her once or twice a week and sometimes not at all within two weeks”. A female participant who share the same experience also said:

“.....I made a mistake for marrying my husband. But now I cannot divorce him because it will appear that I am a bat girl and also our region does not condone divorce. He is sexually weak. Even I am sexually stronger than him. He does not like sex at all. One day I requested for sex and he deny me and even call me a flirt because I like sex too much. Since then, I vow not to request sex from him”.

Same frustration was shared by another male participants who said “.....one peculiar problem about women in this part of the country is that when they grow old they stop availing themselves for sex and that really worry we the men. Sometimes we are compelled to marry additional wife because of this reason and put extra burden on us.”

From the data generated, inadequate sexual role is one overwhelming factor that accounts for spousal communication. Inadequate sexual role is unfulfilling attitude of each partner's request for sex. Love and commitment are indicators for sexual satisfaction. Studies by Huston and Vangelisti (1991), Donnelly (1993), and Morokoff and Gilliland (1993) have shown that personal sexual satisfaction, frequency of sex and sexual activities, and the sexual interest and satisfaction of one's spouse have a great deal to do with marital satisfaction. Christopher and Sprecher (2002), showed that people who reported themselves to be sexually satisfied tended to show higher degrees of love and commitment. Sexual frequency is associated with sexual satisfaction. Higher frequency of sexual relations is related to higher sexual satisfaction.

In addition, Byers, & Heinlein, (1989) suggested that higher levels of sexual satisfaction were related to the greater frequency of affectionate and sexual behavior, fewer sexual concerns, fewer sexual problems for self and partner, and greater relationship satisfaction.

Acquah (1989) found that, marriage stability can be affected by sexual incompatibility and this is consistent with the findings of Oppong (1977) who asserted that the prevalence of polygyny and multiple sexual liaisons prevent conjugal development. It is in line with above, Freud (1968) said "throughout life, the libido normally oscillates between male and female objects; the bachelor gives up his men's friends when he marries, and return to club life when married life has lost its savor" (p.9). There is a relationship between marriage and marital satisfaction, both are inextricably tied to each other. The thread of sexuality is also woven densely into the fabric of marital satisfaction. It is a very sensitive barometer for assessing marital relationship. Sex in no way is the entity of marriage, any disturbance in this aspect can be a threat to marriage.

4.2.2 Infertility

From the interviews conducted, all the participants agreed that infertility on either part of couple is a big problem that often leave couples at loggerheads in trying to identify whom might have fertility problem. They see infertility as the inability of a man or woman to produce.

Emphasizing the importance people in this communities placed in reproduction, a male participant said “if not because of given birth, who would have married. In this era of sex commercialization, one would have preferred going for the commercial sex workers instead of inviting these problems in to the house”. To the people, marrying means inventing problems but since women are necessary evils they cannot do without them. In contrast, a woman participant also said that if not because of giving birth, men do not deserved their companionship because they are betrayers. To the women also, becoming a house wife is a hell to live in but for the desire for children they are compelled to accept the condition. All the participant agreed that there is no passion in marriage apart from giving birth. Another male participant said “.....if you die without a child you are soon forgotten but if you die leaving behind children you will forever be remembered”. Upon further discussions, one male participant said

“.....we have come to know per our culture that, marriage and children are seen as an important part of our future. We view marriage as playing a crucial role in meeting our needs for companionship and emotional security because children are seen as economic resources to the marriage and also represent parents’ heirs after our demise”. Another man saidwhen you have children, it is equivalent to wealth and you are much respected in the society. Likewise when you are impotent people do not respect you”.

Participant said that an impotent person normally lives without wife because any woman who marry such a man unknowingly will call for divorce when she gets to know that he is impotent. They often refer to that person as a bachelor and tease him with all sort of negative statement. For instance, “dokoli baY’ ni bia kpia” meaning that, the bachelor does not care about the death of a child and “dokoli dimaḥja shei tob’dali” which means that the bachelor becomes happy only during an outbreak of war. Conversely one woman stated,

“.....you see, if you are barren, your husband does not regard you unless he is God fearing person who will understand that bareness is the work of God and for that matter treat you as such. Even still, if you are face with fertility problem your husband will marry additional wife and she will take away the love of your husband from you. You can imagine how you will feel because as you know women are jealous people and they do not hide their jealousy”.

In many instances, bareness is attributed to superstition and innocent people are often suspected. This will not bring peace into the family. Sometimes this situation will force the barren woman to divorce the husband to seek comfort in her father’s house.

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

Marriage can be described as a union between two biologically unrelated female and male who live together and seek to derive benefits from such union such as sexual

gratification, love, companionship and also use such a union as a legitimate means to procreate (Abra, 2001).

The above findings agreed with Kyeremeh (2012) who opined that the display of love or affection as a key factor in marital happiness is given a rather low profile treatment amongst Muslim couple or even those anticipating marriage. This is because in Pakistani tradition, the criteria for a successful marriage are not necessarily companionship and love, but fertility, permanence and the alliance of the two family groups. In line with the above, research has revealed that Marriage in the developing societies (such as those 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 (Klomegah, 1997). Such experience might be culturally grounded and reinforced by stereotypic systems of gender role.

In Ghana, men are generally the champions (hunters, workers, kings, opinion leaders). 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 labor force on the farms. Having large families is therefore designated as success and power for men in such societies (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974).

However, the above findings contradict the finding of a study conducted by Malkoc (2001) in his bid to assess the relationship between communication patterns and marital adjustment. He concluded that destructive communication escalates and constructive communication reduces with an increase in the number of children. Consistently, Bodenmann et al. (1998) also reported that while no relationship was found between number of children and communication patterns among German couples, Swiss couples stated that the more children they had, the less mutual constructive communication continued; the more mutual avoidance of communication; the more withdrawal from communication, and the more destructive the process became.

