

**Psychosocial Predictors of  
Marital Satisfaction in  
British and Ghanaian Cultural Settings**

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## DECLARATION

I, *Joseph K. Adonu* originally carried out the research project reported in this thesis under the supervision of *Professor Robin Goodwin* at the School of Social Sciences and Law, Brunel University. Any assertions or research represented therein that are not my own are duly acknowledged and referenced. This thesis has not been submitted in part or in whole for any degree or qualification at any other University. Any errors found therein must be solely ascribed to me.

Some ideas expressed in parts of this thesis (chapters **2, 4 and 6**) have already been discussed in the following publications:

Adams, G., Anderson, S. L. & **Adonu, J. K.** (2004).). The cultural grounding of closeness and intimacy. In D. Mashek & A. Aron (Eds.), *Handbook of Closeness and Intimacy*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Goodwin, R., Costa, P. & **Adonu, J.** (2004). Social support and its consequences: 'Positive' and 'deficiency' values and their implications for support and self-esteem. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *43*(3), 465-474.

## DEDICATION

To the most important people in my life: *Ngoẓi, Dexter and Zanetor*

Also to the spirit of the African mother, symbolised in my mum: *Akwor*.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis seeks to shed light on the cultural construction of marriage and the relative psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction across British and Ghanaian settings. The main argument is that, Britain and Ghana stand apart in socio-cultural standing: Britain is a developed Western European country whereas Ghana is a developing West African Country. Consequently local realities and social constructions would differ across these two settings and engender different constructions and experience of marriage. The project examined the relative contributions of self-construal, self-disclosure, material support, relationship beliefs, marriage role expectation and demographic variables to marital satisfaction among British and Ghanaian married couples. These objectives were pursued through the implementation of quantitative (n=400) and qualitative (n=117) paradigms in studies of couples from London and Accra. Various multivariate analytic strategies were employed to test hypotheses about differential constructions of marriage and the predictors of marital satisfaction across the two contexts. As hypothesized, responses of British couples suggested constructions of marriage that resonate with individualist patterns (e.g., less emphasis on "traditional" marital roles), and responses of Ghanaian couples suggested constructions of marriage that resonate with collectivist patterns (e.g., relative emphasis on instrumental support). Additional analyses revealed the hypothesized role of cultural grounding indicators in mediating the relationship between predictors and marital satisfaction. Specifically, interdependent self-construal mediated the relationship between material support and satisfaction, but independent self-construal mediated the relationship between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction. Qualitative analyses of the interview data aid in the interpretation of these results. The expected and counterintuitive findings that emerged are discussed against the backdrop of individualism-collectivism descriptions of prevalent cultural patterns that implicitly and explicitly shape and determine personal relationship behaviour. Implications of the findings as well as



recommendations for future studies of marriage across cultural settings are offered.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction to the thesis

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 *Main argument*

This thesis explores the cultural construction of marriage and the psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction across British and Ghanaian cultural settings. The fundamental argument in this work is that British and Ghanaian contexts differ along important cultural and socio-economic dimensions: Britain is a developed western European country while Ghana is a non-western developing African country; in cultural studies (e.g. Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1988, 1995; Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990) Britain and Ghana may be described as individualist and collectivist respectively<sup>1</sup>. As a consequence, it is argued that the cultural patterns, social constructions and material realities that exist in the two contexts set the stage for differential relationship experience, thereby determining the relative predictors of relationship outcomes. Goodwin (1999) has pointed out that cultural systems (values, beliefs and worldviews) help people in forming internalised social norms that are prime sources of relationship behaviour (also see Triandis *et al.*, 1984). Marriage, rather than being just an

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<sup>1</sup> The concept culture and its dimensions as proposed by culture theories have been discussed further in chapter two. The problems of cultural dichotomies have also been discussed and the treatment of culture as a less-reifying concept (Adams & Markus, 2001, 2004; Appadurai, 1996; Hermans, 2001; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) is adopted.

element in the social structure, is in itself a social construction (Miller & Browning, 2000).

In perspective, the principal focus of this project was not simply to document cross-cultural differences as is routinely done in cross-cultural research. Beyond simply reporting cross-cultural differences, this project focuses on the particular ways in which marital experience is culturally constructed and experienced in relative settings. Studying the relative construction of marriage is beneficial for two main reasons. First, it takes the issue of the link between culture and behaviour further beyond the conclusions of traditional culture theories – the conclusion for instance, that people in collectivist cultures tend to adhere tightly to cultural norms and place group concerns above those of the individual, and that people from individualist cultures adhere loosely to norms and place individual pursuits and concerns above those of the group (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama; 1991; Triandis, 1995; Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990). In other words, beyond making assumptions on the basis of such theoretical frames, one needs to actually measure the relative extents to which people from these settings really typify particular patterns, both social and ideological, that are reminiscent of those syndromes described by culture theories in social science (Matsumoto *et al.*, 1997).

The second benefit that may be derived from studying the cultural construction of marital experience is the possibility of illuminating the relative predictors of marital outcomes. For example, by establishing how married people in British and

Ghanaian settings construct, understand and experience intimacy, we can predict or hypothesize about the factors that contribute to it and how it (intimacy) relates to marital outcomes; by understanding how marital satisfaction is constructed and experienced, we also can begin to identify the factors that predict it. Such a dynamic approach to culture and experience affords us a better opportunity to explain diversity within and between settings located in particular geo-political spaces.

### *1.2 Novelty and epistemological relevance*

From a social psychological perspective, there is a lot of empirical research on personal relationships in some cultures and little from others. Goodwin (1999) draws together research on personal relationships across the cultures of the world, and has enumerated the cultural systems where much of such research has been done: “‘Western’ cultures, plus Japan, China and some southern European states” (Goodwin, 1999:174). It is interesting to note that no West African (or even African) cultural system has been included in this thoroughly-considered account. In view of such remark, there is no gainsaying the fact that there is a dearth of empirical research from a social psychological viewpoint that has explored African (e.g. Ghanaian, for my purposes) worlds as far as culture and marital relationship is concerned. There has been some research in the Ghanaian (and African) setting on marriage. Most (if not all) of such research has been done by non-psychologists, usually sociologists and anthropologists (e.g. Assimeng, 1989; Gyekye, 1996; Klomegah, 1997; Miller & Kanna, 1999; Opong, 1972b, 1974c, 1980, 1983; Sarpong, 1974; Tettey, 2002; Vallenga, 1983). An in-depth look at

these works shows that although these are good anthropological (ethnographic) and philosophical accounts, they have described marital life in one way or the other, without actual investigation from a psychological perspective to give an empirical social psychological account of the construction and experience of marital life. Invariably, many of these ethnographies are couched in the traditional individualism-collectivism frame (Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Triandis, 1995) with no real cognisance of emerging conceptualisations which seek to frame culture beyond the entity sense. It is doubtful, at least in my view, that such ethnographic approaches have really contributed any much to our understanding of the empirical reality that probably exists about African (Ghanaian) marriages. For instance, sweeping generalizations have been made regarding the elements of romantic love in African marriages. Anthropologists Coppinger & Rosenblatt (1968) have said that on the one hand, where there is a strong instrumental/material dependence between spouses, romantic love is unimportant as a basis for marriage; on the other hand, where there is no strong instrumental/material dependence between spouses, romantic love is important as a basis for marital experience. Making sense of such assertions within the individualism-collectivism frame for example, one would quickly conclude that given the relational interdependence of African social experience, marriages would be void of romantic love in all its shades. Some psychological writers, not surprisingly, have reached conclusions in a similar direction. For example, some authors (Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1985; Yelsma, & Athapilly, 1988) have concluded that in cultures where marriage is seen as a breadwinner-homemaker relationship (traditional marriage roles), dyadic interactional processes such as self-

disclosure are not important as determinants of marital satisfaction. Contrary to such assertions, using the Akan<sup>2</sup> of Ghana as an example, Oppong (1980) argued from a sociological perspective that romantic love and its correlate of affective bonding have been represented in African conjugal unions. She gave ethnographic evidence based on the writings of Brodie Cruickshank's (1853) monograph which vividly accounts for the prevalence of romantic love among Africans in the traditional context of cultural life. It is amply evident from analysis of such positions that much empirical work particularly from a psychological standpoint is imperative and would be relevant in addressing pertinent questions about the cultural construction and experience of marriage. As of now, in the absence of such research, probably answers for questions such as those outlined below cannot be produced with convincing confidence: 1) Are people within British and Ghanaian settings simply individualist and collectivist respectively, and therefore reflect the corresponding cultural syndromes statically as described by cultural researchers (Hofstede, Triandis, Markus, Singelis) and other authors?; 2) How do people within British and Ghanaian contexts really construct, understand and experience marriage?; 3) From a social psychological perspective, what are the differential predictors of marital satisfaction and quality across British and Ghanaian settings?

By collecting questionnaire and interviews data across the two settings (British and Ghanaian) and using various quantitative and qualitative analytic procedures, this

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<sup>2</sup> The Akan are the largest tribe in Ghana, inhabiting the southern half of Ghana and constituting about two-fifth of the population of Ghana (18 million, 1992 est.). The Akan are subdivided by slightly different dialects such as the Fante, Asante, Akim, Akuapem etc. and have a matrilineal system of inheritance.

project has sought to pursue answers to the above questions. Epistemologically, the project approached the study of marital relationship by taking married couples as dyads (in the *omnibus study*) and not just individual married persons. This has permitted dyadic-level analyses leading to important insights into the cross-cultural construction and experience of marriage. These insights hopefully constitute relevant knowledge by which the already-existing ethnographic accounts and psychological research on culture and marriage could be interpreted to extend and illuminate the empirical picture of the relations that exist.

### *1.3.0 Variables studied*

In order to study the construction and experience of marriage across the two cultural settings selected for this project, it was important first, to choose social psychological variables that are relevant to marital experience, as well as variables in which elements of culture are implicated. As asserted by Singelis (2000), contemporary social psychologists in cross-cultural research (such as Bond, 1997; Fiske, Kitayama, Markus & Nisbett, 1998; Segall, 1984; Segall, Lonner & Berry, 1998), are increasingly reaching the awareness that all social psychology is cultural. According to these authors, this is because elements of culture are inherent in most social psychological variables, such as beliefs, values, attributions, attitudes, and self-construals. Second, the variables selected must be effectively measurable in both cultural settings by instruments that have demonstrable psychometric efficiencies. On these two bases, a number of different variables were selected to represent dependent, independent and mediator variables as outlined below:

### 1.3.1 *Marital satisfaction*

The marital outcome (dependent) variable chosen is marital satisfaction, one of the most widely researched variables in marital relationship research (Callan & Noller, 1987). The three-item marital satisfaction scale of Schumm et al (1986) was used to measure marital satisfaction as the main dependent variable in this study. As shown in chapter four, this instrument has proved to be concise, direct and highly valid (Akagi, Schumm & Bergen, 2003; Schumm, Bollman, Jurich & Hatch, 2001).

### 1.3.2 *Relationship beliefs*

*Among the measurable elements of culture is beliefs (Bond & Tedeschi 2001; Singelis, 2000; Jaboda, 1984; Robner, 1984). To investigate the cultural construction of marriage, the personal relationship beliefs held by married couples were measured by use of the Relationship Beliefs Scale of Fletcher and Kininmonth (1992).*

### 1.3.3 *Marriage role expectations*

A quantitative comparison of the marital role expectations of British and Ghanaian couples was pursued. The Marital Roles Expectations Inventory of Dunn & DeBonis (1979) was used as a measure of marital roles attitudes of couples. This was to explore theoretical assertions that traditional and egalitarian role expectations prevail in collectivist and individualist settings respectively, pointing to the fact that elements of culture are implicated in marital role attitudes. The study of marriage role expectations was beneficial in establishing the



construction of marriage across the two settings, as well as enabling the investigation of the extent to which it mediates predictors of marital satisfaction.

#### *1.3.4 Self-construals*

Self-construals (independent and interdependent) are individual-level measures of individualism and collectivism. In order to pursue analysis of the effects of cultural tendencies on marital experience, self-construal was measured among couples in both cultural settings. One of the commonly used measures of self-construals is the Self-Construals Scale of Singelis (1994). This scale was adopted in this study due to its psychometric properties, directness and clarity of items for cross-cultural research purposes.

#### *1.3.5 Self-disclosure*

One of the major predictors of marital satisfaction studied in this project is marital self-disclosure (self-disclosure between married couples). Although there is a myriad of research on self-disclosure in marital research, scholars have noted that most of such research was done in Euro-American contexts (Goodwin, 1999). For comparative purposes, this variable was chosen so as to investigate the extent to which it predicts marital satisfaction in British and Ghanaian contexts.

Empirically, self-disclosure was measured by use of a well-known instrument authored by Jourard & Lasakow (1959).

#### *1.3.6 Material support*

Another major predictor of marital satisfaction hypothesized in this work was material support between married people. In view of the dearth of culturally-relevant and direct self-report instruments for measuring material support (Mutran, Reed & Sudha, 2001), an eight-item measure was developed for use in this project. This measure was carefully constituted to tap levels of material support to and from spouse.

#### **1.4 The scope of the project**

The scope of this thesis is limited to certain definitive boundaries:

1. In the context of this thesis, the type of marital relationship of interest is *de jure* marriage – marital relationship that is legitimized by a court deed or wedding. This thus excludes all *de facto* relationships such as co-habitation or any other such relationship. In the Ghanaian context, ‘properly married’ by definition for our purposes means the person is married customarily *and/or* by wedding/court deed, (Tettey, 2002; Vallenga, 1983).
2. Further, the scope excludes homosexual (gay or lesbian) marriages. ‘Married couples’ as used in this thesis refers only to heterosexual *de jure* marital dyads. The reason for excluding homosexual and *de facto* unions is simply an issue of focus, and not neglect or derogation. Obviously, marital research across cultural settings in itself is an arduous task, more so in view of the doctoral research frame, with its attendant time and funding

constraints. The feasibility therefore, of encompassing all the various forms of marital relationship is minimal.

3. Another definitive specification for marital relationship in this thesis is that of monogamy – a marital union involving two couple members (in this case, wife and husband). This specification is important, given the cross-cultural nature of the research undertaken, as discussed further in chapter two.
  
4. In addition, owing to the multicultural nature of British cosmopolitan society, coupled with the definitional fuzziness that is characteristic of issues of ethnicity and race, the ‘British sample’ was composed of Caucasians only. This in effect excludes all other categories of British people such as British Asians, British Blacks and all non-western European migrant populations which are usually composed of second and third generation populations which might still be in the process of acculturation and therefore retain much of their original cultural tendencies (Goodwin, Chrystakopoulou & Panagiotidou, *in press*).

### **1.5.0 The research settings**

#### *1.5.1 The Ghanaian setting*

Ghana as a geo-political entity is a West African country located along the Gulf of Guinea, bounded on the west, east, north and south by Cote de’Voire, Republic of Togo, Burkina Faso and the Atlantic Ocean respectively. In colonial times, Ghana

was called the Gold Coast due to its wealth of gold that attracted European missionaries and merchants. The Gold Coast served as a focal point first for the Portuguese during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, after which the Danes and the Swedes followed suit in their commercial interests. The decline of the gold trade resulted in the emergence of the slave trade. The English arrived on the coast around this time and established a territory for operation along with the Dutch. The Bond of 1844 was signed between some local chiefs of the southern parts of the Gold coast and the British under Commander Hill. When the Dutch finally left the Gold Coast in 1874, the sphere of British influence was extended and entrenched. After several wars and conflicts with the locals from the Asante, the whole of the Gold Coast came under British Crown Authority (Boahen, 1975, 1986). In effect Ghana as a country has experienced almost a century of British colonisation, a process which has left its enduring imprint on Ghanaian Social, cultural and educational life.

As part of the global consequences of World War II, many countries under European colonisation began to struggle for independence. Ghana was the first African Country to gain independence from the British crown, under the leadership of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in 1957. After independence, the rise of the cold war between the western and eastern blocs as well as problems of political and economic maladjustment created tensions which eventually resulted in a phase of political instability. The newly independent Republic of Ghana was thrown into a period of *coup de tats* between 1966 and 1981. Finally the country

was returned to democratic rule in 1992. Presently, Ghana is judged by most political analysts as the most stable democracy in Africa.

The country has ten administrative regions, and covers a territorial expanse of 239,460 sq km. In terms of ethnicity, Ghana is composed of five broad ethnic groups: Akan, Ewe, Mole-Dagbani, Guan and Ga-Adangbe. Each ethnic group has subdivisions which share a common heritage, history and language. Despite such ethnic categories, no part of Ghana is truly ethnically homogeneous. Certain urban cities are ethnically mixed, due to rural urban migration of people in search of particular types of employment.

As a third world Anglophone country, English is the *lingua franca*, and despite the fact that the country is a multi-tribal society, English is the language of instruction from the first appearance in school to university. As such, some of the best speakers and scholars of the English language are known to come from Ghana, where the language has been relatively preserved in its original and unadulterated form (Anyidoho, Busia & Adams, 1998). Ghana's population is 20,757,032 (July 2004 est.)<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.5.2 *The British setting*

Although the global word 'British' is used here, the connotation is not that of encompassing the entirety of the country of Britain in this research agenda. The

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<sup>3</sup> CIA World Fact Book, January 2004

term is used rather as an overarching one, since the particular enclave within the country where married couples were reached was the capital city of London. However, the capital city of London is a huge metropolis where almost every part of the country is demographically represented. Therefore it is worthwhile offering a brief perspective description of the country as a whole, as was offered for the Ghanaian setting. Great Britain reached the zenith of its power as a dominant industrial and maritime power at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, due to the two world wars in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain's strength as an Empire was seriously depleted. The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the dismantling of the Empire and its rebuilding into a modern prosperous western European nation. In addition, Britain as a modern country is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, a founding member of NATO and the Commonwealth and has played a leading role in the development of parliamentary democracy and capitalist economy. Geo-politically, the United Kingdom is composed of England, Scotland, Wales, N. Ireland, with London as the capital city. The main ethnic groups are English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Ulster, West Indian, Indian, Pakistani and others. Britain has a constitutional monarchy type of government and has a territorial expanse of 244,820 sq km. The UK Population is 60,270,708 (July 2004 est.) Geographically, London has a population of 6,378,600 (1991) located on the river Thames, to the South East of England.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> CIA World Fact Book, January 2004

# Chapter 2

## Review of Literature

### 2.1.0 Culture

#### 2.1.1 *Conceptualisation of culture*

Social scientists (mainly anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists) have always been concerned with definitional problems of culture as a phenomenon for theory and research. While theoretical controversies might still exist over general definition, it is important to conceptualize culture as a phenomenon for cross-cultural research in social psychology (Rohner, 1984). Particularly, this present research project is a cross-cultural one and therefore requires a framing of the concept culture for both theoretical and methodological purposes. In this regard, it is perhaps most appropriate and illuminating to begin with an analytic discussion of the works of pioneers in the field such as Gustav Jahoda, Roland Rohner and Marshall Segall, among others.

Rohner (1984), clearly agrees with the view of culture held by social scientists (anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists) as referring to a learned phenomenon, which is variable from one population to another. Further, he conceives of culture as possessing a fundamental orderliness and regularity of human life in most circumstances. Then, finally, the sharedness of culture is held by all social scientists and culture theorists, though this point serves still as a

source of intellectual debate. Rohner outlines two distinct categories of views about culture in terms of its ontological reality, which divide theorists into cultural realists and cultural nominalists, the latter being the category with which Rohner identifies himself strongly.

In this conceptual categorisation, cultural realists on the one hand are those who talk about culture as having a concrete reality, existing on its own, external to the individual and the laws governing it are uninfluenced by human agency, humans being mere carriers of culture. Still other cultural realists believe that culture exists as a reality in the collective mind, analogous to a cognitive map. This view according to Rohner, underlies the notion of cultural determinism, which he sees as erroneous. Cultural nominalists on the other hand conceive of culture as possessing no ontological reality; it exists merely in the mind of the investigator as a logical construct or a set of abstractions and inferences they derive by observing behavioural regularities. In this understanding therefore, culture is not tangible or palpable, and the five senses cannot reach it.

Another debate on the constitution of culture pointed out by Rohner is what he designates as the behavioural/ideational theories. Behavioural theories refer to all various conceptions that include material embodiments (artefacts) in the definition of culture. Thus, anthropologists describe the worlds of natives by including their material objects in their study; archaeologists reconstruct past cultures by studying artefacts. Ideational theories however, hold culture in terms of a 'cognitive system', 'relations of mind', and as a 'symbolic meaning system'. Rohner himself



sticks out his neck clearly as a proponent of culture as a symbolic meaning system, a system that is not grabbed through direct observation. In his exact words, Rohner asserts about culture: “...one cannot see it, feel it, touch it, taste it, hear it or in any way know it directly through the senses” (Rohner, 1984: 117). In other words, according to this conception, culture is an abstract phenomenon, which is an ideational derivative of observable behaviour, not the behaviour itself. A theory of culture thus, is constructed from measurement of behaviour. Behaviour can be observed and measured through the senses, but culture (which does not exist in the phenomenal world) is not.

Rohner’s conception of culture negates the behaviourist concept, which includes observable behaviour and material concomitants, for example artefacts in the definition of culture. Rohner in effect, argues that if culture is conceived of as a learned phenomenon, then it must exclude artefacts, since artefacts are not learned. To him it is rather the ideas or meanings attached to artefacts that constitute culture. His definition of culture therefore is: “the totality of equivalent and complementary learned meanings maintained by a human population, or by identifiable segments of a population, and transmitted from one generation to another” (Rohner, 1984: 119-20). In this definition, Rohner takes note of possible variation at intracultural and intercultural levels, and by “equivalent meanings”, he refers to the approximate forms of ideas that people in a culture possess. Two individuals do not have exactly the same beliefs, values and norms.

In a comprehensive response to the effort of social psychologists to define culture in their attempt to enhance theory and research in the area, Segall (1984) dismisses the need for a venture of defining the concept culture for cross-cultural research. He noted that this effort is unnecessary and bound to fail. He remarked that “I ...doubt that it is worth the effort to try to enhance the concept’s clarity or to struggle to articulate a universally acceptable definition” (Segall, 1984:153). The central point of Segall’s argument is that psychologists are already studying culture so long as they collect data on beliefs, attitudes, values and other learned meanings that people or a population shares. To him, designating some ‘totality’ of ‘meanings’ as culture and using such standard to determine the work of cross-cultural psychology is no progress for the area, but a narrowing of perspective. In Segall’s view of culture, artefacts constitute an integral part of the phenomenon. Behaviour in human populations is related to material objects such as tools, dwelling, vehicles and the like and these affect the probability of occurrence of many kinds of behaviours. Cross-cultural psychologists therefore must deal with the ideas and meanings that people associate with artefacts, and so artefacts must be included in any meaningful study of culture.

Further than derogating the importance of defining culture for cross-cultural psychological research, Segall’s view of culture reflects an ecological approach – which emphasizes function and the notion of adaptiveness as central to human cultural behaviour. According to Segall’s proposition, the theories and hypotheses that must guide research in cross-cultural psychology are those that are couched in the ecological notion of adaptiveness.

In Jahoda's (1984) response to the works of Rohner, (1984) and Segall (1984), he categorically noted that if cross-cultural psychologists are to account for higher-level psychological functioning in different cultural settings, then a more systematised conceptualisation of the concept of culture is imperative. In other words, Rohner's exclusive emphasis on defining culture only in ideational terms (at the neglect of artefacts<sup>5</sup>) and Segall's assertion that independent cultural variables (such as climates, terrain, language ideologies and artistic traditions) should be studied as sources of explanation for the diversity and constancy in behaviour across cultures, will only rather limit the extent to which cross-cultural psychologists can empirically account for cultural difference in addressing their research problems. Jahoda further points out that Rohner, having stuck out his neck on the side of ideational theorists, has put too sharp the line of dichotomy between behaviour and meanings as contents of culture. In attempting a working definition of such a rich and complex phenomenon as culture, an absolute rejection of behaviour and artefacts as cultural elements would only result in an inadequate and impractical definition (Jahoda, 1984).

### 2.1.2 *Summary*

Rohner and Jahoda, unlike Segall, agree that a conceptual definition of culture as a construct for psychological research is important. However, Jahoda and Segall further, unlike Rohner, agree that a conceptualisation of culture should include

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<sup>5</sup> Artefact in this sense refers to anything made or given shape by human beings, such as a tool or a work of art; also it refers to verbal forms such as folk songs, axioms etc.

behaviour and artefacts. Finally, Segall proposes an ecological framework (emphasising the centrality of function and adaptiveness) in the understanding and explanation of cultural behaviour at both emic and etic levels.

### **2.1.3 The individualism-collectivism cultural dimension**

The dimensions of culture identified by Hofstede (1980, 1984) out of an extensive research data collected between 1967 and 1973 using employees of a large multinational corporation (IBM) are of significance to cross cultural research. The most popular among these dimensions is the individualism/collectivism dimension, along which the two cultural settings (Britain and Ghana) of interest in this present research project would be shown to differ. Hence, it is useful to theoretically discuss it here.

The individualism/collectivism (IC) dimension has received the most attention and comes up as the most important among the other dimensions, and cross-cultural researchers in psychology have always employed it in the explanation and prediction of similarities and differences in behaviour across a wide range of topics (Matsumoto *et al.*, 1997). According to Hofstede's (1980, 1984) descriptions of this dimension, on the one hand, individualist cultures emphasize individual independence and the pursuit of personal goals above that of the society or one's community. In such cultural systems, individual members experience themselves as fundamentally separate. Most countries of Western Europe and North America (such as the UK and USA) are classified as individualist societies. On the other hand, collectivist societies are characterised by relational connections in which

people see themselves as members of a community whose interests must come first. Most African and southern Asian Pacific and South American societies have also been designated as collectivist (Hofstede, 1984). Triandis *et al.* (1988) offered an in-depth description of social interaction in individualist and collectivist cultures in terms of the self-in-group relations in both individualist and collectivist cultures (by in-group is meant people with whom one shares some attribute that contributes to one's positive identity). According to Triandis and his colleagues, on the one hand, in collectivist cultures the individual may be induced to subordinate their personal goals to the goals of some few stable in-groups such as family, band and tribe. In such contexts, much of the behaviour of individuals may concern goals that are in keeping with the goals of the in-group, and they also feel positive about accepting in-group norms without even raising the question of whether or not to accept them.

On the other hand, in individualist cultures there are many more in-groups (family, co-workers, clubs, schoolmates, cycling peers etc), and much of the behaviour of individuals concerns only goals that are consistent with the various in-groups. Further, (according to Triandis *et al.*, 1988) while in collectivist cultures there tends to be a relatively stable relation between individuals and their in-groups, resulting in a situation where they stick with it even when the in-group makes highly costly demands on them, in individualist cultures, people tend to easily and frequently drop demanding in-groups and form new ones.

#### **2.1.4 Individualism-Collectivism: Britain versus Ghana**

Hofstede's individualism index values for 50 countries and 3 regions showed that Great Britain had a score of 90 and a score rank of 2 while West Africa had a score of 20 and a score rank of 39/41. This implies that the two settings stand apart, at least in Hofstede's data (Hofstede, 1991). Thus the British system is far more individualistic than the Ghanaian system. Although the description of cultural contexts so far offered pertains to West African and Euro-American settings in general, in this research work, specific emphasis is placed on the *British* and *Ghanaian* cultural settings. Therefore in referring to patterns of cultural life characteristic of Ghanaian and British settings, the phrases *Ghanaian culture* and *British culture* are used, not in the entity and geo-political sense, to give the impression that 'Ghanaian' and 'British' cultures exist as homogeneous behavioural patterns of life bounded by respective national spaces. As discussed by contemporary social science scholars (e.g. Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Adams, 2000; Shweder, 2001), the rapid trend of global transformation through transport, communication, tourism, immigration, economics and information technology is resulting in a more interconnected world society. Hence, designation of particular spaces with cultural labels is becoming gradually unsatisfactory for theory and research. However, it is still possible to refer to a notion of *British* or *Ghanaian culture* in terms of particular lifeways prevalent within the countries at the social, institutional and physical (artefactual) levels. For example, with regards to the notion of a Ghanaian culture, Adams (2000) has noted:

“The notion of ‘Ghana’ is experienced as real, not just by imposing foreigners, but by inhabitants of these settings. It is associated with institutions, practices, and artefacts like the Daily Graphic

newspaper, the Black Stars national football team, highlife music, eating *kenkey*, and using Ghanaian English or generic Akan as a lingua franca. In this way, the concept of *Ghanaian* is not the mere aggregation of allegedly more basic, local traditions, but constitutes a somewhat separate, dynamic, and emergent set of lifeways.

Although they may penetrate to some extent into all settings in the geopolitical space known as Ghana, these *Ghanaian* lifeways are probably most influential, and constitute the common ground for interaction, in many urban or institutional settings”. (Adams, 2000:24).

By way of illustration, the relative prominence of individualist and collectivist cultural patterns in Britain and Ghana may be established by examination of particular social institutions, social discourse, material artifacts, historical legacies and behavioural tendencies (Jahoda, 1984).

#### 2.1.4.1 *Social axioms*

The collectivist ontological construction of Ghanaian (African) social experience is reflected in many cultural artefacts such as folk songs and proverbs. One typical example of such artefacts is vividly captured by a Twi<sup>6</sup> maxim cited by Gyekye (1992) which states: *onipa firi soro besi a, obesi onipa kurom* [lit. When a person descends from heaven, they descend into a human community (or human

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<sup>6</sup> Twi is one of the widely spoken languages in West Africa, particularly Ghana.

habitation)]. Another such maxim cited again by Gyekye (1996: 37), by translation, says, *a person is not a palm-tree that they should be self-complete (or self-sufficient)*. Although such axiomatic discourse might be found in British society, the explicit engagement with such axioms in Ghanaian cultural society is remarkable and is reminiscent of the socio-centric ontological underpinning of the construction and experience of self.

#### 2.1.4.2 *Marriage forms (Monogamy or polygamy)*

That polygamy is prevalent in the Ghanaian setting is evident both from ethnographic observation and empirical sources. Using a sample of 1,793 wives from the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (1988) data, Klomegah (1997) examined the association of socio-economic factors with monogamous versus polygamous marriages in Ghana. Results show that the population was characterised by polygamy. Education was positively related to monogamy and negatively to polygamy. Also more rural women than urban women were in polygamous marriages. This seems to suggest that as the society develops and goes through important changes economically and educationally, the cultural forces and local realities that perpetuate such polygamous marriage systems become less influential. Notwithstanding, sociological research shows that this is not as simple as it seems. Despite modernisation, the broad cultural heritage of a society leaves an imprint on values that endures (Inglehart & Baker, 2000).



By contrast, in Western European and North American cultural settings, social legislation bars people from having polygamous marriages. It is illegal for a man (or woman) in Britain<sup>7</sup> for example, to marry a second (or third) spouse when their legal spouse is alive (bigamy). A married person cannot take on another spouse unless after a legal dissolution (divorce) of the current marriage (Goldthorpe, 1989; Haskey, 2001).

#### 2.1.4.3 *Power distance*

Hofstede (1984) conceptualised the cultural dimension of power distance as the unequal distribution of power over members of a relationship or community, and occurs in areas such as prestige and wealth. Such “inequality is usually in formalised hierarchical boss-subordinate relationships” (Hofstede, 1984:65).

Hofstede’s power distance dimension is similar to Schwartz’s (1994) egalitarian-hierarchy dimension. In Hofstede’s study, power distance correlated positively with collectivism. Cultures that scored high on collectivism also scored high on power distance. By factor analysis, the two dimensions clustered together. Thus, the possibility exists that power distance being relatively more prevalent in collectivist contexts, explains why in African marriages, the man is seen more as an authority figure. He is looked upon as the breadwinner of the home. Hofstede made particular mention of this tendency:

“In cultures in which people are dependent on in-groups,  
these people are usually also dependent on power figures.

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<sup>7</sup> See Marriage Act 1949 for England and Wales. Also see Review of the Registrar General on Marriages, Divorces and Adoption in England and Wales (1999).

Most extended families have patriarchal structures with the head of the family exercising strong moral authority. In cultures in which people are relatively independent from in-groups, these people are usually also less dependent on powerful others” (Hofstede, 1984:55)

#### 2.1.4.4 *Social welfare system*

Another indicator and reinforcer of individualist or collectivist cultural patterns is the existence or non-existence of social welfare systems within a particular geopolitical setting. For instance in Britain, the welfare system enables individual adults within society to live fundamentally separate lives, without necessary material dependence on others in their family or social world. Comparatively lower unemployment levels, unemployment benefits, child benefits, job seekers allowances, incapacity benefits etc. serve the function of empowering individuals who receive them to be relatively self-reliant. The welfare system in Britain for example serves this function. For instance, Ellwood and Bane (1985) have demonstrated that the major effect of welfare systems on family structure is that the receipt of benefits facilitates the formation of independent households by single mothers. These single mothers in non-welfare systems would tend to live in other households, such as those of extended family and kin. In Ghana, no such social welfare system exists. Instead, such material support is derived from kin, relatives, spouses and social friends (Dodoo, 1992). Thus relational interdependence plays an important instrumental function in Ghanaian society. This sort of interdependence engenders hierarchical patterns in social interaction.

For example, unemployed individuals, newly married couples and incapacitated persons have to rely significantly on relatives, friends, and spouses for material support in the absence of a social welfare system. This leads to the renegotiation of power relations: younger siblings look up to older ones for assistance and sponsorship; parents play continuous instrumental support roles for their married offspring.

### **2.1.5 The problem of reification of culture**

The treatment of cultural differences as dichotomous distinctions (as has been and still is the tradition in social science) has been criticised by others as leading to reification (Adams & Markus, 2001; Appadurai, 1996; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Hermans, 2001). Hermans and Kempen (1998) particularly have noted that in the face of increasing globalisation and interconnections, it is perilous for social scientists (particularly psychologists) to continue holding working conceptions of cultural dichotomies such as the individualism-collectivism dimension. For example, they noted as problematic the contrasting categorisation of western societies as 'individualist' and (most) non-western societies as 'collectivist'; or characterising the western *self* as egocentric and the non-western *self* as sociocentric (cf. Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Marsella, 1985; Shweder & Bourne, 1984).

In a world where we are experiencing the pervasive influence of cultural connections and an accelerating process of globalisation, Hermans & Kempen (1998) adopted the wondering question of Wolf (1982): "why do people persist in

turning dynamic connected phenomena into static separated things?’ (Hermans & Kempen, 1998:113). Beyond questioning the traditional cultural dichotomies that prevail in social science, Hermans and Kempen have suggested the treatment of culture as positions - the dialogical-self framework that emphasises how people negotiate relatively explicit cultural identities.

In response to Hermans & Kempen’s dialogical-self framework of culture as multiplicity of positions, Adams and Markus (2001) have pointed out that although Hermans and Kempen have raised significant awareness to the problem of reification, their proposed ‘solution’ does not meet the challenge. According to Adams and Markus, the notion of culture as multiplicity of positions inherent in the dialogical-self framework proposed by Hermans and Kempen itself is not free from the problem of reification. The conception of culture as group entity is implied in the dialogical-self frame based on the idea that “selves and ‘cultures’ can be represented or fixed as locations in space (Adams & Markus, 2001:5).

The problem of reification of culture, or ‘turning names into things’ (Wolf, 1982) has resulted from a number of sources. Wolf (1982) pointed out that the conception of culture as monolithic, stereotypical entity is owed to the manner in which history is learnt. According to Wolf, the developmental scheme presented by history, in which the *West* is seen as an entity or a society that exists independently in opposition to other societies, is misleading. For example, as Hermans and Kempen (1998:1113) put it, “people grew up in the belief that the *West* has its own genealogy: Ancient Greece begat Rome, Rome gave birth to

Christian Europe, Europe produced the Renaissance, the Renaissance yielded the enlightenment, and the enlightenment evolved into political democracy and the industrial revolution. Finally, industry crossed with democracy, yielded the United States, embodying the rights to life liberty and the pursuit of happiness". In another way, Wolf (1982) reasoned that this developmental scheme of history, misleadingly suggests that the race through time in the West has been a kind in which one runner hands the baton to the next. This creates the impression of a diachronic unfoldment of the *West*, with no manifold socio-cultural processes and interconnection with a non-*West*. According to Wolf, this genealogical, developmental scheme of historical enterprise has culminated in the present view where people turn names into things and endow nations, societies, and cultures with the qualities of internally homogeneous and externally distinctive objects.

Another source of reification (according to Adams and Markus, 2001) is the way ethnographic constructions are made in most anthropological works. In anthropology, where the concept culture is the most central theme, human societies are considered as neatly bounded 'tribes', 'cultures' or communities which occur naturally. The resultant theoretical implication is that, "dynamic flowing societal patterns (are) turned by ethnographic description into static clearly bounded, concrete things" (Adams & Markus, 2001:4).

Further, in accounting for the sources of reification of culture, Adams & Markus (2001) pointed to the act of naming itself as leading to the tendency of turning names into things. As elaborated by Appadurai (1996), the problem stems from

the use of the word culture as a noun, which ends up in the substantialisation of culture, as is inherent in Kroeber's (1917) *superorganic*<sup>8</sup>. To escape the trap of reification in the use of culture as a noun, Appadurai suggests the use of the adjectival form, *cultural*, which is more context-sensitive and contrast-centred. In making contrastive statements for example, the concept of difference can be employed in a less-reifying manner than the substantive properties which the noun form *culture* carries. The implication of the adjectival use (*cultural*) is, as Appadurai put it, "When we therefore point to a practice, a distinction, or conception, an object, or an ideology as having a cultural dimension...we stress the idea of situated difference, that is, difference in relation to something local, embodied, and significant" (Appadurai, 1996:12).

### **2.1.6 Towards an operational frame of culture: Culture as Patterns**

In earlier discussions, it is apparent that we need a definition of culture in doing research in cross-cultural psychology to enable us identify specific variables inherent in particular cultural settings. We then can choose specific independent variables for the behaviours we set out to study. For example, when we define culture as a holistic mechanism incorporating meanings, behaviour and artefacts, then we can be sure that in studying a particular belief system, architecture,

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<sup>8</sup> Alfred Kroeber's (1917) essay "The Superorganic" created an impression of the nature of culture as an entity, substance conception. As he put it, culture "is not mental action but a body or stream of products of mental exercise" (Kroeber, 1952:23). There is evidence that Kroeber later was awakened to the reification implied in his earlier conceptualisation, as he made major changes in his revisions three decades later. In his own exact words, he wrote: "...I retract, as unwarranted reification, the references in the fourteenth, tenth, and sixth paragraphs from the last and in the final paragraph to organic and superorganic "substances", entities, or fabrics. While it certainly is often needful to view different kinds of phenomena as of different orders and to deal with them on separate levels of apprehension, there is no need for metaphysically construing levels of conception or orders of attribute into substantial entities or different kinds of substance." (Kroeber, 1952:23)

agricultural practices etc. of a people, we are studying their culture, (Rohner, 1984; Jahoda, 1984). As an alternative solution to the problem of reification of culture, Adams and Markus propose a conception of culture as patterns. In this regard they borrow from the classic definition of culture offered by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952: 357):

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments of artefacts; the core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values: culture systems may, on one hand, be considered as products of actions and on the other hand as conditioning elements of further action.

The conception of culture as patterns as proposed here implies that cultural involvement is an engagement with behavioural patterns and symbolic meanings, both explicit and implicit. This frame of culture allows that cultural influence is not limited to group membership. A person does not have to belong to a particular cultural group to be shaped by its demands and forces. Instead people have active agency (but sometimes unconsciously) with cultural patterns by which they are explicitly or implicitly shaped. In Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) definition adopted above, there is a distinction between explicit and implicit Patterns. Explicit patterns refers to the consciously considered, recognised or valuable symbolic meanings manifested in social behaviour, practices, institutions

and artefacts. These can take the form of marriage rites, funeral practices, and architecture, with their particular underlying meanings. For example, *kenkey*<sup>9</sup> and *shitor, yor ke gari*<sup>10</sup> are types of food which are locally produced and eaten in Ghanaian society, which may be unknown to people from other parts of the world, but which can be explicitly adopted as a food preference by anybody who chooses to eat Ghanaian food, whether in Ghana or elsewhere that such food can be reached. Implicit cultural patterns are those unrecognised ways of being which are not consciously considered, though they are hidden in daily life and have an automatic shaping influence on the self. Kroeber and Kluckhohn's (1952) definition implies (and rightly so) a mutually constitutive relationship between cultural patterns and the self: cultural patterns condition the mind on the one hand; on the other hand, mind further produces (and reproduces) or shapes cultural patterns.