Similarly, Jose and Alfons (2007) conducted a study on demographics effect on marital satisfaction and found that couples without children are more satisfied than couples with children. It was also found that increased numbers of children is associated with decrease in relationship satisfaction.

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

The fact remains that for most parents, the role of parents continues despite living separations from the children, yet the empty nest stage has proved to have positive effect on marital satisfaction (Katz, 2001).

4.2.3 Infidelity

According to participants, infidelity is the situation when one partner secretly engage in illicit sexual intercourse with someone. Hertlein, Wetchler, and Piercy, (2005) defined infidelity as either “engagement in sexual relations with a person other than one’s partner, cyber- sex, looking at pornography, physical intimacy, or emotional intimacy with someone other than one’s spouse” (p 9). According to one female participant, it is an abomination as a married couple to be caught in bed with another man.

“.....if you are caught in this circumstance, your husband will divorce you and you will be disrespected and also become a subject of mockery by everybody”.

Another participant who is a male said

“.....yes. It is true. Going behind your husband brings conflict in the family. it is a character that brings suspicion and lack of trust in the home. This has happened to me before and we both avail ourselves to elders and significant others of both of our relations including friends to ascertain the truth or otherwise of the matter. Finally, the truth of the matter was uncovered and we separated from each other”.

All participants view infidelity as an embracement to both couples. Even though it involves only the wife but people view the act as a result of irresponsibility on the part of the woman. On this regards a man is quoted to have said “.....if your woman is

caught in a sexual misconduct with another man, it is a big shame to you the wife”. This was the same utterance a woman also made. She said “.....it is a big shame as wife to be caught in illicit sexual intercourse with another man”.

Although certain generalization and accepted social norms make it seem as though it is normal, for men to cheat on their partners while most women will never think of it, there is data that shows women cheat just as much as men do.

In a study by Perel's (1990), the rate of married women who report they have been unfaithful has increased by 40 percent, while the rate about men has remained the same. Though not very common, couples both often engage in illegal sex in spite of the fact that they still love their partners. Regardless of the reasons a partner cheats, it is and will continue to be an obstacle that causes major problems in the relationship.

According to Sabini and Green (2004), men are significantly more likely to report higher levels of anger over a physical disloyalty than emotional disloyalty. However, women reported overall significantly higher amount in their emotional reaction than that of their men counterparts.

Buss, Larsen, Westen, and Semmelroth (1992) revealed that men may show more concerns to partners' sexual infidelity due to paternal uncertainty – not being totally sure that a child is theirs – while females may experience more concerns to partners' emotional infidelity, due to their emphasis on parental investment.

Previti & Amato (2004) concluded that infidelity is both a predictor and a consequence of couples' relationship failure and divorce. Ben-Ami & Baker (2012) showed that marital Infidelity lead family conflict and distress. Infidelity can cause feelings of betrayal, loss of trust, an overwhelming sense of hurt, and often times can deeply impact one's self-esteem. Jealousy or the thought of one's partner having an emotional or

physical extradyadic relationship can elicit violent thoughts, behaviors, and stress on an individual both within the couple and family system (Harris, 2003).

4.2.4 Performance self-responsibility

Majority of the participants in this study identified irresponsibility as a common theme that brings about communication within married couples. They described irresponsibility as the condition in which the husband is unable to provide for the upkeep of the family and also lack problem solving skills to address any matter that arises in the family.

During a focus group discussion, all the women agreed that the attitude of some men towards their wives is bad. They asserted that their husbands do not take full responsibility in the house. One female participant was more elaborate than the rest. She stated “.....beyond providing food, the men does not give money for buying ingredients to cook. It is we the women provides money for buying ingredients and fetching of water”.

Also, one woman asserted that they give ‘chop money’ to their children jointly with their husbands. Another woman reiterated that all other expenditures such as buying of soap, sugar, tea, and other consumables are done jointly with their husbands. Indeed, none of the women indicated that their husbands take up all things as a sole responsibility. In fact, all the women unanimously agreed that irresponsibility post serious danger to the marriage. A women said “.....irresponsibility brings about misunderstanding, infidelity and even divorce”. This was also corroborated during the focus group discussion with the men who all admitted not taking up all responsibilities. They expected that once they engage in income generation activities such as farming and selling goods along street sides and markets for the upkeep of the family, their women should also do the same to support their husbands. A man said

“.....the up keep of the family does not rely on the man alone. This is what our wives supposed to note. They is the need for them to support us in some aspects. If they leave everything for us, it is just like putting all your eggs into one basket. That is why I feel that they must also engage in small businesses so that in case the husband is broke the wife can support him”.

Another man put it as “.....if you marry a liability you will always be under pressure”.

Further In the discussion the women said that in as much as it is their responsibility to cook and clean the house, fetch water, bath the children, and washing clothing, men should have being taking their responsibilities by providing everything for their wives, and even buying sponge and soap. Unfortunately, that is not the case as the women provides money for buying ingredients and fetching of water and also, give ‘chop money’ to their children jointly with their husbands.

The views of this research findings are supported by literature when Holman and Larson (1994) commented that marital communication suffers among couples with unemployed husbands. This is true because where husbands are inadequate providers, wives tend to be unduly critical of them. When this happens, communication between the spouses become inflammatory and characterized by anger. In the same vein could it therefore be extrapolated that when wives (especially those who do not contribute to the family budget) become a drain on the household budget, communication between them and their husbands could suffer the same fate?