### **2.1.7 Individual-level measures of individualism-collectivism**

The individualism-collectivism classification based on ethnicity and country of origin (e.g. Hofstede, 1984) stands on the assumption that individuals in a particular group are considerable homogeneous representatives of their culture. In recent times, cross-cultural researchers are increasingly going beyond the assumption that individualism/collectivism differences exist between groups

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<sup>9</sup> *Kenkey* is a type of Ghanaian food (also may be found in other West African countries) produced out of fermented corn dough, rolled into balls, covered with husks or leaves and boiled; it is eaten with a complementary 'sauce' locally called *shitor*, made out of ground vegetables (tomatoes, pepper, onions etc).

<sup>10</sup> *Yor ke gari* is a special kind of fast food common in West Africa, particularly Ghana and Togo, prepared out of beans (cow pea), vegetable oils (palm nut or coconut oils) and roasted cassava gratings (*gari*)



under study. Such differences can be measured, to determine the actual extents to which participants within a sample possess individualist and/or collectivist tendencies. Consequently, differences in psychological variables can then be related to measured differences on individualism and collectivism. (Bond & Tedeschi, 2001; Matsumoto *et al.*, 1997).

According to Matsumoto *et al.* (1997), measuring individualism and collectivism on the individual level has some three advantages for research: 1) It allows the characterization of the individualism and collectivism syndromes of different groups thereby enabling the examination of the relative importance of individualism or collectivism in those cultural groups. This further leads to the estimation of the proportion of the population that carries individualist and/or collectivist tendencies on the individual level. 2) Further, it affords us the certainty of characterization of groups as individualist or collectivist and so eliminating assumptions about the groups in terms of IC. 3) If individual differences in these cultural tendencies show up in a sample, then those scores can be used as covariates in data analysis. Various labels have been used by different writers in cross-cultural research to denote the individual-level correlates of the individualism and collectivism cultural syndromes, which I discuss in turn below:

Idiocentrism-allocentrism tendencies as described by Triandis *et al.* (1985) are within-culture variables that corresponds to individualism and collectivism at the cultural level. That is, they are individual level correlates of the cultural level constructs of individualism and collectivism. Thus, individuals within a particular

culture may have, to a certain extent, collectivist or individualist personality tendencies.

Dion and Dion (1996) have used the terms ‘psychological individualism’ and ‘psychological collectivism’ to denote individualism and collectivism at the personal level. And societal individualism and collectivism also refer to the cultural-level individualism/collectivism as described by Hofstede, (1980, 1984).

According to Dion and Dion, the connotation behind such differentiation is that, in spite of societal levels of individualism and collectivism, within each society there is variation in the extent to which each individual reflects an ontological understanding. In effect, in a given collectivist society, one can find psychological individualists, and in an individualist society, one can also find psychological collectivists.

Markus and Kitayama (1991) have used the labels independent and interdependent self-construals to respectively denote idiocentric and allocentric tendencies (Triandis *et al.*, 1985) and psychological individualism/psychological collectivism (Dion & Dion, 1996). Such distinction between cultural-level and individual-level cultural syndromes affords us the benefit of avoiding terminological and methodological confusion in the characterisation of cultures and individuals. We then can neatly refer to ‘collectivist cultures’, ‘allocentric individuals’ on the one hand, and ‘individualist cultures’, ‘idiocentric individuals’ on the other hand. In effect, in a real sense, idiocentric and allocentric measures

practically afford us the assurance that a particular individual reflects individualist or collectivist cultural syndromes.

The method of probing the social content of the self (Triandis *et al.*, 1990) appears to be one of the most empirically acceptable ways of measuring individualism-collectivism syndromes at the individual level. Markus & Kitayama (1991) have offered an elaborate analysis of culture and the self, in which they focused on two distinct self-construals: the independent self and the interdependent self. Just as individualism has been associated with most regions of northern and western Europe, North America and Australia on the one hand, and collectivism with cultures in Africa, South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands (Hofstede, 1980, 1984; Triandis, 1988; Triandis, Bontempo, Villareal, Asai, & Lucca, 1988), respectively, these same regions are the locations where independent and interdependent self-construals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991) are prototypical perceptions of the self (Singelis, 1994).

The concept of Self-construals refers to the configuration of thoughts, feelings and actions concerning one's relationship to others, and the self as distinct from others (Singelis, 1994). This has to do essentially with the relationship between the individual mind and the social world. According to Markus & Kitayama (1991), in different cultures, people have strikingly different construals of the self, of others, and of the interdependence of the two. Consequently, self-construals can influence and even determine the nature of individual experience, particularly cognition, emotion and motivation. Furthermore, the nature of the inner self (in

terms of its content and structure) as well as the outer self (deriving from one's relation with other people and social institutions) may vary markedly by culture. Specifically, the dominant shared assumptions prevalent in a particular cultural setting determine the construction of the self in terms of its separation from or connectedness to others. On the basis of the above theoretical demonstration of the relative prominence of individualist and collectivist cultural patterns in British and Ghanaian settings respectively, *hypotheses 1a and 1b* in this project postulated the following hypotheses:

#### **2.1.8 Hypotheses about culture (1a-1b)**

*1a. British couples would score higher than Ghanaian couples on independent self-construal;*

*1b. Ghanaian couples would score higher than British couples on interdependent self-construal.*

#### **2.1.9 Culture and geographic space**

The points raised by Hermans & Kempen (1998) regarding the hybridisation and interconnectedness in cultural experience is well-made and acceptable if only it does not imply a complete, pervasive disappearance of cultural difference from the face of the earth, although cultural forces are less influential at the contact zones between cultural groups, such zones becoming increasingly permeable. Dion and Dion (1996) have demonstrated for example, that despite rapid global

changes and the penetration of the forces of modernisation, there is a significant persistence of traditional values and cultural forces.

The non-entity, less-reifying conception of culture as patterns does not rule out the notion of the locality of cultural forces. Contrary to what modernisation and global system theories posit, it is possible that modal cultural patterns coincide with geographic space. The self is not a passive cultural participant that is floated in a pool of cultural patterns. Rather than being passive, cultural participants actively engage with (explicit) patterns, especially when spaces are geo-politically demarcated and serve as the domain where cultural patterns are sufficiently represented. This leads to the social reality where patterns are locally produced, reproduced and protected by culturally 'defiant' participants (cf. Adams & Markus, 2001; Appadurai, 1996).

In response to Hermans and Kempen's (1998) 'challenge' to cross-cultural psychologists over the notion of locality of culture that is held in their theory and research, the fact may be admitted that the treatment of 'culture' as a categorical independent variable practically prevails in cross-cultural studies, to an extent. As noted by Tweed *et al.* (1999), this treatment of culture as a categorical variable is for methodological convenience. This methodological treatment of culture is based on the fact that despite hybridization or the fuzziness that may exist at contact zones, culture (as patterns) still has the prevailing tendency to differ across bounded locations. Although internal homogeneity is not necessarily claimed in this treatment, it is real that modal patterns of culture can be linked to space,

thereby making it methodologically convenient to compare patterns of behaviour across settings. Therefore in essence, the notion of contact zones as propagated by Hermans and Kempen (1998) does not negate the need and use of categorical labels (even if arbitrarily) that capture cultural realities. It is interesting to note that though Hermans and Kempen's dialogical self frame was supposed (by them) to escape the categorical thinking (cf. Hermans & Kempen, 1999) frame of culture, their notion of the multivoicedness inherent in the self is predicated on categorical premises. The culture-relevant questions raised by them in the dialogical self frame implicitly illustrate the difficulty of an absolute exclusion of categorical labels in any meaningful theory of culture (Adams & Markus, 2001; Holdstock, 1999; Tweed *et al.*, 1999). For example in their illustration of dialogue among the multiple voices located within the self, which are engaged in the negotiation of identity, they wrote:

“Different and contrasting cultures can be part of a repertoire of collective voices playing their part in a multivoiced self: I can speak differentially as a psychologist, a man, a Catholic, a member of a conservative Dutch family, but I can also speak as an American insofar as I am familiar with North American culture. I know this culture from movies, songs, pop art, congresses, and professional contacts” (Hermans & Kempen, 1998: 1118).

### **2.1.10 Unpackaging culture in psychological research**

As Markus, Kitayama & Heiman (1996) have noted, the aim of the cultural perspective in psychology is to understand the various relations that may exist between the socio-cultural and the individual, and to analyse the individual as a cultural participant who is simultaneously a social construction and a social constructor of experience. Cultural psychologists usually take cultural characteristics as independent variables and behaviour as the dependent variable and attempt to comprehend the systematic relationships between them. In order to estimate such systematic relationships, one must assess variation in both cultural characteristics and behaviour. Thus, cross-cultural psychology is concerned primarily with comparing differing cultural groups (Berry, 1980; Goodwin, 1999; Holdstock, 1999; Tweed *et al.*, 1999).

While such pan-cultural analysis in cross-cultural psychology is still relevant, in recent times social psychologists in the cross-cultural area (e.g. Bond and Tedeschi, 2001; Matsumoto *et al.*, 1997; Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999) have been advocating for a shift in the treatment of culture and methodology in a way that was referred to earlier by others (eg. Clark, 1987; Whitting, 1976) as the ‘unpackaging’ of culture. According to these earlier writers, ‘unpackaging’ culture is the process of explaining different levels of a target behaviour across cultural groups. In a proposal for improving the study of social psychological phenomena across cultures, Bond & Tedeschi (2001) have suggested some distinct methodological steps in unpackaging culture in cross-cultural research:

- a) The starting point is the observation of behavioural outcomes across cultural groups.
- b) The next step is the identification of the features of the cultural groups of interest that may account for or bear relationship to the observed differences in the behavioural outcome.
- c) A further step is to translate particular cultural features into individual-level psychological characteristics that generate the behaviour. Such individual-level characteristics may be beliefs, habits, values, self-construals, personality dispositions, emotions, attributions about the self or another person etc.
- d) At the level of analysis, in exploring the links between the psychological characteristic and the behavioural outcome, regression equations may be run to determine the extent to which differences in the behavioural outcome across cultural settings may be explained from differences in the levels of the psychological characteristics. In the use of such regression equations, three outcomes of analysis are possible, each outcome requiring a further response:
  - a. If differences across the cultural groups in levels of the target behaviour may be explained as arising from variations in the levels of particular psychological attributes found in individuals from those cultural groups, then a further pursuit might be made to examine the features of those cultural settings that give rise to higher or lower mean scores of the psychological characteristics in its members.



- b. If such differences may not be explained, then a further pursuit would be to refine the psychological measures for cross-cultural use or search for other psychological explanations.
- c. If such differences may be partly explained, then one would continue searching for additional psychological factors.

The logic in unpacking culture this way (according to Bond and Tedeschi, 2001) is that, on the one hand, if the relationship between the psychological characteristic and the behaviour in question is found in all the cultural groups under consideration, then their relationship is probably universal. On the other hand, if the relationship is not found in all the cultural settings, then a culture-specific influence is apparently at play.

#### **2.1.11 Implications of unpacking culture for studying marital outcomes cross-culturally**

The previous two subsections have considered culture as patterns (Adams & Markus, 2001; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952) and the strategy of unpacking culture (Bond & Tedeschi, 2001; Matsumoto et. al, 1997; Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999) in cross-cultural research in social psychology. In this current research project, this approach to the treatment of culture has both theoretical and practical implications. First, the study of marital outcomes across British and Ghanaian cultural settings is not based only on the categorisation of the two settings as individualist or collectivist. Instead, apart from the methodological convenience appropriated by this cross-national comparison (Tweed *et al.*, 1999),

the British and Ghanaian contexts are considered as domains (geo-political power bases) where modal cultural patterns reflecting individualist and collectivist syndromes respectively, are relatively engaged by actors. Second, the treatment of culture as patterns affords the empirical and analytical possibility of confirming the prevalence of particular cultural syndromes within a setting, and further, relating measures of cultural syndromes, (e.g. Independent and interdependent Self-Construals) to particular dependent and independent variables, in the investigation of causal relationships and predictors of marital outcomes. Third, Appudurai's (1996) suggestion of adherence to the adjectival form (*cultural*) of the noun *culture* in one sense, is assimilated as a less reification-prone reference to culture. This is useful for example, as applied to the title for this research project: *Psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction across British and Ghanaian cultural settings*.

### **2.2.0 Marriage in cultural perspective**

Cidgem Kagitcibasi has pointed out that the Euro-American middle-class family interaction pattern has almost always been assumed to be prototypical of the family. However, as she put it, "in line with variations in social norms and values, family interactions and the meanings attributed to them vary" (Kagitcibasi, 1990: 121). For example the fact that the empirical picture of the relation of social support to marital relationship is still sketchy is noted by Pasch, Bradbury & Sullivan, (1997). From a broad perusal of the literature accessed so far, I discuss below the features of marital experience in Ghanaian and British contexts.

### *2.2.1 Marriage in the Ghanaian context*

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

1. In the traditional African understanding, menstruating women are considered as unclean and unworthy. They therefore cannot be in the company of men, especially their husbands; they cannot assist them in their work or even cook for them. For this reason, sexual intercourse is prohibited between the

husband and wife during the menstrual period, thus necessitating the presence of another wife to whom the man turns in rotation.

2. Sexual intercourse between husband and wife is avoided between three months and two and a half years (depending on health and practical factors such as the need for helpers) after birth. Sometimes the woman has to go and stay with her mother (or mother-in-law) for the first few months after child birth, and this applies more especially to young mothers (wives). The solution for this sexual deprivation and loss of the normal services of a wife (for the man) is to have another wife to turn to for the gratification of his sexual and social desires.
3. Just like other human societies, in African societies, the human world “belongs” to the man. The man therefore, unlike the woman, has the prerogative to marry as many women as he desires or has capacity for.
4. Women outnumber men in African society, as in other societies. Historical and ethnographic evidence is adduced to explain this demographic trend in terms of men in the past having engaged in more dangerous activities (such as hunting, fishing and warfare). This relatively reduced the male population. Thus polygamy carries the social benefit of getting lonely, unsupported women in society to be absorbed into marriage.
5. Social reputation and memorial for men is defined by having a large number of descendants. This serves as a strong incentive to polygamy.
6. Economic consideration is another factor underlying polygamy, especially beyond the last two decades, and presently in rural communities where arable farming is a main economic activity. A man with many wives and children

hopes to be wealthier than a man with only one wife, because his wives and children will help him in his occupation. It is quite interesting to find that sometimes, women in African society seriously and genuinely advise their husbands to “find other wives so that the household and family activities may become lighter for them” (Sarpong, 1974: 78). Such causal factors of polygamy pertain to most African cultures, not excluding those of Ghana, regardless of tribal plurality.

Having large families is therefore ‘designated’ as success and power for men in such societies (Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974).

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

**In typical African traditions, the individual being a composite part of his community, does not have absolute autonomy in the choice of marriage partner. Gyekye (1996:79) notes about African marriage:**

“Marriage is contracted only after each lineage group has satisfied itself of the worthiness or suitability of the man or woman. The marriage ceremony itself involves not just the couple, but an entire retinue of immediate and distant relatives, as many of the members of the lineage groups as can attend – plus neighbours and friends.”

This *socio-centric* ontology is characteristic of all typical African marriages, and in Ghana, all the various tribal traditions generally follow this path. Such experience is uncharacteristic of the western reality of marriage represented by theory and research in social psychology.

The socio-cultural systems of Ghana have undergone considerable change in the past three decades. The major engines of change include education, religion, politics, urbanisation and transport and communication technology. For example traditional African religion, Islam and the mainline Christian churches (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian) predominated until the early 1970s which

saw the upsurge of independent Pentecostal/Charismatic Christian churches. These are radical Christian denominations with large memberships and very fast growth rates with a 'fundamentalist' adherence to basic Christian doctrines such as monogamy. Members of such groups are converts from both traditional African religion and the mainline churches, and sometimes Islam and other religions. The religious education offered by such independent churches is an accelerator of 'westernization' in cultural terms, as many of the traditional African cultural practices are frowned upon and seen as typically 'unchristian' (cf. Assimeng, 1989). For example the validity of the marriage on the basis of only family recognition is questioned by some Christian churches who insist that the marriage gifts be passed through the church elders, in addition to the families (Gyekye, 1996; Vallenga 1983). Here, the powerful influence of collectivistic syndromes on marriage is evident, drawing a clear distinction between marital experience in such collectivist cultural settings and that in atomistic, individualist cultural settings. In individualist cultures marriage offering is made directly to the target woman or lady while in collectivist cultures the marriage offering is given through a network of relatives and church elders.

With rapid social change and change in the security of the lineage system, many women in Ghanaian society want a stronger emphasis on the conjugal bond (Vallenga, 1983). However, though the lineage system may not provide the strong security of the past, many of its forms still linger on. As Vallenga put it,

“polygamy in one form or another is still widespread, but again without the security of former times” (Vallenga, 1983:152).

As mentioned above, (e.g. Gyekye, 1996; Vallenga, 1983) traditionally, marriage in Ghana (as in other non-western cultures) involves rites performed together by the two lineage families, which takes the form of exchange of items and money, and an intense celebration that binds the two parties and lineage groups together.

These social ties remain relatively strong and serves as the social legitimacy for the marriage. Thus marriage at the traditional level is socially recognised and legitimate in Ghanaian society, both rural and urban. However, since there is usually no documentary evidence in the form of a court deed or a church certificate, it is becoming increasingly fashionable to proceed beyond the traditional marriage rites to secure such documentary evidence by having a church wedding or a court deed.

### *2.2.2 Marriage in the British cultural context*

J. E. Goldthorpe’s extensive account locating British marriage life in the wider context of family life in Western society is illuminating in any discussion of marriage in the British cultural setting. The shaping of western society lends much to the Christian revolution which was accentuated by the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in AD313. Since then, Christianity was transformed from a minority sect into the officially established state religion of the Roman Empire.

Later successor states of the Roman Empire as well as other empires and kingdoms Europe adopted Christianity as their state religion. Such a powerful and wealthy corporation, the Christian church thus dominated society and carved family life through its control of marriage and inheritance according to biblical perspectives.

Goldthorpe (1989) has pointed out that marriage and the family in western societies, over the centuries have been characterised by certain central features.



These features distinctively mark western societies from non-western societies such as those of Africa, Asia, the Islamic world and even southern and eastern Europe. According to Goldthorpe (1989), these central features are bilateral kingship and the monogamous marriage of consenting adults. He further elaborated that in Western (European) societies, bilateral kingship does not lead to the formation of descent groups such as clans or lineages. Where in some few cases (such as in Scotland) clans are found, it is usually little more than picturesque survivals. From a general sociological perspective, kingship ties in western society are recognised between grandparents and grandchildren, only to the extent of cousins. Such ties are weak or even non-existent outside three generations of kindred.

In Goldthorpe's account, as a result of such relatively weak and non-existent kingship ties and descent groups in western society, marriage therefore takes place on the primary initiatives of the couples themselves. In cases where there is some family influence on the marital choices of couples, it is generally informal. Over a period of time the product of marriages based on the consent of two adults, is the formation of autonomous nuclear family households. Notwithstanding, there still exists affection and assistance between married adults and parents, though parents have no rights to either interfere in their children's autonomous nuclear family households or to claim support from them. For example, in such western societies, the aged are not regarded wholly a family responsibility. Instead, care and support for the aged involves a significant community provision. Western

families have also tended to be characterised by a smaller number of children, compared with non-western families (Goldthorpe, 1989).

In parts of Britain (England and Wales), according to The Family Law Reform Act 1969 (which came into effect on 1 January 1970) the age of majority was reduced from 21 to 18, and consequently, the age at which men and women were able to marry without parental consent. Further, the Matrimonial Act of 1973 stipulates that any marriage between persons either of whom is under 16 is void. One major change in British family pattern in recent the past few decades is that marriages are being contracted later in life, and the major contributing factor is the growing rate (1 in 6 adult non-married) of cohabitation. In effect, 52% of births in the UK are from non-married adults (Haskey, 2001; Park, Curtice, Thompson, Jarvis & Bromley, 2001).

Although normative barriers exist on marrying members of the nuclear family and first cousins, preferences for a spouse, for the majority of the British people lie at the discretion of the persons involved, whether or not parents from both sides content to the choice of partner (Goodwin, Christakopoulou, *in press*). However, beyond the white community, among Britain's ethnic minorities (e.g. British Asians), arranged marriage practices frequently prevail. The grounds for such arrangement by parents or intermediaries are religious and/or social, (Ghuman, 1994). Such arrangement of marriage is not absolute, as some choice is still left with the individuals to accept or reject the arrangement, (Goodwin, Adatia, Sinhal, Cramer & Ellis, 1997).

Married life in Britain has undergone and is undergoing rapid change. There is for instance a growing need for the amendment of marriage laws to incorporate other forms of relationship such as cohabitation and homosexual marriages. For example Barlow & James (2004) have used the recent Nuffield Foundation funded research of the views of over 3000 respondents about marriage, cohabitation and the law, in a number of interviews with current and former cohabitants, to reach conclusions that cohabitation is now an accepted parenting and partnering structure across Britain. They observed that this trend has to be reflected in a reflexive approach to legal regulation in the area of marriage and the family. This trend in the British system is akin to that in the United States, and these two national settings differ significantly from the rest of the western world in their response to these changes (Barlow & Probert, 2004).

In another discussion, Barlow (2004) further conceded that Europe at large is in the process of losing heterosexual marriage as a universal fulcrum of the family and family law. For example, in the United Kingdom, the number of marriages has fallen from around 459, 000 since 1971 to around 286, 000 in 2001<sup>11</sup>. Barlow (2004) therefore recommended that the legal response to these changing trends leading to a less marriage-centric society, should be both 'de-moralised' and

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<sup>11</sup> *Social Trends*, 34, 2004 Edition, Chapter 2: Households and families

principled. This approach, according to her, would provide family protection as well as the freedom to opt in and out of marriage<sup>12</sup>.

*Table 1* below depicts the gradually-shifting trends of heterosexual marriage for the last three decades in Britain, particularly, England and Wales. The trend is shifting towards later marriage and early divorce.

*Table 1: Average age at marriage and divorce (England and Wales)*

Year	First marriage		Divorce	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1971	24.6	22.6	39.4	36.8
1981	25.4	23.1	37.7	35.2
1991	27.5	25.5	38.6	36.0
2001	30.6	28.4	41.5	39.1

Source: Office of National Statistics (reported in *Social Trends 34*, 2004 Edition)

### **2.3.0 Relationship beliefs**

#### *2.3.1 The concept of beliefs*

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<sup>12</sup> See also Kiernan, (2004) for an extensive review of recent trends in unmarried cohabitation, unmarried parenthood, comparison of marital and cohabiting unions and the impetuses that underpin these trends in Britain and Europe.

The frame of culture adopted in the present work has the centrality of traditional ideas and their attached values (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952).

According to Leung *et al.* (2002), a more reliable and measurable representation of cultural patterns within particular settings is the prevalent beliefs within that setting and the determination of the relative extents to which individuals hold those beliefs. They noted that earlier approaches to the study of cultural differences such as Hofstede's (1980, 1984) and Schwartz's (1994) dimensions have been value-laden (and rightly so, since they were based on values), and are not able to yield certain types of information about cultural difference. This is mainly because individuals are not necessarily and directly knowledgeable about their own values, since 'values' as phenomena are not readily accessible in linguistic form. However, Leung *et al.* (2002) explain that beliefs unlike values, widely vary along the continuum of specificity, in terms of actor, setting and even time. *Axioms* is the term which Leung *et al.* (2002) have used for what Rotter (1966) conceptualised as 'generalised expectancies'. They noted also that since beliefs are generalised at the level of abstraction they tend to be recognizable by actors from different cultural sources and although such recognition of beliefs does not necessarily imply endorsement, differences in cultural patterns can be determined by the extent to which people from particular settings endorse particular beliefs in a functional way. Thus cultural participants of a particular system may hold certain beliefs to the extent that it has functional significance to them (Sangree, 1992).

Further, Leung *et al.* (2002) have offered a conceptual structure for beliefs (or social axioms – like mathematical axioms, which are basic grounds that people endorse and utilise as guides for behaviour across situations). According to them social axioms have the structure of A is related to B as entities, with either a causal or correlational relationship. Rather than being evaluative, beliefs imply relational-directional force. For example a belief is “Sharing interests and hobbies keeps relationships healthy”, whereas a value might be “It is good (or bad) to share interests and hobbies in relationships”.

Fletcher & Kininmonth (1992) have noted that there are certain antecedents of general close relationship beliefs: 1) they develop from the influence of the media and popular culture, in the ways that the print and electronic media construct and present relationships. For example, the way marital infidelity is cast by the media in a particular setting will engender the prevalence of particular relationship beliefs; 2) further, relationship beliefs are powerfully influenced by personal relationship experience, positive or traumatic; 3) also, relationship beliefs are influenced by socialisation in the form of parents or peers. Fletcher & Kininmonth (1992) conclude that from a social cognition perspective, relationship beliefs are epistemological constructs which are verbally accessible and (can) exert causal force on behaviour.

### **2.3.2 Cultural grounding of relationship beliefs**

According to Fletcher & Kininmonth, (1992), beliefs serve as indicators of cultural patterns because they are components of affective constructs such as emotions and attitudes, and these are states that transpose into behavioural patterns that are referred to as cultural depending on their qualitative attributes. Recent work on social axioms brings more empirical pointers to the link between beliefs and culture. In their large-sample study of social axioms across five cultural groups, Bond *et al.*, (2004) found evidence of correlations between a five-dimensional structure of social axioms and cultural syndromes such as collectivism, hierarchy and conservatism and national indices such as lower social development.

The cultural grounding of personal relationship beliefs can be illustrated by other studies of personal relationship across cultures. In a study of the cultural construction of personal relationships across North American and West African worlds, cultural researchers have found interesting phenomena on the cultural grounding of friendship and *enmityship*<sup>13</sup>. For example they found that on the one hand, people in West African settings represented particularly in diverse Ghanaian settings have the tendency of reporting fewer friends and endorsing caution towards friendship; on the other hand, (comparatively) people in North American settings (such as central Pennsylvania, San Francisco Bay area, Stanford University and the University of Kansas) claimed more friends and found it curious that people would hold personal enemy ideologies to the extent of exercising caution

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<sup>13</sup> *Enmityship* is a neology used by Adams (2000:1) to denote the phenomenon of “a personal relationship of hatred and malice in which one person desires another person’s downfall or attempts to sabotage another person’s progress”

about friendship (Adams, 2000; Adams *et al.*, 2003; Adams, Anderson & Adonu, 2004; Adams & Plaut, 2003). According to these authors, such tendencies originate from beliefs about the social world that prevail in the respective contexts, which have functional significance. Several cultural indicators of these tendencies were documented, such as a popular practice in West African settings where local commercial transport minibuses have particular social axioms painted on them such as: “I’m afraid of my friends, even you” (For an extensive account of these phenomena, see Adams & Plaut, 2003). In a discussion of culture and personal relationship beliefs, such findings bring insight into the potency of local realities in the generation of and adherence to beliefs about social interaction. Beliefs and attitudes are formed within particular socialisation contexts. For example, Kağıtçıbaşı (1996) has noted that marital attitudes (of which beliefs constitute the cognitive element) are formed through family socialisation. Other authors have pointed to the fact that socio-cultural systems engender the formation of normative beliefs that drive relationship behaviour (e.g. Goodwin, 1999; Goodwin & Gaines, 2003). One other empirical evidence that demonstrates the potency of relationship beliefs in determining relationship outcomes is reported by studies of the Chinese relationship belief in *yuan-fen* (relational fatalism). *Yuan-fen* implies the predestination of personal relationships, to the effect that relationship partners have little influence on the success or failure of the relationship. Such belief can either lead to relationship satisfaction (when partners believe that they must do all their best to make it work since they have been fated to be in such relationship) or dissatisfaction (when partners believe they are not able to improve a relationship



which is predestined to be what it is) (Goodwin & Findlay, 1997; Yang & Ho, 1988).

Contreras, Hendrick & Hendrick (1996) studied perspectives on marital love and satisfaction among Mexican-Americans and Anglo-American and found that Hispanic-oriented respondents held more pragmatic love attitudes (in which beliefs constitute the cognitive element) and were less idealistic about sex. However passionate love and marital satisfaction were correlated for both Anglo-American and Mexican-American groups.

In this research project, the purpose for studying relationship beliefs among married couples across the two settings is dual: first, to map out the cultural construction of marital relationship by way of measuring and comparing relationship beliefs across British and Ghanaian settings; second, to determine the extent to which such beliefs influence the experience of marriage across the two settings. Triandis (1995) has noted that structural factors (such as social and family expectations) play a role of reducing the importance of intra-psychic processes such as beliefs as determinants of relationship quality. Working within the individualism-collectivism frame of culture, one would expect two distinct trends: that on the one hand, relationship beliefs that reflect collectivist patterns would more significantly be endorsed by participants located in Ghanaian settings than those located in British settings; on the other hand, those beliefs that reflect individualistic patterns would be more significantly endorsed by British

participants than Ghanaian participants. With reference to the Relationship Beliefs Scale<sup>14</sup> of (Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992), hypotheses 2a – 2c were formulated, as stated in the section below.

### 2.3.3 Hypotheses about relationship beliefs (2a-2b)

*2a. Ghanaian couples would score higher on the **External Factors** relationship beliefs factor than their British counterparts.*

*2b. British couples would score higher on the **Individuality, Intimacy and Passion** relationship beliefs factors than Ghanaian couples.*

Granting that these suppositions were supported, one would say that such trend illuminates an aspect of the cultural construction of marriage in British and Ghanaian contexts.

### 2.4.0 Marriage role expectation

#### 2.4.1 Marriage roles

According to Callan and Noller (1987), an important aspect of an individuals subjective world is the manner in which they perceive and categorise the self and

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<sup>14</sup> In the Relationship Beliefs Scale of Fletcher & Kininmonth (1992), four latent factors were derived by factor analysis: Intimacy, Passion, External Factors and Individuality. See *Appendix 2a* for the items that loaded on these factors.

others. In effect, people organise their behaviour by defining the self and others in terms of roles, categories and positions. Social relationships (spouses, children, neighbours and people in professional relationships) are ruled by laws (Argyle, 1988). Marriage as a unit of interacting personalities, involves patterns of social activities that are governed by widely endorsed but informal rules for behaviour that ought or ought not to be performed by each member of the dyad. Such informal rules which govern patterns of social activity in marital relationship are called marriage roles.

Broadly, marriage roles are considered in two forms: egalitarian and traditional (cf. Johnson *et al.*, 1992 for an elaborate discussion of marital typologies).

Conceptually, the operational definitions of egalitarian and traditional forms of marriage offered by Dunn (1960) are adopted in this present work. According to Dunn (1960), the traditional form of marriage is a family structure containing some four distinct characteristics:

- a. the husband provides the primary source of income for the household.
- b. the wife's responsibilities are primarily contained in the home.
- c. she has primary responsibility for care of the children.
- d. the husband is to make decisions for the household.

The egalitarian (or companionship) marriage form involves a structure where:

- a. financial responsibilities are shared.
- b. responsibility for the home is shared.
- c. both husband and wife share responsibility for the care of children

d. and both husband and wife share in the making of decisions.

#### *2.4.2 Formation of Marriage Roles*

The construction of marriage role expectation has certain antecedents. Family socialisation and experience is the major determinant. Hofstede (2001) has noted that the development of gender roles is almost entirely determined by socialisation, since only a small part of gender role differentiation is biologically determined. Both boys and girls learn their place in society, and most of them want to remain that way. In this sense (according to Hofstede, 2001), the family may take several forms: the modern industrial society nuclear family, the extended family system of traditional societies, the post-industrial one-parent family, and even the day nursery (which in a way represents the family). Children brought up in all these various forms of the family observe and model after adults and quickly develop the awareness of their own gender category. This leads to identification processes, through which other values are transmitted from parent (or parent figure) to child. In other words “gender related values and behaviours are programmed into us in subtle ways and from a very early age” (Hofstede, 2001:300).

Thorn and Gilbert (1998) reported a study of 190 male college juniors and seniors whose orientation toward work, marriage and family life was investigated.

Results showed an orientation toward shared family roles (which had been traditionally divided). This orientation is associated with father's participation in household work, accentuating the evidence that family socialization is a major factor in the formation of marriage roles.

Another study which investigated the possibility of the influence of parental marital status on the formation of marriage roles was that by Marlar & Jacobs (1992) in which it was found that parental marital status (in terms of divorced/intact families) significantly influenced marriage role expectation. Males from divorced families reported more traditional marriage role expectation than did males from intact families. Further, the study found that females from divorced families reported more companionship-oriented marriage role expectations than did their counterparts from intact families. However, ignoring the factor of parental marital status, overall gender difference revealed that the female college students were more companionship-oriented than the males.

#### *2.4.3 Cultural grounding of marriage roles*

The focus of this section is to show that marriage role formation is culturally grounded. In other words, having noted from discussions above that family socialisation is a main contextual source of marriage role formation, the next concern is to adduce empirical evidence that marriage role expectations vary across particular cultural settings. The sense behind such a position is obvious: the different socio-cultural systems—British and Ghanaian— are patterned by particular

syndromes that drive socialization, family life, parental upbringing practices and kinship systems.

Higgins, Zheng, Liu and Sun (2002) in a comparative study of the marriage and sexual attitudes of Chinese and British university students found that traditional sexual and mate selection attitudes persist more in China than the United Kingdom, despite the social revolution that has gone on in China for decades. A relatively more conservative sexual culture still exists in Chinese society. Particularly, these authors discovered the prevalence of traditional morality and attitudes among women in China.

The attitudes and behaviours of women from Japanese and American origin in cross-national marriages toward marriage and childbearing showed that American women married to American men hoped that their children would develop the ability to make life choices regardless of others' opinions more than their Japanese counterparts. Further, Japanese women married to Japanese men as well as Japanese women married to American men held the hope that their children would grow to disregard their own interests for the benefit of larger society (Minatoya & Yoshimitsu, 1988).

Contreras, Hendrick & Hendrick (1996) studied perspectives on marital love and satisfaction among Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans and found that Hispanic-oriented respondents held more pragmatic love attitudes and were less idealistic about sex. However passionate love and marital satisfaction were

correlated for both Anglo-American and Mexican-American groups. Also marital satisfaction was predicted in both groups by partner similarity.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, according to culture theory, (cf. Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Triandis, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1996; Kagitcibasi, 1996) syndromes such as collectivism and high power distance are generally characteristic of African systems whereas individualist and low power distance tendencies characterise western cultural systems. From the descriptions of marriage roles offered earlier, it is apparent that elements of individualist and collectivist syndromes are implicated in egalitarian and traditional marriage roles respectively. In a straight-forward manner, we can gain a sense of this cross-cultural variation by comparing levels of marriage role expectations between couples located within British and Ghanaian settings.

#### *2.4.4 Marriage Roles and Change*

Marital Role expectation has been shown to have undergone change with time. Weeks & Botkin (1988) demonstrated this in a longitudinal study of the marriage expectations of college women in the United States. In this study using 326 female university students enrolled in an introductory marriage and family course, groups of 1961, 1972, 1978 and 1984 were compared. Results showed significant shifts towards egalitarianism. For example the 1972 group was significantly more egalitarian than the 1961 group in overall marriage role expectation and on all subscales except authority; the 1978 and 1984 groups were significantly more egalitarian than the 1961 group on all subscales: authority, homemaking, childcare,

personal characteristics, social participation, education and employment and support.

Further, Chia *et al.* (1986) compared American and Taiwanese college students' marital role attitudes across two decades. Results showed that compared to US participants in 1962, US participants in 1984 held a more egalitarian attitude towards marriage roles. A 1984 comparison of the US and Taiwanese participants showed that the Taiwanese participants held a more male-dominant attitude toward marriage roles. However women in both countries and at both times held a more egalitarian viewpoint, and this sex difference was stronger in 1984 than in 1962. It is apparent from these results that sex role attitudes have undergone significant changes in the last two or three decades, and this change is oriented towards egalitarianism.

Modernisation has been found to account for intra cultural differences in marital role attitudes. Within the same cultural setting for example, people living within urban cities tend to move away from traditional marriage values than those living outside the mainland urban settings (Hsieh & Burgess, 1994). Steinberg, Kruckman & Steinberg (2000) studied the social construction of fatherhood in Japan and Canada in a trans-national study. Results showed a significant transformation in the social meaning of fatherhood. The presence of the father in the domestic sphere is legitimised as a result of shifting extended family household structures, the empowerment of women and economic conditions.



There is also evidence that marriage role attitudes are subject to contextual variation. Particular household situations determine whether or not traditional role expectations are overridden or upheld. Davis & Greenstein (2004) described a study in an international social justice project which involved 13 nations. Their findings indicated that apart from cross-national differences in division of household labour, contextually, husbands were more likely to perform at least half of the total household labour in households where the wife was employed for pay outside the home. Further, relative educational level between husband and wife was found to account for household participation. In households where the wife's educational level equalled or even exceeded that of her husband, the husband was more likely to perform about half of the household labour. Even so, women in some contexts seemed to address the deviation from normative marriage role expectation by taking on more work at home when they play significant breadwinner roles.

Evertsson & Neramo (2004) investigated dependence within Swedish and American families from the mid-1970s to 2000 by using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (US) and the Swedish Level of Living Survey. They found evidence to support the conclusion that over all, housework was truly gendered toward women in both countries. However, a further finding was that American women unlike their Swedish counterparts, seemed to increase the time they spent at home on household labour when their husbands were economically dependent on them to some extent. It seems to be an effort to neutralise their

spouses' gender deviance in terms of a relative 'dependence of the husband on the wife'. This strengthens the reason why Davis & Greenstein (2004) suggest a contextual approach to the determination of cross-national differences in reported division of household labour.

Beliefs exert causal force on behaviour. According to a research by Sangree (1992), strikingly dissimilar marriage and cultural belief systems underlie gender role and gerontocratic attitudes of two African societies (Tiriki, Kenya and Irigwe, Nigeria). Findings from this research showed that on the one hand, gender role distinctions have decreased in Irigwe and elders' authority has markedly diminished; on the other hand, although gender role differentiation has diminished in Tiriki, male elders' status still remains high, while women elders' status has increased. By extension from such empirical findings therefore, one would expect traditional marriage role attitudes to be relatively more prominent in African cultural systems than British systems. Hence, in terms of the cultural construction of marriage across British and Ghanaian settings, *hypothesis 3* posited that:

#### **2.4.5 Hypotheses about marriage role expectation**

*3. Ghanaian couples would be more traditional in their marriage role expectations than their British counterparts; in other words, British couples would be more egalitarian than Ghanaian couples in their marriage role expectations. Quantitatively, this implies*

*that Ghanaian couples would score lower on the Marriage Role Expectations Inventory than British couples.*

Further than simply establishing the comparative differences in marriage role expectations between British and Ghanaian couples, a more fruitful pursuit is to establish the possibility that marriage role expectation plays a mediating role between the antecedents and outcomes of marital experience in British and Ghanaian settings. This forms the focus of *hypothesis 7* as proposed in *section 2.7.3* further in this chapter.

## **2.5.0 Support in marriage**

### *2.5.1 Social support*

Researchers have defined and studied social support in various ways for the last 30 years (Mutran, Reed & Sudha, 2001). According to Goodwin & Giles (2003), the past two decades have seen a flourishing of social support research in social psychology. Within these past decades, many studies have investigated the role of perceived and received social support in marriage (e.g. Sarason, Sarason & Gurung, 1997). According to Hobfoll & Stokes (1988: 499), social support can be defined as “social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance or with a feeling of attachment to a person or group that is perceived as loving or caring”. Social support mainly constitutes (at least in one aspect) what Cattel (2001) refers to as a person’s social capital.

A broad perusal of the social support literature brings up two forms of social support: Perceived and received support (Sarason & Sarason, 1985; Cohen & Hoberman, 1983). Perceived support is an individual's perception of the various ways in which they think support is available to them, albeit they may not have experienced such support in practical terms. In essence, perceived support is a cognitive appraisal of a reliable connection to others, (Barrera, 1986). Received (or actual) support however refers to the practical support that is acted toward an individual. This involves actual behaviours or actions from the source of support to the recipient of support, and not mere cognitive appraisals of what might be available, (Barrera, 1986; Sarason, Sarason & Shearin, 1986).

Notably, Cutrona (1996) has discussed four different ways in which social support is likely to contribute to the quality and survival of marital relationships. These discussions are summarized below:

1. During times of severe stress, support from the spouse can prevent emotional withdrawal and isolation that can otherwise erode the marital relationship.
2. Support from the spouse can prevent the onset of clinically significant depression and the aversive behaviours associated with depression that are damaging to relationships.
3. In the context of the inevitable disagreements that arise between couples, support-like behaviours can prevent conflicts from escalating in intensity to the point where they become destructive.

4. Intense moments of emotional intimacy that strengthen the bond between partners are facilitated by supportive communication.

### *2.5.2 Sex differences in marital support and wellbeing in marriage*

Sitrin (2001) conducted a study of the impact of prenatal marital support and adaptation on pregnancy and post-natal psychosocial and emotional adjustment of mothers. This study concludes also that since in a marital context the husband is viewed by her wife as an emotional attachment figure, the issues that he brings to bear on the marital relationship influence his emotional and instrumental support. Also they pointed out that husbands' ability to provide wives with emotional and practical support serves as the most important factor affecting the quality of maternal experience.

Xu & Burleson (2001) in their study of the relation of support to marital satisfaction across cultures (America and China) confirmed the suggestion of a support gap between husbands and wives. Thus, they found that wives reported desiring significantly higher levels of support from their husbands than did their husbands on all types of support.

Social support reciprocity among long term couples was reported by Goodman (2000). It was found that women focused more of their reciprocity on relational areas of support while men focused on control aspects. Reciprocity of support in marriage was posited to be linked to positive descriptions of the marriage. A

greater protective effect of marital relationship support as compared to support among cohabiting couples was noted by Kim (1999). It was found that being married was associated with a strong sense of mastery, higher levels of psychological well-being and self-esteem. Further, it was found that in terms of marital support, the absence of it had a greater negative effect on women than men. Women tended to experience higher levels of depressive symptoms than men in the absence of material instrumental support.

Some researchers have found consistent links between social support and health in general (e.g. Cattell, 2001) while others have pointed to a connection between social support and health in personal relationships (Sarason, Sarason & Gurung, 1997). Dehle, Larsen & Landers (2001) reported a negative correlation between perceived support and depressive symptomatology and perceived stress in a study of 177 married individuals from a college sample. Further, perceived support adequacy accounted significantly for unique variance in marital quality, depressive symptomatology and perceived stress. In times of illness, married partners provide instrumental support through active engagement, protective buffering and over protection (Hagedoorn, Roeline, Bunk, DeJong, Wobbles & Sanderman, 2000).

The greater protective effects of marital relationship support as compared with cohabiting couples was noted by Kim (1999). It was found that being married was associated with a strong sense of mastery, higher levels of psychological well-being and self-esteem. Further, it was found that in terms of marital support, the

absence of it had a greater negative effect on women than men. Women tended to experience higher levels of depressive symptoms than men

(Alvin, 1998; Caron, Tempier, Mercier & Leouffre, 1998).

### *2.5.3 Reciprocity of support*

As a resource exchange mechanism, availability of support in dyadic unions is characterized in many instances by reciprocity. The tendency to offer support in turn elicits support from the other. In marital relationships, the continuing coexistence of the couple members practically necessitates reciprocity on the basis of either equality or equity, as a condition for satisfaction and harmony. Material support reciprocity among long term couples was reported by Goodman (2000). Reciprocity of support in marriage was posited to be linked to positive descriptions of the marriage.

Also Wright & Aquilino (1998) reported the exchange of social support between care giving wives and husbands being related to marital satisfaction. It is logical to assert that the reciprocity of support would be determined by the propensity to give such support. By extension, it would be an acceptable proposition that, given the evidence adduced earlier on the prevalence of relatively more traditional marriage role expectation in African cultural systems, reciprocity of material support would be less in Ghanaian marriages than in British marriages.

### *2.5.4 Support in marriage and Culture*

As noted by Goodwin (1999), the need pattern of a people (e.g. a cultural group) is a predictor of harmony in personal relationships. Goodwin noted particularly that among collectivist-oriented people, high affiliative, nurturant and succorant needs are more evident than among their individualist-oriented counterparts. For example, in Ghanaian cultural settings, being collectivist-oriented, insofar as a woman is socio-economically supported in a (monogamous or polygamous) marriage, to the extent that she has the freedom and material resources to have as many children as possible, she is satisfied. The more children she has, the more influence she has in the marriage home and microcosm; and the more 'claim' she lays (indirectly through her children) to the man's property (land, houses, farms etc). (cf. Assimeng, 1989; Gyekye, 1996).

Mutran, Reed & Sudha (2001) conducted an extensive review of the definitions and instruments used to access social support as a construct. They noted categorically that few of these instruments have been used with ethnic minority populations. They noted that although researchers in the social support area have emphasized the conceptualization and measurement of the construct, there is little emphasis on making these conceptualizations and instruments appropriate for use in certain populations (such as non-Western or even minority groups). They therefore concluded that there is the need to comprehensively evaluate social support measures to make them possess equivalent conceptual clarity and ease of administration. As an example, in our<sup>15</sup> study of social support and values among Ghanaian, Portuguese, British and Mozambican students, we utilised two of the

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<sup>15</sup> I collected the Ghana version of the data in this study.



most widely-used measures of perceived and received support (*perceived support*: Cohen *et al.*, 1985; *received support*: Barrera & Ainley, 1983) with Chronbach's alphas in excess of .80. We noted the need for the development of further local assessments of support within the African setting (Goodwin, Costa & **Adonu**, 2004). This need was also pointed out by Walters, Wielislawa & Tatyana (2002) who emphasized the importance of conceptualization and measurement of constructs in cross-cultural family studies. On the basis of such note, in this project, the instrumental aspect of support (particularly, material support) was mainly considered in relation to marital satisfaction. The reason is that both at the conceptual and experiential levels, social support as a construct in social science has different connotations for different socio-cultural contexts. The traditional assumption which has been long-held in family sociology is that there are two broad types of forces which may hold a marriage together after it has been contracted: 1) instrumental and institutional bonds in the forms of economic dependence or interdependence, legal constraints and social pressures and, 2) the couple's personal affective attachment. The suggestion here is that where one of these two broad forces is absent or minimal, the other is important in ensuring the stability and survival of the marriage (Oppong, 1980). Historically, such conclusions were founded on pioneering writings of mid-twentieth century anthropologists and sociologists. For example, Coppinger and Rosenblatt (1968:15) have remarked that "where subsistence dependence between spouses is strong, romantic love is unimportant as a basis for marriage; while where subsistence dependence between spouses is weak, romantic love is important as a

basis for marriage” In respect of the above discussion, hypotheses *4a* and *4b* were framed as shown in the section below:

#### **2.5.5 Hypotheses about material support (4)**

*4a*     *There exists a greater gap in material support exchange among Ghanaian couples than among British couples. Specifically, Ghanaian husbands give more material support to their wives than they receive from their wives; whereas British husbands’ material support to their wives would not be more than they receive from their wives.*

*4b*     *There would be greater dyadic reciprocity of material support among British couples than Ghanaian couples.*

#### **2.6.0 Self-disclosure in personal relationships**

Beginning in the 1950s, Sidney Jourard conducted some of the pioneering psychological researches and experiments on self-disclosure. Jourard’s intellectual interest in probing self-disclosure sprang from a hunch he had at a time when he was seeking another position, and almost daily, was obliged to fill out personal data sheets for prospective employers. Some of these personal data sheets asked for information he considered personal and private. The thoughts that occurred to Jourard, which later became his initial research questions were: “I am telling these things about myself to strangers. Would I reveal as much to my friends and family?” (Jourard, 1971: 1).

### 2.6.1 *What is self-disclosure?*

Jourard interestingly avoided defining self-disclosure in his most complete book on the subject (Jourard, 1971). However Cozby (1973) defined self-disclosure as any information about himself or herself which a person communicates verbally to another person. Cozby (1973) used the term self-disclosure to refer to both a personality construct and a process of interaction between persons. In other words, self-disclosure is both a tendency at the personal level and also an act which people consciously engage in. Pearce & Sharp, (1973) have further noted that self-disclosure as an interactional process should be both voluntary and personal. This means that a person is self-disclosing when they willingly divulge information about themselves to another, under no coercion at all. Further the information disclosed (according to Pearce & Sharp, 1973) must be personal, so that the person at the receiving end of disclosure is not able to get the information from other sources.

Self-disclosure is target-dependent. People self-disclose to varying extents to particular target persons on the basis of the nature of personal relationship they have with the target person (Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). From Jourard's other classic studies on self-disclosure, he discovered that rather than increasing or decreasing the total extent to which individuals disclose themselves, marriage experience results in a redistribution of self-disclosure. For example Jourard (1959, 1971) found that married people 'concentrated' their self-disclosure on their spouse and thus became reticent toward other persons. Also the reciprocity

of self-disclosure showed up in Jourard's studies in which 80 faculty members were asked how much each had disclosed to the other. Then he investigated how much each disclosing member had been disclosed to by the other member. Jourard discovered that the more intimate information one had disclosed to someone else, the more the person had disclosed back; and the more liking resulted between disclosing members.

## 2.6.2 Processes and functions of self-disclosure

*Social penetration theory offers probably the most comprehensive frame of the processes and functions of self-disclosure. In this theory, Altman and Taylor (1973) developed an elaborate orientation about the processes of self-disclosure by which personal relationships are formed. This relationship formation process is referred to as social penetration. Altman and Taylor viewed relationship processes from the angle of human personality, on the assumption that the penetration process is a sort of progressive interweaving and exploration of mutual selves by relationship partners. According to the theory, human personality is analogous to an onion, having dyadic dimensions of breadth and depth.*

### 2.6.2.1 Breadth dimension

The breadth dimension (according to Altman and Taylor, 1973) refers to the range or collection of topics which individuals disclose on. There exist a number of topical areas that an individual makes accessible to the other person on the process of interpersonal relationship development. The breadth dimension has two facets of *breadth category* and *breadth frequency*.

The breadth category refers to a group of items related to a particular topic. For example, a breadth category of “religion” would contain elements such as belief in God, attitudes to prayer, faith healing, spirit world and extra sensory experiences. Breadth frequency however refers to the number of single items contained in a category. A breadth category of “sex” for instance, may contain comparatively more elements such as first sexual encounter, sexual orientation, sexual experiences, sexual abuse in childhood, secret fears about sex and future expectations of sexual experience.

#### 2.6.2.2 *Depth dimension*

This dimension of personality has a series of central-peripheral layers along which people differ. A person’s biographical information (name, tribe, age etc) for instance, exist in the outer layers while core characteristics such as emotions, self-concepts and values reside in the inner layers. Moving towards the central layers of personality, elements become more unique to an individual and are less visible and the assumption is that these inner layers contain elements that influence peripheral elements. Further, the more vulnerable and socially undesirable aspects of personality are hypothesised to dwell in the central layers of human personality. Thus, personal relationship development takes place in the form of interaction and disclosure along the depth dimension. The depth of penetration increases

with time in a relationship, the analogue of this depth of penetration is the gradual movement of a pin toward the centre of the onion (Altman and Taylor 1973).

### 2.6.2.3 *Valence dimension*

Valence of self-disclosure is the 'positiveness' or 'negativeness' of what is disclosed. Gilbert & Horenstein (1975) have demonstrated and noted the importance of the valence dimension as a determinant of the impact of self-disclosures. A supposition of social penetration theory is that during the formative process of personal relationships, valence would mostly be positive, and both positive and negative at later stages. Tolstedt & Stokes (1984) investigated the reverse side of social penetration (the depenetration process) and discovered that during the deterioration of intimacy, there was a significant decrease in positive valence and a concomitant increase in negative valence. As emotional intimacy dissipated, couples were more likely to become negative in their communication. Negative emotions were expressed and destructive information was divulged. In this condition, spouses may also withhold the disclosure of positive and constructive thoughts and feelings. It is important to note that Altman & Taylor (1973) did not hypothesise about a relationship between negative valence and intimacy.

Given the above properties of personality, in the development of personal relationships (social penetration), Altman & Taylor supposed the possibility of the creation of several penetration profiles. Examples are: i) low breadth category – a

person exposes very few aspects of their personality to another (e.g. sex, religion, politics etc.); ii) low breadth frequency – a person scarcely reveals themselves within a particular topical area, (e.g. sex: virginity, sex fears, sex orientation etc.) For each high or low breadth category and frequency, an individual may divulge information (like the pin piercing through the onion) at peripheral, intermediate or central levels of depth.

### **2.6.3 Self-disclosure versus closeness and intimacy**

Arriaga, Goodfriend and Lohmann (2004) have offered a definitive description of closeness from the point of view of personal relationships. According to them, closeness in personal relationship refers to the extent of inclusion of aspects of partner in one's sense of self; further it involves an element of commitment at varying levels; then also it involves levels of couple functioning. Research in experimental social psychology has revealed causal links between closeness and interaction in personal relationships. Aron, Melinat & Aron, (1997) studied closeness effects between pairs of individuals in an experimental context.

Participants in this study carried out self-disclosure and relationship building tasks that were manipulated to gradually increase in intensity. Aron and colleagues demonstrated that there was greater postinteraction closeness after pairs carried out intensive interaction tasks than after they carried out small-talk tasks. Another relevant finding that resulted from this experimental study (Aron, Melinat & Aron, 1997) was the importance of certain personality factors that mediate between self-

disclosure and closeness in personal relationships. For example, they revealed an overall tendency for introverted individuals to report somewhat lower closeness.

Altman and Taylor's depth penetration finds support in a study by Laurenceau, Barret and Pietromonaco (1998) of self-disclosure and intimacy. Event-contingent diary methodology was used to capture self-disclosure between relationship partners. Results showed that the self-disclosure of emotion came up as a more important predictor of intimacy than self-disclosure of facts and information. Altman and Taylor noted that divulging of items from the deeper layers of personality (where emotions and core characteristics reside) is more important for social penetration than items from the peripheral layers.

Morton (1978) proposed a two-dimensional approach to the study of depth of self-disclosure. 1) The description dimension entails the disclosure of facts (intimate and non-intimate) about oneself. Non-intimate facts are for example, one's occupation, tribe, name, marital status whereas intimate facts may be about diseases one has contracted or a suicide attempt. 2) The evaluation dimension has to do with disclosure of emotion, opinion and judgement relating to certain targets. In such disclosures the depth may range from non-intimate (e.g. favourite food, music, political party etc) to intimate (e.g. one's position on abortion or expression of anger).



Branden (1980) articulated the principle of psychological visibility, using the analogy of the mirror. According to Branden, when we stand before a mirror, we are offered the ability to perceive our own face as an object in reality. As a consequence, we usually derive pleasure in doing so (that is, if we derive pleasure from seeing our face), in the contemplation of our physical entity. The consciousness (or perceptions) of another human serves as a mirror in which we 'see' ourselves, and this consciousness of others is made available to us through unveiling of thoughts in communication (self-disclosure). Branden argues that self-awareness is only conceptual – we possess self-concepts – while psychological visibility is perceptual. The perceptions of other people (another consciousness) or 'mirrors' offer us the opportunity to experience ourselves perceptually, as concrete objects.

In effect, whenever people's perceptions of us are alien to our self-concept, they provide 'mirrors' that yield distorted reflections of our conceptual selves. Branden (1980) concisely stated this principle thus, "the experience of significant visibility requires consciousness congruent, to some meaningful extent, with our own" (p.74). Psychological visibility therefore is a direct (or sometimes indirect) comparison of the self-concept with perceptions of others. In a study of heterosexual couples by Franzoi, Davis and Young (1985), 131 participants (married or engaged) answered questions concerning themselves and their relationships. Franzoi and colleagues found a positive relationship between private self-consciousness and relationship satisfaction. This relationship between private

self-consciousness and relationship satisfaction was a consequence of great self-disclosure resulting from heightened self-attention.

#### 2.6.4 Culture and self-disclosure

As briefly mentioned earlier in this section, Goodwin *et al.* (1999) have reached the conclusion that though there has been considerable work so far on self-disclosure, yet there remains so much that is unknown about the influence of cultural forces on self-disclosure.

Serving the function of uncertainty reduction, self-disclosure in personal relationships is subject to cultural and demographic variation (Berger & Bradac, 1982). Generally, in the individualism-collectivism frame of culture, it might be expected that people in 'collectivist' settings would be more willing to self-disclose than people in 'individualist settings. Contrary to this expectation, the empirical evidence seems to suggest that individualists disclose relatively more than collectivists (Gudykunst, 1994). While in individualist settings assertive negotiation of one's personal interests in the social world and the likelihood of voluntary sharing of information in own goal achievement are prominent, the exercise of caution and in-group cohesiveness are paramount in verbal exchanges. (Gudykunst, 1994; Ting-Toomey, 1991). In a study of American and Chinese students by Chen (1995), 200 American and 144 Chinese Students responded to a questionnaire on the degree of self-disclosure on different topics to particular target persons. According to these findings, American students disclosed more than Chinese students in all categories. Mogrevejo (2002) reported a study that compared self-disclosure of students from Peru and the United States in which American students were more willing to self-disclose than Peruvian students. In addition, US participants were more willing to disclose on happy events than sad events.

In a study of three cultural settings (Russia, Georgia and Hungary) Goodwin *et al.* (1999) investigated the worldviews and disclosure levels of manual workers, business people and students. Among other findings, on differential self-disclosure a significant effect was found for culture. The more collectivist countries tended to disclose more, albeit such disclosure was towards intimate members of one's social world and not distant members. Political socialization, in the sense of repressive or democratic regimes has been noted as determining the

extent to which individuals within particular systems divulge personal information.

For instance, communist regimes are known to engender suspicion, fear of sabotage and personal insecurity, thereby reducing people's willingness and tendency to self-disclose (Gilberg, 1990; Markova, 1997).

With reference to *section 2.3.2* of this chapter, from our projects on the cultural construction of friendship and *enemyskip* in West African and North American systems, (Adams, 2000; Adams, Anderson & Adonu<sup>16</sup>, 2004; Adams & Plaut 2003), we discovered that the phenomenon of *enemyskip* in Ghanaian social worlds was linked to a prevalent caution about self-disclosure. Unlike participants in North American settings, Ghanaians across a variety of regional and demographic categories consistently reported fewer friends and more (usually hidden) enemies. Such enemies included neighbours, colleagues, members of one's family and kin and even spiritual forces perceived as potential sources of harm and sabotage. North American participants however, found it strange and sometimes abnormal to admit to the existence of personal social enemies about whom to exercise caution in the disclosure of personal information.

From such empirical picture of culture and disclosure in personal relationships, one would expect that dyadic self-disclosure in the context of marriage would be valued more in individualist cultural settings than in collectivist settings. Therefore hypothesis *5a* and *5b* predicted the following:

### **2.6.5 Hypotheses about marital self-disclosure and culture**

*5a. There would be higher levels of self-disclosure among British couples than their Ghanaian counterparts.*

*5.b There would be greater reciprocity of disclosure among British couples than Ghanaian couples.*

## **2.7.0 Marital satisfaction**

### *2.7.1 The concept of marital satisfaction*

Marital satisfaction has been defined as "the subjective evaluation that a marital relationship is good, happy, satisfying or successful (Callan & Noller, 1987). Each couple member brings a set of expectations, personality dynamics, a particular level of emotional or physical health and family background into the marriage. What determines marital satisfaction for the couple therefore is how these factors combine and inter-relate (Talmage, 1985).

Social exchange theory maintains the general principle that people avoid costly behaviour or situations and instead seek rewarding relationships, interactions and statuses. In essence, according to Nye (1979), social exchange theory is about how we seek to maximize our profits and minimize our losses. Social exchange theory

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<sup>16</sup> I served as research partner in most of these projects since August, 1996.

emerged from the works of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century social theorists (such as Levi-Strauss 1969; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959; Homans, 1961; Blau, 1964).

In the context of marriage, social exchange theory applies in the sense that the stability of marriage is critically determined by the relation of rewards to costs in the marital relationship. Rewards in the marital context may be material/instrumental resources (material resources, care and practical day-to-day support) or relational resources (physical love and companionship), whereas costs may involve conflicts, hostility, violence and abuse of power, (Callan & Noller, 1987).

### **2.7.2 Predictors of marital satisfaction across cultural settings**

The ultimate objective of this project was to unravel the relative factors that predict marital satisfaction across British and Ghanaian cultural settings.

The two main predictors of marital satisfaction studied in this project were self-disclosure and material support. These two variables were selected on the basis of assertions by many authors of studies that have explored the categories of factors that are involved in process of exchange in marital relationships (Callan & Noller, 1987; Coppinger & Rosenblatt, 1968; Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1985; Yelsma, & Athapilly, 1988). These studies have noted that although there are several factors that account for satisfaction in marriage, these factors can be categorized into relational and instrumental factors (also see Kamo 1993; Ting-Toomey, 1991)

In a study by Veroff *et al.* (1988) of factors that correlate with marital satisfaction among couples committed to being in stable marriages, three distinct factors were identified: a) the importance of fulfilling gender-role expectation; b) affective balance in the marriage, weighted toward positive rather than negative experiences; c) balance between obtaining individual gratification and relational gratification (often in dialectical tension with each other). Veroff *et al.* (1998) found evidence for each of these factors, albeit their study was not a cross-cultural one, but one based on western married populations.

The relation of marital role behaviour to marital quality appears important in other research findings. Frank, Anderson and Rubinstein (1980) studied three categories of couples; 80 non-patients, 50 couples seeking sex therapy and 50

other couples seeking marital therapy. All couples were asked to report on who they felt should and who actually does assume responsibility in eight major marital roles. Analysis involved examination of the discrepancy between role ideal and role behaviour (the degree of individual 'role strain'). The marital therapy couples showed higher husband wife discrepancies in respect of who does have the various role assignments. The conclusion reached by this finding is that the violation of role expectation in marriage detracts from the quality and health of the relationship. In other words, role fulfillment predicts marital harmony and therefore satisfaction.

Researchers (e.g. Goodwin, 1999) have noted time and again that much of personal relationship research (in cross-cultural psychology) has been done in many cultural systems that mostly are not African. Many marital researches have been done that have compared couples and marital outcomes between cultural systems that can be described as individualist and collectivist, but often, the focus has been on comparing South Asian and the far East cultural systems with Euro-American systems (e.g. Kamo, 1993).

Miller & Kanna, (1999), went close in their effort to studying the predictors of marital quality in Ghana, but their study was restricted to Ghanaian husbands. Apart from this limitation, their measures of marital outcome predictors were theoretical (latent), and were assumed to be valid social indicators. For example, their measures of marital quality were single questions scored on four-point scales, and they "believe" (p. 605) that an underlying latent variable was more

appropriate for assessing marital quality. There is a sense in which we can conclude on the basis of these and other (very) few sociological studies (e.g. Oppong, 1980, 1983; Vallenga, 1983) that have attempted to unravel the realities of marriage in African systems that there is a dearth of empirical knowledge of the actual relations that exist in this area (Georgas, 1999).

In this project the main predictors of marital satisfaction are material support and self-disclosure. These two variables were selected on the basis of assertions of authors in family sociology and social psychology that argue that the two broad categories of marital success factors are relational and instrumental (Coppinger and Rosenblatt, 1968; Hendrick, 1981; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1995). However, as has been earlier discussed in this chapter, the prevalence of collectivist or individualist cultural patterns among married couples in Ghanaian and British contexts would set the stage for marital experience.

Therefore the extent to which material support and self-disclosure predict marital satisfaction should be mediated by cultural syndromes of individualism and collectivism, which in this study were measured primarily by independent and interdependent self-construals and secondarily, by psychosocial variables in which cultural syndromes are implicated, i.e. relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation. Specifically the following predictions were made:

### **2.7.3 Hypotheses about predictors of marital satisfaction (6-8)**

- 6.a Self-construals mediates the relationship between material support and marital satisfaction.

- 6.b Self-construals mediates the relationship between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction.
7. Besides self-construals as measures of cultural patterns, the other variables in which aspects of culture are implicated (relationship beliefs and marriage role expectations) also mediate between material support and self-disclosure on one hand and marital satisfaction on the other hand, in the following ways:
- 7a. For wives, material support from spouse and marital satisfaction are mediated by marriage role expectation; the more traditional they are in marriage role expectation, the stronger the positive relationship between their marital satisfaction and their received material support from spouse.
- 7b. For husbands, the more egalitarian they are in their marriage role expectation, the stronger the positive relationship between their marital satisfaction and material support received from spouse.
8. Relationship beliefs would mediate between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction.

## 2.8.0 Summary of Hypotheses

The hypotheses in this project are organized under the two broad objectives of investigating the cultural construction of marriage and the psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction. These are summarised below.

### 2.8.1 *The cultural construction of marital experience*

- 1a. On the one hand, British couples would score higher on independent self-construal than Ghanaian couples;
- 1b. On the other hand, Ghanaian couples would score higher on interdependent self-construal than British couples.
- 2a. Ghanaian couples would score higher on the **External Factors** relationship beliefs factor than their British counterparts.
- 2b. British couples would score higher on the **Individuality, Intimacy and Passion** relationship beliefs factors than Ghanaian couples.
3. Ghanaian couples would be more traditional in their marriage role expectations than their British counterparts; in other words, British couples



would be more egalitarian than Ghanaian couples in their marriage role expectations. Quantitatively, this means that Ghanaian couple would score lower on the Marriage Role Expectations Inventory than British couples.

- 4a. There exists a greater gap in material support exchange among Ghanaian couples than among British couples. Specifically, Ghanaian husbands give more material support to their wives than they receive from their wives; whereas British husbands' material support to their wives would not be more than they receive from their wives.
  
- 4b. There would be greater dyadic reciprocity of material support among British couples than Ghanaian couples
  
- 5a. There would be higher levels of self-disclosure among British couples than their Ghanaian counterparts.
  
- 5b. There would be greater reciprocity of disclosure among British couples than Ghanaian couples.

### ***2.8.2 Relative Predictors of marital satisfaction***

- 6.a Self-construals mediate the relationship between material support and marital satisfaction.
- 6.b Self-construals mediate the relationship between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction.
- 7a. For wives, material support from spouse and marital satisfaction are mediated by marital role expectation; the more traditional they are in marriage role expectation, the stronger the positive relationship between their marital satisfaction and their received material support from spouse.
- 7b. For husbands, the more egalitarian they are in their marital role expectation, the stronger the positive relationship between their marital satisfaction and material support received from spouse.
- 8. Relationship beliefs (intimacy, passion, individuality and external factors) would mediate between self-disclosure and marital satisfaction.

# Chapter 3

## The Research Project

### *3.0 Research Design*

As mentioned in earlier discussions, this research project had two broad dimensions of focus. First and most important, the focus was to explore the cultural construction of marital relationship in both contexts: British and Ghanaian. The second focus was to then establish the relative factors that are predictive of marital satisfaction in the two contexts. Consequently, the project involved two main studies: one quantitative and the other, qualitative. The quantitative study employed an omnibus<sup>17</sup> questionnaire as the data collection tool, administered to married couples as dyads (cf. Appendices *1a* and *1b*). It is important to discuss in turn, the methodological rationales of the quantitative and qualitative strategies involved in this research design. Further, I also discuss the justification for conducting ‘only’ two main studies for a doctoral thesis.

### **3.1 Main Study 1: Omnibus Quantitative**

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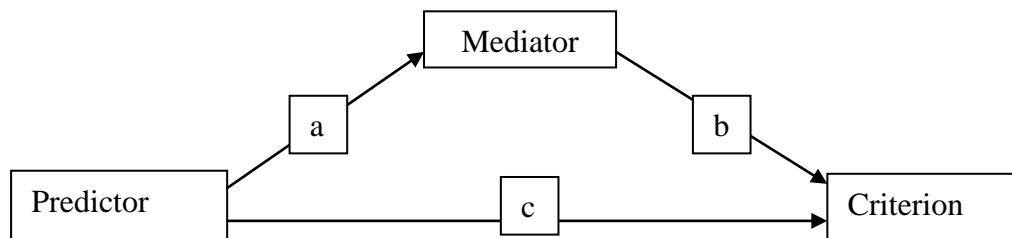
<sup>17</sup> An omnibus questionnaire is a multi-sectional one constituted of several scales. For example in this study, the omnibus questionnaire is constituted of seven scales (viz, marriage role expectation inventory, marriage scenarios scale, self-construals scale, self-disclosure inventory, relationship beliefs scale, Material support inventory, and marital satisfaction scale).

This study utilized the omnibus questionnaire mentioned above. All the seven scales in the questionnaire yielded quantitative measures of the various constructs. Since the investigation of the mediational role of cultural variables (interdependent and independent self-construals) and psychosocial variables (marriage role expectations and relationships beliefs) in predicting marital outcomes (marital satisfaction) were part of the study objectives, it required techniques that investigated the extent to which people's self-construals, marriage role expectations and relationship beliefs (cultural variables) mediate between self-disclosure and material support on one hand and marital satisfaction on the other hand, in British and Ghana cultural settings.

The use of measures of independent and interdependent self-construals (individualism and collectivism at the individual level) offers the possibility for comparing populations or cultural groups statistically on the degree to which these cultural syndromes are prevalent in a context and also to estimate levels of homogeneity within that particular context. Thus, measures of cultural syndromes can then be related to particular independent and dependent variables, such as in third-variable (e.g. mediational) models. The other variables viz, marriage role expectations and relationship beliefs are measurable at the individual level with instruments such as the Marriage Role Expectation Inventory of Dunn and DeBonis (1979) and the Relationship Beliefs Scale of Fletcher and Kininmonth (1992).

### 3.1.1 Mediatorial models

The nature of mediational variables has been recognized in classic psychological work such as the S-O-R model which posits that the relationship between stimulus and response is mediated by an active organism. This was a development (by cognitive-behavioural pioneers, e.g. C. L. Hull and E. C. Tolman etc.) that took a further step from the Skinnerian black box (S-R) approach. A mediator variable in effect, is a third variable which accounts for the relation between an independent and a dependent (criterion) variable. In other words, “mediator variables explain how external physical events take on internal psychological significance” (Baron & Kenny, 1986: 1176). *Figure 1* depicts the causal paths in a mediator model.



**Figure 1. Mediator model (Adapted from Baron & Kenny, 1986)**

Arrows *a* and *b* show particular causal paths. Arrow *b* represents the causal path between the mediator and outcome variable, while arrow *c* represents a direct causal path between the independent variable and the outcome variable.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a variable qualifies as a mediator when it functions in accordance with the following 3 criteria: a) variations in levels of the

independent variable must account significantly for variations in path *a* (i.e., the mediator); b) further, variations in the mediator must significantly account for variations in path *b* (the dependent variable); c) controlling paths *a* and *b* must result in a non-significant relation between the independent and dependent variables. Thus, when path *c* is zero, it implies the occurrence of the strongest possible mediation.

Baron & Kenny (1986) noted clearly that the mediator in psychological research is often an internal variable (a psychological construct), and as such, its measurement is not error-free. Consequently, on the one hand, such measurement error in the mediator results in an underestimation of its effect, and on the other hand, an overestimation of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. For example, if self-construals and marriage role expectations are measured with considerable error, their relative potency as intervening variables is overshadowed, leading to an overestimation of the strength of the (causal) relation between self-disclosure/material support and marital satisfaction.

Beyond establishing the relative cultural construction of marriage across the two settings, the ultimate concern of establishing the relative predictors of marital satisfaction was addressed by applying the 3-variable model in *figure 1* above. Thus, it was possible to predict personal relationship outcomes as shown in *figure 2* below.

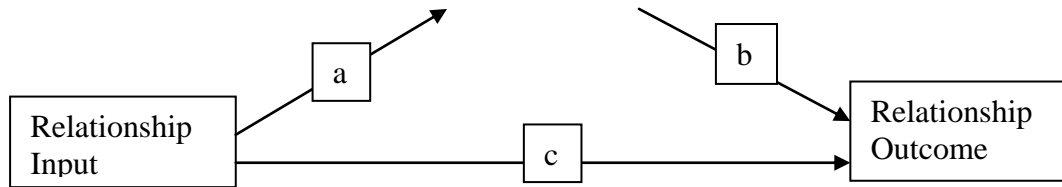


Figure 2. Mediation in predicting personal relationship outcomes across cultures

The real form of the simple 3-variable mediational model shown in *figure 2* takes the form of 3 categories of variables. The independent category (relationship input) had two variables: self-disclosure and material support; the mediator category (cultural syndromes) had three variables: self-construals, marriage role expectations, relationship beliefs; and the outcome variable (relationship outcome) is one variable: marital satisfaction. To test hypotheses *6a* and *6b*, self-construals served as the mediator between material support and self-disclosure on one hand and marital satisfaction on the other hand, as depicted in *figure 3* below:

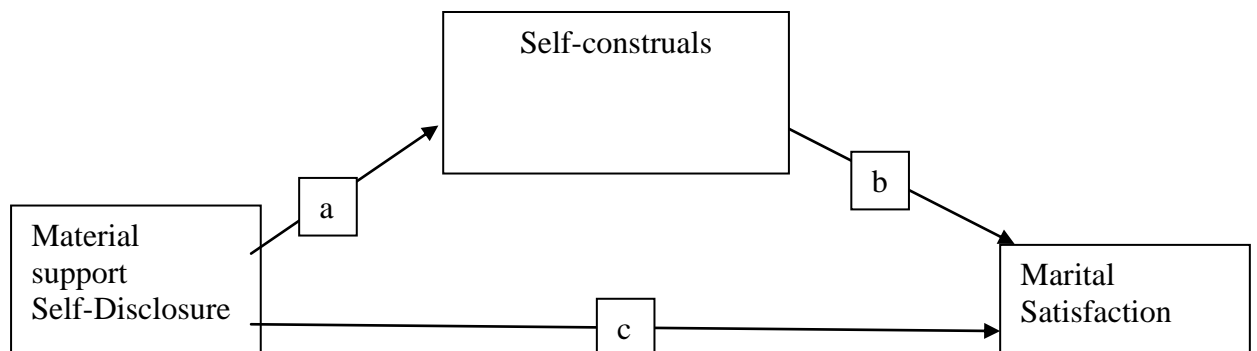
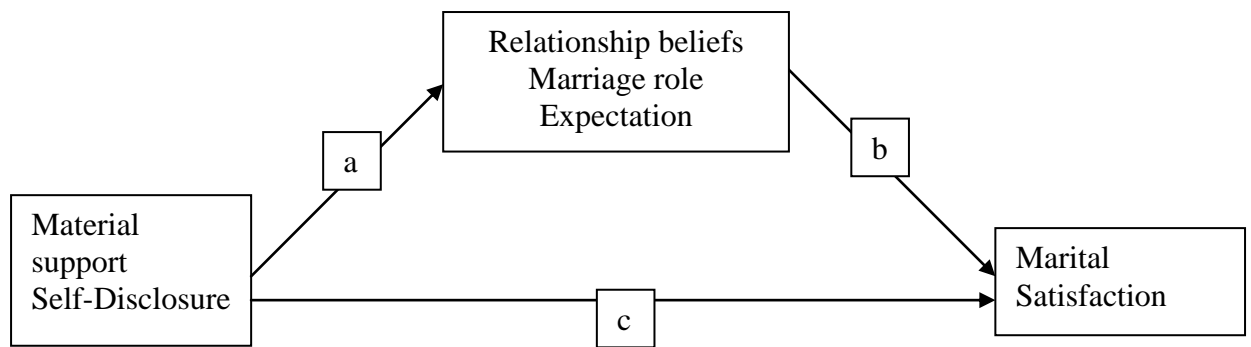


Figure 3. Mediation effect of self-construals

In addition to testing the mediation effect of self-construals, hypotheses *7a*, *7b* and *8* were tested by exploring the mediation effects of relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation, (*figure 4*).



**Figure 4: *Mediation effects of relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation***

The analytic design of this mediational model affords the opportunity to relate cultural variables to dependent variables in a procedure earlier referred to in chapter two as ‘unpacking’ culture (Bond and Tedeschi, 2001; Matsumoto et. al, 1997; Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999).

### **3.2 Main study 2: Qualitative**

The quantitative measure of psychological constructs across cultural settings is of a greater epistemological relevance if emerging trends are further illuminated by qualitative data (Miller et al., 1997). Therefore the rationale for this qualitative study was to pursue much richer data that would serve as interpretive insights for making sense of the trends that would emerge from the quantitative (omnibus) study. As noted above, this qualitative study involved semi-structured interviews with participants (married couples in British and Ghanaian settings). The items constituting the interview protocol were developed in consonance with particular research objectives/hypotheses and also out of a preliminary analysis of the



quantitative data. For instance aspects of marital experience explored by this interview study include features of material (instrumental) support received from spouse and the magnitude and regularity of such instrumental support. Also, constructions of intimacy/closeness, marital satisfaction and marriage roles were investigated. The qualitative study is reported in chapter 5 of this thesis.

### **3.3 Justification for conducting two main studies**

Whenever I discussed my research project and its strategies with psychology people, one of their first questions was: Why conduct *only* two studies for a doctoral thesis? Epistemologically, such a question is both relevant and important. My response to such an important question is simple but also important and well considered: The nature of my area of study (marriage across cultures) and the particular research settings (British and Ghanaian) practically require such an approach. Traditionally, many psychological researches (especially those in the cognitive, developmental and social areas) rely heavily on the use of undergraduate psychology or social science students as participants. Such student participants are easily contacted as ‘captive audiences’ during lecture or laboratory sessions. With such relatively easy access to participants who sometimes must take part in surveys as part of course exercises, it is probably more possible to have several different studies for a doctoral thesis.

A cross-cultural study of marriage sounds *prima facie* simple. However, the implications of such research agenda need to be considered in order to appreciate the strategy of conducting a smaller number of omnibus studies. First of all, the studies involved personal relationships, an area where participants are relatively more difficult to access, not due to their unavailability, but rather due to the general reluctance that people have in divulging personal information to a researcher (cf. Jourard, 1971; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). Second, this research is not on personal relationships in general, but specifically, marital relationships. This makes the problems of participant accessibility more acute: married couples are relatively more difficult to contact as a dyad for research participation than other categories of people. For example psychological studies and experiments involving undergraduate participants usually afford the researcher the 'luxury' of getting large and multiple samples. In such situations, it is perhaps possible to do several different studies and experiments to answer particular research questions. Such different studies may engage smaller samples at a time. Third, another reason why it is difficult to do a number of different smaller studies in the study of marriage is because of the cross-cultural nature of my research. Participating couples were drawn from the UK and Ghana. Warwick (1980) has offered an extensive discussion of the problems of cross-cultural research, and among them was the problem of limited accessibility to some populations in research across cultures. It is apparent that the married population is of such inaccessible ones. In a real sense, drawing comparable samples from both settings for a number of different studies was a hard task, considering the time frame within which a doctoral programme is carried out and also the concomitant financial implications.

Fourth, scores for each participant/couple on the various scales were supposed to be interrelated in within-subjects and between-subjects designs and therefore could not be separated in many different studies. The alternative (and equally effective) strategy of conducting two main omnibus studies therefore was based on these practical and methodological considerations. The omnibus and qualitative studies were carefully conducted social psychological studies that have sought to address all the major objectives, research questions and hypotheses in the project.