Avotri and Walters (2001) concluded that women in rural areas are likely to be held back by limited control over resources and unequal property rights because of patriarchy yet, they are expected to meet most of their family needs through food

production and earnings from income generating activities while men retain most of the proceeds of their work. In line with Schandorf and Kwarfo (1990) in their studies on power and authority in the marital homes in Western Region of Ghana found that despite the tradition that husbands traditionally decide on issues, in the event of irresponsibility on the part of the husband concerning financing, the wife took major decisions affecting the home. Financial strains are a major factor in family breakdown. Families are spending less time together and the inability of various family members to communicate effectively with each other is an outcome of this. Financial strains are a major factor in family breakdown. Families are spending less time together and the inability of various family members to communicate effectively with each other is an outcome of this. The difficulties which couples face in dealing with social pressures can exacerbate relationship problems. Idialu (2003), financial problems put enormous strain on family relationship. She argued that contemporary marriages experience more strain because of financial matters than any other factors. This conclusion also agreed with that of Lauer (1992) who found that major reasons why couples engage in verbal abuse was as a result of insufficient income. It was observed during the study that the relationship that exist between the husband and wife of rich home differs from those of middle or low socio-economic class. Gender role clearly assign roles to men and women in the communities. Gender division of heavy workloads is present throughout the villages, where women not only tend to the household – cooking and cleaning – but also engage in income-generating activities such as farming and selling goods along street sides and markets while men are often assigned responsibilities that involve leaving home and the emphasis in their training is on public activities while girls' tasks are home based (Boateng et al., 2006; Barry, Bacon, & Child, 1973; Nabila, 2001). As

Boateng et al (2006) argue, girls are taught to look up to men and boys as stronger, wiser, and more responsible and boys are socialized to lead and control women.

In line with this, (Coleman and Miller 1975) stated that to be satisfied in marriage is to reach one's goals in marital life or attain affective condition of a spouse who gained his/her desires in marriage. Marital satisfaction is an individual's subjective impression of specific components within his/her marital relationship. It includes roles, interpersonal relationships and reciprocities, prosperities, motivations, inter marital contention factors, privacy preferences, perception of the partner's humor and attribution.

Marital satisfaction is the product of interaction between husband and wife and the amount of agreement between one's expectations of the marriage and the rewards that marriage provides. A good marriage is the most rewarding experience life can offer. It makes a person feel adequate, desired, approved and complete to a degree which is not possible in any other form of human relationships.

Uniquely, marital satisfaction is a relatively stable attitude and attribute which reflects the individuals' overall evaluation of the relationship. Marital satisfaction depends upon the individual's needs, expectations, and desires for the relationship. Individuals are usually satisfied when their needs are being met, the individual's expectations and desires are being satisfied and hurting each other is minimal or not present to some extent.

4.2.5 Affection

Affection is viewed as any behavior intended to arouse feelings of love in the giver and/or the recipient. In the view of the male participants in this study, sexual intercourse and commitment is what comprise affection. They also said respect, obedience, and the absence of misunderstanding are guaranteed for affection in intimate relationship. This is evident in the extract of one man who said ".....see, she disobey my commands, she

does not respect my family not to talk of myself. What shows that she loves me”? Whereas the men see affection as the respect, obedience, and the absence of misunderstanding, the women see affection as the man’s willingness and ability to provide the needs of the wife and the entire family. To them providing their needs is what will bring them closer to their husbands. They also view affection as accepting their proposals with regards to how the relationship must function.

This was also evident in a focus group discussion when one women said “.....how can you pretend to love me when you do not provides my needs”. Another woman said “.....my husband is only interested in making love to me but he does not care about my daily bread”. Finally, all the participants agreed in a focus group discussions that in terms of accepting their decision, it is the least thing that their husbands do. With this a woman said “.....my husband has never listened to my advice”.

Sternberg (1986, 1997) proposed that love can be conceptualized as being comprised of three components which collectively constitute love. These three components are intimacy, passion, and decision/commitment. Intimacy implies emotional closeness and bondedness.

Intimacy “refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships” (Sternberg, 1997, p. 315).

Passion “refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships” (Sternberg, 1997, p. 315).

Commitment (or decision) “refers, in the short-term, to the decision that one loves a certain other, and in the long-term, to one’s commitment to maintain that love” (Sternberg, 1997, p. 315).

Perhaps the act of sharing one's body with another person increases emotional intimacy. In order for affection to occur, couples must be in close proximity. Being physically close to another person increases opportunities for both verbal and nonverbal communication, and therefore increased emotional intimacy (Flaherty, 1999).

Affection may contribute to commitment in direct and indirect ways.

Because commitment is the last component of love to develop, affection, simply by its contribution to intimacy and passion, enables the development of commitment. Because affection causes the release of oxytocin, which is linked to pair-bond formation, affection may directly increase the level of commitment.

Furthermore, if affection does aid in conflict resolution it could increase relationship satisfaction and stability by decreasing conflict (Gulledge, & Stahmann, 2003).

Affection has also been associated with relationship unity (Gurevitch, 1990).

Christopher and Sprecher (2002), showed that people who reported themselves to be sexually satisfied tended to show higher degrees of love and commitment. Sexual frequency is associated with sexual satisfaction. Higher frequency of sexual relations is related to higher sexual satisfaction.

In addition, Byers, & Heinlein, (1989) suggested that higher levels of sexual satisfaction were related to the greater frequency of affectionate and sexual behavior, fewer sexual concerns, fewer sexual problems for self and partner, and greater relationship satisfaction.

4.2.6 Intolerance

This theme was paramount among all the themes which were revealed to be associated with spousal communication. According to participants, to tolerate or put up with differences is tolerance. Tolerance may also represent a "let's agree to disagree" stance when it comes to controversial issues. In the absence of tolerance, intolerance prevails.

It does not mean that one has to accept or embrace words, deeds or ideas that are against his beliefs and values. Simply it means that on any matter one should agree to pay respect and give values to his or her feelings. Participants all agreed that upon all it takes to maintain a peaceful co-existence between spouses, problems will still persist.