### 3.4 *Participants*

Married heterosexual couples (*de jure*) within the age range of 18 and 60 constitute the target population. In the qualitative study (unlike the omnibus study), participants were not taken as dyads. Married men and women were taken in isolation from their spouses due to the difficulty in getting them as dyads, in view of the less anonymous nature of interviews and the divulging of personal information involved. The lowest level of education was GCSE (GCE Ordinary Level, in the Ghanaian context). Further, participants in the Britain sample did not fall in the category of (immigrant) ethnic minorities. In accordance with the scope of this project (as outlined in chapter 1), they were British Caucasians by birth, and living in the UK for at least the past 5 years. This however excludes second-generation and/or non-European ethnic minorities and migrants, such as Asians, Caribbean and Africans. Specific demographic characteristics of the samples recruited as well as ethical considerations for the omnibus and qualitative studies are given in their respective chapters (chapters 4 and 5).

### **3.5 Statistical techniques and analytic procedures.**

Since this project is a cross-cultural one and the hypotheses are mainly comparative and predictive in nature, the following statistical techniques for analysis were appropriately employed:

#### *Multivariate analysis*

1. MANOVA models to test for main and interaction effects in between-subjects designs. These comparative analyses were performed on self-construal, relationship beliefs, marriage role expectation, material support, self-disclosure and marital satisfaction in order to establish the cultural construction of marital experience, which are reported in chapter 4 part I.
2. Multiple regression analysis was pursued (to establish the relative amounts of variance in the criterion variable –marital satisfaction- accounted for by particular predictor variables (e.g. self-disclosure and material support). To test for possible mediation in the prediction models, multiple regression equations were used instead of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) because the variables involved were all measured. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), it is only necessary to resort to SEM in testing for mediation when the variables involved in the analysis are latent variables. Although SEM can also be used for testing mediation when measured variables are involved, the results produced are the same as when multiple regression equations are used (see

also Judd & Kenny, 1981). Therefore since the use of multiple regression is a less complicated analytic procedure than SEM (Byrne, 1994), the former was employed in this project, as shown in chapter 4 Part II.

3. To investigate reciprocity of self-disclosure and material support exchanges between spouses, correlational (Pearson's) analyses were performed.

#### *Content analysis*

4. The semi-structured interview data yielded by the qualitative study (*main study* 2) was subjected to content analysis<sup>18</sup> in order to explore the relative constructions of marital experience and the predictors of satisfaction in respect of particular hypotheses. Details of the systematic procedures involved in this analysis are discussed in chapter 5.

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<sup>18</sup> According to the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (Reber, 1995), content analysis is “A general term covering a variety of methods for analysing a discourse, message or document for varying themes, ideas, emotions, opinions, etc. Most of such analysis consist of sophisticated counting schemes in which the frequency of particular words, phrases, affective expressions and the like are determined”

# Chapter 4

## The Omnibus Study (Study 1)

### 4.0 Introduction

#### 4.1.1 *The omnibus questionnaire*

As mentioned in Chapter 3, for *study 1*, I utilised an omnibus questionnaire (see Appendices *1a* and *1b*) to collect data on several aspects of marital experience that are pertinent to the research questions in this project. The nature of the target population (married couples across two cultural settings) made it imperative for an omnibus questionnaire to be used. The questionnaire was composed of seven scales measuring particular variables of interest: marriage role expectation, relationship beliefs, self-disclosure, material support, self-construals, and marital satisfaction. Details of each of these scales are offered in the appropriate sections of this chapter. The omnibus questionnaire was piloted both in England and Ghana on a sample of 40 spouses (10 wives and 10 husbands in each country). The purpose for this pilot was to test the comprehensibility of all the scales contained in it as well as get basic comments from participants on particular technical aspects. Also the psychometric properties of each scale were verified. After reflective examination on the pilot, no need for a major modification was

seen, apart from a few insignificant typographical and technical errors which were corrected.

#### *4.1.2 Participants*

Married couples located in London and Accra were contacted for participation in this study. Their minimum level of education was GCSC (the Ghanaian equivalent is GCE Ordinary level). Descriptive statistics on their demographic characteristics are represented in *tables 4.1* and *4.2* below.

Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics on participants' age, length of marriage and number of children.

Nation	Spouse	Descriptive Statistics	Age	How old is the marriage	Number of children
Britain	<i>Husband</i>	Mean	42.14	13.226	1.43
		N	87	84	87
		Std. Deviation	9.575	10.4911	1.187
		Minimum	27	1.5	0
		Maximum	72	51.0	4
	<i>Wife</i>	Mean	41.02	14.484	1.49
		N	98	95	98
		Std. Deviation	10.717	10.9122	1.270
		Minimum	24	1.0	0
		Maximum	76	52.0	5
	<i>Total</i>	Mean	41.55	13.894	1.46
		N	185	179	185
		Std. Deviation	10.184	10.7052	1.229
		Minimum	24	1.0	0
		Maximum	76	52.0	5
Ghana	<i>Husband</i>	Mean	37.33	6.822	1.99
		N	107	107	107
		Std. Deviation	6.718	6.3848	1.476
		Minimum	27	1.0	0
		Maximum	63	36.0	9
	<i>Wife</i>	Mean	32.59	6.916	1.95
		N	108	107	107
		Std. Deviation	5.857	6.3695	1.495
		Minimum	23	.2	0
		Maximum	57	35.0	9
	<i>Total</i>	Mean	34.95	6.869	1.97
		N	215	214	214
		Std. Deviation	6.718	6.3623	1.482
		Minimum	23	.2	0
		Maximum	63	36.0	9

*Age.* The mean age of British husbands was 42.14 while that of their Ghanaian counterparts was 37.33. British wives' mean age was 41.02 and that of Ghanaian



wives was 32.59. There was a greater age gap between Ghanaian spouses than between British spouses. Also averagely, British couples tended to be older than Ghanaian couples, although standard deviations were smaller for Ghanaian couples than their British counterparts. This confirms the trend of marriage age in the United Kingdom reported in chapter two (*table 1*), where the age at marriage has steadily increased over the past three decades.

*Length of marriage.* British couples had a greater length of marriage (13.89) than Ghanaian couples (6.86), again with a smaller standard deviation for the Ghana sample (6.36) than the British sample (10.70).

*Children.* Ghanaian couples had greater numbers of children (1.97) on average than British couples (1.46). The maximum number of children in the British sample was 5 as against 9 for the Ghanaian sample. Since couples were taken as dyads, there was no difference between husbands and wives on length of marriage and number of children.

*Employment status.* As depicted in table 4.1 below, among British couples, 40.2% of husbands fell into the professional/managerial occupation category as against 13.3% of wives. Among Ghanaian couples, 20.6% of husbands and 10.2% of

*Table 4.2:* Occupation of participants by nation and spouse

Spouse	Occupation	Nationality		Total
		Britain	Ghana	
<b>Husband</b>	Professional, managerial	<b>35</b> (40.2%)	<b>22</b> (20.6)	<b>57</b> (29.6)
	Clerical, sales or skilled labour	<b>30</b> (34.5%)	<b>78</b> (72.9%)	<b>108</b> (55.7%)
	Services or unskilled labour	<b>8</b> (9.2%)	<b>5</b> (4.7%)	<b>13</b> (6.7%)
	Homemaker	<b>3</b> (3.4%)	<b>2</b> (1.9%)	<b>5</b> (2.6%)
	Full-time student	<b>3</b> (3.4%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>3</b> (1.5%)
	Retired, unemployed or job-seeking	<b>8</b> (9.2%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>8</b> (4.1%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b> (100%)	<b>107</b> (100%)	<b>194</b> (100%)
<b>Wife</b>	Professional, managerial	<b>13</b> (13.3%)	<b>11</b> (10.2%)	<b>24</b> (11.7%)
	Clerical, sales or skilled labour	<b>56</b> (27.1%)	<b>90</b> (83.3%)	<b>146</b> (70.9%)
	Services or unskilled labour	<b>6</b> (6.1%)	<b>6</b> (5.6%)	<b>12</b> (5.8%)
	Homemaker	<b>14</b> (14.3%)	<b>1</b> (0.9%)	<b>15</b> (7.3%)
	Full-time student	<b>4</b> (4.1%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>4</b> (1.9%)
	Retired, unemployed or job-seeking	<b>5</b> (5.1%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>5</b> (2.4%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b> (100%)	<b>108</b> (100%)	<b>206</b> (100%)

wives fell in this category. This category is made of occupations such as lecturer, manager, doctor and other such top level positions. Although More British than Ghanaian couples fell into this occupation category, there was similarity of the gap between husbands and wives from both settings. More husbands than wives come in this category. In the next category labelled as clerical/sales/skilled labour, more Ghanaian couples than British couples were realised (72.9% of Ghanaian husbands, 83.3% of wives; 34.5% of British husbands and 57.1% of wives). In Both countries, more wives than husbands fell into this category. More British wives than Ghanaian wives reported being housewives (14.3% and 0.9% respectively).

#### *4.1.3 Procedure*

The procedure for the omnibus questionnaire administration was straight-forward. Married couples were contacted wherever they could be found. This included homes, offices, town centres and social gatherings such as club meetings and universities. After a brief unstructured interview to ascertain that participants fell within the requirements<sup>19</sup> for participation, and to solicit their participation, the questionnaire was handed to them in a self-addressed/stamped envelop. Although all necessary instruction was contained in the questionnaire, couples who agreed to participate were assured of anonymity and reminded to simply drop the questionnaire in the post after completion. This administration was to couples as dyads, so linking codes were used for the set that went to a particular couple. For example, H5 and W5 (Husband 5 and Wife 5) were administered to a couple. This was to enable responses from couples to be matched for dyadic analytic purposes, and was explained to participants, to make them not wonder about the codes and get an erroneous impression that the codes were any secret identification that might link findings to them personally. Male and female data collection assistants were recruited and sent out to contact couples both in London and Accra. This was important for purposes of increased assurance of anonymity and to control for researcher influences on respondents. Further, the return address used on the questionnaire was also anonymised. In the UK, the title ‘departmental research administrator’ was used while in Ghana, ‘local research co-ordinator’ was used.

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<sup>19</sup> As detailed in the scope of this project (Chapter 1.4), participants must be heterosexual monogamous married couples; in Ghana, they must be black Africans whereas in Britain, they must be British Caucasians.

This was to avoid any unacceptable impression of the identity of the researcher and thereby reducing social desirability tendencies that might bias participants' responses.

Contacting couples for participation in this study was considerably challenging, particularly in the British setting. One consequence was the very low questionnaire return rate, which was about 15%, making it extremely difficult to get a larger sample for this study. There were two delay pathways to the questionnaire journey: it took some time administering it, since it required a targeting search for couples who fell within the scope of the project and who were willing to participate in the study; further, after administering the questionnaire to couples, it took them some considerable length of time to complete and return them through the post. It is interesting to note that despite the low return rate of the omnibus questionnaire in the British setting, the many different scales contained in it were adequately responded to by most participants, except for a few cases where sections were left unanswered, probably due to oversight or deliberate skip.

#### *4.1.4 Ethical Considerations*

The research proposal for this project was submitted to the ethics committee of the School of Social Sciences and Law (then, Department of Human Sciences). The omnibus questionnaire was examined by the committee and the data collection technique of using a postal questionnaire return system was discussed satisfactorily. Furthermore, in the administration of the questionnaire, adequate

information was given to participants and their consent sought on that basis. It was made clear to participants that they could withdraw from the study or skip any portions of the questionnaire that constituted discomfort to them in anyway. Since the study was not an experimental one, no information was withheld from the participants apart from the hypotheses. Also, the return of the questionnaire was completely anonymous. Therefore it was not necessary and possible to debrief participants. However they were given the opportunity to contact me later by phone, email or post for information on the findings of the research, if they were interested. Just a few phone calls and emails came from participants in Britain and Ghana, and general information from preliminary analysis was given them.

## **PART I: THE CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION OF MARITAL EXPERIENCE**

### **4.2.0 Self-construals**

As discussed in chapter two, it was important to measure culture at the individual level so that empirical assertions could be made about the existence of particular syndromes in the two settings. Emphasis was placed on the main dimension described by Hofstede, (1984), i.e., the individualism-collectivism dimension. To measure individualism-collectivism at the individual level, self-construal was measured among British and Ghanaian couples. Comparative analysis was performed to determine the relative prominence of these cultural patterns in the two settings.

4.2.1 *Instrument*

One of the currently useful psychometric tools for measuring self-construal is Singelis' (1994) Self-Construals Scale (SCS). This scale measures both independent and interdependent self-construals, which correspond to individualism and collectivism. The SCS contains two sets of 12 items for measuring independent and interdependent self-construals, as shown in the omnibus questionnaire in *appendices 1a* and *1b*. The SCS has been demonstrated to possess adequate internal reliability with Cronbach's alphas<sup>20</sup> ranging from the high .60s to the middle .70s (Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999; Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk & Gelfand, 1995).

Table 4.3: Cronbach's alphas for the Self-construal scale.

Self-construals	Cronbach's alphas		
	Britain	Ghana	Equality of alphas ( <i>F</i> ) (Britain versus Ghana)
Independent	.87	.68	.406 (NS)
Interdependent	.78	.72	.733 (NS)

NS  
=  
No  
n-  
sig  
nifi

cant ( $p > .05$ );  $df_1 = n_1 - 1 = 185 - 1 = 184$ ;  $df_2 = n_2 - 1 = 215 - 1 = 214$

<sup>20</sup> Cronbach's alpha is a reliability coefficient that denotes the internal consistency of an instrument or subscales of a multidimensional instrument. Usually, alphas of .70 or more are regarded as adequate, (Howitt & Cramer, 2001).

As shown in *table 4.3* above, there was equality of reliability coefficients<sup>21</sup> between the Britain and Ghana samples on the SCS. Thus for independent self-construal,  $F=.406, p>.05$ ; for interdependent self-construal,  $F=.733, P>.05$ .

#### 4.2.2 Scoring

The items in the SCS were scored on a 7-point scale, from 1=very strongly disagree to 7=very strongly agree. The lowest and highest obtainable scores on each of the two sets of items (independent and interdependent) are 12 and 84 respectively.

#### 4.2.3 Results

*Table 4.4:* Means and standard deviations for spouse and nation on interdependent and independent self-construals.

	Nationality of participant	Spouse	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Interdependent self-construal	Britain	Husband	50.08	11.911	84
		Wife	53.48	9.773	98
		Total	51.91	10.914	182
	Ghana	Husband	61.43	10.295	106
		Wife	60.08	9.817	106
		Total	60.76	10.057	212
	Total	Husband	56.42	12.374	190
		Wife	56.91	10.316	204

<sup>21</sup> In cross-cultural comparisons, it is essential that a measurement instrument possess adequate psychometric properties in all the cultural groups of interest. To ensure that an instrument has similar or comparable reliabilities in the different groups, the equality of reliability coefficients can be tested. For large samples, the statistic follows an  $F$  distribution with  $N_1 - 1$  and  $N_2 - 1$  degrees of freedom. The expectation is for the null hypothesis to be retained, implying that the two alphas are not significantly different. (See van de Vijver, & Leung, 1997 for a detailed discussion of this analytic procedure).

		Total	56.67	11.343	394
Independent self-construal	Britain	Husband	58.10	10.509	84
		Wife	59.34	12.694	98
		Total	58.76	11.721	182
	Ghana	Husband	62.57	10.109	106
		Wife	64.52	10.732	106
		Total	63.54	10.446	212
	Total	Husband	60.59	10.499	190
		Wife	62.03	11.971	204
		Total	61.34	11.294	394

On interdependent self-construal, Ghanaian couples scored higher than British couples (mean(Gh.)=60.76; mean(Br.)=51.91). However, counter-intuitively, Ghanaian couples also scored higher than British couples on independent self-construals, (mean(Gh.)=58.76; mean(Br.)=63.54), although British couples scored higher on independent construal than they did on interdependent construal. Further, standard deviations in all the groups (nation and spouse) appear similar.

To test for the significance of these comparative differences, MANOVA was performed. The multivariate test was significant for nation, Wilks's Lambda<sup>22</sup> ( $\Lambda = 0.825$ ,  $P < 0.001$ ) and not for spouse ( $\Lambda = .993$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Further, the multivariate test of interaction of spouse and nation was not significant ( $\Lambda = .983$ ,  $p = .066$ ). The various  $F$  values for the univariate tests of between-subjects effects are shown in the summary *table 4.5* below:

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<sup>22</sup> The Wilks' Lambda ( $\Lambda$ ) is one of four Multivariate Tests provided by SPSS. These tests sometimes produce identical results, but other times they do not. Although there is no straightforward way of choosing between them, the Wilks' test is usually useful (Richardson, 2000). The test produces a statistic (known as 'Lambda') which is equal to the proportion of the variation in the dependent variables that the independent variables do *not* explain. This is similar to working out the correlation coefficient in regression analysis. In this particular analysis, the value of Lambda,  $\Lambda = 0.825$  for nation. This implies that the independent variable of nation (Britain vs. Ghana) explains 1-.825 (or 0.175) of the variance in independent and interdependent self-construals. However the actual between-subjects effects are depicted by the  $F$  ratios in *table 4.5*.





Table 4.5: Summary of MANOVA (2 x 2 factorial) comparing nations and spouses on independent and interdependent self-construals

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
<b><i>BETWEEN</i> (groups)</b>					
<b>Factor A (nation)</b>					
Independent self-construal	2273.95	1	2273.95	18.623	.000
Interdependent self-construal	7868.26	1	7868.26	72.570	.000
<b>Factor B (spouse)</b>					
Independent self-construal	249.01	1	249.01	2.03	.332
Interdependent self-construal	102.27	1	102.27	.943	.154
<b>Factor A x B</b>					
Independent self-construal	12.34	1	12.34	.101	.751
Interdependent self-construal	549.53	1	549.53	5.06	.025
<b><i>WITHIN</i> (Error)</b>					
Independent self-construal	47619.626	390	122.102		
Interdependent self-construal	42285.149	390	108.423		

There was significant main effect for nation on both independent and interdependent self-construals, ( $p < .001$ ). Ghanaians scored significantly higher on both independent and interdependent self-construals. This implies that *hypothesis 1a* which predicted a significantly higher independent self-construal among British couples is not supported. Nevertheless, a significantly higher interdependent self-construal among Ghanaians lends support to *hypothesis 1b* which predicted that Ghanaians would score significantly higher on interdependent self-construal. No significant main effect was found for spouse,

( $p > .05$ ). However the interaction of nation and spouse was significant for interdependent self-construal only ( $p < .05$ ) - which was why the multivariate test of interaction on the whole was not significant.

#### 4.2.4 Discussion

Independent and interdependent self-construals being the principal measures of individualistic and collectivistic cultural patterns in the two contexts in this study, the observed comparative differences have important implications for the relative constructions of self and social experience that prevail in these contexts. In line with the assertions of cultural studies (as discussed in chapter two), that collectivistic tendencies feature more prominently in African than Euro-American settings (Hofstede, 1980,1984; Triandis, 1995), *hypothesis 1b* gains support that Ghanaians would score significantly higher on interdependent self-construals. Given the fact that independent and interdependent self-construals represent strikingly different constructions of self and sociality, one would expect that *hypothesis 1a* (which postulated British couples to score significantly higher on the independent self-construal) to be supported. A first thought that occurs on the perusal of the cross-national differences shown above is that probably, Ghanaian participants had the tendency to score high generally on Likert-type scales, albeit there is no empirical evidence of such tendency. What shows that such tendency is not a possible explanation of the trend observed is its striking counter-intuitive nature. Even if Ghanaians have the tendency of scoring higher on psychometric scales, they would have scored higher on interdependent rather than independent

self-construal, given the theoretical understanding that they (Ghanaian participants) should be more collectivist than individualist.

Another considerable possibility is that the instrument (Self-Construals Scale of Singelis, 1994) possesses different psychometric efficiencies in the two cultural settings. However, as shown in *table 4.3* above, the test for equality of alpha coefficients showed that the null hypothesis was retained, i.e. there was no significant difference between the alpha coefficients across the Ghanaian and British samples on both independent and interdependent self-construals. Any observed differences are due to chance. Furthermore, the observed degree of dispersion of scores in the various groups, as indicated by their standard deviations gives the indication of similarity of variance across nation and spouse. Such similarity of variance allows the assertion that there was uniformity of response to the SCS across the two settings.

According to (Yum, 2004), although the traditional dichotomy of cultural tendency implied in independent and interdependent self-construals have been found useful by many other researchers (e.g. Dion & Dion, 1996; Gudykunst, 1996; Kim, 1994; Oetzel, 1998a, 1998b) in the prediction of individualistic and collectivistic cultural syndromes, at times there is empirical evidence (e.g. Kim *et al.*, 1996) to suggest that these two dimensions (independent and interdependent self-construals) may not be sufficiently reminiscent of variation in cultural tendency across individualist and collectivist contexts.

Turning to other possible and more convincing explanations for the higher scores on independent self-construal among Ghanaians, the phenomenon of biculturalism comes into focus. Kim *et al.*, (1996) proposed a multidimensional framework of self-construal in which they posited four components of the self: bicultural, marginal, independent and interdependent. In their work, Kim *et al.* found empirical support for this expanded framework as a more consistent explanation for variation in cultural behaviour. In the light of such explanation of the possibility of a bicultural construal of the self, there is a sense in which one can say that Ghanaian couples possess a construction of self that is partly independent and partly interdependent, just as British couples also scored fairly high on interdependent construal. Further to this understanding, it is important to take into account the social context of the participants in this study. The study was limited to the capital cities of Britain and Ghana: London and Accra respectively. It is probable that urban-dwelling Ghanaians experience the characteristics of modern industrial city life which include relatively less contact with kin, social anonymity, nuclear family system, considerable economic independence, exposure to the mass media and social and geographical mobility. These factors have been known to be the building blocks of individualist cultural systems (Hofstede, 2001; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). To the extent that social experience is increasingly oriented towards these factors, there is a considerable shift from collectivistic to individualist tendencies.

#### 4.2.5 *Summary*

The aim of comparing British and Ghanaian couples on self-construals has been to empirically establish the evidence that individualist and collectivist cultural tendencies prevail in the respective social systems. There is sufficient indication from the trend discovered in this data that collectivistic tendencies are characteristic of Ghanaians because, on interdependent self-construal, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than British couples. However, the unexpected higher scores on independent self-construal among Ghanaian couples probably due to the urban empirical boundaries of participants, points to the argument proposed by some authors (e.g. Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Adams & Markus, 2001) that the dynamism and globalising forces of societies are enough reason to go beyond individualism-collectivism assumptions about particular socio-cultural settings to actual measurement of cultural syndromes in cross-cultural research. .

### 4.3.0 Cultural setting and relationship beliefs

#### 4.3.1 Instrument

The relationship beliefs scale (Fletcher and Kininmonth, 1992) was administered as part of the omnibus questionnaire). This scale is composed of 54 items, categorised into 18 subscales<sup>23</sup> measuring various aspects of relationship beliefs (e.g. Communication, love, trust, independence etc). The items in this scale are scored on a six-point Likert scale, from 1 (do not hold this belief at all) to 6 (very strongly hold this belief). Factor analysis performed by Fletcher and Kiningmonth on the 18 aspects of relationship beliefs yielded 4 latent factors: *Intimacy*, *External Factors*, *Passion* and *Individuality*. This scale has been shown to possess good psychometric properties. Fletcher and Kininmonth's (1992) tests showed a test-retest reliability correlations (n = 52) ranging from .69 to .89, measured over a period of three weeks. Cronbach's alphas were adequate. In this present study, Cronbach's alphas were computed and compared with those obtained by Fletcher and Kininmonth. These are depicted in *table 4.6* below:

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<sup>23</sup> The various aspects measured by the 18 subscales and the resultant factor structure obtained by Fletcher and Kininmonth (1992) are shown in Appendix 2.

Table 4.6: Cronbach's alphas for the Relationship Beliefs Scale on the four factors.

Relationship Beliefs Factor	Cronbach's alphas			
	Britain	Ghana	Fletcher & Kininmonth (1992)	Equality of alphas ( <i>F</i> ) (Britain versus Ghana)
Intimacy	.86	.89	.87	.785 (NS)
Passion	.57	.69	.78	.720 (NS)
Ext. Factors	.76	.63	.74	.648 (NS)
Individuality	.52	.61	.51	.812 (NS)

NS = Non-significant ( $p > .05$ );  $df_1 = n_1 - 1 = 185 - 1 = 184$ ;  $df_2 = n_2 - 1 = 215 - 1 = 214$

Although alphas for some of the relationship beliefs factors were not high, there is comparative similarity between Britain and Ghana values, since the values obtained for the test of equality of reliability coefficients were non-significant ( $p > .05$ ).

#### 4.3.2 Results

A comparative analysis was performed between Ghana and Britain responses on the four factors. This was meant to directly test hypotheses 2a and 2b which predicted cultural-level differences in the relationship beliefs. Specifically, hypothesis 2a predicted Ghanaian couples to score significantly higher than British couples on the *external factors* relationship beliefs factor. Hypothesis 2b predicted British couples to score significantly higher than their Ghanaian counterparts on *intimacy*, *passion* and *individuality*. As shown in the descriptive statistics (table 4.7) below, Ghanaian couples scored higher than British couples on *Intimacy* [mean(Gh)=15.91; mean(Br)=13.93], *Passion* [mean(Gh)=13.84;



mean(Br)=11.9]. Standard deviations on these factors depict a similarity of dispersion in both contexts.

Further, as predicted by part of the same hypothesis, Ghanaian couples scored higher on External Factors than British couples [mean(Gh)=12.30; mean(Br)=9.71], however with slightly dissimilar dispersions<sup>24</sup> (SD(Gh)=4.02; SD(Br)=2.26]. Finally on the Individuality factor, again as hypothesised, British couples scored higher than Ghanaian couples [mean(Br)=13.03; mean(Gh)=11.89) also with slightly dissimilar standard deviations, as depicted in the table below.

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<sup>24</sup> Standard deviation on the External Factors was higher for Ghana scores particularly because of a higher standard deviation for Ghanaian wives (husbands=2.69; wives=4.98). Nonetheless it must be noted that on the whole, wives both British and Ghanaian have shown the bigger standard deviations of scores on almost all four factors, probably reminiscent of wide status differences among wives in terms of education level (a demographic variable not measured in this study).

Table 4.7: Means and standard deviations for spouse and nation on the four relationship beliefs factors.

Factor	Nation	Spouse	Mean
Passion	Britain	Husband	12.19 (2.19)
		Wife	11.63 (2.66)
		Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>11.77 (2.46)</b>
	Ghana	Husband	13.80 (2.74)
Wife	13.88 (2.89)		
Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>13.84 (2.81)</b>		
Intimacy	Britain	Husband	13.96 (1.75)
		Wife	13.90 (1.84)
		Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>13.93 (1.79)</b>
	Ghana	Husband	15.83 (1.71)
Wife	15.98 (1.70)		
Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>15.91 (1.70)</b>		
External factors	Britain	Husband	9.84 (2.28)
		Wife	9.60 (2.25)
		Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>9.71 (2.26)</b>
	Ghana	Husband	12.86 (2.69)
Wife	13.59 (4.98)		
Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>12.30 (4.02)</b>		
Individuality	Britain	Husband	12.77 (1.89)
		Wife	13.26 (2.40)
		Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>13.03 (2.18)</b>
	Ghana	Husband	11.59 (3.13)
Wife	12.17 (3.53)		
Wife <b>Total</b>	<b>11.89 (3.34)</b>		

N(Br.) = 185; N(Gh.) = 205.

Standard Deviation in parenthesis

In order to test for the statistical significance of these observed differences on all four factors, a multivariate factorial ANOVA procedure was pursued. Multivariate tests performed for nation and spouse on the for the four RB factors produced significant results for nation , Wilks's Lambda ( $\Lambda$ ) = 0.506,  $P < 0.001$ ) and not for spouse ( $\Lambda = .976$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Also, there was no significant interaction of spouse and nation ( $\Lambda = .992$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

To find out the particular relationship beliefs factors on which significant differences were observed, univariate analysis of variance was produced (in the same multivariate procedure), shown in *table 4.8a* below.

Table 4.8a: Multivariate factorial (2 x 2) ANOVA comparing nations and spouses on the four (latent) relationship factors.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
<b>BETWEEN</b> ( <i>groups</i> )					
<b>Factor A (nation)</b>					
Passion	360.28	1	360.28	51.11	.000
Intimacy	378.93	1	378.93	123.22	.000
External factor	1193.64	1	1193.64	109.21	.000
Individuality	124.30	1	124.30	15.29	.000
<b>Factor B (spouse)</b>					
Passion	5.47	5.47		.777	.379
Intimacy	.212	1	.212	.069	.793
External factor	5.64	1	5.64	.517	.473
Individuality	28.24	1	28.24	3.47	.063
<b>Factor A x B</b>					
Passion	9.94	1	0.9.94	1.14	.538
Intimacy	1.17	1	1.17	.38	.848
External factor	22.65	1	22.65	2.07	.151

Individuality	.191	1	.191	.023	.878
<b><i>WITHIN (Error)</i></b>					
Passion	2720.72	386	7.04		
Intimacy	1187.0	386	3.07		
External factor	4218.86	386	10.93		
Individuality	3137.32	386	8.12		

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There was significant main effect for *nation* as shown in *table 4.8a* above, on all four RB factors, ( $P < .001$ ). However, there was no significant main effect for *spouse* as well as the interaction of *nation* and *spouse*. This implies that the mean differences observed between British and Ghanaians on the all the four RB factors were significant; further, there was no significant difference between wives and husbands across the two settings; finally the significant differences between Ghanaians and British were not dependent on whether participants were wives or husbands.

*Table 4.8b* below shows an exploratory bivariate correlation between relationship beliefs and age for both British and Ghanaian couples. The rationale for this line of analysis was to explore any age-related trends in relationships beliefs among couples from both settings. It is interesting to observe that among British couples, there was negative correlation between age and all relationship beliefs factors except for *external factors*. For all these correlations between age and beliefs among British couples however, there was significance only for intimacy,  $r = -.202$ ,  $p = .000$ . This implies that the older British couples were, the lower they scored on *intimacy*, *passion* and *individuality* beliefs. Among Ghanaian couples however, there were non-significant positive correlations between age and all the relationship beliefs factors

as shown in *table 4.8b*. The implication of this trend among Ghanaian couple is that, scores on the various relationship beliefs factors were not influenced by couples' ages. Both young and old couples scored similarly on all four beliefs factors in the Ghanaian setting.

*Table 4.8b:* Pearson correlation of relationship beliefs and age among British and Ghanaian couples

Variable	Nation	1	2	3	4	5
1. Age	Britain	—	-.202**	-.074	.129	-.102
	<b>Ghana</b>		<b>.060</b>	<b>.013</b>	<b>.065</b>	.018
2. Intimacy	Britain		—	.624***	.352***	.599***
	<b>Ghana</b>			<b>.608***</b>	<b>.404***</b>	<b>.506***</b>
3. Passion	Britain			—	.456***	.418***
	<b>Ghana</b>				<b>.506***</b>	.610***
4. External factors	Britain				—	.274***
	<b>Ghana</b>					.495***
5. Individuality	Britain					—
	<b>Ghana</b>					

\*  $p < .05$  (1-tail)

\*\*  $p < .01$  (1-tail)

\*\*\*  $p < .001$  (1-tail)

Further, there were high positive correlations among all the relationship beliefs factors for both British and Ghanaian couples. What sense can be made of these trends in the light of theory and research is discussed in *section 4.3.3* below

### 4.3.3 Discussion

On *passion* and *intimacy*, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than did British couples. On *external factors* Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher, as expected, in line with traditional culture theory. Likewise on *Individuality*, British couples scored significantly higher than Ghanaian couples.

Hypotheses 2a and 2b in this project predicted that on the one hand, British couples would score significantly higher than their Ghana counterparts on relationship beliefs factors that reflect individualist patterns, specifically, *Intimacy*, *Passion* and *Individuality*; on the other hand, Ghanaian couples would score higher on the relationship beliefs factors that reflect collectivist patterns, specifically, *External Factors*. The findings of this study have only partially supported these hypotheses: in line with hypothesis 2a, British couples scored significantly higher than Ghanaian couples on *Individuality*; and Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than British couples on *External factors* in support of part of hypothesis. The other aspect of the hypothesis 2b that predicted higher scores for British couples on *Intimacy* and *Passion* factors was not supported, as Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than their British counterparts.

According to culture theory, in cultural settings where ‘collectivistic’ patterns are prevalent, personal heterosexual relationships are characterised less by emotional intensity and hedonistic tendencies. (cf. Schwartz, 1994; Triandis, 1995; Markus &

Kitayama, 1991). The cross-cultural study of emotion for example implies that in cultural settings characterised by interdependent or collectivist tendencies, the public expression of emotion is minimal, compared to individualist settings where the construction of self is independent (Matsumoto, 2001; Yelsma & Athapily, 1988). Given these theoretical and empirical frames of cultural patterns, it is counter-intuitive to observe that married couples from Ghanaian settings scored significantly higher on personal relationship beliefs factors of *passion* and *intimacy*. One would have expected that couples from England would score higher on these factors. In view of the significant cross-national differences observed on the 4 relationship beliefs factors, a possible explanation is that people responded to these items invariably in the same way and any differences could be attributed to chance. However, a consideration that probably rules out this explanation is the statistical characteristics of the scores. For example, an examination of the standard deviations and homogeneity of variance of scores obtained on the Relationship Beliefs Scale show that similar standard deviations were obtained for all the four factors across the two cultural settings. What this implies from a statistical perspective is that participants' responses were not dissimilarly spread and therefore reflect a smooth pattern of response within and across settings. In other words, couples responded consistently to reflect their real stable beliefs. This fulfils an important conditional requirement of parametric tests, a requirement that reduces the risk of committing Type I Error.



Inferentially, the homogeneity tests<sup>25</sup> confirm the descriptive indicators ( $P > .05$ ), implying similarity of variance between settings on the factors. Finally, in terms of reliability, as exhibited in *table 4.6*, Cronbach's alphas obtained show quite high reliabilities for the RB scale, compared with those originally obtained by Fletcher and Kininmonth (1992). Also the equality of reliability coefficient between the two settings showed no significant differences between the coefficients, which means there is no significant difference in reliability on the four relationship beliefs factors between Ghanaian and British couples.

#### *4.3.4 Implications for cultural construction of marital relationship*

*External factors and Individuality.* The observation of significant differences on the two factors (*external factors* and *individuality*) has implication for the cultural construction of marital relationship. If Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher on external factors than did British couples, it is a pointer to the prevalence of relational patterns in ontological understanding. People understand marital relationship experience as necessarily linked to forces outside it, such as children, finances, kin, extended family and norms. In addition to scoring significantly higher on external factors, Ghanaian participants scored significantly lower on the individuality factor, in line with the individualism-collectivism dimension in

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<sup>25</sup> In homogeneity tests, non-significance ( $p > .05$ ) is the desired outcome, and implies that the groups being compared have similar variance, i.e. variance between groups is theoretically equal.

culture theory. Although Ghanaians scored significantly higher on independent self-construal, it can be argued that independent self-construal and *individuality* relationship belief mirror slightly different aspects of the self in relation to the social world. For example, *individuality* is oriented towards romantic personal relationship target (Fletcher and Kininmonth, 1992) whereas independent self-construal is not relationship target-specific. A range of relationships are implied in self-construals, such as religious authority, academic authority, unspecified in-group members and the social world at large. (cf. Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Singelis, 1994). Thus, while independent self-construal is a direct cultural variable, *individuality* is a relationship belief in which elements of culture are implicated.

Another important trend is the non-significance observed for spouse. Thus there was no significant difference between couples from the same cultural setting. Most probably, this points to ‘homogeneity’ of cultural patterns with regard to relationship beliefs. The word homogeneity is used advisedly here in the more general sense of modal trends observable at the etic level of analysis, and not to give a sense of the kind of assumed etic homogeneity implied in some earlier writings of pioneering cultural authors such as Hofstede (1980) and Kroeber’s (1917) essay “The Superorganic”. A non-significant main effect for spouse on all four relationship beliefs factors, in conjunction with a non-significant interaction effect of *nation* and *spouse* can only point to a different construction of personal relationship ideology that can be termed adjectivally as ‘cultural’ (Appadurai, 1996).

*Intimacy and Passion.* An observation of significantly higher scores on these factors among Ghanaian couples is a pointer to a trend in relationship beliefs which is counterintuitive in the frame of culture theories that claim that in Euro-American settings personal relationships are based on atomistic tendencies that engender a greater extent of self expression, both at the social and emotional levels as against marriage in non-western systems where marital relationships are maintained by obligatory commitment instead of commitment based on emotional intimacy and relationship vitality (Coppinger & Rosenblatt, 1968; Yelsma & Athapily, 1988). In this sense, couples from a ‘collectivist’ setting should score lower on such factors as intimacy and passion.

A beneficial question that might bring further light to bear on the trends reported above is, to what extent does such trends – higher scores on intimacy and passion among Ghanaian couples – be a function of age? In other words, is this trend reminiscent of younger married couples whose relationship beliefs may have changed in pattern from those of earlier generations in which the expression of romantic emotion and intense intimacy in marriage for example are not primary? A statistical indicator of this trend would be a linear correlation between age of participants and relationships beliefs. If there is a negative correlation between age and the relationship beliefs of intimacy and passion, then a strong indication exists that the higher scores on intimacy and passion among Ghana couples is related to younger couples. That would mean that the trend exists only among couples of a

particular age range. However as shown in the correlational analysis performed for age and relationship beliefs, there was no significant correlation between relationship beliefs and age among Ghanaian couples. Instead, among British couples there was a significant negative correlation between age and intimacy, with non-significant negative correlations between age and passion and individuality. In effect, the indication is that among British couples, the older they were, the weaker their belief in relevance of relationship *intimacy*, *passion* and *individuality* and the stronger their belief in the relevance of *external factors* they hold.

Perhaps intimacy and passion are differently constructed and experienced by couples in the respective contexts. What is understood and experienced as intimacy and passion in Ghanaian marriages might be qualitatively different from that in British marriages. Probably among British couples, *intimacy* and *passion* mean those direct affective engagements such as frequent kissing and holding of hands in public places, spending most of the time alone in enclosed flats and going on holidays, whereas among Ghana couples, intimacy might mean attending to the duties of the home and family to the pleasure of their spouse, such as preparing food on time, keeping a clean home, taking care of the children, providing for the upkeep of the home, thereby fulfilling the normative obligations and incurring the admiration and confirmation of their spouse.

#### 4.3.5 *Summary*

This chapter has focussed on investigating comparative differences in relationship beliefs (RB) as psychological indicators that demonstrate the ways in which marital relationship is relatively constructed in British and Ghanaian systems. As predicted by hypotheses 2a and 2b, significant indications have been found in consonance with individualism-collectivism explanations of cultural difference – Ghanaian couples scored higher than British couples on *External Factors* RB, while British couples scored significantly higher than Ghanaian couples on the RB factor of *Individuality*. Nevertheless, contrary to routine expectation, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than their British counterparts on the RB factors of *Intimacy* and *Passion*. Of course, the traditional epistemological shortcoming of quantitative paradigms is the lack of deeper explanatory insight into particular trends observed in statistical analysis. A complimentary investigation by way of a qualitative approach usually carries far-reaching benefits (Miller, 1996). In effect, a qualitative study to investigate the ways in which marital intimacy and closeness, and marital support, among other things, are constructed and experienced by couples in Ghanaian and British settings carries the promise of illuminating the trends observed in the quantitative study reported above. This constitutes in part, the focus of chapter 5 of this thesis.

#### 4.4.0 Measuring Marriage Role Expectations

This section focuses on shedding light on an aspect of the cultural construction of marital experience – the cultural grounding of marriage role expectations. The main aim of this line of investigation was to perform a direct comparison of married couples from British and Ghanaian cultural contexts on their marriage role expectations. To map out marriage role attitudes of couples, scores on the Marriage Roles Expectation Inventory (MREI) of Dunn & DeBonis (1979) and the marriage scenarios instrument developed in the project were considered.