Therefore, the only way to out in this situation of married couples is to be patience, forgive and forget. Below are some extracts of some of the participants; one male participant said

“.....if we even quarrel, within an hour I make sure that I initiate conversation with her again. This is not peculiar with my spouse only but any other person I love. After all life must go on”.

Another man said

“.....in a situation where our quarrel goes beyond normal speaking to harsh exchanges of words, I advise myself and walk out and stay outside for some time before I return to the house”.

One woman also said that one thing she dislike about her husband is that sometimes he does not easily forgive and forget when it is something wrong she said or done. Choacharles (2009), defined tolerance as one’s capacity for or the patience of knowing and respecting the beliefs of others, and the ability to tolerate hardship and pain.

Consistent with the above findings, Kalra (2011), asserted that when opinions are expressed by both parties, and it is clear that no one like to change position, agreeing to disagree is often the most friendly and amiable outcome. Similar view is held by Markson (2006), who averred that when something goes wrong in one’s relationship or something unexpected happens, it is a situation when the exhibition of patients is needed. One should take advantage from such situations as opportunities and cope with

them sagaciously. When someone can cultivate the aptitude or have a talent to tolerate when his partners departs from what he hoped, he will be able to lessen the amount of time he feel anger and detached from his spouse (Watson, 2010).

According to Sawant (2013), communication with spouse, pay attention to the reason why partner stresses on acting in a certain fashion. One will be able to accept partner's behavior bitterly when one can understand the underlying apprehension that initiates a certain behavior in his partner and show tolerance for those things that are not satisfactory.

Tolerance in a marriage is something that many people experience and learn when they get married (Markson, 2006).

4.3 RQ2: How couples communicate

According to participants marital communication is an automatic actions that occur in the daily life of partners. They alluded that in marital relationship, a husband and his significant other are like one whole. In as much as humankind constantly communicate to himself, a husband or wife constantly communicate to his or her significant other verbally and nonverbally. This was eminent in my conversations with participants in a focus group discussions. One man said

“..... “when my wife mood unusual, I normally call her and question her”. Also, when I want something from her I make a verbal request. Likewise, when she also want something, she make a verbal request to me”.

A woman said that whenever she complaint to her husband, he does not take quick action on it and this normally bring misunderstanding between them because she always question her husband why he did not act on her complaint. Another man said “I speak

to my wife when I want her to do something for me and when she does the thing I asked her to do I acknowledge satisfaction for that and when she fails to do what I asked her to do I express my displeasure for her in a form harsh approach and sometimes insults, frowning, silence and avoidance.

From the above discussions, it implies that verbal communication between couples take the form of request, complaint, misunderstanding, compliments or verbal assault. Further discussions indicated that spouses also communicate non-verbally. This is what one man said

“.....when I go to farm I make sure I come home with something for my wife. For instance, sometimes I hunt bush meet for my wife to cook and another times too I do bring her some vegetables such as okro, pepper, tomatoes etc. I am doing these things to support my wife and also, to proof to her that I love her”.

These confession was corroborated in a focus group discussion with the women participants in the research. Another woman confessed to this fact when she said “.....when my husband travels, he always make sure he buys something for me upon returning. So whenever he travels I feel eager to see him back home”. These indicate that, giving gifts to your wife gives her satisfaction and it is a sign of love for her. Another man said

“.....when my wife realize that my mood changed, it is an indication that she has done something wrong or refuses to do the right thing notably when she denies me sex.....”

A woman confessed to this when she said

“...as for my husband, when you refused to act quickly to his commands, he walks out and in an extreme case, he beats you...” To the women, biting is a form of, correction or a reminder to something.

Communication in intimate relationships is defined as the verbal and/or non-verbal interactions that occur between men and women (Smith, 2007). In addition, Sullaway and Christensen (1983) reported that communication patterns are defined as the patterns of communication that people typically use to deal with problems in relationships.

Spousal communication goes beyond just greeting in the morning, and making some remarks at the dinner table. Uwom-Ajaegbu, Ajike and Fadolapo (2015) elucidates that meaningful conversation is telling your spouse where you are intellectually, emotionally, and physically. She adds that because two people live together, it does not mean they would know all about each other they still have to talk. Van Pelt (1997) states that communication in the marriage “sparks caring, giving, sharing and affirming and this depends on the proper utilization of the principles of listening and speaking.

Ledermann et al (2010) reported that marital communication is as a constant exchange of information of messages between the two spouses by speech, letter writing, talking on the telephone, the exhibition of bodily or facial expression, and other methods as well verbal and non-verbal. It is for these reasons that this research question sought to examine how couples communicate in the Juo and Joa communities in the Nanumba North Municipality.

Good communication demands that the message received is the same as the message sent.

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

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

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

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

In so far as refusing to talk to one another conveys a message Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) assert that silent treatment is a way of showing hostility and anger instead of a desire to work through the problem or what counselors call "crazy making behaviour". It could also happen that a person's body language conveys a message contradicting the

person's verbal message. For instance, a husband who says there is nothing wrong but his non-verbal behaviour such as long face, pouting, sighing with eyes directed upwards etc. indicate that he is terribly displeased.

These sit well with the research findings of Gottman and Silver (1994) who posited that Problems become apparent in a marriage when complaints are unacknowledged and a spouse continually repeats the same act that precipitated the complaint. Perren, Von Wyl, Burgin, Simoni and Von Klitzing (2005) supported this idea by finding that decreases in communication and sensitivity were a major source of declining satisfaction in a marriage.

The quality of communication associated with marital outcomes is continuing to gain evidence over time. When spouses experience strain, it can be assumed that their marital interaction and communication might be primed for more critical comments and blaming (Rogers & White, 1998).

When there are no spoken words, facial expressions, proxemics, body posture, hand gestures, head movement, sexual role, commitments and physical assaults replace the verbal communication. The most common nonverbal way of communication that occurs between spouses is stonewalling. This frequently occurs when couples are talking things out. A stonewalled removes him or herself from the discussion by becoming a "stone wall." It is a powerful act, and "conveys disapproval, icy disdain and smugness. Body language also covers perhaps ignoring instructions or refraining from asking for help or assistance. One man said that when there is a disagreement between him and her wife, he tries to convince her, but when she does not want to compromise he stops talking or walk out.

4.4 RQ3: How Spousal Communication can be enhanced

According to Hansen (1986), listening is the single most important communication skill as it is the best way to understand your partner. Therefore, good listening skills enhances communication between partners.

Also, using negative words, phrases, and body language often causes misinterpretations and discourages good listening. When speaking, it is important to use positive (or neutral) words, phrases, and body language to encourage open and attentive listeners (Jolly 1998).

More so, effective communication requires openness and clear Self-expression. Having the expectation that your partner can read your mind sets both of you up for negative results—hurt, disappointment, and misunderstandings (Caughlin et al. 2002). Time together as a couple relief partners from stress. Although you may be busy, stressed, and worried, take the time to focus on your partners' needs and spend quality time together without interruption. Couples need each other both in good times and bad. Effective communication means the chances of solving problems are much higher if you and your partner can express yourselves openly and freely with each other.

4.4.1 Decision-making

It is important for couples to feel comfortable and practice mutual influence in order to feel accepted and understood. Majority of women in this research agreed that their husbands do not consider them as reasonable and for that matter do not involve them in their matters. This is evident when a woman said that the man sees it as his moral responsibility to make decisions for the family without due consultation.

She puts it as

“The man’s words are always final. They see as inferior who does not have sense to contribute meaningfully to the good of

the family meanwhile that is not the case. We women are also sensible like the men”.

Consistent with above findings, Mackey and O'Brien (1995) identified mutuality of decision-making as very important to marital longevity. Couples who reported higher levels of joint decision-making also reported significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction.

Decision-making is a give and take endeavour in which the wife and husband search for mutual responsibilities and enjoyment that will lay the strongest possible foundation for their future happiness.

All the authors quoted in this part of the discussions have given indications as to how both effective and non-effective communication can enhance or ruin marriages.

According to Kelly (1974), decision making should form an early component in the lives of the newly married couples. He gave a whole array of areas and issues for which decision-making becomes necessary. He has explained that decision-making enables couples to plan ahead without anxiety and unreasonable optimism.

Decision-making on its part has been identified as an essential component of marriage which complements effective communication to build up a harmonious marriage. In marriage when only one partner always takes decisions on matters that affect the couple or the marital unit the disenfranchised partner is bound to seek redress through unconventional means such as angry acting out.

Decision making has a very close link with communication because no two people can decide on issues together without using one communication type or the other. Research

indicates that couples have happier and more stable marriages when husbands are more accepting of influence from their wives (Coan, Gottman, Babcock, and Jacobson 1997; Gottman, Coan, Carrere, and Swanson 1998). In other words, they are more likely to use turning toward responses and be open to and accepting of the wife's ideas.

In congruent with this findings, Mackey and O'Brien (1995) viewed intimacy as a composite of mutual understanding, acceptance, trust, and respect based on being open and honest about one's feelings and reflected both physically and psychologically. Donnellan et al. (2004) showed that higher rates of neuroticism are associated with more negative interactions.

Moreover, it was found that higher degrees of openness are related to less negative interactions. Furthermore, Caughlin et al. (2002) indicated that partners who exhibit higher neuroticism tend to be more negative in communication with their partners.

4.4.2 Affection

People have a fundamental need to belong, and as such, strive to experience emotionally satisfying bonds with significant others. An important way to fulfill the need to belong is by experiencing affection. According a male participants, respect, obedience, and the absence of misunderstanding are guaranteed for affection in intimate relationship. This is evident in the extract of one man who said “.....see, she disobey my commands, she does not respect my family not to talk of myself. What shows that she loves me? On the other hand, the women sees affection as the man's willingness and ability to provide the needs of the wife and the entire family and this what will bring the woman closer to the husband. This was also evident in a focus group discussion when one women said “.....how can you pretend to love me when you do not provides my needs”. Christopher and Sprecher (2002), showed that people who reported themselves to be

sexually satisfied tended to show higher degrees of love and commitment. Sexual frequency is associated with sexual satisfaction. Higher frequency of sexual relations is related to higher sexual satisfaction.

In addition, Byers, & Heinlein, (1989) suggested that higher levels of sexual satisfaction were related to the greater frequency of affectionate and sexual behavior, fewer sexual concerns, fewer sexual problems for self and partner, and greater relationship satisfaction.

4.4.3 Engagement

Majority of participants said that sometime their partners keep them in suspense by refusing to talk when there are problems assuming that they know what is going on. This is how a female participant put it “when there is problem my husband normally stop talking to me even to the extent that when he wants something, he does not want to tell me to do that thing for him. This is not how a man should behave. It is women who normally nag but to me it not proper for a man to always found of nagging. I feel that my husband should always be open to me so that where I am wrong I will admit and render apology”.

This was evident when a male participant said

“...Hmmm! Sometimes my wife annoys me and I will stop speaking with her and sometimes too conversation will move on smoothly. My expectations towards my wife are that; she should be respectful, appear descent, taking care of the children, cleaning the house, washing clothing, cooking for the family, and above all availing herself whenever I need sex. When she is able to do the above mentioned obligations, then everything goes on well and there is

enthusiasm for communication. The opposite of these also bring anger and distress in couple's relationship”.