##### 4.4.1 Instrument

The Marriage Roles Expectation Inventory (MREI) of Dunn and DeBonis (1979) was part of the omnibus questionnaire. The scale comes in two versions: wife version and husband version. This is because the wording of each item necessarily had to be specific for wife and husband. For example, item wordings for wife and husband versions are as follows:

##### Item 9 for husband version

*It will be more important for my wife to be a good cook and housekeeper than for her to be an attractive, interesting companion.*

##### Item 9 for wife version

*It will be more important for me to be a good cook and housekeeper than for me to be an attractive, interesting companion.*

A study by Jacobs and Marlar (1992) showed that the MREI possesses very high internal consistency. The total scale scores showed the following reliabilities: alpha ( $\alpha$ ) = .95, split-half = .87, corrected split-half = .93. In this present study, Cronbach's alphas for the British and Ghanaian samples were .83 and .79 respectively. The F test for the equality of coefficients (van de Vijver & Leung, 2001) was computed for the British and Ghanaian samples. The test showed non-significance for difference in coefficients,  $F=.809$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $df_1=184$ ;  $df_2=213$ <sup>26</sup>. This implies that the alpha coefficients for the British and Ghanaian samples were not significantly different.

#### 4.4.2 Scoring

Scoring of each of the 50 items is on a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored by: strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, undecided = 2, disagree = 1, strongly disagree = 0 for negative<sup>27</sup> (traditional) statements; whereas a reverse scoring is done for positive (egalitarian) statements. Thus, the higher a participant's aggregate score, the more egalitarian their marriage role expectation; conversely, the lower their aggregate score, the more traditional their marriage role expectation. The minimum score obtainable across the 50 items is 0 while the maximum score is

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<sup>26</sup>  $df_1=n_1-1=185-1=184$ ;  $df_2=n_2-1=214-1=213$

<sup>27</sup>A negative statement is so called, not because it is inherently unacceptable or irrational, but because it depicts a traditional role. An example of a negative statement is: "In my marriage, I expect that staying at home with the children will be my duty rather than my husband's" (wife version). Further, a positive statement (depicting egalitarian role) is "that managing and planning for spending money will be a joint proposition between my wife and me" (husband version).

200. A score of zero (0) implies an absolutely traditional role expectation while a score of 200 also implies an absolutely egalitarian role expectation.

#### *The marriage scenarios instrument*

Apart from the MREI, two sets of marriage scenarios were generated and piloted for use as a supplementary measure of marriage roles. Marriage role expectation, as discussed in chapter two, is a cognitive-social psychological variable in which elements of culture are implicated. Due to the implicit (as well as explicit) and automatic shaping nature of cultural forces (Adams & Markus, 2001), their tendencies are not (completely) verbally accessible at cognitive levels. As noted by Fiske (2002: 81- 82), “Most of the intangible constituents of culture generally are not accessible to consciousness, reflection, or explicit linguistic expression. People simply are not aware of these aspects of their culture and cannot report them, even in terms of their own behaviours and preferences” The scenarios were designed to measure such relatively less conscious tendencies (Bond, 2002). As a first step towards generating the scenarios for tapping such unspoken, unwritten normative role expectations, samples of adolescent undergraduate students from Brunel University (N=45) and University of Ghana (N=140) served as participants in a pilot study. The rationale behind the use of such predominantly non-married samples in the development of an instrument to be used for married samples is that, such individuals theoretically represent active participants in the cultural *lifeways* of their settings. As cultural participants, these individuals grew in family contexts where their marriage role attitudes were formed (Hofstede, 2001) and therefore serve as sources of popular discourse and assumptions about



relationships, particularly marriage. In effect, as cultural constructions, individuals within these student samples are 'social commentators' whose comments might reflect the marital realities of their cultural contexts.

I generated these scenarios in accordance with definitions of egalitarian and traditional marriages (cf. Dunn, 1960), and pre-piloted and discussed them with a sample of 17 mature students (married individuals) in an access class at Thames Valley University. The clarity and depiction of the items were slightly improved from that stage to the actual pilot stage. The trend of ratings made on the scenarios in the actual pilot (not reported here) were very similar to those made in this omnibus study.

For each scenario, participants were asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 7 (1=very dissatisfied; 7=very satisfied), how satisfied they think each member of the marriage is with their married life. Thus, separate ratings were made for husband and wife on each scenario. Below are the two sets of scenarios, egalitarian and traditional:

Egalitarian

- 1. Mary and Mark are married. They both work full-time and also share the household chores.*
- 2. Mark and Mary are married. Mark works full-time but Mary works only part-time. Mary also does majority of the household chores.*

### Traditional

3. *Mark and Mary are married. Mark works full-time while Mary does not work at all, but does all the household chores.*
  
4. *Mark and Mary are married. They both work full-time and Mary does all the household chores as well.*

Each of the four scenarios was followed by the following questions asking participants to rate the level of satisfaction for husband (*Mark*) and wife (*Mary*) on the rating scale given (1 to 7):

*How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life?\_\_\_\_\_*

*How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life?\_\_\_\_\_*

#### 4.4.3. Results

The descriptive statistics performed in this analysis shows in *table 4.9* below that on the MREI, British couples scored higher (mean=154.79) than Ghanaian couples (mean=129.83). Standard deviations in the two groups showed similarity [SD (Britain) = 20.88; SD (Ghana) = 19.14], implying similarity of variance between (and within) groups. A higher mean score on the MREI among British couples indicates a more egalitarian marriage role expectation in the British setting than the Ghanaian setting.

*Marriage role scenarios*

Scores on the marriage scenarios are also presented in *table 4.9* below. In support of theoretical expectation, British couples gave higher marital satisfaction (MS) ratings for egalitarian marriage scenarios than did Ghanaian couples. Thus, mean (Br)= 12.11; mean (Gh)= 10.72. The group standard deviations were similar [(SD(Britain)= 2.19, SD(Ghana)= 2.23]. However, Ghanaian couples rated higher satisfaction for traditional marriage scenarios [mean (Gh)= 9.24] than British couples[mean (Br)= 8.08,]. However, unlike ratings for the egalitarian scenarios, group SD for traditional marriage scenarios differed, [SD(Br)=1.66, SD(Gh)=2.82].

*Table 4.9:* Means and standard deviations of marriage roles scores for British and Ghanaian couples.

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Nation</b>	<b>Spouse</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Marriage roles expectation (MREI)	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	151.53 (21.89)
		Wife	157.75 (19.56)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>154.79 (20.88)</b>
	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	130.41 (19.30)
		Wife	129.25 (19.04)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>129.83 (19.14)</b>
MS rating for egalitarian role (Scenario)	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	11.98 (2.23)
		Wife	12.23 (2.13)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>12.11 (2.19)</b>
	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	10.68 (2.49)
		Wife	10.77 (1.98)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>10.72 (2.23)</b>
MS rating for traditional role (Scenario)	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	8.18 (2.95)
		Wife	7.98 (2.69)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>8.08 (2.82)</b>
	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	9.06 (1.55)
		Wife	9.41 (1.74)

<b>Total</b>	<b>9.24 (1.66)</b>
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N (Britain) = 183; N (Ghana) = 209; Standard Deviation in parenthesis

The Levene's Test of equality of error variances<sup>28</sup> showed that Ghanaian and British couples' ratings on the traditional marriages had unequal error variances,  $p < .001$ . This implies that the dispersion of scores on the traditional scenarios was much greater for the Ghanaian sample, a sign that some individual married people had varying degrees of endorsement for traditional role arrangements. However, there was equality of variances for the egalitarian scenarios ( $p > .05$ ).

To test for significant differences between British and Ghanaian couples on the MREI as well as MS ratings for the egalitarian and traditional marriage scenarios, a comparative analysis was carried out by way of a factorial MANOVA. This is a 2 x 2 between-subjects design that compared scores between British and Ghanaian settings, as well as between spouses across the two settings. A summary of this analysis is shown in *table 4.10* below.

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<sup>28</sup> This is a test of the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups (Howitt & Cramer, 2001). This implies that an important condition of Anova is violated. However, there was equality of error variances for MREI scores and ratings for egalitarian scenarios ( $p > .05$ ).

Table 4.10: Multivariate (2 x 2 factorial) ANOVA comparing nations and spouses on the MREI and the marriage form scenarios.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
<b><i>BETWEEN</i> (groups)</b>					
<b>Factor A (nation)</b>					
MREI	59977.08	1	59977.086	151.392	.000
MS for egalitarian role	186.45	1	186.45	37.941	.000
MS for traditional role	130.429	1	130.429	23.512	.000
<b>Factor B (spouse)</b>					
MREI	624.145	1	624.145	1.57	.210
MS for egalitarian role	2.763	1	2.763	0.562	.454
MS for traditional role	0.527	1	0.527	0.095	.758
<b>Factor A x B</b>					
MREI	1327.062	1	1327.062	3.35	.068
MS for egalitarian role	0.647	1	0.647	0.132	.717
MS for traditional role	7.048	1	7.048	1.270	.260
<b><i>WITHIN</i> (Error)</b>					
MREI	153714.569	388	396.172		
MS for egalitarian role	1906.723	388	4.914		
MS for traditional role	2152.374	388	5.547		

There a was significant main effect for *nation* on all three variables – MREI, MS ratings for egalitarian and traditional scenarios. Thus on the MREI, British couples scored significantly higher than Ghana couples,  $p < .001$ . This implies that British couples held a significantly more egalitarian marriage role expectation than Ghanaian couples. On the MS ratings for egalitarian marriage scenarios, in line with my prediction, British couples scored significantly higher than Ghanaian couples,  $p < .001$ . A corroborative result was observed for MS ratings for

traditional marriage scenarios – Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than British couples,  $p < .001$ . Thus, *hypothesis 3* which predicted a more egalitarian marriage role expectation among British couples and a more traditional role expectation among Ghanaian couples is supported.

Further, there was no significant main effect for *spouse* on all three variables ( $p > .05$ ). This means that ignoring *nation*, husbands and wives do not differ significantly on the MREI as well as MS ratings for egalitarian and traditional scenarios. Also no significant interaction of nation and spouse was observed, implying that the significant differences observed between British and Ghanaian couples on the MREI and marriage scenarios does not depend on whether a couple member is a husband or wife.

#### *Marriage roles and age*

Another line of analysis pursued was bivariate correlations of the three marriage roles variables with the age of participants. The purpose for this line of analysis was to explore the possibility that marriage people's marital role expectation is associated with age. If, for example, results show that the older a person is, the more traditional their marriage role expectation is, such a trend is an indication of cohort effects on the construction and change of marriage role expectation.

Results of this correlational analysis are represented in *table 4.11* below

*Table 4.11:* \_Pearson correlation between MREI scores, MS ratings for marriage scenarios and Age.

Variable	Nation	1	2	3	4
1. Age	Britain	—	-.378***	-.145*	-.003
	<b>Ghana</b>		<b>-.103</b>	<b>.001</b>	<b>.061</b>
2. MREI	Britain		—	.392***	-.025
	<b>Ghana</b>			<b>.011</b>	<b>-.138*</b>
3. Egalitarian role	Britain			—	.465***
	<b>Ghana</b>				<b>.266***</b>
4. Traditional role	Britain				—
	<b>Ghana</b>				

\*  $p < .05$  level (1-tail)

*MS = Marital Satisfaction*

\*\*  $p < .01$  level (1-tail)

*N = 400*

\*\*\*  $p < .001$

For British couples, there was a significant negative correlation between age and MREI scores,  $r(185) = -.378$ ,  $p = .000$ . Since a higher score on the MREI indicates egalitarian role expectation, such a negative correlation implies that among British couples, the older a married individual was, the less egalitarian their role expectation was. However, for Ghanaian couples, there was a non-significant negative correlation between age and MREI scores [ $r(214) = -.103$ , NS<sup>29</sup>]. As expected among British couples, there was a significant negative correlation between age and egalitarian roles,  $r(183) = -.145$ ,  $p < .05$ . This again means that among British couples the older an individual married person was, the less egalitarian their marriage role expectation was. The trend was different for Ghanaian couples on this variable combination – there was a non-significant positive correlation between age and the egalitarian scenario rating,  $r(210) = .001$ , NS.

<sup>29</sup> This negative correlation was nearly significant at the .05 alpha level, since  $p = .066$ .

There was also a significant positive correlation (for British couples) between MREI scores and egalitarian scenarios,  $r(183)=.392$ , as expected. For Ghanaian couples, the positive correlation between these two variables was not significant [ $r(209)=.011$ , NS]. Both British and Ghanaian couples showed a negative correlation for MRE and traditional scenarios, although there was significance for only Ghanaian couples with  $r(209)=-.138$ ,  $P<.05$ . The most unexpected observation in this correlation matrix is the highly significant correlation between the two scenarios, egalitarian and traditional, as depicted in the table. In conclusion, there was a relationship between marriage role expectation and age in both settings.

#### ***4.4.4 Discussion***

In consonance with theoretical expectation, British couples scored significantly higher than Ghanaian couples on the MREI. This scale is constructed in such a way that higher scores imply egalitarian marriage role expectation while lower scores imply traditional expectations. Thus *hypothesis 3* in this project which predicted a more traditional role expectation among Ghanaian couples gains support with regard to the scores on the MREI. It is appropriate to juxtapose such trend to the accounts offered by some authors on African marriages.

#### *Egalitarian versus traditional constructions*

Besides the empirical evidence (discussed in chapter 2) that shows that marriage role expectations keep changing with time, such change is gradual. This explains why despite the influences of education, urbanization and social change, marriage



role expectation in African societies is still considerably traditional, in comparison to the British system. Such a difference is a case for the conclusion that on the one hand, in Ghanaian tradition, the homemaker-breadwinner relationship situation is characteristic of the construction of marriage; on the other hand, in the British context, marital experience is predicated on egalitarian role expectations. Inglehart and Baker (2000) have noted that the traditional values of a society (as well as the cultural patterns engendered by such values) possess inertia by which they linger on despite the forces of modernization. This implies that in line with the frame of egalitarian and traditional marriage forms described by Dunn (1960), the construction of marriage roles in the Ghanaian context is more traditional in comparison with the British context. In Dunn's (1960) descriptions, marriage roles have some four dimensions relating to household income, domestic chores, childcare and household decision making. Some authors have vividly captured these dimensions of role expectation from anthropological, sociological and philosophical points of view. For instance Gyekye (1996) has offered an account of marriage in the Ghanaian context which reflects traditional constructions. In turn, I discuss the dimensions of role expectation below.

*Income.*

According to Gyekye's (1996) account, a man in the Ghanaian context is encouraged by his extended relatives, friends and such close persons to marry because marriage is associated with responsibilities that elevate him to a respectable status in society. In order to fulfill his responsibilities as a husband, the man in this situation must provide for the material welfare of his wife and

children. In traditional settings, the young man is encouraged to save his money, which he earns normally through farming (in non-urban societies where the basic occupation is farming).

### **Decision making**

With such responsibility for material upkeep of the home, comes the authority to make decisions, and it is common in such traditional societies that the married man is looked upon to play decision-making roles such as settling disputes among younger members of the lineage group and in giving advise in situations of dilemma and ambiguity. Thus, it follows as a matter of logical extension that in the marital home, it is the husband who makes the major day-to-day decisions for the family. Thus, the wife, though she may influence decisions, does not stand in the primary position of initiating them. Sometimes, it is a matter of social ridicule if it is known that a man follows the decision of her wife instead of making one himself on important issues (Gyekye, 1996).

### **Children**

In the typical traditional expectation, Gyekye (1996) has noted that the ultimate purpose of marriage is procreation. Marriage is primarily expected to be for the production of children who will continue with the heritage and name of the family. Such great importance placed on children in Ghanaian marriages leads to a situation where it is calamitous for the wife who fails to bear children for her husband. She faces humiliation, ridicule and sometimes, abuse. This high premium put on the production of children in African marriages is represented in several

ways, including prayers, child names<sup>30</sup> and polygamous pursuits by men. In view of this priority for procreation in marriage, the role of the woman is basically defined by her absolute involvement with childcare. In effect, in African marriages, care of the children is primarily set aside for the man. While the man's role is to provide the material resources for the children's upkeep as well as serving as the authority figure of the home from whom most major decisions derive, the woman is expected to cater for the day to day welfare of the children in terms of bathing, washing, feeding and general minding.

#### *Role expectation and change*

Having established that the construction of marital experience in the Ghanaian context is characterized more by traditional role expectation, whereas in the British context, egalitarian expectation is more prevalent, the next point of interest is about the dynamic nature of attitudes. As indicated by the correlational analysis, there is a relationship between age and role expectation. The older married couples were, the more traditional their role expectation. Further, the younger they were the more egalitarian their role expectation was.

#### Marriage scenarios

The marriage scenarios instrument was used as a complementary measure of marriage role attitudes. The instrument is an indirect measure of attitudes to marriage roles in the sense that it simply asked participants to rate satisfaction

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<sup>30</sup> For example, among the Ewe of Ghana, child names that are reminiscent of the great importance placed on the production of children are: Elikem (means "s/he has fortified me"); Dzidzienyo (also means "Procreation is good" (cf. Gyekye, 1996 for more accounts of such child names of African origin).

levels of the members of the marriage scenarios presented, which depicted egalitarian and tradition situations. The rationale behind the use of such an indirect measure was to tap the unspoken assumptions that usually are not linguistically expressed, as cultural syndromes are not always verbally represented at cognitive levels (Bond, 2002; Fiske, 2002).

In support of the results obtained from couples' scores on the MREI and in confirmation of *hypothesis 3*, Ghanaian couples rated significantly higher satisfaction levels for traditional marriages than did British couples on the one hand; on the other hand, British couples rated significantly higher satisfaction levels for egalitarian marriages than did Ghanaian couples.

#### 4.4.5 *Summary*

This section has been devoted to demonstrating the way in which marital experience is culturally constructed and acted in British and Ghanaian settings by focusing on one social-cognitive aspect of marital experience – marriage role expectation. The section has offered a comparative evidence on the two forms of marriage roles - egalitarian and traditional – specifically showing that role expectations differ significantly between the two settings. Traditional marriage role expectation is more prevalent among Ghanaian couples than their British counterpart, among whom also egalitarian role expectation is more prominent. This relative prominence of egalitarian and traditional role attitudes in the two settings however is dependent on age: the older married people were the more egalitarian their marriage role attitudes and *vice versa*. The next stage of the analysis

of marriage roles is in predicting marital satisfaction. Particularly, marriage role expectation and its mediating role between material support and marital satisfaction was established, as presented later in part II of this chapter.

#### **4.5.0 Self-disclosure among British and Ghanaian couples**

As discussed in chapter 2, self-disclosure (SD) as a process of interaction between persons (Cozby, 1973) is an important determinant of the success and quality of personal relationships. By logical extension, SD must be more important in the development and sustenance of marriage. Such importance of disclosure may vary from one cultural system to the other. Nonetheless, the empirical evidence from cross-cultural research is still not fully established (Goodwin, Nizharadze, Luu, & Emelyanova 1999) and therefore requires more investigation. This section is therefore given to exploring any comparative differences in marital SD in British and Ghanaian marriages. To this end, self disclosure was measured in British and Ghanaian couples in the omnibus study, as reported in the sections that follow.

##### *4.5.1 Instrument*

The items that constitute the SD instrument in the omnibus questionnaire were developed from Jourard and Lasakow's (1959) SD questionnaire with some modification. Some items were completely excluded while others were rephrased. The reasons for these changes are:

1. Many of the items were out-dated. For example, items such as “my views on communism”, “my views on the question of racial integration, in schools, transportation, etc.” were excluded. These topics (i.e. communism, racial integration) for self-disclosure were of their greatest social importance during the periods of the cold war (between the eastern and western blocs) and civil rights movements especially in America (from the 1950s to the 1970s).
2. Since the questionnaire was originally meant for use with people in general (e.g. strangers, acquaintances) and not particularly for marital self-disclosure, many of the items were irrelevant for couples. Examples of such items are “my likes and dislikes in music”, “my favorite reading matter”, “my present physical measurements”. The specific reason for excluding these items is that, once people are living together as married couples (and not strangers or acquaintances), such kinds of information about a spouse are not difficult to know by mere observation and daily experience.

The final version contained 51 items measuring self-disclosure under the subsections of attitudes and opinions (6 items), money earnings and spending (9 items), the future (4 items), social life and work (8 items), personality (7 items), Health (4 items), sexual life (6 items) and family life (7 items). For each self-disclosure item, participants were instructed to rate the extent of disclosure on the scale provided for two targets, in terms of:

*Information from me to my spouse*

*Information from my spouse to me*

In the final version of the scale<sup>31</sup> these response targets contain the words *wife* or *husband* in place of *spouse* for the two targets shown above respectively for wife and husband versions of the omnibus questionnaire. The purpose for this dual-target rating was to yield comparative data to enable the investigation of the reciprocity of disclosure between spouses at the dyadic level. Analysis towards the establishment of the reciprocity of disclosure was possible in two ways: 1) by correlating each participant's reported scores on 'self-disclosure to spouse' and 'self-disclosure from spouse'; 2) by dyadic correlation of scores on 'self-disclosure to spouse' as well as 'self-disclosure from spouse'. Either way would yield the same indication of reciprocity. Cronbach's alpha was computed for the British and Ghanaian samples, and the F test for equality of alphas performs. This is presented in table 4.12 below:

*Table 4.12: Cronbach's alphas for the Self-disclosure scale.*

Self-disclosure	Cronbach's alphas		
	Britain	Ghana	Equality of alphas ( <i>F</i> ) (Britain versus Ghana)
Self-disclosure to spouse	.75	.82	.720 (NS)
Self-disclosure from spouse	.76	.79	.875 (NS)

nificant ( $p > .05$ );  $df_1 = n_1 - 1 = 185 - 1 = 184$ ;  $df_2 = n_2 - 1 = 215 - 1 = 214$

<sup>31</sup> See Appendices 1a and 1b for the final versions for wife and husband.

Cronbach's alphas for the British and Ghanaian samples on 'disclosure to spouse' were .75 and .82 respectively. The F test for the equality of coefficients was showed non-significance for difference in coefficients,  $F=.720$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $df_1=184$ ;  $df_2=214$ <sup>32</sup>. Further for 'disclosure from spouse, alphas were .76 and .79 respectively for the Britain and Ghana samples,  $F=.875$ ,  $p>.05$ . Thus, the alpha coefficients for the Britain and Ghana samples were not significantly different on both directions of disclosure between spouses.

#### 4.5.2 Scoring

The scoring technique used by Jourard and Lasakow (1959) was adopted in this study. According to this technique, the following system was presented beneath each disclosure item:

- 0 -- I have told my spouse nothing about this aspect of me.
- 1 -- I have talked in general terms about this aspect. My spouse has only a general idea about this aspect of me.
- 2 -- I have talked in full and complete detail about this aspect to my spouse. S/he knows me fully in this respect, and could describe me accurately.
- X -- I have lied or misrepresented myself to my spouse so that s/he has a false picture of me.

The magnitude of SD is determined by aggregating scores on all items under each section to obtain sectional scores and then across sections to obtain an overall score for SD. The minimum obtainable score is zero (0) while the maximum score is 102 (on each response direction). For the response option denoted by X, a

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<sup>32</sup>  $df_1=n_1-1=185-1=184$ ;  $df_2=n_2-1=215-1=214$



score of zero (0) was offered. Nevertheless, almost all participants avoided choosing this particular option.

### 4.5.3 Results

#### 4.5.3.1 Cultural-level analysis

From *table 4.12* below, it can be seen that British couples scored higher in both directions of self-disclosure: disclosure to spouse [mean(Br.)=80.69; mean (Gh.)=72.72], and disclosure from spouse [mean (Br.)=80.51; mean (Gh.)=73.77]. This implies that British couples disclosed more than Ghanaian couples in both directions, as greater scores on the SD scale denote higher levels of disclosure. With regards to the spread of scores, there is similarity within groups, that is, the standard deviations of Ghana scores are similar for both husbands and wives and on each direction of disclosure (to or from spouse). The same trend applies to the Britain scores, and it can be seen from a comparative point of view that standard deviations were slightly higher for Ghana scores than Britain scores.

*Table 4.12:* Means and standard deviations of Self-disclosure scores of British and Ghanaian couples.

Variable	Nation	Spouse	Mean
Disclosure to spouse	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	80.45 (16.39)
		Wife	80.01 (17.35)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>80.69 (16.88)</b>
	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	70.16 (18.83)
		Wife	75.14 (21.78)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>72.72 (20.50)</b>
Disclosure from spouse	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	81.32 (17.89)
		Wife	79.78 (17.54)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>80.51 (17.67)</b>
	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	73.07 (18.77)

	Wife	74.44 (19.31)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>73.77 (19.01)</b>

N (Britain) = 184; N (Ghana) = 208; Standard Deviation in parenthesis;

To test for the significance of the observed mean differences between British and Ghanaian couples, a factorial MANOVA was performed. The multivariate tests show significance for nation ( $\Lambda = 0.956, p = 0.000$ ) and not spouse. The test of between-subjects effects reported in the summary *table 13* below depicts this trend in detail.

*Table 4.13:* Multivariate (2 x 2 factorial) ANOVA comparing nations and spouses on self-disclosure.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
<b><i>BETWEEN (groups)</i></b>					
<b>Factor A (nation)</b>					
Disclosure to spouse	6361.584	1	6361.584	17.911	.000
Disclosure from spouse	4503.560	1	4503.560	13.254	.000
<b>Factor B (spouse)</b>					
Disclosure to spouse	305.931	1	305.931	.861	.354
Disclosure from spouse	.691	1	.691	.002	.964
<b>Factor A x B</b>					
Disclosure to spouse	1003.964	1	1003.964	2.827	.094
Disclosure from spouse	206.042	1	206.042	.606	.437
<b><i>WITHIN (Error)</i></b>					
Disclosure to spouse	137810.869	388	355.183		
Disclosure from spouse	131842.312	388	339.800		

For Nation, there was a significant main effect ( $F = 17.91, p < .001$ ). However, no significant main effect was found for spouse and the interaction of nation and spouse. Thus, it is established from this analysis that in terms of marital self-disclosure, British couples disclosed significantly more than Ghanaian couples. However, there were no significant differences between wives and husbands from the same setting on self-disclosure. Also the non-significant interaction effect between nation and spouse implies that the self-disclosure levels of wives and husbands does not depend on their membership of British or Ghanaian settings. In respect of this trend, hypothesis 5a which predicted higher levels of self-disclosure among Ghanaian couples is supported.

#### 4.5.3.2 Correlational analyses

A further analytic procedure that was followed was the correlation of self-reported disclosure levels with age of participants as well as how long participants had been married. Results of this correlation analysis are exhibited in *table 4.14a* below.

*Table 4.14a:* Pearson correlation of Self-disclosure, age and time length of marriage for British and Ghanaian couples.

Variable	Nation	1	2	3	4
1. Age	Britain	—	-.164*	-.129*	.809***
	<b>Ghana</b>		<b>-.142*</b>	<b>-.091</b>	<b>.741***</b>
2. SD to spouse	Britain		—	.941***	-.306***
	<b>Ghana</b>			<b>.857***</b>	<b>-.238***</b>
3. SD from spouse	Britain			—	-.263***
	<b>Ghana</b>				<b>-.218**</b>
4. Length of marriage	Britain				—

## *Ghana*

\*  $p < .05$  level (1-tail)

*SD = Self-Disclosure;*

\*\*  $p < .01$  level (1-tail)

\*\*\*  $p < .001$  (1-tail)

As is shown in *table 4.14a* above, in both the Britain and Ghana samples, there was a significant negative correlation between marital self-disclosure in both directions and length of marriage,  $p < .001$ . In almost all of these bivariate correlations, such a strong correlation indicates that the longer a couple is married, the lower the levels of dyadic self-disclosure. A similar trend appears for the relationship between age of participant and levels of self-disclosure in both directions – there was a significant negative correlation between age and self-disclosure to and from spouse for British couples, ( $p < .05$ ) and for Ghanaian couples, the significance was only for self-disclosure to spouse,  $p < .05$ . Further, there is sufficient evidence of reciprocity of disclosure as there was a significant positive correlation between self-disclosure to and from spouse, and this trend was observed for both British and Ghanaian couples [Britain -  $r(83) = .941$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Ghana -  $r(90) = .857$ ,  $p < .001$ ]. However this reciprocity of disclosure was computed solely on the basis of what each couple member reported as disclosure to and from their spouse. An alternative analytic procedure was to correlate self-reported disclosure between spouses directly. This means correlating for example, wife's reported self-disclosure to husband and husband's reported self-disclosure to wife; or similarly, correlating wife's reported self-disclosure from husband and husband's reported self-disclosure from wife. Results of these correlations are displayed in the matrix (*table 4.14b*) below:

Table 4.14b: Pearson correlation of Self-disclosure at dyadic level for British and Ghanaian couples

Variable	Nation	1	2	3	4
1. Husband's SD to wife	Britain	—	.420***	.932***	.375***
	<b>Ghana</b>		<b>.600***</b>	<b>.876***</b>	<b>.212***</b>
2. Wife's SD to husband	Britain		—	.534***	.943***
	<b>Ghana</b>			<b>.573***</b>	<b>.368***</b>
3. Husband's SD from wife	Britain			—	.473***
	<b>Ghana</b>				<b>.255*</b>
4. Wife's SD from husband	Britain				—
	<b>Ghana</b>				

\*  $p < .05$  level (1-tail)

SD = Self-Disclosure;

\*\*  $p < .01$  level (1-tail)

\*\*\*  $p < .001$  (1-tail)

Table 4.14b above shows the dyadic-level correlations of self-disclosure (SD) among British and Ghanaian couples. The phenomenon of interest in this particular analysis is the dyadic reciprocity of marital self-disclosure – the extent to which wife and husband disclose to each other in commensurate magnitudes. For British couples, there was a significant positive correlation between wife's reported SD to husband and husband's reported SD to wife,  $r(83) = .420$ ,  $p < .001$ ; similarly, there was a significant positive correlation between wife's reported SD from husband and husband's reported SD from wife,  $r(83) = .473$ ,  $p < .001$ . Likewise, for Ghanaian couples, a significant positive correlation was observed between wife's reported SD to husband and husbands reported SD to wife,  $r(88) = .600$ ,  $p < .001$ ; and again there was a significant positive correlation between

wife's reported SD from husband and husband's reported SD from wife,  $r(84) = .876, p < .001$ .

These two forms of correlational analysis confirm the reciprocity of disclosure between spouses in both settings. The non-dyadic level analysis showed a greater reciprocity of disclosure among British couples, in support of hypothesis 5b which predicted a *higher reciprocity of disclosure among British couples*. However, the dyadic-level analysis showed the opposite trend: the reciprocity of disclosure was higher among Ghanaian couples than British couples, contrary to the hypothesis

#### 4.5.4 Discussion

The results presented in the above sections show various trends in the pattern of disclosure between couples in this study. From the multivariate ANOVA, there was significant difference in self-disclosure levels in the two directions –self-disclosure to and from spouse- between British and Ghanaian couples. There was no significant main effect for spouse and the interaction between spouse and nation was also non-significant. Further, the correlational analysis revealed significant correlations between age of participant, time length of marriage and the reciprocity of dyadic-level self-disclosure among both Ghanaian and British couples. The various significant observations are elaborated in the sections that follow.

##### 4.5.4.1 Culture and self-disclosure

As discussed earlier in chapter 2 section 6, Goodwin, Nizharadze, Luu, & Emelyanova (1999) have concluded out of their study that there is still much to be investigated on the cultural differentials of self-disclosure because, despite the host of studies so far conducted by psychologists, the empirical picture still remains a bit unclear. Most of the self-disclosure and culture research so far documented is based on comparisons of Euro-American systems with South American and South Asian populations and not African populations (e.g. Berger & Bradac, 1982; Chen, 1995; Goodwin, Nizharadze, Dedkova & Emelyanova, 1999). One positive way forward in making sense of results such as reported in this chapter however, is to interpret findings in the context of the prevalent socio-cultural patterns of interaction within the particular settings of interest.

From the results reported above married couples from the British setting disclosed to each other more than did their counterparts in Ghanaian settings. This difference in disclosure was along the two directions of self-disclosure: self-disclosure to spouse as well as self-disclosure from spouse. The connotation of this trend is that in terms of dyadic interaction Ghanaian couples characteristically divulged less personal day to day information to their spouses and in return received commensurate levels of disclosure from their spouses. In order to understand such tendency in social interaction in a cultural setting, the patterns of social life and the local realities as well as the ideological underpinnings of such realities must be considered. Ghanaian and for that matter, African social systems have been described as having high power distance (Hofstede, 1984). This means that social interaction takes place in accordance with hierarchical observance. For

example, younger people in African social worlds address elderly people (older siblings, parents, workplace superiors etc) by titles denoting their status. Usually, one finds such qualifying titles as ‘brother’, ‘sister’ etc used for older siblings and ‘madam’ ‘sir’ also used for work place superiors or authorities. By extension, in marital relationships, traditionally, wives address their husbands either with titles<sup>33</sup> or by appending the name of their first born to their husband’s name<sup>34</sup>. In effect, the extent to which dyadic communication takes place is governed by such hierarchical sense of being. In contrast, in western systems such as Britain, social interaction has been described as being characterized by low power distance where interaction is predicated on a much less hierarchical basis. For instance it is characteristically commonplace to address superiors, older relatives and friends simply by their first names, without appending any titles. There is a sense in which one can say that a less hierarchical-oriented relationship would engender higher levels of disclosure and the continuous process of such disclosure than a more hierarchical relationship. The possibility is that the relatively lower power distance (Hofstede, 1984, 2001; Schwartz, 1994) in the British social system orients social interaction towards equalitarianism, thereby reducing communication barriers and making the sharing of personal information along several dimensions more natural.

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<sup>33</sup> Titles for husbands, in local dialects in Ghana for instance include: ‘mewura’ (the Akan for ‘my lord’) and ‘nye afetor’ (the Ewe for ‘my lord’). These are titles used for husbands by wives which have connotations in terms of the maintenance of hierarchy in the home and as well as establishing and reaffirming the authority of the man as the leader and owner of the home. Literally, the direct meanings of these titles point to this. The word ‘me wura’ literally means ‘my owner’ while ‘nye afetor’ means ‘the owner of my home’.

<sup>34</sup> For example a man whose first born child is Kofi would be called Kofi Papa, literally meaning Kofi’s father. However, women are also called by this appendage name form such as Kofi Mami. The difference lies in the way in which the male version is used as a symbol of respect and authority, by avoiding the direct mention of his name by his wife.



A further social indicator of the cultural grounding of self-disclosure in Ghanaian social worlds is the commonplace tendency of not declaring one's (particularly husbands) salary earnings, even to spouses. It is common for example, for Ghanaian husbands to withhold from relatives the exact magnitude of their total earnings. This tendency to economize such information can be understood in the context of the relational interdependence (Adams & Plaut, 2003; Singelis, 1994) that characterizes social experience in African settings, where for example, close friends and kin look up to the economically 'capable' close other to extend material help to those needing such help. Husbands thus, are expected to play the principal breadwinner role. The practical benefit therefore of withholding information on one's income earnings for example serves a protective function. To the extent that people know how much you earn, they are likely to be motivated to expect a commensurate amount of help from you.

In addition, the tendency to withhold such information can be further understood from the legacy of the polygamous marriage system, which is still prevalent in African and for that matter, Ghanaian society (Gyekye, 1996; Klomegah, 1997). For instance, in a polygamous marriage where a man has two or more wives, each of whom has a certain number of children and perhaps grandchildren, the man stands in the centre of the family system and administers 'governance' from this position. The power dynamics involved in such administration is so complex and requires such a masterful handling that, the management of information between wives and husband is very crucial to the success of the entire family system. As

noted in the discussion of the marriage role expectation literature in chapter two, the formation of roles is determined largely by family socialisation (Hofstede, 2001; Kagitcibasi, 1990). By extension, despite social change and the resultant emergence of new generations of marriage, the legacy of such polygamous family systems has its imprint on the construction of marital experience, a process and condition that can be referred to as the cultural grounding of psyche.

Pertaining to the cultural grounding of marital self-disclosure, a further confirmatory empirical evidence derived from the comparative analysis of self-disclosure among British and Ghanaian couples is the non-significant main effect for spouse as well as a non-significant interaction of nation and spouse. These results point to the fact that the pattern of disclosure does not depend seriously on whether a married individual was a male or female. Despite the small differences in mean disclosure between Ghanaian husbands and wives, the indication overall is that the only important systematic difference in disclosure is based on culture: couples within the British settings are more self-disclosing generally and particularly at the dyadic level than their counterparts in Ghanaian settings.

#### *4.5.4.2 Long co-existence and Self-disclosure*

One of the tendencies between personal relationship members in general and married couple members in particular is that, as members co-exist for a considerable length of time, the continuous sharing of personal information

brings them to a point where they know so much about each other, thereby reducing the need to divulge information about themselves. Besides daily occurrences and social experience from which relationship members continually share information, any other information about themselves in terms of their attitudes to particular targets, their past experiences and other aspects of disclosure such as those depicted in the Jourard & Lasakow's (1959) study become exhausted. This tendency of a negative relationship between years of dyadic co-existence and levels of marital self-disclosure is strongly evident in the correlational analysis pursued above. For both British and Ghanaian couples, the number of years of marriage as well as age were negatively related to self-disclosure levels, both to and from spouse. It can therefore be asserted that an important characteristic of self-disclosure –the decreasing of self-disclosure levels with increasing time-related factors such age, length of time married and number of children- as represented in the literature (cf. Altman and Taylor, 1973; Antill & Cotton, 1987) has been captured by this particular study.

#### *4.5.4.3 Reciprocity of Self-disclosure*

Jourard's studies (as well as other pioneering studies in self-disclosure) established the phenomenon of reciprocity of disclosure: people disclose in commensurate amounts to others who disclose to them, (Jourard, 1959; Worthy, Gary & Kahn, 1969). This trend showed up strongly in the correlational analysis, in two ways: 1) there was significant positive correlation between married individuals self-reported disclosure to and from spouse (non-dyadic). This means the correlation of participants' own rating of given and received disclosure with regard to their

spouse; 2) there was significant positive correlation between self-disclosure to spouse as well as self-disclosure from spouse at the dyadic level. That is, correlation between wives' reported self-disclosure to husband and husbands' reported self-disclosure to wife, as well as between wife's reported self-disclosure from husband and husband's reported self-disclosure from wife.

#### *4.5.5 Summary*

This section has covered the empirical analysis of self-disclosure (SD) as a process of interaction in marital relationships. A cultural-level analysis of patterns of SD among British and Ghanaian couples has revealed that British couples disclosed significantly more in their marital interaction than Ghanaian couples. In addition, some of the major trends that have been discovered in classic studies of SD emerged in this present study: 1) negative association between SD and time-related variables such as participants' age and time length of marriage, 2) the reciprocity of SD. The objective of part I of this chapter has been to illuminate the cultural construction of marital experience, an objective has been pursued in the cultural-level analysis on other variables such as relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation. To a significant extent, this objective has further been attained in the demonstration of cultural differentials in SD. Beyond the attainment of this objective, the ultimate interest however is in revealing the link between marital SD and marital satisfaction across the two cultural settings, Britain and Ghana. Part II of this chapter, is devoted to exploring the psychological predictors of marital satisfaction, where SD among other independent variables were regressed on marital satisfaction.