Avoidance or withdrawal occurs when one partner shows they are unwilling to start or continue an interaction. This pattern is also called “stonewalling” (Gottman and Levenson 1992) and occurs when one partner just “checks out” of the conflict while the other remains or wants to remain engaged.

Healthy couples usually know how to repair relative minor damage in a way that keeps them together and happy. Some researchers, such as Renaud et al. (1997) and Zhou, (1993) stated that sexual satisfaction is the absence of dissatisfaction.

Communication is associated not only with relationship satisfaction, but also stability of relationships. The study by Karney & Bradbury (1995) indicated that the quality of communication among married individuals and cohabitants is closely linked to relationship satisfaction and stability. The results showed that better communication is related to better relationship satisfaction and stability. Conversely, poor communication is associated with poor relationship satisfaction and instability. Byers (2005) found that poor communication lead to a decrease in relationship satisfaction. Therefore, communication is the foundation that assists support and promotes relationship satisfaction (Doohan & Manusov, 2004).

4.4.4 Responsibility taking

Men recognized the immense pressure that emanated from their role as household heads, they equally recognized this responsibility as in conformity with traditional practices and norms. The following statements from a female and male participants respectively illuminate this finding:

“.....the responsibility of men is to only suffer because if you are a man then you have lots of trouble and problems to deal with . . .”

This indicated that the man is supposed to provide everything for up keep of the family if he wants to maintain peaceful coexistence in the family.

“ . . . a man must always show his worth, he is the person who marries a woman, he has to take care of her and all their children, it is not an easy task at all but what can we do? . . . as men, we are doing our best . . . ”

This finding is consistent with Larson, quoted by Scanzoni and Scanzoni (1988) who commented that marital communication suffers among couples with unemployed husbands. This is true because where husbands are inadequate providers, wives tend to be unduly critical of them. When this happens, communication between the spouses become inflammatory and characterized by anger.

In the same vein could it therefore be extrapolated that when wives (especially those who do not contribute to the family budget) become a drain on the household budget, communication between them and their husbands could suffer the same fate?

4.4.5 Sexual role

In fact, for all the above mentioned factors, one male participant mentioned that sex is the top most factor that always trigger communication between him and his wife.

“.....I seize talking to my wife when she refuses to obey my instruction for the above factors especially when it comes to sex”. Another woman also said that one night she wake up her husband for them to make love but he declines and it disturbs her a lot and so, she made up her mind to pay him back. Few days later she observed that her husband also wants to make love to her and she pretended to be as sleep and when her husband wake her up, she also declined. “.....when he comes from farm and fills tired he does not want me to touch him”.

It has been observed that marriage serves as a moral safeguard because it acts as an outlet for sexual needs and regulates man's sexual desire so that man does not become a slave to it (Munroe 2003)

Studies by Huston and Vangelisti (1991), Donnelly (1993), and Morokoff and Gilliland (1993) have shown that personal sexual satisfaction, frequency of sex and sexual activities, and the sexual interest and satisfaction of one's spouse have a great deal to do with marital satisfaction.

4.4.6 Tolerance

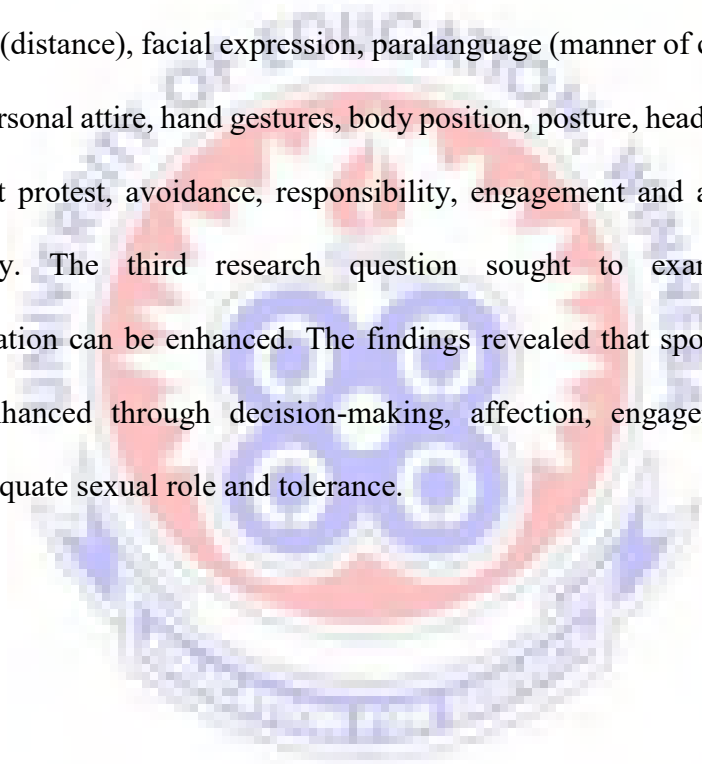
Participants in the study point out that a victim's ability to empathize with the offender and see him or her as a human being capable of making mistakes as the victim is a large component of his or her ability to forgive. From the interviews conducted, one male participant said

“.....I will forgive my wife if only she admits her guilt and by reassuring me that the offense will never reoccur. Primarily, the forgiver changes his or her thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, when forgiveness occurs”.

A woman also said that there are times when you feel forsaken due to life problems or when you feel dejected by your husband. In this circumstance, you have to be patient and hopeful because that is the way life goes. According to Jazy (2011), tolerance plays a very effective role in peace and compatibility of life. A factor with such an effect on its solidity and presence is difficult to find. When someone can cultivate the aptitude or have a talent to tolerate when his partner departs from what he hoped, he will be able to lessen the amount of time he feels anger and detached from his spouse (Watson, 2010). Couple relations and life hitches need high tolerance. Marriage is a blessing but many people make it a curse due to lack of tolerance and understanding. Marriage relationship is an eternal bond that brings happiness and blessings for both partners (Alex, 2011).