#### **4.6.0 Measuring material support.**

##### *4.6.1 Instrument*

In order to emphasize the measurement of material exchanges between spouses, a direct measure was specifically developed for this study. This effort was necessitated by the lack of measures that particularly focus on the extent and frequency of material exchanges between couples (Mutran, Reed & Sudha, 2001). Almost always, a search for material support as framed for this study brings up no results, unlike general social support which has a myriad of literature and instruments used to measure it. Barrera (1986) has rightly noted that the diversity in social support needs to be appreciated since it requires researchers to specify the concepts of support that are relevant to their inquiry. Then, they can select or design measures that match these concepts, in order to simulate the hypothesized connections between the variables of interest. It is important to note that according to the particular objectives pursued, material support is conceptualized as 'provision of the material things that we use'. Such 'material things' were captured along seven dimensions of provision of food, clothing, accommodation/rent/housing, payment of utility bills, health expenses, transport expenses, and spending/upkeep money. Cronbach's alphas for the British and Ghanaian samples were .89 and .86 for 'material support to spouse' respectively,  $F=.785, p>.05$ ; For material support from spouse, the alphas were .87 and .83 for

the Britain and Ghana samples respectively,  $F=.764$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $df_1= 184$ ;  $df_2=214$ <sup>35</sup>.

Thus, there was no significant difference in alpha coefficients for the British and Ghanaian samples.

#### 4.6.2 Scoring

On each support dimension, participants were simply instructed to rate on a six point scale (from 1=very rarely to 6=always) first, how often or rarely their spouse provided them with such support, then second, how often they provided their spouse with such support. This bidirectional measurement of support is to find out the prevalent direction of support between spouses as well as investigate the reciprocity of support between them.

#### 4.6.3.0 Results

##### 4.6.3.1 Cultural-level analysis of material support

A comparative analysis was performed on couples' scores on the material support instrument described above. The aim was to observe the relative extents to which exchange of material resources took place between spouses across the two settings. *Table 14* shows the descriptive statistics for couples.

*Table 4.15:* Means and standard deviations of material support scores for British and Ghanaian couples.

Variable	Nation	Spouse	Mean
Material support to	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	32.54 (7.93)

<sup>35</sup>  $df_1=n_1-1=185-1=184$ ;  $df_2=n_2-1=215-1=214$

spouse		Wife	28.19 (10.82)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30.23 (9.79)</b>
		<hr/>	
Material support from spouse	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	36.79 (7.26)
		Wife	24.57 (9.55)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30.62 (10.45)</b>	
	<i>Britain</i>	Husband	28.04 (11.17)
		Wife	32.20 (8.74)
<b>Total</b>		<b>30.25 (10.14)</b>	
	<i>Ghana</i>	Husband	23.54 (8.95)
		Wife	36.95 (7.00)
		<b>Total</b>	<b>30.31 (10.45)</b>

*Note: Standard Deviations in parenthesis*

Among both British and Ghanaian couples, husbands scored higher on ‘material support to wife’ [ mean(Br)=32.54, SD=7.93; mean(Gh)=36.79, SD=7.26] than wives [mean(Br)=28.19, SD=10.82; mean(Gh)=24.57, SD=9.55]. This implies that in the exchange of material resources, husbands provided more often to their wives than wives provided for their husbands. Another interesting trend in the descriptive statistics is the pattern of spread group scores. For both British and Ghanaian husbands, their ratings on ‘material support to spouse’ showed smaller standard deviations [SD(Br)= 7.93; SD(Gh)=7.26) than did the ratings of wives from both settings [SD(Br)=10.82; SD(Gh)=9.55]. A similar trend occurred for ‘material support from spouse’ (in reverse) where again wives’ scores had a smaller SD than husbands’, as shown in *table 4.15* above. What this trend in the spread of scores among husbands and wives on the two directions of material support implies is that, there was more consistency in the frequency of material support from husband to wife than from wife to husband in both the British and Ghanaian settings. To test however for the significance of the mean differences shown above, a factorial MANOVA was performed. Multivariate tests were significant for spouse [Wilks’s Lambda ( $\Lambda$ ) = 0.544; df=2, 386, P<0.001] and the

interaction of spouse and nation [Wilks's Lambda ( $\Lambda$ ) = 0.826; df=2, 386, P<0.001] but not nation. The univariate tests summary for this analysis is represented in *table 4.16* below.



Table 4.16: MANOVA (2 x 2 factorial) comparing nations and spouses on the material support to and from spouse.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	<i>p</i>
<b>BETWEEN</b> ( <i>groups</i> )					
<b>Factor A (nation)</b>					
Material support to spouse	9.775	1	9.775	.121	.729
Material support from spouse	1.642	1	1.642	.020	.886
<b>Factor B (spouse)</b>					
Material support to spouse	6645.242	1	6645.242	81.920	.000
Material support from spouse	7478.571	1	7478.571	93.094	.000
<b>Factor A x B</b>					
Material support to spouse	1501.237	1	1501.237	18.507	.000
Material support from spouse	2069.963	1	2069.963	25.767	.000
<b>WITHIN</b> ( <i>Error</i> )					
Material support to spouse	31393.097	387	81.119		
Material support from spouse	31088.916	387	80.333		

There was significant main effect for spouse on both directions of material support ( $p < .001$ ) and not nation, implying that there was a similar extent of material support between husband and wife in both settings in both directions of exchange. Also the interaction of spouse and nation was significant ( $p < .001$ ). Hypothesis 4 predicted a greater gap of material support (exchange weighted) towards the husband among Ghanaian couples than British couples. The results support this hypothesis. Ghanaian husbands provided more material resources to their wives than their British counterparts did to their wives.

#### 4.6.3.2 Reciprocity of material support

Table 4.17: Correlation of material resource exchanges and length of marriage among British and Ghanaian couples

Variable		1	2	3	4	5
1. Husb. rating of MS given to wife	Britain	—	-.117	.613***	.118	.010
	<b>Ghana</b>		<b>.036</b>	<b>.240*</b>	<b>.417***</b>	<b>-.209*</b>
2. Husb. rating of MS received from wife	Britain		—	.202*	.800***	.020
	<b>Ghana</b>			<b>.407***</b>	<b>.246*</b>	<b>-.049</b>
3. Wife rating of MS given to husb.	Britain			—	.231*	.104
	<b>Ghana</b>				<b>.033</b>	<b>-.123</b>
4. Wife rating of MS received from husb.	Britain				—	.087
	<b>Ghana</b>					<b>-.120</b>
5. Years of marriage	Britain					—
	<b>Ghana</b>					

\*  $p < .05$  (1-tail)

MS = Material Support

\*\*  $p < .01$  (1-tail)

\*\*\*  $p < .001$  (1-tail)

There is significant evidence of reciprocity of material support provision at the dyadic level for British and Ghanaian couples. The more husbands gave to their wives, the more wives gave in return, as shown in *table 4.17* above. Yet, the extent of reciprocity was greater among British couples than Ghanaian couples, as is denoted by the magnitudes of the correlation coefficients. Thus, *hypothesis 4* gains another support in the greater reciprocity of support among British couples. Further, material support provision among Ghanaian couples was negatively related to length of marriage, although these correlation was significant only for Husbands' rating of material support given to wife.

#### 4.6.4 Discussion

The extent to which material support provision differs in magnitude from husband to wife and vice versa, as well as the reciprocity of such provision between husband and wife in the respective contexts can be interpreted as reminiscent of particular constructions of marriage in consonance with the cultural patterns that characterize these contexts. In the analysis reported in this section of chapter 4, Ghanaian husbands provided significantly far more than their wives provided for them. In comparison to Ghanaian husbands, although British husbands also provided to their wives more than their wives provided for them, the disparity was greater for Ghanaian couples. Further, the correlational analysis showed a greater reciprocity of support exchanges among British couples than Ghanaian couples. This is indicated by the larger magnitudes of correlation coefficients<sup>36</sup> for British spouses. In effect, this trend confirms *hypothesis 4* which postulated a greater gap of material support exchanges among Ghanaian couples. The implication is that, as demonstrated in the cultural-level analysis of marriage roles, a preponderant claim to support provision by Ghanaian husbands, both out of their own report and the report of their wives points to a more traditional construction of marriage among Ghanaian couples than among British couples. However, it is important to examine some realities that prevail in African settings, in order to avoid the impression that women are almost passive in the provision of resources in the marital context.

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<sup>36</sup> Between husband's reported support to wife and wife's reported support to husband – Britain( $r$ )=.613; Ghana ( $r$ )=.240. Also, between husband's reported support from wife and wife's reported support from husband - Britain( $r$ )=.800; Ghana ( $r$ )=.246

The pattern of socio-cultural life in Ghanaian (African) settings is that the status of the woman is not officially recognized as a breadwinner, though they do win much bread (Gyekye, 1996; Miller & Kannae, 1999; Oppong, 1980). So even in marriage, though the Ghanaian woman may be the main material support source, this remains only unofficial. Mostly, it is the men who engage in paid employment while the women are self-employed or petty traders. Consequently, since it is the man who bears the label of a 'teacher', 'clerk' 'accountant' etc and earns a specific amount of salary on regular monthly basis, he is recognized for it. Dodoo (1992) noted in line with this observation that in Ghanaian society, husbands assume leadership roles invariably and relegate their wives to positions of subservience. So although the woman trades (selling foodstuff in markets and hawking petty items and consumables in the community) and purchases basic necessities such as foodstuff, children's clothes and household consumables, this is officially unrecognized (Sarpong, 1974). Among Ghanaian women there is no such thing as 'unemployment'. This is because even if she is not engaged in institutionally regulated employment, she engages in petty trading and the offering of local services.<sup>37</sup>

Social welfare systems in the form of child benefits, income support, job seekers allowance or council housing do not exist in the Ghanaian system (Klomegh,

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<sup>37</sup> In a tropical West African country such as Ghana, the common socio-economic practice is for men and women to sell daily consumable items such as foodstuff, toiletries, fast food, cosmetic products and services such as shoe shining, plating of hair etc by hawking from house to house within the community. Such practice is common both in rural and urban settings in Ghana. Generally, women and young girls carry out this form of petty trading more commonly than men and boys.

1997; Kuenyehia, 1998), unlike the British system where such facilities exist. People survive in the socio-economic environment such petty trading if they are not in regular employment, whether self or civil. Domestic maidservants, mostly teenage girls from extended family or social acquaintances and clan folk, usually located in the village or rural country areas are brought to live with married people in the cities, especially when the couple have a baby or young children. These servants offer domestic services ranging from child care, domestic chores to petty trading for their 'madam'. Normally, this is in exchange for helping such servants to learn a trade later on in the areas of dress-making and hairdressing. Such servants in most cases have no opportunity from their original homes and parents to go to school, and so are usually illiterates. Therefore bringing them to the city or urban towns such as Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi (these are Ghanaian regional capital cities) to experience city life and 'civility' is a form of 'education' which makes a great difference in their lives and personality in comparison with their counterparts who still live in the villages or rural areas (cf. Opong, 1972b, 1974b).

The greater support provision among British wives (compared with their Ghanaian counterparts) may be comprehended in view of the pattern of socio-economic life that exists in western societies, particularly Britain. For example, official supportive systems exist in British society that do not exist in Ghanaian society, such as higher employment opportunities for women and the social welfare benefits mentioned above. In the absence of instrumental support from spouse, British wives for example have access to such employment and welfare

resources that moderate their material needs. Against the backdrop of such considerable socio-economic differences between British and Ghanaian systems, it is probably not difficult to understand the differences in material support exchange at the dyadic level among couples from the two settings.

#### *4.6.5 Summary*

Concerning the nature of material resource exchanges in the construction of marriage in British and Ghanaian systems, it was hypothesized in this project that there would be a greater gap between Ghanaian husbands and wives than their British counterparts in the provision of material support, such support being weighted towards the husband. Cultural-level analysis has confirmed this hypothesis both in the magnitude and reciprocity of support among couples across the two settings. Such trend is comprehensible against the backdrop of the socio-economic and cultural systems differences between the two contexts: First, Ghana is a developing third-world country whereas Britain is a developed western country; second, it has been shown theoretically and empirically in this project that the Ghanaian system is patterned more by collectivist (and less by individualist) syndromes than the British system. In keeping with the objectives of this project, the next stage of comparison of material support exchange among couples from the two settings is the establishment of the relative extents to which material support from spouse predicts marital satisfaction. This is the focus of analysis to which Part II of this chapter is devoted. Prior to such analysis of predictors of satisfaction, a brief analysis of marital satisfaction is offered in the section that follows.

#### **4.7.0 Marital satisfaction**

Although no hypothetical supposition was made about comparative differences in marital satisfaction levels among British and Ghanaian couples, it was relevant to explore the general levels of satisfaction by spouse and nation in order to establish psychometric properties of the measurement tool. This is particularly important because marital satisfaction is the main dependent variable (marital outcome) in this project. Hence, a univariate analytic procedure was pursued to explore couples' scores of marital satisfaction, as a prelude to Part II of this chapter which focuses on predictors of satisfaction.

##### *4.7.1 Instrument*

Marital satisfaction, being an evaluation of the perception of relationship experience, is best measured by evaluative-type questions, (Norton, 1983). The Kansas Marital Satisfaction scale of Schumm *et al.* (1896) is one of the most frequently used measures of marital satisfaction which is composed of evaluative-type questions. This is a brief, 3-item scale which has been proven by previous research to possess internal consistency, construct validity, criterion-related

validity and test-retest validity (Schumm, 1985; Schumm *et al.*, 2001; Shek & Tsang, 1993; Shek *et al.*, 1993). For example, Akagi, Schumm & Bergen, 2003) found the following test-retest validities:  $r=.72$  for husbands;  $r=.62$  for wives. The scale has three simple items (see Appendices 1a and 1b) and total scores on it have been found by Schumm *et al.* (1986) to have sufficient correlation with Spanier's (1976) Dyadic Adjustment Scale and Nortons's (1983) Quality of Marriage Index.

In this present study, Cronbach's alphas for the British and Ghanaian samples were .96 and .94 respectively. The F test for the equality of coefficients was computed for the two samples and results showed non-significance for difference in coefficients,  $F=.666$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $df_1=184$ ;  $df_2=214$ <sup>38</sup>. Thus, the alpha coefficients for the British and Ghanaian samples were not significantly different.

#### 4.7.2 Scoring

The three items of the scale were scored on a seven-point Likert scale anchored on 1=Extremely dissatisfied to 7=Extremely satisfied. The total satisfaction score is the sum of scores on all three items. In effect, the minimum satisfaction score is 3 while the maximum score is 21.

#### 4.7.3 Results

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<sup>38</sup>  $df_1=n_1-1=185-1=184$ ;  $df_2=n_2-1=215-1=214$



Overall, Ghanaian couples scored higher than British couples [mean(Br)=17.17; mean(Gh)=18.53]. Also standard deviations were similar between British and Ghanaian couples [SD(Br)=4.68; SD(Gh)=4.03]. In both samples, husbands tended to score higher than wives; and wives tended to have higher standard deviations than husbands, as shown in *table 4.18* below.

*Table 4.18:* Means and standard deviations of marital satisfaction scores for British and Ghanaian couples.

Nationality of participant	Spouse	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Britain	Husband	17.63	4.000	87
	Wife	16.76	5.211	98
	Total	17.17	4.689	185
Ghana	Husband	19.05	3.217	107
	Wife	18.02	4.664	108
	Total	18.53	4.033	215

To test for significance for nation and spouse, a factorial ANOVA was performed as shown in *table 1.19* below.

Table 4.19: ANOVA (2 x 2 factorial) comparing nations and spouses on marital satisfaction.

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
NATION	177.937	1	177.937	9.477	.002
SPOUSE	90.070	1	90.070	4.797	.029
NATION *	.567	1	.567	.030	.862
SPOUSE					
Error (within)	7435.082	396	18.775		

#### 4.7.4 Summary of results

There was significant main effect for nation ( $p < .01$ ) and spouse ( $p = < .05$ ).

However, there was no significance for the interaction of nation and spouse. The connotation is that Ghanaian couples were significantly more satisfied with their marriages than British couples. Further, Husbands across the two settings were more satisfied than their wives, and this differential dyadic satisfaction is not moderated by nation. In adherence to the objectives of this project, analytic procedures to investigate the relative predictors of marital satisfaction among British and Ghanaian couples were implemented, as reported in Part II of this chapter to which I turn.

## **PART II: PSYCHOSOCIAL PREDICTORS OF MARITAL SATISFACTION**

### **4.8.0 Predictors of marital satisfaction among British and Ghanaian couples.**

As elaborated in *chapter 2.1.11*, the process of unpackaging culture advocated by some cross-cultural researchers (e.g. Bond & Tedeschi, 2001; Clark, 1976; Matsumoto et. al, 1997; Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999; Whitting, 1976) involves identification of cultural tendencies that might account for particular behavioural outcomes. Further, the particular cultural tendencies are reduced to individual-level psychological characteristics (beliefs, habits, values, self-construals, personality dispositions, emotions, attributions) that generate the behavioural outcome. Then in order to determine the extent to which a particular behavioural outcome may be predicted by levels of cultural tendencies, regression equations may be generated.

The main variables that were hypothesized as direct or mediated predictors of marital satisfaction across British and Ghanaian settings are material support and self-disclosure between married persons. The measure of culture that served as a mediator between these predictors these variables and marital satisfaction was self-construal. In addition to self-construal, other variables in which elements of culture are inherent, specifically, relationship beliefs and marriage role expectations were hypothesized as playing mediational roles in the prediction of marital satisfaction. The analytic strategy adopted for predicting marital satisfaction in the various groups of couples is multiple regression. The statistical

rationale behind the use of regression equations for predicting marital satisfaction is that there is no latent variable involved in the entire design, i.e. all variables were measured (Baron & Kenny, 1986). For all the analyses performed, the *stepwise*<sup>39</sup> method was adopted because of the exploratory rather than confirmatory stance taken in determining predictors of marital satisfaction, as a result of some counterintuitive trends observed in the preceding sections (part I) of this chapter in which for example, Ghanaian couples scored higher on the relationship beliefs factors of *intimacy* and *passion* than did British couples.

#### 4.8.1 *Direct predictors of marital satisfaction*

In this exploratory approach, 14 predictor variables were entered into a model for each subset of participants. This means that for each subset, i.e., British wives, Ghanaian wives, British husbands and Ghanaian husbands, marital satisfaction was regressed on independent self-construal, interdependent self-construal, self-disclosure from spouse, self-disclosure to spouse, material support to spouse, material support from spouse, MRE score, *Intimacy*, *Passion*, *External Factors*, *Individuality*, age, number of children and length of marriage. Results of these analyses (only those models that were significant are presented here) are presented in *table 4.20* below.

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<sup>39</sup> Brace, Kemp & Snelgar (2003) have advised that when there is uncertainty surrounding the theoretical positions of particular variables in regression, the safest approach is to use a method that is able to exclude predictor variables that do not meet a retention criterion. In stepwise multiple regression, predictors are added to the equation one at a time and each is retained if adding it contributes to the model, and all the other variables are re-tested to be sure they still contribute successfully to the model. If they do not significantly contribute to the model any longer, they are removed. Thus the stepwise approach has been recognized as the most sophisticated and parsimonious method of multiple regression, (see also Howitt, & Cramer, 2001; Kinnear & Gray, 2000).

Table 4.20: Cultural-level summary of Step-wise regression of marital satisfaction on predictors across Ghanaian and British settings.

Variable	$\beta$ (std)	SE of $\beta$	<i>p</i>
<b>Britain</b>			
<i>Husband</i>			
Ext. Factors	.439	.146	.000
Individuality	-.567	.193	.000
Intimacy	.274	.213	.028
MRE	.373	.015	.000
<i>Wife</i>			
Individuality	.575	.115	.000
MRE	-.337	.015	.000
Ext. Factors	-.240	.120	.028
<b>Ghana</b>			
<i>Husband</i>			
SD from spouse	.261	.017	.021
<i>Wife</i>			
SD to spouse	.267	.025	.016
Ext. Factors	-.312	.099	.004
Intimacy	.263	.348	.023

*Ghanaian husbands*

By regressing the criterion (marital satisfaction) on the 14 predictor variables stepwise, a significant model emerged ( $F_{1,76} = 5.57, p < .021$ ), where Adjusted R squared = .056. Among all the above predictors, only one (Husbands' reported self-disclosure from wife) predicts marital satisfaction among Ghanaian husbands, for which  $Beta = .261, p = .021$ . What this result does imply is that, among Ghanaian husbands the only variable that significantly predicts marital satisfaction directly is the level of their wife's self-disclosure to them. Specifically, Ghanaian husbands'

reported disclosure from wife accounts for 26.1% of the variance in their marital satisfaction.

#### *Ghanaian wives*

A significant model for predicting marital satisfaction (MS) was obtained for Ghanaian wives,  $F_{3,80}=7.46$ ,  $p=000$ , and Adjusted R square=.189. Among the 14 predictors entered stepwise, three were retained in the model, and *Table 4.20* above shows the beta weights for these significant predictors. Unlike Ghanaian husbands, Ghanaian wives' marital satisfaction level was predicted by levels of their reported self-disclosure to husband as well as their belief in the importance of *external factors* and *intimacy* in relationships. The relative amounts of variance in satisfaction explained by these variables are 26.7% for self-disclosure to husband, 31.2 % for *external factors* and 26.3% for *intimacy*. However, it must be noted that their belief in the importance of external factors in relationships has a negative effect on their marital satisfaction.

#### *British husbands*

For British husbands, a significant model was derived where  $F_{4, 71}=10.63$ ,  $p=000$ , and Adjusted R square=.339. Four predictor variables had significant beta weights, as depicted in *table 4.20* In this model, belief in *external factors* explains 43.9% of the variance in marital satisfaction while *individuality* and *intimacy* explain 56.7% and 27.4% respectively. However belief in individuality had a negative association with marital satisfaction, which implies that the more strongly British

husbands uphold the importance of individuality in relationships the less their experience of marital satisfaction. Further, their marriage role expectation accounts for 37.3% of the variance in marital satisfaction, connoting that the more egalitarian their marriage role expectations, the more positively it affects their marital satisfaction.

#### *British wives*

The same predictor variables were entered for British wives and a significant model emerged. Thus,  $F_{3,74} = 11.66, p = .000$ , while Adjusted R square = .293. British wives' belief in the importance of individuality in relationships accounts for 57.5% of the variance in marital satisfaction (MS), denoting a positive relationship to the latter. However, their levels of marriage role expectation (MRE) have a negative impact on MS and explains 33.7% of the variance in their MS. Also their belief in the importance of *external factors* negatively explains 24% of their MS variance. According to this model, British wives' marital satisfaction goes up to the extent that they believe in the importance of *individuality* in relationships; whereas the more egalitarian their marriage role expectation, the less satisfied they are in their marital experience; and the stronger they hold beliefs about the importance of external factors, the less satisfied they are. Among the hypothesized predictors of satisfaction, only self-disclosure directly predicted marital satisfaction, and this was among Ghanaian couples, i.e. self-disclosure from husband.

#### 4.8.2.0 *Mediated predictors of marital satisfaction*

Having established from the above analyses the particular variables that directly predict marital satisfaction in British and Ghanaian settings for husbands and wives, the next pursuit was to probe into indirect prediction by exploring mediation (discussed in chapter 3). According to Baron & Kenny (1986), when no significant relationship is found between a theoretical predictor ( $x$ ) and a criterion ( $y$ ), the possibility is that a third variable ( $m$ ) mediates the predictor and the criterion. In order to establish the possible presence as well as the magnitude of such mediation, a number of regression equations<sup>40</sup> can be obtained. Therefore since all the models reported above were unmediated and material support did not emerge as a significant direct predictor, the next step was to develop hypothetical mediated models to be tested. The Sobel (1982) version of mediation tests<sup>41</sup> was used by manual calculation and cross-checked by using the on-line<sup>42</sup> software for this test provided by Kenny (2003). The mediational tests were performed along two lines. The first step of tests involved self-construal being the main measure of culture, as a mediator of predictors (self-disclosure and material support) and outcome (marital satisfaction). In the second step of tests, cultural variables<sup>43</sup> (variables in which elements of culture are inherent) were treated as mediators

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<sup>40</sup> Kenny (2003) has elaborated that in testing for mediation in a model, when only measured variables are involved, the basic analytic strategy that is appropriate is Multiple Regression. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used when the variables involved are latent, although SEM can also be used with measured variables. Whichever analytic approach is used with measured variables (SEM or Multiple Regression), the steps involved for testing mediation are the same (*see also* Hoyle & Kenny, 1981a; Judd & Kenny, 1981). Therefore to follow the Law of Parsimony, the less complicated approach of Multiple Regression was used.

<sup>41</sup> Sobel (1982) mediation test equation:  $z\text{-value} = a*b/\sqrt{(b^2*s_a^2 + a^2*s_b^2)}$ , adapted from Mackinnon & Dwyer, (1993) and Mackinnon, Warsi & Dwyer (1995).

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.unc.edu/~preacher/sobel.htm>

<sup>43</sup> Refer to *section 1.3.0* of Chapter 1 for a discussion of the study of cultural variables in cross-cultural social psychology.



between the predictors and outcome. These cultural variables were relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation. Only those models from the first and second steps that showed significant mediation are reported here, in turn.

#### **4.7.2.1 Step 1: Culture (self-construals) as mediator.**

Self-construals served as the main measure of individualism-collectivism cultural syndromes to which self-disclosure, material support and marital satisfaction were related. Since self-construal is a bipolar reflection of individualism and collectivism, mediational tests with independent and interdependent construals were performed for nation by spouse. In addition to the need to treat self-construals as interval-scaled measures, the other reason for this analytic strategy is based on the cultural-level differences observed in the step-wise regression analysis of direct predictors of marital satisfaction presented in section 4.8.1 (*table 4.20*) above, in which a number of different models emerged significant for wives and husbands across Britain and Ghana. In a similar way, the significant models obtained in the mediational tests are presented in the sections that follow.

##### *Ghanaian wives*

Three significant models were observed for Ghanaian wives. First, material support from husband and marital satisfaction were positively mediated by interdependent self-construal,  $Z = 2.15, p = .031$ . This implies that among Ghanaian wives, the marital support they receive from their husbands impacted

their marital satisfaction to the extent that they reflect collectivistic tendencies.

Figure 4.1 below depicts this mediation.

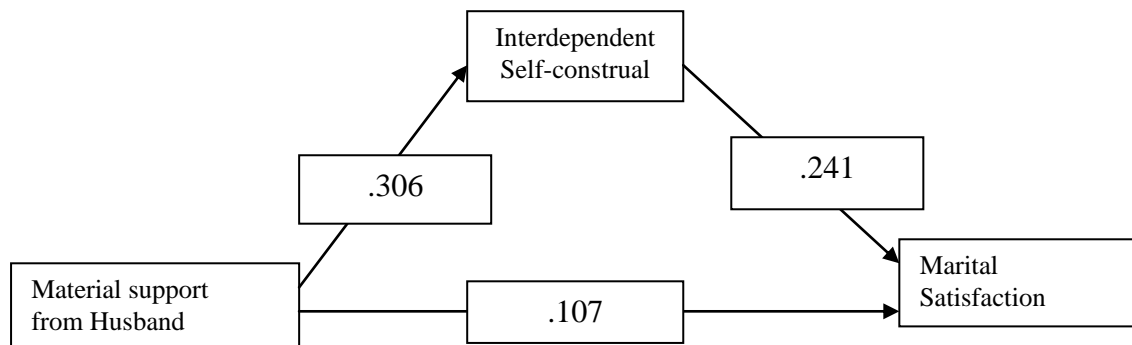


Figure 4.1: Mediation of material support from husband and marital satisfaction by interdependent self-construal among Ghanaian wives.

In addition, material support to husband had a similar effect on their marital satisfaction. As shown in figure 4.2 below, a significant model was obtained for the mediational role of interdependent self -construal (SC). Thus,  $Z = 2.41, p=.015$ .

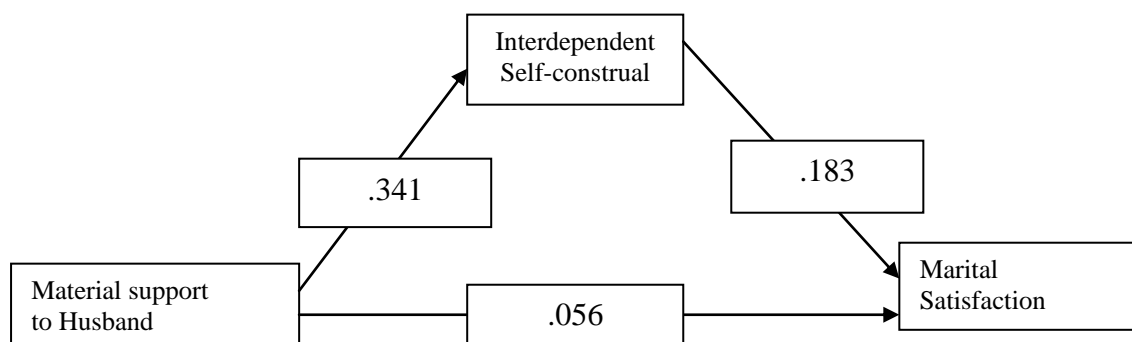
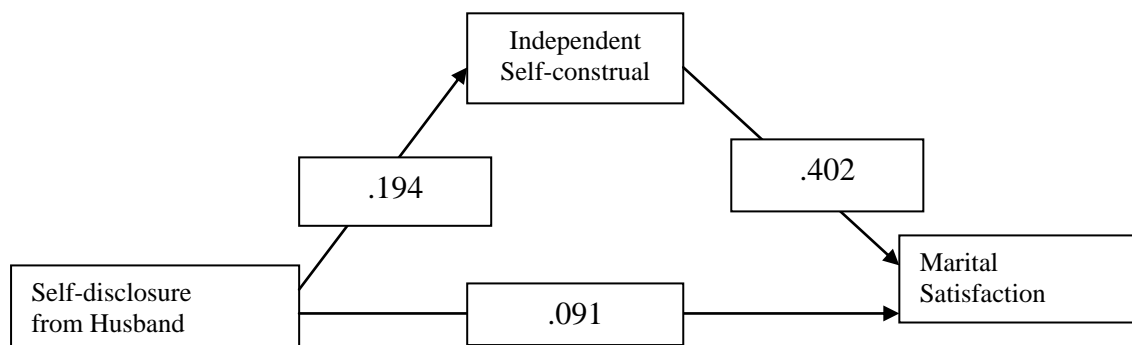


Figure 4.2: Mediation of material support to husband and marital satisfaction by interdependent self-construal among Ghanaian wives.

Further, *figure 4.3* exhibits that interdependent SC mediated self-disclosure from husband and marital satisfaction among Ghanaian wives ( $Z = 2.51, p=.01$ ). Their scores on independent SC determined whether self-disclosure from husband predicted their level of marital satisfaction. These three significant models lend support to *hypotheses 6a* (which predicted a mediation of SC between material support and satisfaction by self-construal) and *6b* (which also predicted that self-disclosure and satisfaction were mediated by SC), for Ghanaian wives.



*Figure 4.3:* Mediation of self-disclosure from husband and marital satisfaction by independent self-construal among Ghanaian wives.

#### *Ghanaian husbands*

For Ghanaian husbands, interdependent SC mediated the relationship between material support given to wife and marital satisfaction,  $Z = 3.5, p=.000$ . This coheres with the trend among Ghanaian wives where their marital satisfaction and support received from husband were also mediated by interdependent SC, all in support of *hypothesis 6a*. *Figure 4.4* represents the mediational model for Ghanaian husbands.

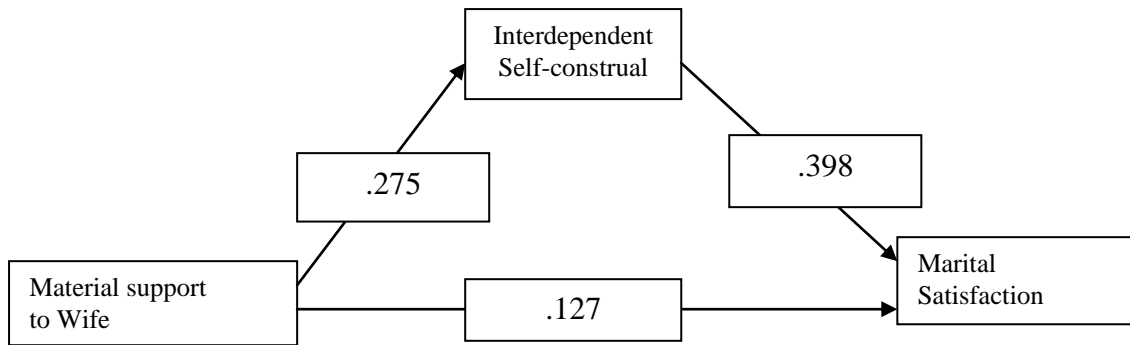


Figure 4.4: Mediation of material support to wife and marital satisfaction by interdependent self-construal among Ghanaian husbands.

*British wives*

Similar to the trend among Ghanaian wives, British wives' marital satisfaction was predicted by material support from their husbands through the mediation of interdependent SC ( $Z = 2.38, p = .017$ ), as shown in figure 4.5 below. This predictive relationship was also positive. The more British wives tended to reflect collectivistic tendencies of social connection, the stronger the impact of material support from their husbands on their marital satisfaction, lending further support to hypothesis 6a.

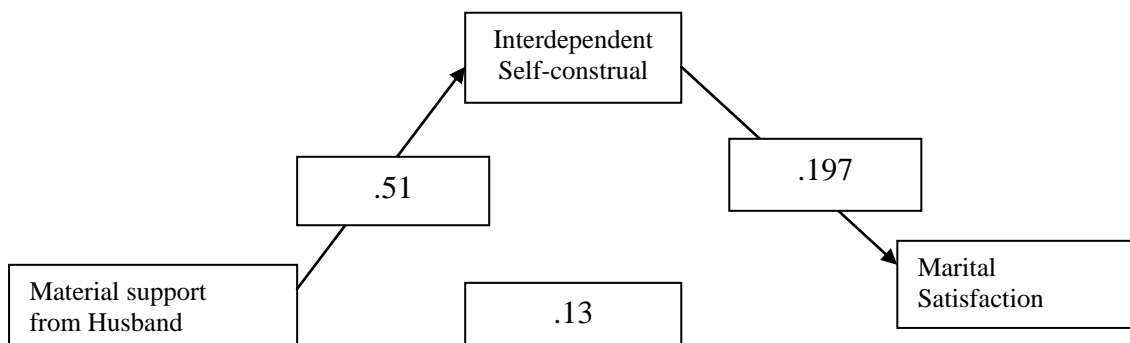




Figure 4.5: Mediation of material support from husband and marital satisfaction by interdependent self-construal among British wives.

However, British wives' marital satisfaction was positively related to self-disclosure to husband through the mediation of independent SC ( $Z = 2.01$ ,  $p = .043$ ). The difference between British and Ghanaian wives in the relationship of self-disclosure to marital satisfaction is that, whereas among Ghanaian wives the direction of disclosure was from their husbands, for British wives, it was disclosure from wife that impacted on wife's satisfaction, as figure 4.6 shows below

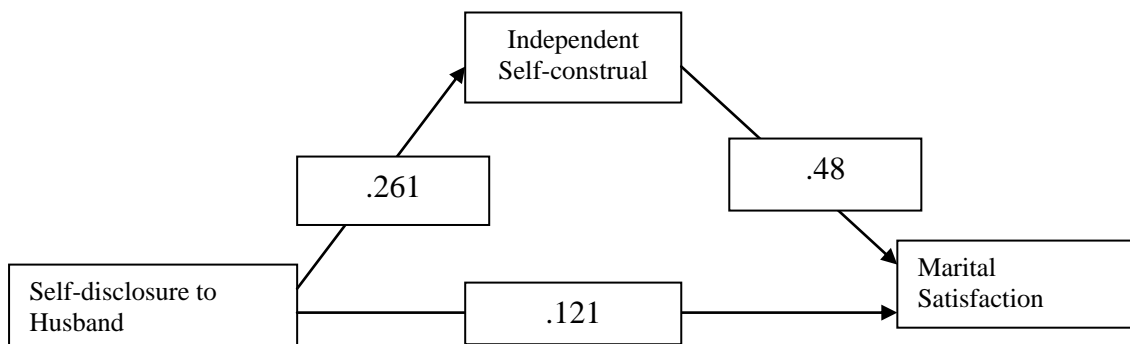


Figure 4.6: Mediation of self-disclosure to husband and marital satisfaction by independent self-construal among British wives.

#### British husbands

Independent SC mediated self-disclosure to wife and marital satisfaction among British husbands, as in figure 4.7.

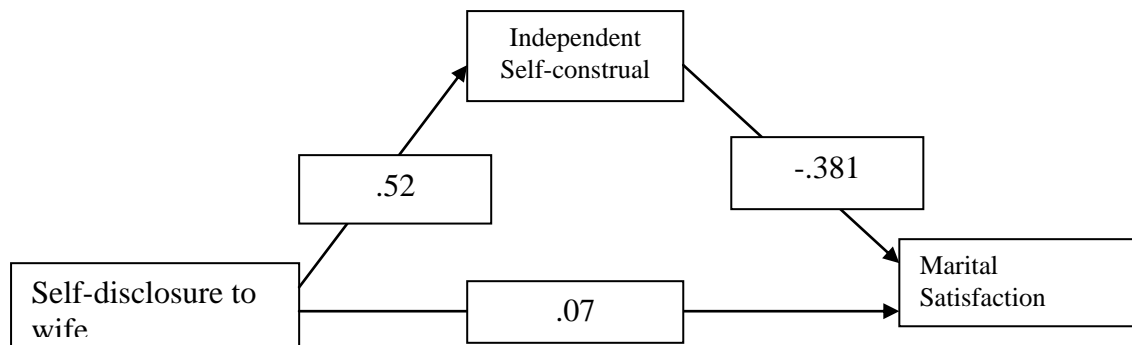


Figure 4.7: Mediation of self-disclosure to wife and marital satisfaction by among British husbands.

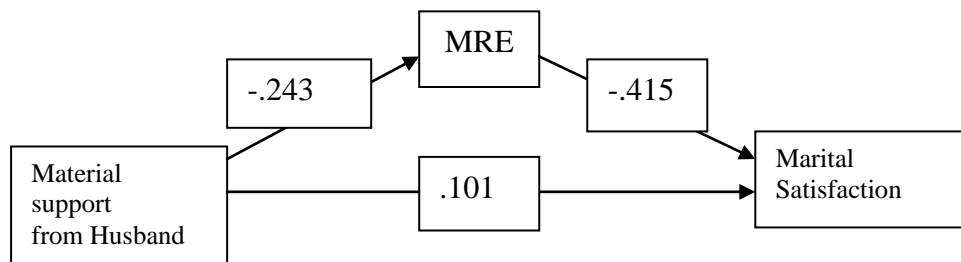
This implies that to the extent that British husbands possessed independent SC, self-disclosure to their wives impacted their own marital satisfaction. However, as indicated in *figure 4.7* above, this relationship is negative ( $Z = -.395, p=.000$ ). This was due to the negative relationship between their independent SC and marital satisfaction. Thus, for those British husbands who reflect individualistic tendencies such as independent SC, the more they disclosed to their wives, the less satisfied they were in their marriages.

**4.8.2.2.0 Step 2: Cultural variables as mediators.**

Marriage role expectation and relationship beliefs were treated as mediators in this step of analysis, in order to test *hypotheses 7a, 7b and 8*. The various significant models in this analysis are presented in turn, below.

*Ghanaian wives*

Two significant mediational models emerged for Ghanaian wives. 1) *Material support from husband* was mediated by marriage role expectations to predict marital satisfaction, ( $Z = 8.23, p=.000$ ); 2) *Self-disclosure from husband* was mediated by wife’s belief in relationship *intimacy* to predict marital satisfaction, ( $Z = 18.063, p=.000$ , as shown in *figures 4.8 and 4.9* below:

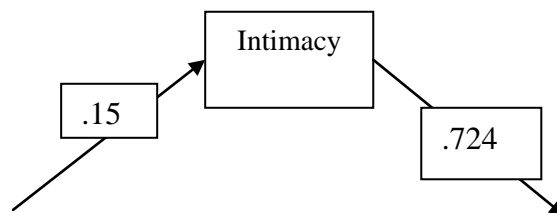


*Figure 4.8:* Mediation of material support from husband and wife’s marital satisfaction by MRE among Ghanaian wives.