4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the findings with respect to the research questions. Data collected based on the research questions were thoroughly analyzed and explained using the theories of social exchange and communication theories of interpretive and interaction theories. With respect to research question one, findings revealed inadequate sex role, infertility, infidelity, performance self-responsibility, affection and tolerance as the main themes that emerged. Also, with regards to research question two, findings revealed that couples communicate verbally and non-verbally through words, and proxemics (distance), facial expression, paralanguage (manner of communication), eye contact, personal attire, hand gestures, body position, posture, head movement, material gifts, silent protest, avoidance, responsibility, engagement and adequate sexual role respectively. The third research question sought to examine how spousal communication can be enhanced. The findings revealed that spousal communication can be enhanced through decision-making, affection, engagement, responsibility taking, adequate sexual role and tolerance.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main findings of the research, draws conclusions and makes recommendations on the importance of taking factors that account for spousal communication into consideration. The chapter also captures the limitations of the study as well as areas for further research.

5.1 Main Findings and Conclusion

The study sought to examine factors that account for spousal communication, how spouses communicate, and finally how spousal communication can be enhanced in Jou and Joa communities in the Nanumba North Municipality. Data collected were critically described and analysed using the concepts in literature as well as the theoretical frameworks.

In answering the first research question which sought to examine factors that accounts for spousal communication in Jou and Joa communities, six main theme emerged; inadequate sex role, infertility, infidelity, performance self-irresponsibility, affection and intolerance. The findings revealed that in a relationship, every individual has expectations from his/her partner. A relationship without expectations is meaningless. Feelings and emotions ought to be reciprocated for a successful and long lasting relationship. Relationships can never be one sided. An individual invests his time and energy in relationships only when he gets something out of it. All participants in the study agreed that marital relationship strive on these six main themes, that is, adequate sexual role, fertility, faithfulness, responsibility, affection and tolerance. So therefore, in a situation where these things are absent or not in their right proportions, there is

bound to be dissatisfaction and instability in the marriage relationship. Even though, dissatisfaction or satisfaction and stability or divorce in marital relationship does not depend solely on these factors as research revealed that other factors such as alcoholism, and family issues, can lead to instability, this research findings of lack of adequate sex, infidelity, and performance self-responsibility, affection and intolerance surpass all other factors.

Research question two examined how spouses communicate. It was found that couples communicate by words and actions. According to the participants, gifts, physical supports, adequate sex, faithfulness and responsibilities are actions that communicate affection, commitment, understanding and trust. On the other hand, sexual denials, lack of physical support when the need arises, infidelity, and irresponsibility are actions that communicate lack of affection, lack of trust, lack of understanding, distress and anger. Also, words such as “pay’ba nin daa” meaning of all women you are number one and ‘pay’ba salima’ meaning that of all women you are the only one who shine like gold are used to show affection. Those who are a little bit enlighten use compliments, such as I love you, you are beautiful/ hansom, and refer to their significant others ‘sweet’, or honey to also show affection.

Also, the findings of the study indicated that, couples in Jou and Joa communities assaults one another. Whereas, women make use of verbal assaults, men use both verbal and physical assaults to show signs of distress, anger, and lack of understanding. On the other breath, couples who live peacefully, communicate understanding, tolerance, and respect for each other.

Furthermore, the study revealed that, couples in these two communities use avoidance, cessation in communication, frowning, and denial of sex on the part of both couples

and even silence to communicate displeasure, irresponsibility, and lack of understanding. In an extreme case or as it may be, women run to their homes to signal protest or danger in getting divorce with the man. According to participants, spouses who freely request for something and get it done as well as caring for each other especially when one spouse realizes that his or her significant other is not in good mood is a sign of affection, understanding and commitment.

Research question three probed into how spousal communication can be enhanced. In answering this question, findings revealed that men must not regard women talks as trivial but rather helpers in decision-making. Women must not be considered emotional and incapable of taking hard decisions that may sometimes have to be taken for the good of the family as men do. More so, women must not be considered inferior and only subordinates to men but must be seen as men coequals and involve them in conversation and decision making. On the accounts of women, if there should be peace and harmony in a marital relationship, then men ought to accept that women have voices that are worth listening to. If decisions are one sided and are not favorable to the disfranchise partner, it calls for redress in a form of silent protest, anger, or avoidance.

Also, the findings revealed that, for couple's communication to be enhanced, there must be clarity, and openness in their communication. By so doing, couples must cultivate the habit of admitting to their faults and rendering apology to one another when the need arises. According to Donnellan et al. (2004), higher rates of neuroticism are associated with more negative interactions and higher degrees of openness are related to less negative interactions. More so, Caughlin et al. (2002) indicated that partners who exhibit higher neuroticism tend to be more negative in communication with their partners.

In addition, the research findings revealed that, for spousal communication to be enhanced, couples must perform their duties and responsibilities. If couples are able to fulfill each other's expectation, then spousal communication will be enhanced. Instead, spouses' level of fulfillment of expectations will be determined on the basis of whether they are experiencing more or less of a behavior than anticipated. Therefore, the evaluation of level of fulfillment of marital expectations will be based on their perceptions of costs and benefits from the marriage relative to their investment. According to Sabatelli and Shehan (1993) the higher the level of fulfillment of marital expectations the more likely the couple is to experience marital satisfaction. If people are experiencing less than expected on a majority of the issues, they will have an unsatisfactory marital experience. The opposite is true if people are experiencing more than they expected on a majority of marital issues.

Finally, the research findings concluded that couples must learn how to manage conflict situations in marital relationship and learn how to speak politely to one another. By this, couples need to be tolerant and cultivate the habit of forgiveness.

5.2 Conclusion

This chapter has examined factors that account for spousal communication in Jou and Joa communities in the Nanumba North Municipality. It also examined how spouses communicate and how spousal communication can be enhanced in these two communities. Drawing from social exchange theory and communication theories of interpretive and interactivity theories, previous literature, and the findings of this study, revealed that accomplishment of partner's expectations and effective spousal communication are the yardstick of couple's interaction and bring satisfaction to both spouses self-interest. The level of fulfillment of marital expectation is the basis for spousal communication in the communities. Couples with higher level of fulfillment of

marital expectations will experience marital satisfaction and for that matter effective communication. In the same vein, if couples are experiencing less than expected on a majority of the issues, they will have an unsatisfactory marital experience and for that matter ineffective communication.

5.3 Limitations

This study primary aims at examining spousal communication in Jou and Joa communities in the Nanumba North Municipality in the Northern Region of Ghana. Apart from the distance from Bimbilla where I am located, Jou and Joa are typical traditional societies where culture is revered and greatly cherished. The typical nature of these communities brought about other constraints.

First, getting the go ahead from the chief to permit me contact the participants for this study was very difficult. I had to pass through a lot of bureaucratic tendencies before I could get to him personally and for him to approve of my study in his communities. Getting the participants to interview them was another factor because of the nature of the communities. Being too traditional, the participants were very skeptical and not all that willing to open up for the study. Having dishonest answers from participants can heavily impact the validity and the reliability of the research.

Aside that, collecting data in such an environment was very difficult and tedious. Because the people are basically farmers, sometimes I had to wait a long period before I could get some of my participants even though the participants had been given prior notice.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

For further studies, a follow up work can be carried out on conflict communication among couples in these communities to compare and contrast findings on conflict communication among couples vis-a-vis factors that account for spousal communication in Jou and Joa communities.

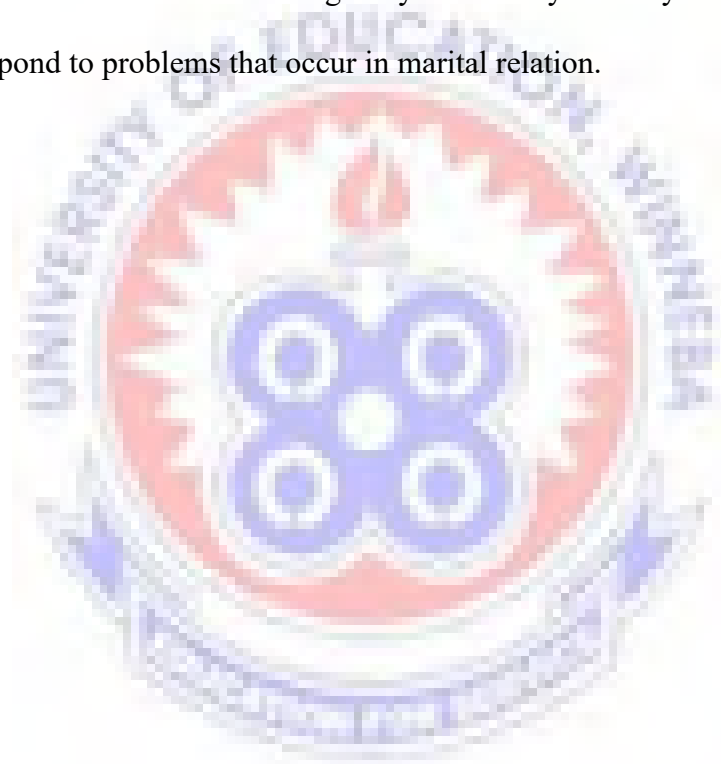
This study did not cover married people in other communities in the municipality though they are equally susceptible to the conditions that warrant this study. It is therefore suggested that future research be carried out on married people in other communities other than the ones used for this study.

Works can also be done taking a critical look at how power, hegemony and dominance come to play in spousal communication and its effects on the stability of marital relationship in Jou and Joa communities in the Nanumba North Municipality as well as other communities.

5.5 Recommendations

1. The researcher recommends that programmes on marriage should be undertaken by counsellors in a form of theater for development or cinemas on marriage issues and also organize more workshops and marriage seminars in the localities. This may help married people in the communities to take advantage of some of the vital issues discussed at those programmes so that their marriages can be sustained and improved to become a success.
2. Counsellors and other stakeholders who are interested in marriage issues should place emphasis on what make either a man or a woman happy in marriage. They should communicate what are expected of a man to make his marriage a success as well as what are expected of a woman to make her marriage successful.

3. In the study, men were found to dominate in decision making as far as spousal communication is concerned. Since females were found less communicative than males. Government needs to provide opportunities for females because advancement in education is highly associated with communication.
4. Marital conflict is often a complex problem that defies a simple solution. However, if proper care is not taken most marital conflicts which could have been resolve amicably will rather result in marital separation. Therefore, there must be a marital counselling body on standby in every community to quickly respond to problems that occur in marital relation.



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APPENDIX

QUESTION GUIDE FOR ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

REAEARCH QUESTION ONE

1. Please, kindly introduce yourself including your name, age, ethnic affiliation, education and professional background

2. What factors account for communication with your spouse?

3. What factors influence your communication with your spouse?

REAEARCH QUESTION TWO

1. How do you communicate with your spouse?

2. Is there conflict with you and your spouse?

3. How do you communicate with your spouse during conflict?

REAEARCH QUESTION THREE

3. How do you maintain cordial relationship with your wife?

4. How do you manage conflict between you and your spouse?