The implication of this mediational model is that, as shown in the stepwise regression reported in *table 4.20*, whereas three factors (*self-disclosure to husband, External Factors and Intimacy*) directly predicted marital satisfaction among Ghanaian wives, indirectly, Material support predicted MS through the mediation of marriage role expectation. The relationship between material support from

husband and marriage role expectations (MRE) is a negative one, just as that between MRE and marital satisfaction. It means that the lower Ghanaian wives scored on MRE (implying traditional role expectations), the more they received material support from their husbands and the more satisfied they were in marriage. Therefore, by this model, among Ghanaian wives, material support from husband served as a predictor of marital satisfaction only if wives held traditional marriage role expectation. Thus, *hypothesis 7a* (which predicted that among wives, material support from husband would lead to marital satisfaction only if they held traditional marriage role expectation) gains support for Ghanaian wives and not British wives.

The second significant mediational model obtained for Ghanaian wives was the mediation of *self-disclosure from husband* and marital satisfaction by the relationship belief of *intimacy*. As shown in the model below, wives' marital satisfaction was significantly related to their belief in the importance of intimacy in personal relationships, which was also related to SD from husband. Thus, among Ghanaian wives, SD from husband did not directly predict marital satisfaction; it only did for those who believed in the importance of relationship *intimacy*. Again, this model resonates (although with regard to *intimacy*) with *hypothesis 8* which supposed that *the relation of marital self- disclosure to marital satisfaction would be mediated by relationship beliefs*.





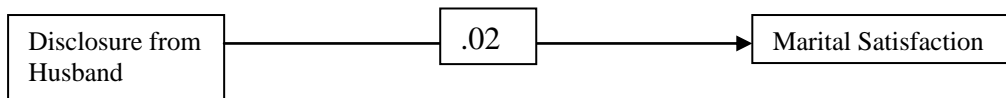


Figure 4. 9: Mediation of SD from husband and wife’s marital satisfaction by intimacy relationship belief (Ghanaian wives).

### Ghanaian husbands

In the analysis of direct predictors of marital satisfaction among Ghanaian husbands the only significant model that emerged was (as represented in *table 4.20* above), *self-disclosure from* wife positively predicting husbands’ marital satisfaction. However as observed in the mediational analysis, for Ghanaian husbands, the effect of *material support to wife* on marital satisfaction was significantly mediated ( $Z = .845, p=.000$ ) by their marriage role expectation (shown in *figure 4.10* below). MRE has negative associations with material support to wife as well as marital satisfaction. This implies that the lower Ghanaian husbands scored on MRE (implying a traditional role expectation), the higher they scored on material support to wife as well as their own marital satisfaction. Thus, *Hypothesis 7b* which predicted a mediational role of MRE between husbands’ material support exchange and marital satisfaction, gains support among Ghanaian husbands.

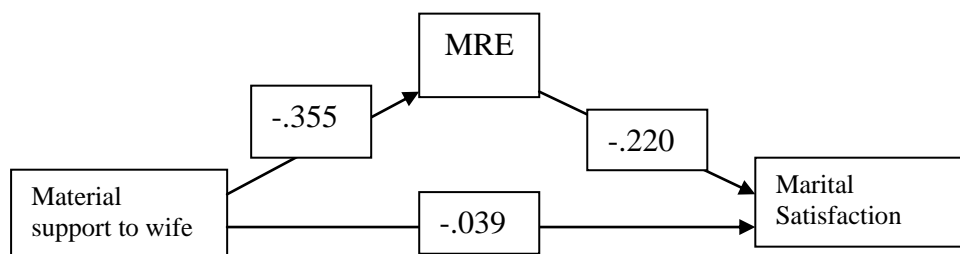


Figure 4.10: Mediation of material support to wife and marital satisfaction by MRE among Ghanaian husbands.

*British husbands*

For British husbands, the relation of ‘self-disclosure to wife’ to husband’s marital satisfaction was significantly mediated by their belief in *individuality* ( $Z = -2.243$ ,  $p=.024$ ). Self-disclosure to wife bore a positive relationship to individuality while the latter bore a negative relationship to marital satisfaction as shown in *figure 4.11* below.

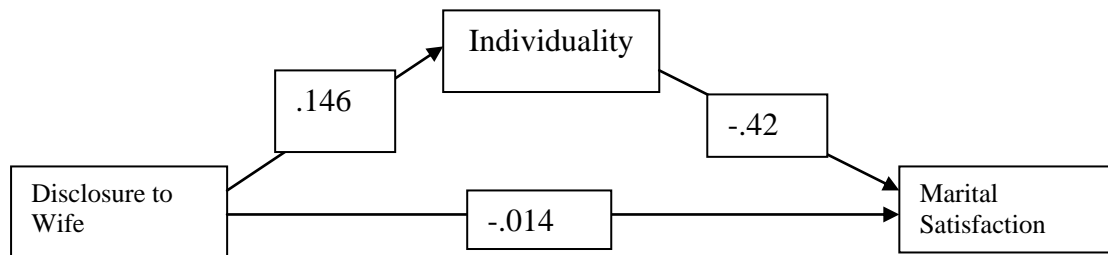


Figure 4.11: Mediation of SD to wife and husband’s marital satisfaction by *individuality* relationship belief among British husbands.

The direct (non-significant) relationship between SD to wife and husband’s marital satisfaction was also negative, showing that, self-disclosure and marital satisfaction among British husbands were negatively related: as one increased the other decreased. Generally this trend supports *hypothesis 8* in respect of the mediating role of *individuality* between SD and marital satisfaction, though for British husbands only.

#### 4.8.3.0 *Discussion*

The primary pursuit of Part II of this chapter has been to show the ways in which marital satisfaction in British and Ghanaian cultural settings is predicted by relatively different factors. The theoretical motivation for investigating such cultural differences was derived from the assertions of researchers (e.g. Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1995; Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hendrick, 1981) who have remarked -on the basis of observed cultural-level differences on particular psychological variables - that in cultural systems where collectivist tendencies are prevalent, marital outcomes are not significantly predicted by personal interactional factors, such as marital self-disclosure. Specifically, these authors asserted that in those settings where traditional marriage forms are held, self-disclosure does not significantly relate to marital satisfaction. The theoretical underpinning of such assertion is clear when one thinks about the characterizations of the individualism-collectivism dimension. This research project has brought up findings, some of which lend support to the above proposals. Nonetheless, counterintuitive findings also emerged, and these are discussed in the subsections that follow.

#### 4.8.3.1 *The Ghanaian setting*

Among the 14 factors that marital satisfaction was regressed on, only one factor (self-disclosure from wife) emerged as the significant direct predictor of marital satisfaction among Ghanaian husbands. Among Ghanaian wives however, three direct predictors emerged: Self disclosure to spouse, *external factors* and *intimacy*

relationship beliefs. These trends are contrary to *hypotheses 6b* and *8* expected that such relational factors as self-disclosure and intimacy would not feature as direct predictors of marital satisfaction among Ghanaian couples. Among Ghanaian wives the emergence of self-disclosure to husband as a significant direct predictor of marital satisfaction corroborates the trend observed for Ghanaian husbands where self-disclosure *from* wife emerged as a significant predictor. This corroborative trend in self-disclosure gives the indication that Ghanaian wives are more self-disclosing than their husbands. Such indication is supported by the dyadic-level analysis of self-disclosure reported in Part I of this chapter in which Ghanaian husbands scored significantly lower than their wives on self-disclosure. This evidence supports previous studies that have discovered that females on the whole are more disclosure-oriented than males particularly in close relationships such as marriage (e.g. Burleson, 2003; Tannen, 1990; Wood, 1993).

In addition, Ghanaian wives' satisfaction was directly predicted by their belief in the importance of *external factors* and *intimacy* in relationships. *External factors* was negatively related to satisfaction while *intimacy* was positively related to it. These results (direct prediction by *intimacy* and *external factors*) are contrary to expectation, as it was expected (in *hypothesis 8*) that relationship beliefs would only play mediational roles as cultural variables in the prediction of marital satisfaction. These observed differences challenge the assumptions implied in the theoretical positions of earlier authors (such as Franzoi, Davis & Young (1995) Hansen & Schuldt (1984) and Hendrick (1981) that marital satisfaction among collectivist

and traditional couples is not predicted by psychosocial variables such as self-disclosure and belief in intimacy.

In line with hypotheses that expected mediated relationships between predictors and outcomes of marital experience, evidence from the first step of mediation analysis point to the influence of culture on the prediction of marital satisfaction. The mediation of material support (to and from husband) and marital satisfaction by interdependent self-construal, as well the mediation of disclosure from husband and marital satisfaction by independent self-construal among Ghanaian wives is a relevant pointer to the empirical benefit of analysis of cultural tendencies at the individual level. To further strengthen this view, a similar trend was discovered for Ghanaian husbands, where material support to wife and marital satisfaction were mediated by interdependent self-construal. In the second step of mediation analysis where marriage role expectation (MRE) and relationship beliefs (treated as cultural variables) served as mediators, another confirmation of influence of culture was derived. Among Ghanaian wives, marriage role expectation mediated material support from spouse and marital satisfaction, while *intimacy* mediated self-disclosure and marital satisfaction. Also, marriage role expectation mediated husband's marital satisfaction and material support to wife.

these results for Ghanaian couples on mediation point to the importance of the frame of culture adopted in this project: culture as dynamic patterns with which

individuals engage implicitly and/or explicitly and can be automatically shaped by its forces (Adams and Markus, 2001, 2004; Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). Among Ghanaian wives, for example, although material support from spouse as well as self-disclosure from spouse did not come up as significant direct predictors of satisfaction, these factors were mediated by self-construals, marriage role expectation and belief in the importance of relationship intimacy to predict marital satisfaction.

The empirical reality portrayed by this trend is that, it is probably misleading to base conclusions about the predictors of relationship outcomes on simple cross-national comparisons of scores on psychological variables as is usually done in many etic differences, actual individual-level measures of cultural tendencies and their relations to particular psychological variables would give more convincing emic indications of the relations that exist in particular cultural settings (Bond & Tedeschi, 2001; Matsumoto *et al.*, 1997). For example with these findings of mediational roles of culture and cultural variables for Ghanaian couples, the implication that may rightly be drawn is that, material support and self-disclosure from husband do not necessarily lead to marital satisfaction. Such a causal link depends on the grounding of psyche that individuals within the setting have as a result of engagement with formative socio-cultural forces within and/or beyond their immediate social environment. In effect, individual married people within the Ghanaian system may hold marriage role expectations, traditional or egalitarian, to varying extents. To the extent that they hold particular expectations, they are primed to derive satisfaction from their spouses' provision of material

resources. In the same way, whether or not couples in the Ghanaian setting derive marital satisfaction from intimate disclosure from their husbands depends on their self-construals and the premium they place on the importance of *intimacy* in marriage.

#### 4.8.3.2 *The British setting*

The direct predictors of marital satisfaction obtained for British couples differed from those of Ghanaian couples. Marriage role expectation for example, directly predicted marital satisfaction positively among British husbands and negatively among British wives. This implies that egalitarian and traditional attitudes predicted marital satisfaction among husbands and wives respectively. *Individuality* and *external factors* also directly predicted marital satisfaction among British couples, albeit in different directions: individuality negatively predicted husband's satisfaction whereas external factors negatively predicted satisfaction for wives. Also, intimacy predicted husbands' (and not wives') satisfaction. Perhaps the fact that all the direct predictors observed among British couples is explicable by social cognitive perspectives that emphasise the causal force of schemas. As noted by Leung *et al.* (2001), beliefs being the cognitive component of attitudes, tend to influence behaviour in proportion to the strength of those beliefs as well as the opportunity and context to act on them (cf. Lee & Kim, 1997; Kim *et al.*, 1996). The caution that is applied here however is that, although a correlational relationship is implied by such regression analysis, a causal link is not necessarily implied. These relationship beliefs among British couples might be related to other variables.

The influence of cultural tendencies on the relationship between material support and self-disclosure on one hand and marital satisfaction on the other hand is confirmed among British couples, as among Ghanaian couples. In support of mediational hypotheses (6a to 8) which variously postulated that self-construals and relationship beliefs would emerge as significant mediators, among Ghanaian and British wives, material support from spouse and marital satisfaction were mediated positively by interdependent self-construal; also self-disclosure to husband and marital satisfaction were mediated positively by independent self-construal. Further, for British husbands independent self-construals negatively mediated self-disclosure to spouse and marital satisfaction.

In the second step of mediation analysis where marriage role expectation and relationship beliefs were treated as mediators, the relation of *Individuality* to satisfaction was negative, showing that higher scores on this variable led to lower scores on satisfaction. This corroborates the negative mediation by independent self-construal among British husbands noted above, as well as the negative direct predictive effect of *individuality* found in the cultural-level regression analysis reported in *table 4.20*. This negative mediational role of independent self-construal and *individuality* beliefs found for British husbands is perhaps more difficult to explain in view of the assertions of authors in the area of culture and self that in an atomistic construction of self and social reality, persons experience themselves as fundamentally unconnected, and any social connections (especially, beyond kin)



are volitional and uninherited with an unlimited possibility of creations and recreations of connections (Adams 2000; Markus, Kitayama & Heiman, 1996; Singelis, 1994). With such construction of experience, one would have expected that the endorsement of *individuality* in relationships would be positively related to relationship satisfaction. It is interesting to note that for British wives the opposite trend on *individuality* was found: *individuality* was positively related to satisfaction. Probably one plausible explanation that may be adduced is that, in the emergence of the changing roles for women, the sense of *individuality*, which implicates liberty and emphasis on individual rights has a more rewarding effect for British women than men. This makes sense when consideration is given to legislations on access rights and legal consequences of marital dissolution that appear to be more favourable for women than men (Barlow, 2004; Barlow & James, 2004; Barlow & Probert, 2004).

In consonance with such trend is the differential predictive effect of marital role expectation for British husbands and wives. For British husbands, MRE bore a direct positive relationship to marital satisfaction whereas it bore a negative relationship to satisfaction for British wives. The more egalitarian British husbands attitudes to marriage were, the more satisfied they were; while the opposite was true for British wives: the more traditional their attitudes were, the more satisfied they were.

Another point of departure between British husbands and wives on the predictors of marital satisfaction is the predictive relation of *external factors* to their levels of

marital satisfaction. While for British husbands *external factors* bore a positive predictive relationship to their marital satisfaction, the opposite was true for wives: *External factors* was negatively predictive of marital satisfaction. The conceptualization of External Factors as a relationship belief offers some insight into the probable reasons for this divergence of predictive relationship among British wives and husbands. *External factors* as a relationship belief has constituents of important others, finances, children, personal security and commonality. It is possible that the tensions and disruptions that such external forces bring to bear on the quality of marital experience has more unpleasant impact on British wives than their husbands (Berrington, 2001).

#### 4.8.3.2 Chapter summary

The Quantitative paradigm has sought to investigate the relative construction of marital experience, and this objective has been pursued through the comparative analyses of the various social psychological indicators: self-construals, marriage role expectations, relationship beliefs, self-disclosure and material support. Further, the extent to which these variables predict marital satisfaction has been pursued. The main findings that have been reported and discussed in this chapter as summarized below.

*Self-construals.* Significant cross-national differences emerged between British and Ghanaian couples. Contrary to *hypothesis 1a*, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher on independent self-construal than their British counterparts; again

Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher on interdependent self-construals, in keeping with *hypothesis 1b*. Beyond establishing the relative prominence of individualism-collectivism patterns through these analyses, the predictive effect of self-construals on marital satisfaction was analysed in direct and mediational prediction models. Among British and Ghanaian couples, self-construals did not directly predict marital satisfaction. However, self-construals mediated between material support/self-disclosure and marital satisfaction in various ways, in confirmation of *hypotheses 6a* and *6b*.

*Marriage roles.* As hypothesized (*hypothesis 3*), a comparison of the marriage role expectations (MRE) of British and Ghanaian couples revealed that Ghanaian couples held significantly more traditional role expectations than did their British counterparts. Explanations were therefore put forward in the sense of the prevalence of collectivistic cultural patterns in the Ghanaian context. Among British couples, MRE directly predicted marital satisfaction, although negatively: the more traditional their role expectation, the less their marital satisfaction levels. No such direct prediction was found for Ghanaian couples. In the mediation analyses, MRE mediated material support exchanges and marital satisfaction for Ghanaian couples but not their British counterparts.

*Relationship beliefs.* In line with predictions (*hypothesis 2a*), Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than their British counterparts on the *External Factors* factor of the Relationship Beliefs Inventory of Fletcher & Kininmonth (1992). This factor, with items tapping belief elements relating to commonality, children, money and

important others in one's social world, is reminiscent of the syndromes described as collectivist. It was therefore confirmatory that Ghanaian couples scored higher on this factor, compared with British couples. Further, in consonance with hypothetical expectation, British couples scored higher than Ghanaian couples on the *Individuality* beliefs factor, confirming culture theory as established by authors in the field (e.g. Hofstede, 1984; Triandis, 1995, etc.). Notwithstanding, contrary to expectation, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher on the remaining two beliefs factors – *Intimacy* and *Passion*.

*Self-disclosure.* Hypothesis 5a expected significantly higher levels of marital self-disclosure among British couples. This is confirmed by multivariate analysis. Also the reciprocity of disclosure was found. The non-dyadic level analysis showed a greater reciprocity of disclosure among British couples, in support of hypothesis 5b which predicted a *higher reciprocity of disclosure among British couples*. However, the dyadic-level analysis showed the opposite trend: the reciprocity of disclosure was higher among Ghanaian couples than British couples, contrary to the hypothesis. Self-disclosure served as a direct predictor of marital satisfaction among Ghanaian couples and not British couples. In the mediation analyses, Self-disclosure as a predictor of marital satisfaction was mediated by self-construals and relationship beliefs.

*Material support.* Hypothesis 4a predicted that at the cultural-level, husbands would provide more material support to their wives than they received from their wives. Results confirm these hypotheses. Also there was a greater dyadic reciprocity of

support among British couples than their Ghanaian counterparts, in line with *hypothesis 4b*. Also as noted above, material support had no direct effect on marital satisfaction. Self-construals and marriage role expectation mediated material support and marital satisfaction.

# Chapter 5

## The Qualitative Study (Study 2)

### 5.1.0 Introduction

In order to complement the quantitative paradigm reported in chapter four and pursue the trends observed therein in a deeper way, a qualitative approach was implemented in the form of in-depth semi-structured interviews with married people in Britain and Ghana. The rationale was to yield much richer data on marital experience across the two settings which would illuminate the relative constructions that exist, as well as probe further into the predictors of satisfaction. The Quantitative paradigm sought to investigate the relative construction of marital experience, and this objective has been pursued through the comparative analyses of the various social psychological indicators: self-construals, marriage role expectations, relationship beliefs, self-disclosure and material support.

Particular results needed qualitative enquiry. For example, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher on the relationship beliefs of Intimacy and Passion. This result is counterintuitive in the light of existing assumptions which imply that in social systems where relational interdependence, and hierarchical patterns

feature prominently, the hedonistic and affective aspects of personal (heterosexual) relationship are minimally expressed (Matsumoto, 2000; Schwartz, 1992, 1994; Markus & Kitayama' 1991). In view of these results, it was imperative to further illuminate these observations through interviews procedure that explicitly probes people's subjective understanding of the phenomena of intimacy and passion. Related to this results is the observation of significantly higher levels of self-disclosure among British couples. Since self-disclosure is hypothesized as a major determinant of marital satisfaction, it was important to explore it beyond the quantitative observation. Further, with regard to material support, the particular nature and processes of these exchanges could not be determined solely by the typical Likert –scale type of measure. Thus, it was beneficial to shed more light on these exchange processes. In addition, perhaps a concept such as marital satisfaction is vague and might mean different things to people across or even within particular cultural settings (Goodwin & Cramer, 2000). For this matter, an in-depth pursuit of the particular understandings of the phenomenon of marital satisfaction, just like the other concepts in this project, was very relevant. Also, to go beyond the quantitative indication of the traditional-egalitarian dichotomy of marriage role expectation among British and Ghanaian couples, a further analysis of the local realities underpinning these value-based attitudinal tendencies was necessary.

### **5.2.0 Methodological triangulation**

The term triangulation was used for the first time by Webb *et al.* (1966) in the social sciences to characterize the use of multiple methods in the measurement of

the same construct (Campbell, 1956; Campbell & Fisk, 1959). Social scientists have remarked time and again about the epistemological benefits that can be derived from triangulation in research (Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990). In psychological research where the basic phenomenon of interest is human behaviour and mental processes, the use of one paradigm to complement the other has yielded progressive outcomes. Thus as succinctly remarked by Knafl & Breitmayer (1989:238), “Investigators engaged in qualitative research will have increased confidence in the credibility of their results when multiple data collection methods yield consistent findings”. The quantitative and qualitative analyses of complex phenomena are complementary and not competing (Miller et al, 1997). In a real sense, combining various investigatory methods puts research in a stronger position to make sense of findings in a more confident way than utilising one particular approach (Cooligan, 1996; Triandis, McCusker & Hui, 1990).

### **5.2.1 Formulating the interview Protocol**

As mentioned in chapter three, this qualitative study was designed as a sequel to omnibus study. The themes under which questions were formulated were derived from:

1. The particular aims and hypotheses outlined in this research programme.
2. Field encounters in the administration of the omnibus questionnaire in the quantitative study. This includes comments volunteered by some participants during the process of seeking their consent and handing in questionnaire packs to them. Notes were taken of such comments. Also,



some participants responded to questionnaire items in an interesting way by writing extra comments besides particular questions to which they had something to say beyond the Lykert-type scales on which they were instructed to rate their responses.

3. Further, throughout the research period, I had made several poster presentations of preliminary findings (based on *main study 1*) at departmental conferences<sup>44</sup> and discussions in peer group seminars<sup>45</sup> where colleagues and various social science scholars have thoughtfully made relevant suggestions and insightful comments. Apart from these sources of useful insights, constant discussions with my academic supervisor(s) have also served vital functions of advising the formulation of the interview questions.

In essence, apart from the specific research objectives and hypotheses pursued in the project, all of the above (in)formal sources coupled with theoretical positions derived from the marital relationship literature have directly and indirectly served as guiding insights for questionnaire item formulation.

### **5.2.2 The interview Protocol**

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<sup>44</sup> The Department of Human Sciences held an annual one-day conference on the University's Runnymede Campus, usually in January of every year. At this conference, the teaching and research staff of the department make oral presentations of their individual ongoing research to the academic audience of the department, composed of lecturers, research fellows and postgraduate students. Postgraduate students however make poster presentations based on their research, towards the end of the day, and this session is very productively patronized by all conference participants who discuss and contribute their ideas on the posters. This has always been a fruitful 'sounding board' for postgraduates to garner rich ideas and comments from the academics in the various multidisciplinary areas. In total, I have made three such poster presentations throughout the four years of my postgraduate studies.

<sup>45</sup> For example, the Human Sciences Postgraduate Writing Group.

An interview protocol is a guide or schedule, showing the particular questions to be asked, and in what order. For each participant, the entire number of items in the protocol were exhausted. There were four sections of questions: section A tapped biographical information on age, length of marriage, number of children, participants' occupation and occupation of spouse; section B contained items on material support; section C addressed companionship and sharing and was constituted of questions on intimacy, closeness and disclosure; section D was composed of questions on marital satisfaction. In all, the four sections contained a total of 13 questions (see *Appendix 3a* for protocol). Owing to the nature of personal information that participants would be expected to divulge, the number and length of questions were intentionally kept to a minimum. The strategy was to use probes at appropriate junctures to elicit more specific information from participants (cf. Berg, 2004). The questions were used as stimuli to 'set the agenda' for further probing. Writers in the field of qualitative research have noted that this opportunity of probing further is one of the main benefits of semi-structured interviews as an epistemological paradigm (e.g. Berg, 2004; Boyatzis, 1998).

### **5.3 Participants**

Married persons from both British and Ghanaian settings were contacted for participation. This involved taking married people as individuals, not as dyads. In other words, any husbands and wives were recruited in isolation of their spouses, wherever they could be reached within the settings. The empirical difficulty of reaching married couples as dyads in the omnibus questionnaire study served as a guide for the interview study. Due to the nature of the private information

disclosure required in the interviews, it was not feasible and easy to secure the willingness of participants when their spouses would also participate. Participants were more spontaneous and willing in their responses when they had the assurance that the research was in no way connected with their spouses. Further than all this, and more importantly, the research objectives that this study was meant to address did not require dyadic participation.

As in the omnibus study, couples were contacted in the capital cities of the two countries, England and Ghana: London and Accra. A hundred and seventeen (117) married individuals were interviewed from both settings, with an almost equal representation of sex<sup>46</sup>. Participants' average ages and standard deviations are shown alongside their respective numbers (N) in *table 5.1a* below. The main qualification for participation was that participants must be married (*de jure*). The next qualification was their level of education: participants must have at least *secondary education*; this means O' Level, SSS (in Ghana) or GCSC (in Britain) as well as vocational/technical school certificates.

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<sup>46</sup>The sampling trend that emerged in the omnibus study was also observed for the interview study: in the omnibus study, wives in Britain were more willing to participate than husbands; similarly, in the interview study, wives were more willing to participate, and gave the least excuses to opt out. However, in Ghana, husbands were more willing to participate than wives in both the omnibus and questionnaire studies.

Table 5.1a: Descriptive statistics on age, length of marriage and number of children by nation and couple member.

Nation	Spouse	Descriptive Statistics	Age	Length of marriage	Number of children
Britain	<i>Husband</i>	Mean	42.00	8.77	2.15
		Median	40.00	6.00	2.00
		N	26	26	26
		Std. Deviation	5.817	5.006	.784
		Minimum	35	4	1
		Maximum	55	18	3
	<i>Wife</i>	Mean	36.39	10.79	1.68
		Median	36.50	6.50	2.00
		N	28	28	28
		Std. Deviation	7.335	9.163	.863
		Minimum	27	2	0
		Maximum	49	30	4
	<i>Total</i>	Mean	39.09	9.81	1.91
		Median	38.50	6.00	2.00
		N	54	54	54
		Std. Deviation	7.167	7.458	.853
		Minimum	27	2	0
		Maximum	55	30	4
Ghana	<i>Husband</i>	Mean	39.79	8.13	1.82
		Median	40.00	5.00	1.00
		N	34	34	34
		Std. Deviation	6.718	7.651	1.714
		Minimum	27	1	0
		Maximum	58	33	7
	<i>Wife</i>	Mean	35.97	7.79	1.62
		Median	33.00	5.00	2.00
		N	29	29	29
		Std. Deviation	7.380	7.208	1.474
		Minimum	25	1	0
		Maximum	46	21	5
	<i>Total</i>	Mean	38.03	7.98	1.73
		Median	38.00	5.00	1.00
		N	63	63	63
		Std. Deviation	7.233	7.392	1.598
		Minimum	25	1	0
		Maximum	58	33	7

As shown in table 5.1b above, British participants had slightly higher mean ages (husband=42.0, wife=36.39) than Ghanaian participants (husband=39.79, wife=35.97)

with slightly higher standard deviations for husbands across the two settings. Further, participants from both settings had similar lengths of marriage though standard deviations differed between British wives and husbands. Further, although the same median marks (Median=2) were obtained for both settings on the number of children, Ghanaian participants had higher mean scores than their British counter parts (Mean (Gh)= 1.73; Mean (Br)=1.91).

Table 5.1b: Occupation of participant by Couple member and National setting

National setting of participant	Occupation		Couple member		Total
			Husband	Wife	
<b>Britain</b>	Occupation of participant	Professional, managerial	12 (46.2%)	4 (14.3%)	16 (29.6%)
		Clerical, sales or skilled labour	14 (53.8%)	12 (42.9%)	26 (48.1%)
		Homemaker	0 (.0%)	10 (35.7%)	10 (18.5%)
		Retired, unemployed or job seeker	0 (.0%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (3.7%)
	<b>Total</b>		26 (100.0%)	28 (100.0%)	54 (100.0%)
<b>Ghana</b>	Occupation of participant	Professional, managerial	6 (17.6%)	0 (.0%)	6 (9.5%)
		Clerical, sales or skilled labour	27 (79.4%)	27 (93.1%)	54 (85.7%)
		Services or unskilled labour	1 (2.9%)	2 (6.9%)	3 (4.8%)
	<b>Total</b>		34 (100.0%)	29 (100.0%)	63 (100.0%)

More British participants (29.6%) were in managerial-level occupations than Ghanaian participants (9.5%). No Ghanaian wife was in this occupational category. More Ghanaian participants (87.5%) fell in the next occupational category (clerical, sales or skilled labour) than British participants(48.1%).

#### 5.4 Interview Procedure

The procedure for contacting participants was very strategic. Since the sampling technique was purposive, the interviewers<sup>47</sup> contact married people wherever they would be found: offices, academic settings, homes, town centres and social functions. Potential participants were approached and introduced to the research. When participants agreed<sup>48</sup> to take part, after the interviewer had ensured that they fell within the sampling specifications, either the interviewers held the interview session there and then or appropriate time and venue were agreed upon, and the interviewer simply honoured the appointment and contacted participants for the interview session.

## 5.5 Ethical considerations

During the session, informed consent was secured after interviewers had given participants some more information about the general purpose of the interview (without revealing the particular hypotheses or expectations of the project). Also, ethical principles were implemented by reminding participants of their rights to

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<sup>47</sup> I recruited four psychology student colleagues, two in Ghana (University of Ghana) and two in England (Brunel University and Thames Valley University), who assisted me at various stages of research. All four of them helped with Questionnaire administration in the *omnibus study*, and one in each country helped with the interviews in this *qualitative study*.

<sup>48</sup> Securing such agreement with each potential participant was difficult. Generally, married individuals are reluctant to disclose personal information relating to their marital experience, especially to a researcher (Jourard, 1971; Jourard & Lasakow, 1958). Logically one would have thought that such reluctance applied only to married individuals who are experiencing some sort of relationship trauma, abuse or disharmony. But we discovered from the field interviews that many times, even individuals who were happy in their marital experience still exhibited reluctance in participating in a study that appears to be prying into private, usually undisclosed and unarticulated matters. As a consequence, several potential participants declined the request for participation. Some agreed on the first contact and later changed their minds and failed to participate. It was difficult first of all locating married people in the British setting, as most of the potential participants revealed they were not married, but were just (cohabiting) partners. Interestingly, British wives were more willing to participate than British husbands, whereas Ghanaian husbands were more willing to participate than Ghana wives. Due to this practical difficulty particularly with the Britain sample, the total number of participants who successfully completed the interview sessions was limited, though a great amount of time (6 months) was devoted to the interview data collection.

withdraw at any point in the interview if they felt so, and their freedom to withhold any aspect of information they felt uncomfortable with. For purposes of accuracy and time economy, the interview sessions were recorded (with permission from participants) for transcription.

### **5.6.0 Content Analysis**

The sort of content analytic strategy implemented was a combination of both manifest and latent content analysis (Gottschalk, 1995). Manifest content refers to the visible or apparent elements of the interview text, such as the particular words or phrases used by the interviewee as well as the manner and the number of times they were used. However to grasp the meaning of particular words or phrases as used by a particular respondent, we turn to latent content analysis which seeks to unravel the underlying aspects of the message interpretively. Some qualitative research authors refer to this combination as thematic analysis (e.g. Gottschalk, 1995; Smith *et al.*,1992).

#### **5.6.1 Coding scheme generation**

The data yielded was transcribed verbatim from the tapes. The next stage involved content analysis of interview scripts. In this content analysis, the categories used for the data coding were inductively determined. This inductive approach to category formation begins with the researcher immersing themselves in the transcribed text with the aim of identifying emergent themes from each

message (Abrahamson, 1983) unlike the deductive approach where the categorical scheme suggested by a theoretical perspective is used. Thus, with the inductive approach to category development, the researcher is allowed to “ground these categories to the data from which they derive” (Berg, 2004:273). Some of these categories were *in vivo* categories while others were researcher-formulated categories (cf. Strauss, 1990). Since the interviews were semi-structured, questions were topically organized and distinct responses were elicited by each question under particular topics. The answers were coded according to the coding scheme thus developed particularly by examining the answers in the following ways:

- a. Descriptive – sticking to the facts contained in the script, summarizing selected points.
- b. Deductive<sup>49</sup> – drawing conclusions from the interview material in the fashion of deducing Y from the given X.
- c. Thematic – detecting and picking up themes that emerge within the interview or across several interviews.
- d. Speculative – hypothetical interpretations abstracted from the content interviews.

### **5.6.2 Reliability analysis**

The reliability of interviews data is ensured by a number of steps. These steps as detailed by Silverman (2001) are: thorough pre-testing of interview schedules

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<sup>49</sup> ‘Deductive’ as used here does not imply the top-down method to investigation as used in the coding scheme development mentioned in the preceding paragraph. It simply means deducing inferences from a given material, as stated above.



(protocols), training of interviewers, and as much use as possible of fixed choice answers and inter-rater reliability checks on the coding of answers to open-ended questions. These guidelines were closely followed in this study as much as was practically possible. To begin with, the questions in the protocol were formulated to be as simple and straightforward as possible, in order to reduce unclarity and ambiguity to the barest minimum. Further, a two-part pre-test was carried out on married individuals in Britain as well as Ghana (using pre-university access students - mature adult students). However no important changes were deemed necessary over all the original protocol items. Further, the two assistants who assisted in the conduct of the interviews in the two settings were psychology students, who were given adequate recruitment and instructions by me to ensure they possessed requisite skills to carry out the interview sessions successfully and properly. Since open ended questions were used in the semi-structured form, inter-rater reliability tests were carried out on the coding of two analysts (myself and one other psychology graduate). Also, low-inference descriptors (Silverman, 2001) were used in the form of tape-recording the interview sessions and ensuring that tapes were carefully transcribed verbatim (by myself, not an audio-typist). Finally, extracts from the data (verbatim answers from some interviewees) are included in the analysis and discussion of results, alongside the particular questions that elicited them.

### **5.6.3 Inter-rater reliability**

The percentage agreement method of estimating inter-rater reliability was used for testing the reliability of scoring of the interviews data. This method was chosen

for two main reasons: 1) the number of themes coded were few; 2) the number of units of coding were few (Boyatzis, 1998). This method thus permits the reliability analysis of qualitative data by the formula:

$$PA = \frac{\text{number of times both coders agreed}}{\text{number of times coding was possible}}$$

Thus in application, the two coders' codes were compared for agreement counts and these counts were divided by the number of possible counts. A fairly high range of percentage agreement was attained (80-95.6 %) across all responses. The percentages for particular items are displayed in *table 5.2* below.

*Table 5.2: Inter-rater percentage agreement on interview coding (items 1-3 were demographic)*

<b>Protocol item (question)</b>	<b>Inter-rater percentage agreement</b>
<b>4</b>	88%
<b>5</b>	92%
<b>6</b>	85%
<b>7</b>	83.3%
<b>8</b>	80%
<b>9</b>	82.6%
<b>10a</b>	95.6
<b>10b</b>	88.5
<b>11</b>	85%
<b>12a</b>	82%
<b>12b</b>	86%
<b>13</b>	85.6%

### 5.7.0 Quantitative derivations of results

One major benefit of the semi-structured interviews paradigm is the possibility of questioning and probing along similar lines for all participants within and across groups. This enables responses to be categorized by a coding system so that between-group comparisons could be made quantitatively by use of counts. This was the kind of analytic strategy employed with this particular data and therefore the results are organized according to the particular lines along which questions probed. Due to the multiple categories generated to capture the diverse responses, coupled with the relatively small sample size obtained, inferential statistics could not be performed on comparisons of responses, since some cells within the contingency tables had zero (0) counts, while others had too low counts. Thus Chi Square tests could not be performed for those comparisons. Hence, descriptive representation in the form of percentages were adopted as quantitative derivations for those categories.

#### *5.7.1 Relative exchange of material support in marriage*

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, material support in this particular context refers to the direct provision of the physical things that we use in daily life such as food, clothing, housing and their accompanying financial implications. To begin with, participants were asked the straightforward question: ‘in your marital home, who provides the material things that you use such as house-keeping money, food, clothes, rent, bills etc?’. Responses were categorised according to the source specifically mentioned by participants. Thus for this particular question, five categories were inductively generated and responses coded accordingly. As

exhibited in table 5.3a below, 32.4% of Ghanaian husbands reported providing exclusive material support for their family as against 0% of British husbands.

Table 5.3a: Provision of material resources

			Source of material support				
			Self exclusively	Self more	Spouse exclusively	Spouse more	Both equally/joint account
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	0(0%)	10(38.5%)	0(0%)	2(7.7%)	14(53.8%)
		Wife	4(14.3%)	0(0%)	10(35.7%)	0(0%)	14(50%)
	Ghana	Husband	11(32.4%)	14(41.2%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	9(26.5%)
		Wife	2(6.9%)	1(3.40%)	7(24.10%)	11(37.90%)	8(27.6%)

Also, in line with this trend, no Ghanaian husband (0%) reported their wife as either providing material support exclusively or more than them, whereas 7.7% of British husbands reported their wife as providing more support than them. To corroborate the claims of Ghanaian husbands, 24.1% of Ghanaian wives reported their spouse as providing exclusively while 37% of them reported their husbands as providing more. In the category of both husband and wife equally providing material support and/or running a joint account from which resources are provided, more British (53%) than Ghanaian (26%) husbands were found. The same trend was found between British wives (50%) and Ghanaian wives (27%).

The general trend that is apparent from these results is that Ghanaian husbands and wives tend to regard the husband as the main source of material provision, in terms of exclusive or more provision. On the contrary, although 35.7% of British wives indicated that their husbands provided exclusively, their higher indications for running a joint account or providing equally seems to point to the fact that in their understanding and experience, husbands are not as highly expected to or really do not serve as the major source of support provision. This indication is vividly reflected in the exact responses of some respondents from the two settings, presented below.

#### Claims to major responsibility of the husband

Many Ghanaian husbands and wives exhibited strong claims to major responsibility of the husband to provide material resources for the home. The force of their discourse in this direction is reminiscent of the cultural construction of material exchange between marital dyads.

*#8-Gb Husb:* I'm in charge of everything. I provide the school fees, electricity bill, clothes everything, I'm the one who provides them all.

*#9-Gb Husb:* I'm in charge of everything. Nothing comes from anywhere.

*#10-Gb Husb:* By God's grace I'm the one who supplies those things.

*#11-Gb Husb:* As the man, I'm the one who provides. I understand the man has his covenant duties and the woman has hers. If you don't perform your duty, there will be chaos in the home. That is solely my responsibility but she comes in to help, she supplements.

#14- *Gb Husb*: I am the only one who does everything. She sews but there is no income. I have been questioning her from time to time about how the work is going. But I provide for everything.

#22-*Gb Husb*: Mostly I do, as the man of the home and I provide most of these things. However occasionally my wife too makes an input.

39#-*Gb Husb*: I do. I provide the material needs for the home. As a parent, that is a tradition in my life. In the bible I am to do that.

#28-Gh Wife: OK, considering marriage, it is the responsibility of my husband, but as a help meet, a woman, I do my best to support him.

#33-Gh Wife: It's my husband. I think it's the duty of the man to provide those things he does, as the head, but as time goes on I also provide some in that aspect.

In other responses, Ghanaian wives simply responded by saying. “my husband does” or “he does”, while husbands also simply said “I do” or “it is I”. In those instances where a Ghanaian participant indicates a dual system of provision, still the force of the discourse indicates that although both parties practically contribute to the material upkeep of the home, it is primarily the man who is or must be the breadwinner for the home. A typical example is this response from a (Ghanaian) wife: “He does, as the head, but as time goes on I also provide some in that aspect” (# 44-Gh Wife).

#### *Types of material resources provided by spouses*

On the issue of particular material resources provided by participants' spouses, (*table 5.3b* below) most husbands from Britain (80.8%) and Ghana (58.8%) reported that their wives provided resources that were categorised as ‘household

consumables'. These consumables include food, soap and other short-lived items.

On the direct mention of money, most wives (Britain=82.1%: Ghana=65.5%) reported that their husbands provided money. From these results, it appears wives generally tended to be involved in family shopping more than husbands, who provide the money.

Table 5.3b: *Particular material support provided by participants spouse*

			Material resources from spouse				
			<i>Household consumables</i>	<i>Partly bills</i>	<i>Children's clothes</i>	<i>money</i>	<i>Nothing</i>
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	21(80.8%)	0(0%)	3(11.5%)	2 (7.7 %)	0(0%)
		Wife	2(7.1%)	3(10.7%)	0(0%)	23(82.1%)	0(0%)
	Ghana	Husband	20(58.8%)	5(14.7%)	2(5.9%)	4(11.8%)	3(8.8%)
		Wife	1(3.4%)	8(27.6%)	0(0%)	19(65.5%)	1(3.4%)

#### *External sources of material support*

While British participants indicated very little (3.6% of wives) material support in terms of money and consumables from external sources to the marital home, a considerable percentage of Ghanaian participants (17.6 % husbands and 27.6% of wives) reported having received support from external sources. However a relatively larger percentage of British wives (28.%) received external instrumental help in the form of emotional support from friends and extended family, whereas no Ghanaian wife reported receiving such emotional help. An interesting trend that showed up is in the category of child care support where no Ghanaian participant (0%) reported receiving child care support. This is supported by a large

number of them (76.5% husbands, 72.4% wives) indicating having received no help at all. In contrast, British participants largely (42.3% husbands, 53.6% wives) reported having received external help for child care. This trend appears contrary to expectation given the knowledge that the Ghanaian social world (more than the British social world) is predicated on relational interdependence.

*Table 5.3c: Instrumental help received from external family and friends*

			External support received			
			<i>None</i>	<i>Child care</i>	<i>Money / consumables</i>	<i>Emotional Support &amp; advice</i>
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	15 (57.7%)	11 (42.3%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
		Wife	4 (14.3%)	15 (53.6%)	1 (3.6%)	8 (28.6%)
	Ghana	Husband	26 (76.5%)	0 (0%)	6 (17.6%)	2 (5.9%)
		Wife	21 (72.4%)	0 (0%)	8 (27.6%)	0 (0%)

The trend of a higher report of childcare help from parents reported by British participants is reminiscent of the child minding situation prevalent in Britain which is not recognized in Ghanaian settings. In Ghanaian settings though friends, extended family and even neighbours may be involved in taking care of one's child or children, such help is so natural and usually available at no official cost that people (parents) do not refer to it as support<sup>50</sup>. This is reflected in the admission of some Ghanaian participants to receiving external support in the form of money and consumables (1.6% of Ghanaian husbands and 27.6% of Ghanaian wives, as compared 0% for British husbands and 3.6% for British wives. (No 'child minding' in Ghana).

<sup>50</sup> This social reality is elaborated further in the discussion of this chapter.



### 5.7.2 Relative understandings and experience of marital intimacy and closeness

This section of the interviews covered participants’ understandings of marital intimacy and closeness in terms of dyadic companionship and sharing of personal information (disclosure). Participants were directly asked three main questions along this line, the first one being, “how do you understand intimacy in marriage?” Responses to this question were coded into two distinct categories as shown in *table 5.4a*.

*Table 5.4a: Categorization of wives’ and husbands’ understanding of intimacy by nation.*

			Intimacy themes		
			Relational	Instrumental	
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	26 (100%)	0 (0%)	
		Wife	28 (100%)	0 (0%)	
	Ghana	Husband	33 (97.1%)	1 (2.9%)	
		Wife	28 (98.6)	1 (3.4%)	

All British participants, husband and wife, (100%) described their understanding of marital intimacy as constituted of elements that were both explicitly and implicitly indicative of a relational construction<sup>51</sup>. Both husbands and wives in the British sample gave vivid descriptions of their understanding of marital intimacy, as shown in extracts of exact responses included below.

<sup>51</sup> Relational construction or elements refers to elements such as dyadic sharing of personal information, disclosure of emotional needs, trust, communication affection and mutual respect, as depicted in the verbatim responses reported above. Instrumental elements however refers to pragmatic things such as fulfilment of roles relating to domestic chores, provision of material needs, attending to the physical needs of partner or the nuclear family as well as extended family.

*#1-Br Wife:* To me its about not having secrets, sharing problems together, not sort of worrying about something without telling my partner, we share all things.

*#3-Br Wife:* It's just being yourself, sharing, loving, just being allowed to just being your own person. You don't have to put on a show for something. And also sharing your innermost secrets, thoughts and worries with somebody knowing that they will just accept your words or no words really.

*#5-Br Wife:* Intimacy....eh I would say trust, it would be em having a good sexual relationship. Also that trust in your lover as well, and your friend.

*#9-Br Wife:* Being able to talk to him about anything.

*#10-Br Wife:* Is how you relate to the your partner emotionally. And it's the foundation that keeps together even though things on the outside also matter but it's the bond.

*#26-Br Wife:* It's your closeness really and being able to communicate and being in a loving relationship and being friends.

*#15 – Br Husband:* Understanding, trust, doing things together. Trust and being mates, understanding each other's personality, who he is.

*#20 – Br Husband:* Having care and understanding for each other. This will make closeness possible, you can really satisfy each other in everything, emotionally and sexually

*#21 – Br Husband:* How close you are in talking about issues, communication and trust and love. There must be respect for each other so that you can be intimate.

A similar trend was observed for Ghanaian participants where 97.1% of husbands and 98.6% of wives articulated relational elements in their understanding of intimacy. A representative selection of responses to this effect is presented below:

*#1 – Gb Wife:* Is more than friendship, and I say it's more than friendship. You'll be close, the closeness is the same as

love. The more you love each other, the more you talk, you discuss the house together, the more you become intimate.

#6 – *Gh Wife*: Oneness, oneness (prompt: what) that love that generate between Adam and Eve, you see that brings couples together, to bring that intimacy that you're talking about.

#15 – *Gh Wife*: It implies understanding each other, the love for each other, showing compassion for each other and respecting of each other.

#16 – *Gh Wife*: Very close with my husband. (probe: what is intimacy all about?): To be very close to him, free to him and every problem I have I tell him, and he also advise me that when I do this it will help me in my marriage.

#23 – *Gh Wife*: OK, I understand it in this way: closeness, that cordial relationship, freely and so many things (probe: what exactly). The closeness, I mean we don't feel shy (pause, smile...). (probe: say it). We don't feel shy, if I .... want to have sex with him, I can say it. If he too wants to have sex with me, he can say it. We don't feel shy (laughed).

#20 – *Gh Husband*: Yes, intimacy is something I believe is like the engine of the marriage. Because if there's not that intimacy, you cannot communicate, or understand each other very well. Without intimacy there is no understanding and no love. It is the engine.

#21 – *Gh Husband*: My understanding of intimacy is that you both couples should be together, knowing each person's way. The cooperation and togetherness is important in marriage.

#31 – *Gh Husband*: Bible says what God has put together, nothing should separate it. Sharing everything with your wife. You shouldn't hide anything from your wife. It should be transparent.

One tendency that featured in some Ghanaian responses is the hesitation that characterised their talk about sexual matters, particularly wives. Many of them tended to use the phrase 'emotional needs' in place of 'sex'. Even though these

participants interestingly tended to want to mention the issue of sex in relation to their understanding of intimacy, much of this was implicit, and could only be deduced in the form of latent content (Strauss, 1990). This is represented by indicative gestures such as pauses, smiles, sighs and looking away. Some of these behavioural indicators were captured by the audio tape recording<sup>52</sup>. A confirmatory source is that, after exhausting the questions and accompanying probes with each participant, interviewers asked interviewees if they would volunteer any more information about their marital experience which may not have been mentioned by them earlier. Some participants, particularly Ghanaian wives used this opportunity to disclose some more about their sexual desires and some asked the recorders to be put off. In essence, issues mentioned in this way mainly involved their frustrations with 'workaholic' husbands who would be absorbed in their work for six days of the week, leaving them (the wife) to be sexually starved many a time. This trend was relatively uncommon with British participants.

The second and third inductive categories (Berg, 2004) that were created for responses to this particular intimacy question were coded 'instrumental elements', and 'relational/instrumental elements' respectively, and these were theoretically derived. As shown in *table 5.4a* above, British husbands and wives did not (0%)

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<sup>52</sup> The audio recorders used had Voice Activated Systems (VAS) which could be programmed to record only when a voice is heard. However, this function was switched off in order to permit a continuous recording of the interview sessions. This was practically beneficial because the recording captured all pauses, sighs, audible laughs, giggles and hesitations, although it also meant that several tapes were used and the transcription was also more tedious in terms of time and energy. In addition, interviewers made session notes on each participant as far such notes were deemed necessary in capturing non-verbal communication with interviewees.

indicate intimacy constituents that fell in any of these two categories; however a small percentage of Ghanaian participants (one husband and one wife, representing 3.17% of the Ghana sample) indicated instrumental elements as constituent of marital intimacy.

Beyond the indication of the constituents of marital intimacy, the next question asked participants to make a comparative indication of importance relating to their spouse versus extended family and friends. The question specifically was, ‘*comparing your husband/wife to your extended family and friends, who is more important to you*’. Such a question is based on the atomism-connection<sup>53</sup> assumption inherent in the individualism-collectivism theory of culture (Hofstede, 1984; Triandis, 1995; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The point here is that married people located in Ghanaian and British settings might have a sense of being (relational or independent) that shapes their construction of the dyadic involvement of marital experience, to the effect of being represented in their priorities with regard to spouse versus extended family and friends. Once again inductive categories were derived, into which responses were coded as exhibited in *table 5.4b*.

*Table 5.4b: Comparative importance of spouse*

	Importance choice			
	Spouse	Ext fam/friends	Spouse & fam/frends	The children

<sup>53</sup> Atomism-connection is used by some cultural scientists (e.g. Adams, 2000; Adams & Markus, 2001; Adams, Anderson & Adonu, 2004) to denote an ontological sense (instead of the value orientation) of individualism-collectivism. Atomism thus refers to a Hobbesian philosophy in which individual sense of being is that of fundamental separateness, and any relational agency is absolutely volitional; connection is the opposite sense, in which individual experience is located in a relational field where one is non-voluntarily connected by forces (social relationships) outside themselves.

<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	26(100%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
		Wife	21(75%)	2(7.1%)	1(3.6%)	4(14.3%)
	Ghana	Husband	31(91.2%)	0(0%)	3(8.8%)	0(0%)
		Wife	24(82.8%)	2(6.9%)	2(6.9%)	1(3.4%)

Most participants -British and Ghanaian- indicated that their spouses were more important to them than extended family and friends, as shown in the ‘spouse’ column. Both husbands and wives indicated their spouses as more important than extended family and friends. A small percentage (8.8%) of Ghanaian husbands (and 6.9% of wives) indicated that spouse and extended family and friend were equally important to them. On the comparative importance of children, 14% of British wives chose their children above their husbands.

The reasons given by participants for their choices brought further insight into the cultural construction of marital experience. *Table 5.4c* represents the kinds of reasons given, showing that a greater percentage of participants chose their spouses as more important for the reason of love and understanding.

*Table 5.4c:* Reasons for comparative partner importance.

	<b>Reasons for comparative priority</b>			
	No reason given	Choice, love understanding	Extended family always been there	We are one flesh

<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	0 (0%)	23 (88.5%)	3 (11.5%)	0 (0%)
		Wife	4 (14.3%)	19 (67.9%)	5 (17.9%)	0 (0%)
	Ghana	Husband	0 (0%)	23 (67.6%)	3 (8.8%)	8 (23.5%)
		Wife	1 (3.45%)	17 (58.6%)	4 (13.8%)	7 (24.1%)

Thus 88.5% of British husbands and 67.9% of British wives gave such reasons of love, personal choice and companionship. Similarly Ghanaian couples (67.6% of husbands and 58% of wives) gave the same reason. Other reasons given include the fact that extended family is always there as a source of rescue and help in situations of difficulty or calamities, even before they got into the marital contract. It is interesting to note that no British participant made reference to religious beliefs as the reasons for their choices, whereas some Ghanaian participants (23.5% of husbands and 24.1% of wives) referred to the marital discourse of ‘one flesh’. In a sense, such responses point to the power of beliefs in the cultural grounding of psyche.

In response to the relative comparison of partner importance, some participants gave more elaboration of their choice, by making a distinction for the choice. One of such responses is:

“I can’t compare him with my family such as my mum and other, because they are in different categories. But in terms of closeness, I’m closer to him now than with my mum. So I guess he is closest person than any of my family”. (#10 – Br Wife)(verbatim).

### 5.7.3 Relative understandings and experience of marital satisfaction

In order to investigate the cultural construction of marital satisfaction, interview questions probed into the construction and personal experience of marital satisfaction. For example, the first question on marital satisfaction was explicit and brief: *from your experience, what makes marital satisfaction?*. This particular question was aimed at tapping the prevalent expectation (i.e. construction) of satisfaction, beyond an individual situation. Responses to this question were again inductively categorised to capture codes in three broad ways as represented in *table 5.5a* below. Results show that relational elements again feature prominently within and across the two settings, for both husbands and wives. However, British husbands tended to refer less to relational elements than did British wives and Ghanaian husbands and wives. In both settings, a greater percentage of wives than husbands mentioned relational elements.

*Table 5.5a: Constituents of marital satisfaction*

			What makes marital satisfaction		
			Relational elements	Instrumental elements	Relational & /instrumental elements
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	11(42.3%)	2(7.7%)	10(38.5%)
		Wife	22(85.7%)	0(0%)	4(14.3%)
	Ghana	Husband	22(64.7%)	3(8.8%)	9(26.5%)
		Wife	25(86.2%)	0(0%)	4(13.8%)



It is interesting to note that in terms of marital satisfaction, wives from Ghana and Britain did not refer at all to instrumental elements as constituent of marital satisfaction. In addition, an identical small percentage (14.3% of British wives and 13.8% of Ghanaian wives) indicated a combination of relational and instrumental issues. On the contrary, a considerable percentage of Husbands, both British and Ghanaian, referred to instrumental (7.7% of British husbands and 8.8% of Ghanaian husbands) as well as a combination of relational and instrumental elements (38.5% and 26.5% of British and Ghanaian husbands respectively).

To unravel the causal elements of marital satisfaction at the individual experiential level, participants were specifically asked to account for the particular *“things that make you satisfied or dissatisfied in your marriage?”* This aspect of probing yielded an expected trend (*table 5.5b*): on the one hand, more British husbands (88.5%) than Ghanaian husbands (52.9%) and more British wives (85.7%) than Ghanaian wives (65.5%) tended to mention relational elements. On the other hand, more Ghanaian husbands and wives also indicated instrumental as well as relational/instrumental elements as shown in *table 5.5b* below

*Table 5.5b: Marital satisfaction factors.*

			Specific satisfaction factors		
			Relational elements	Instrumental elements	Relational & /instrumental elements
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	23(88.5%)	0(0%)	3(11.5%)
		Wife	24(85.7%)	0(0%)	4(14.3%)

Ghana	Husband	18(52.9%)	6(17.6%)	10(29.4%)
	Wife	19(65.5%)	2(6.9%)	8(27.6%)

A way to back-check on the construction of satisfaction was to look at responses on dissatisfaction factors. Again, relational-oriented factors (e.g. spouse rudeness and misunderstanding/communication breakdown) featured strongly across settings. A notable emergence is the factor of intrusion of in-laws, which was mentioned by some Ghanaian husbands and wives. This pattern is captured in *table 5.5c* below.

*Table 5.5c: Marital dissatisfaction factors.*

			Specific dissatisfaction factors					
			No dissatisf. reported	Spouse rudeness	Misunderstanding & communication breakdown	Inadequate Sex life	Unmet emotional/ material needs	Intrusion Of In-laws
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	0(0%)	2(7.7%)	15(57.7%)	3(11.5%)	3(11.5%)	0(0%)
		Wife	7(25%)	9(32.1%)	7(25%)	0(0%)	3(10.7%)	2(7.1%)
	Ghana	Husband	2(5.9%)	4(11.8%)	17(50%)	0(0%)	2(5.9%)	3(8.8%)
		Wife	2(6.9%)	6(20.7%)	10(34.5%)	2(6.9%)	0(0%)	5(17.2%)

On marital relationship quality and satisfaction, there was indication that a significant percentage of participants experienced high levels of quality and

satisfaction. As demonstrated by the categorizations in *table 5.5d* below, both British husbands and wives (61.5% and 78.6% respectively) and Ghanaian husbands and wives (73.5% and 82% respectively) reported having very cordial and close dyadic experiences. Comparatively lesser percentages of participants reported having average (ambivalent) quality. These responses were elicited by the question: *in terms of closeness and intimacy and sharing of personal information, how do you describe the relationship between you and your spouse?*

Table 5.5d: *Relationship quality.*

			Description of relationship with spouse	
			<i>Very cordial &amp; close, nobody knows our secret; good sex life</i>	<i>Average, a bit of closeness &amp; conflict sometimes</i>
<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	16(61.5%)	10(38.5%)
		Wife	22(78.6%)	6(21.4%)
	Ghana	Husband	25(73.5%)	5(26.5%)
		Wife	24(82.8%)	5(17.2%)

In corroboration of the extent of relationship quality, the final question asked participants to rate their overall satisfaction with their marriage. The majority of participants reported satisfaction levels between very satisfied and averagely satisfied (*table 5.5e*).

Table 5.5e: *Over all satisfaction.*

	<i>Over all satisfaction</i>			
	Very satisfied	Averagely satisfied	Ambivalent Sometimes	Dissatisfied

<b>National setting</b>	Britain	Husband	15(57.7%)	11(42.3%)	0(0%)	1(3.0%)
		Wife	17(60.7%)	8(28.6%)	1(3.6%)	1(3.4%)
	Ghana	Husband	18(54.5%)	13(39.4%)	1(3%)	0(0%)
		Wife	15(51%7)	9(31%)	4(13.8%)	0(0%)

### 5.8.0 Discussion

This chapter has been committed to adducing qualitative evidence to complement the quantitative findings reported in *chapter 4* of this thesis. In very broad terms, the theoretical structure of enquiry that has been held throughout the project is the relative importance of relational (e.g. self-disclosure, companionship) and instrumental (e.g. material support) factors in predicting marital outcomes (marital satisfaction, relationship quality) in the cultural contexts of Britain and Ghana. The semi-structured interviews paradigm implemented in this project has also followed this structure. Two distinct dimensions of enquiry were pursued: **1)** the cultural construction of marriage in terms of *a)* material realities and resource provision in marriage, *b)* the relational aspect of dyadic experience, and consequentially, **2)** marital outcomes, in the forms of marital satisfaction and quality. To put the findings reported above in perspective, I follow a similar structure.

### 5.8.1 *The cultural construction of marriage*

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, quantitative evidence of the cultural construction of marriage across British and Ghanaian contexts has emerged in the comparative analyses on measures of particular psychosocial indicators – self-construals, marriage role expectations, relationship beliefs, marital self-disclosure, and material support between spouses. Some of the hypothetical suppositions that have driven the project found support while some counterintuitive trends also emerged on the cultural ways in which British and Ghanaian couples understand and experience marriage. Considerable evidence from this interview study support to significant extent, the trends that emerged from the quantitative indicators. I discuss this evidence below in the sections that follow.

#### 5.8.1.1 *Instrumental factors*

One major finding in the quantitative study reported in chapter 8 is that of cultural differences in instrumental support. Married people in British and Ghanaian contexts have relatively different constructions and experience of material exchange at the dyadic level. Specially, in consonance with *hypothesis 3*, which predicted a more traditional construction of marriage in the Ghanaian context gains support in the way that Ghanaian husbands and wives understand and implement material support exchanges. There was a wider gap between Ghanaian husbands and wives on the provision of material support than their British counterparts. On the one hand Ghanaian husbands provided far more

material support to their wives than their wives provided them; on the other hand, the gap of material support between British husbands and wives was relatively smaller, pointing directly to a more egalitarian understanding and enactment of marriage. According to Dunn (1960) and Johnson *et al.* (1992), one defining feature of traditional marriages is that the husband is the major source of income and material provision for the home.

In the results reported in this chapter, there is ample evidence of an exclusive claim to material support provision by Ghanaian husbands. This reveals the perceived and probably actual role of the Ghanaian husband. Probably the formulaic style in which Ghanaian husbands responded to the question of who was the source of material provision in their marriage (e.g. “It is I the man”, “I am the one -man- in charge of all those things”) and also how their wives reported the exclusive role of their husbands (e.g. “It is my husband” or “It is my husband and I support him sometimes”) suggest that couples in Ghanaian settings share consensual understandings of the construction of marriage with particular reference to material support exchanges. However, the force of this claim to a primary and major material provision role of the Ghanaian husband probably obscures the actuality of the prevalent situation, by down playing the instrumental contributions of the wife. On the contrary however, British husbands and wives did not lay such hard and fast claim to the supremacy of the husband in the provision of instrumental resources. Half their number specifically stated that they run joint bank accounts with their spouses, accounts into which both husband and wife transfer money to be used in running the marital home. Again this fits into

Dunn's (1960) description of the egalitarian marriage form in which financial (material) responsibilities are shared.

Possible explanations for this trend in the cultural construction of marital reality with regards to resources may be adduced. First of all, the legacy of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic (the two most dominant religions in Ghana) constructions of marriage where the man is "the head of the family" seems to be deeply rooted in the Ghanaian psyche. There is direct evidence for this in the form of references being made by some Ghanaian wives to their husbands as "...he is the head of the home". Secondly, as in other parts of the world, the world has been said to be "a man's world", in the sense of a historic masculine hegemony in the arenas of education employment, politics and social leadership. However, perhaps the western world (particularly Western European and North American worlds) has gone many strides ahead of non-western worlds in the reduction of such masculine hegemony through the development of educational and employment opportunities, democratic progress, and the pursuit of an equalitarian society (Appdurai, 1996; Goldthorpe, 1989; Inglehart & Baker, 2000).

There is a sense in which the primacy of the role of Ghanaian husbands in the provision of material support in marriage is over-represented. For example, one consequence of polygynous marriage systems (which are still largely present in Ghanaian society – cf. Dadoo, 1998; Klomegah, 1997) is that, each wife in such marriage arrangement has a major share of the responsibility of care for her children since the man is centrally located and spreads his resources over the

entire family. The successful nurturance and upkeep of each child therefore depends largely on the extent to which their mother plays the role of managing and providing supplementary resources. Although the present generation of Ghanaians are less polygamous than the generations before, it is important to note that traditional systems continue to exert their influence on the collective understanding of cultural actors, despite the forces of modernisation and social change (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Klomegah, 1997).

The particular material resources provided by spouses was also investigated. In both Britain and Ghana, most husbands reported their wives as providing household consumables, while most wives have also reported their husbands as providing money. Also more wives than husbands across both settings have reported their husbands paying utility bills. This aspect seems obvious since by common observation, wives (or women) on the whole tend to do more of the shopping and the purchasing of domestic consumables than husbands (or men) in the marital context. And husbands tend to concern themselves more with paying bills, as this has to do directly with money, as depicted in the results (Dunn, 1960).

Another facet of the construction of marriage in terms of instrumental support we can look at is the particular material resources couples received from external sources (extended family and friends) across the two settings. The results from this aspect of the study show an interesting nature of such support received by wives and husbands in British and Ghanaian systems. To begin with, responses to the question of whether participants received material support (in any form) from



external family or friends showed a trend where more Ghanaians than British indicated having received no such support at all from external sources. An extension of this trend is that, no Ghanaians reported any external instrumental support in the form of assistance with child care, whilst British participants (about half their number, both husbands and wives) admitted to receiving external support in the form of child care. Such instrumental support came particularly from mothers in-law of either or both husband and wife. These trends are *prima facie* counterintuitive, in the sense that, given the description of cultural systems where African (Ghanaian) social worlds are characterized by a sense of relational interdependence (Adams, 2000; Hofstede, 2001), one would have thought that participants from these settings would readily admit to receiving lots of external help in diverse ways. For example one would have thought Ghanaian husbands and wives would overwhelmingly report external support in the form of money and consumables, although comparatively more of them reported this help than did British participants. The most acceptable explanation for this particular trend is in respect of the local social reality that pertains in the two contexts. For instance, with regard to child care as a form of external support in marriage, it is understandable that Ghanaians laid nearly no claim to any such support. This is because, in the Ghanaian social world the concept of child minding does not exist as it does in Britain. In Ghana, housing is of tropical type, with widely spaced and spread house units on large compounds where a number of family units can live together (Goody, 1973; Oppong, 1974). Unlike Britain where housing takes the forms of flats located within blocks or semi-detached and independent house units located on small land areas, most Ghanaian housing is open and people can

interact and socialize on open grounds and large compound areas within the community. This is partly due to the tropical climate of Ghana (where there simply is a dry and a wet season each year, instead of four seasons of summer, autumn, winter and spring). Life in Ghana is almost like a continuous summer season, with ambient temperatures almost always in excess of 20 degrees Celsius. With this kind of system, social contact is very natural and abundant where parents leave their children with neighbours or extended family folk who live 'just across the road' or 'next door' (Bohannan, 1971; Sarpong, 1974). So in Ghanaian contexts such unrecognized and unpaid 'child minding' is so common and natural that in effect, to pay other people to take care of one's child is almost strange. So even though married people in Ghana definitely receive help in the form of child care from external sources, they do not seem to consider such support as an external instrumental one, hence the lack of mention of it when questioned along this line.

One other issue that featured among British wives (and not Ghanaian wives) is the reference to emotional support from external sources, such as friends and extended family. A considerable number (28.6%) of British wives reported having received emotional support and advice from extended family and friends. Again, such reference points to the different ways in which social life is constructed and experienced in British and Ghanaian worlds. In a real sense, one can say that there is an abundance of such emotional resources in Ghanaian worlds, where relational interdependence is characteristic of social experience. Friends and extended family are available all the time and can visit one's family even without

prior notification (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997). So for example, whereas in the British social system, social workers, counselors, therapists and other professionals usually intervene in family or social matters, such supportive intervention is played by extended family and friends in the Ghanaian context. In effect, it is most probable that British wives find such much-needed emotional and social support from friends and extended family so valuable and instrumental, hence their persistent report of it. In Ghana, extended family and friends assume an automatic unassigned role of social workers and carers. The extended families of the two sides in a marriage enter into a fraternal bond, by which they deem it obligatory to support and ensure the success of the marriage. As succinctly put by one leading Ghanaian scholar in women's affairs, "Marriage is primarily a union between the two families, rather than two individuals" (Dolphyne, 1991:2). In the mist of such relatively abundant sociality, probably Ghanaian wives do not see such emotional-social support from friends and extended family as worthy of mention, a reason why they did not mention it at all. This differential construction and experience of social life in marriage can be rightly referred to as cultural (Appadurai, 1996; Segall, 1984; Segall, Lonner & Berry, 1998).

#### *5.8.1.2 Relational factors*

'Relational factors' refers to interpersonal elements such as love, trust, companionship, understanding and the sharing of personal information at the dyadic level. These were the elements that were variously mentioned by participants and categorised inductively at the analytic level as relational factors. In

this context then, categorizing references to intimacy and closeness as ‘relational factors’ was in the broadest of senses, to enable quantitative comparisons of responses between spouses and national settings. As demonstrated in the results presented above, most Ghanaian and British participants indicated relational factors in their understanding of marital intimacy and closeness.

It was hypothesized that British participants would score higher than their Ghanaian counterparts on relationship factors that are theoretically reflective of individualist cultural patterns. The theoretical basis of the hypothesis as explained in *Chapter 2* is the proposal by some cross-cultural psychologists (e.g. Hansen & Schuldt, 1984; Hendrick, 1981; Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1995) that marital intimacy elements (e.g. marital self-disclosure, social expression of affection between spouses, etc) do not feature prominently in cultural contexts where collectivistic syndromes (e.g. traditional marriage role expectations and interdependent self-construals) are predominant. First of all, as demonstrated in *Chapter 4*, an important unexpected trend was observed to the contrary of this hypothesis: Ghanaian participants scored significantly higher on the relationship beliefs factors of *Intimacy* and *Passion* than British participants. It is therefore not surprising that here again in this qualitative evidence, intimacy factors feature significantly among Ghanaian married participants. One can interpret such corroborative trends of the comparable prominence of marital intimacy elements in both quantitative and qualitative analyses as a social reality that prevails (Cruikshank, 1953; Oppong, 1980).

Having established a comparable prominence of marital intimacy in British and Ghanaian settings, the next question that comes to mind is that of the cultural construction of such intimacy. Do Ghanaian married people share the same social experience of intimacy as their British counterparts? To what extent for example, do Ghanaian and British couples endorse the social expression of romantic affection? The possibility is that, although participants from both settings laid claim to relational elements in their understandings of marital intimacy, the particular ways in which such marital intimacy is enacted is relatively different in each setting. In a number of recent studies of the cultural construction of personal relationships in West African settings, Adams (2000) and Adams & Plaut (2003) have documented the prominence of a tendency that prevails in most West African worlds: the tendency to exercise ambivalence and caution about closeness and intimacy. Contrary to traditional assumptions in social science that cultural worlds characterised by collectivist syndromes of interdependence would have greater interpersonal trust and friendship cohesion, Adams (2000) found a prevalent concern among participants across many West African worlds about hidden personal enemies who wish to sabotage or harm them in their daily social lives. The conclusion from such empirical evidence is that, friendship is not a universal default construction. Particular socio-cultural norms, values, local material realities and ontological understandings set the stage for personal relationship experience (Adams, Anderson & Adonu, 2004; Goodwin, 1999). Although these studies were not particularly on marital intimacy, an indicative insight that can be drawn from them is: in the context of marriage, although Ghanaian couples considerably reported intimacy or relational elements in their

construction of marriage, the enactment of these elements might be relatively different from their enactment among British couples.

### 5.8.1.3. *Marital satisfaction*

In the omnibus study, marital satisfaction was measured by the three-item scale of Schumm et al, (1986). In this qualitative study, the aim was to unravel the emic understandings of the concept that exist among British and Ghanaian participants. The findings that emerged out of responses of participants to particular questions on satisfaction indicate a number of tendencies. First, on the whole (i.e. across the two settings), wives tended more than husbands to mention relational elements in their understanding of marital satisfaction. Such relational elements as shown in the results presented earlier in this chapter include references to dyadic understanding, sharing of ideas, trust and love. Whereas husbands from the two settings also mentioned relational factors, wives seemed a lot more oriented towards the fulfillment of such relational aspects of the marital relationship as a condition for the attainment of marital satisfaction.

Further, husbands more than wives were driven by instrumental elements, as well as a combination of relational and instrumental elements. In most of these references to instrumental elements, husbands pointed to such aspects as childcare by wife, keeping the home clean and making food on time. Concerning relational elements, sexual satisfaction and dyadic understanding were mentioned frequently, especially by Ghanaian husbands. Although different conceptual understandings

of satisfaction might exist in the two settings, the comparable references to similar elements as constituent of marital satisfaction probably point to assertions of socio-biologists in line with evolutionary theories which posit that females on the whole are driven more by affective factors while men are driven by pragmatic factors(cf. Buss, 1988, 1989; Buss & Barnes, 1986; Feingold, 1992a).

### **5.8.2 Summary**

This chapter has presented a qualitative enquiry into marriage across British and Ghanaian contexts by way of an in-depth semi-structured interview paradigm. The aim was to probe beyond the quantitative evidence shown in the analyses presented in *chapter 4*, on the ways in which married people from the two contexts construct understand and experience marriage. The emergent evidence shows that contrary to theoretical expectation, Ghanaian couples emphasize relational elements as constituent of marital satisfaction to an extent comparable to their British counterparts. In accounting for the particular things that constitute marital satisfaction, Ghanaian couples made reference to instrumental as well as a combination of instrumental and relational factors. British couples however more frequently referred to relational elements as constituent of satisfaction. On the provision of material resources, British couples tended to more frequently report a joint account or equal resource provision than did Ghanaian couples.

# Chapter 6

## Conclusions, Implications and Caveats

### 6.0 Introduction

This final chapter is a synthesis of the major findings of this project and their concomitant discussions *vis-à-vis* the objectives that have driven the project. As already detailed and expatiated in chapters *one* and *three* of this thesis, the project as a whole has been driven by two broad objectives: **1)** empirically illuminating the prevalent constructions of marital experience in the two selected cultural settings – British and Ghanaian, and related to this foundational objective, **2)** unravelling the relative predictors of marital satisfaction in the two settings. To a significant extent, as is evident in chapters four and five, these objectives have been achieved within the scope of the project. Part I of chapter four was devoted to the first objective by cultural-level analyses of quantitative psychosocial indicators of the cultural construction of marital experience: the relative prominence of independent and interdependent self-construals, the cultural grounding of relationship beliefs, marriage role expectations, material support and self-disclosure. These indicators have also been further studied qualitatively as a supplementary epistemological source in chapter *five*. Part II of chapter *four* was devoted to the second major objective of establishing the psychosocial predictors



of satisfaction through the application of the various analytic procedures that linked predictors to the hypothesized outcome through mediating variables. Mediation models were developed for psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction across British and Ghanaian cultural settings. Conclusions that have been drawn from the various discussions of the findings, the implications of such conclusions, their limitations within the scope of the project and recommendations for future work are offered in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

### *6.1 Culture and the construction of marriage*

On the basis of individualism-collectivism descriptions of culture, British and Ghanaian domains were selected for this project. There is evidence from the findings of the project that confirms empirical assertions of culture and personal relationship authors that socio-cultural forces prevalent in particular settings set the stage for relationship experience and outcomes (e.g. Adams, Anderson and Adonu, 2004; Goodwin, 1999; Miller & Browning, 2000). Although the dynamic nature of socio-cultural experience is not negated considering the forces of globalisation and technological advancement, it was evident from this project that traditional legacies of the cultural settings still have their enduring imprints on marital experience. Such imprints are usually in keeping with the ecological and historical realities of the settings (Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Nombulelo, 1998). Confirmatory and counter-intuitive evidence on the construction of marital experience from cultural-level analyses of self-construals, relationship beliefs,

marriage role expectation, material support, self-disclosure and marital satisfaction attest to these perspectives, which I present in turn.

### 6.1.1 *Self-construals*

To establish empirical evidence of the relative prominence of individualist and collectivist cultural tendencies in British and Ghanaian settings, independent and interdependent self-construals were measured. Ghanaians scored significantly higher than their British counterparts on both measures. However, comparatively, the overall cultural-level mean difference was far greater for interdependent than independent self-construals. Three conclusions are drawn from this trend: First, there is evidence that the phenomenon of biculturalism might be at play.

Individuals are capable of possessing different constructions of the self in relation to their social world and may not simply reflect only one aspect (Kim *et al.*, 1996). For example, Kagitcibasi (1996a, 1996b) has posited other aspects of the self such as the autonomous-relational self which point to the fact that an individual may possess construals of the self that might integrate both independent and interdependent elements. As an individual-level measure of individualism-collectivism cultural patterns therefore, self-construals among British and Ghanaian couples show that people within these settings may not simply be conceived of as individualist or collectivist respectively. At the emic level, individuals possess these cultural tendencies to varying degrees, depending on factors such as education, travel, urbanisation, patronage of information and communications technology and socio-economic status (Adams & Markus, 2004; Hermans & Kempen, 1998; Matsumoto *et al.*, 1997). The next point that must be

noted is about the possibility that non-urban-dwelling individuals within the Ghanaian setting might reflect less individualist tendencies than their urban counterparts. The samples used in this project were drawn for the capital cities (London and Accra) and might also account for the relatively higher scores on independent self-construals. As discussed in chapter two, there is much ethnographic evidence that individualist and collectivist patterns are prevalent in British and Ghanaian settings represented in marriage forms, hierarchy in social interaction, social axioms and what may be referred to as non-voluntary socio-economic dependence (Kelly & Thibaut, 1978; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1997; Rusbult). In adherence to Bond & Tedeschi's (2001) proposal of unpackaging culture in psychological research, independent and interdependent self-construals were analysed as mediators in the prediction of marital satisfaction among couples in the two settings. These mediational analyses are accounted for under the section on predictors of satisfaction in a subsequent section of this chapter.

### 6.1.2 *Relationship beliefs*

It has been demonstrated that married people in Ghana do not simply understand and experience marriage as a union of obligatory commitment for the maintenance of the clan and kinship as has always been reported in many anthropological and sociological works (e.g. Tettey, 2002). At the etic level of analysis, the assumption may comfortably be held about the relative unimportance of marital relationship constituents such as *intimacy* and *passion* in Ghanaian marriages. But the reality at the individual and emic levels might be different from such assumption. This is one of the interesting findings of this project. As

reported earlier, Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher than their British counterparts on the relationship beliefs of *intimacy* and *passion*. The direct connotation of such trend is that Ghanaian couples endorse intimacy and passion as important elements of marital experience. As noted by Fletcher and Kininmonth (1992), beliefs are cognitive-level phenomena that have the power to exert causal force on behaviour, a point which underscores the possibility that, people's beliefs do not end up only at the abstract level, but find behavioural expression given the context and opportunity to act (Leung, *et al.*, 2002). So it must mean that Ghanaian couples do not merely endorse the importance of *intimacy* and *passion* in relationships, but are likely also to practice them in their own marital experience. If such a tendency is at variance with hypothetical supposition based on the theoretical assumptions of culture theory, then the explanation that may be considered is that, over the course of time, social change impacts relationship processes and attitudes (Goodwin, 1999). There are several dynamic forces that are constantly engendering socio-cultural change in an increasingly globalizing way. These forces include expanding access to education, information and communications technology, travel and tourism, art and music and the media (Hermans & Kempen, 1998).

Cultural-level analysis on the other two relationship beliefs factors also gives some insight into the cultural construction of experience in the two settings. In line with the individualism-collectivism descriptions of culture, Ghanaian participants scored higher than British participants on the relationship belief of *external factors*, and this goes to confirm that collectivistic tendencies feature more prominently at

the individual level in the Ghanaian setting. *External factors*' is conceptualized to include elements such as importance of others, children, commonality and personal security, which are to a large extent reminiscent of collectivistic syndromes (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Markus, McCusker & Hui, 1990; Singelis, 1994; Triandis, 1995). Further, as one would expect given the individualism-collectivism dimension, British participants scored significantly higher than their Ghanaian counterparts on the beliefs factor of *Individuality*, which implied independence and equity in social experience and exchanges. Bringing these confirmations to bear on marital experience, one can understand why in African or Ghanaian marital experience, a host of important others are implicated. Such important others include extended family and kin on both sides of the couple (Dolphyne, 1991; Gyekye, 1996; Sarpong, 1974). Unlike the Ghanaian situation, marital unions in British systems primarily involve the two individuals who have the ultimate control and paramourcy in matters of choice regarding the marriage, although important others are still relevant and supportive (Goodwin, Chrystakopoulou & Panagiotidou, *in press*).

### 6.1.3 *Marriage role expectations*

With regard to the construction of marriage in terms of role expectations, results are in line with other empirical evidence that gender role divisions are more prevalent in African (or collectivist) societies than in Western (individualist) societies. Analysis of scores on the Marriage Roles Expectation Inventory depicted Ghanaian couples as significantly more traditional in their marriage role

expectations than their British counterparts. Confirmatory supplementary results from the marriage scenarios instrument developed for use in this project were also obtained: Ghanaians gave higher satisfaction ratings for traditional couples and lower ratings for egalitarian couples, whereas British participants gave higher and lower ratings for egalitarian and traditional couples respectively. It can be concluded from these trends that the construction of Ghanaian marital experience is predicated on breadwinner-homemaker premises, more than British marital experience. Viewed against the backdrop of the socio-cultural realities of the two contexts these findings are better understood: on the one hand Ghanaian (African) women have larger numbers of children, have comparatively lower levels of education than their husbands and spend greater parts of their active life in bringing up children (Dodoo, 1996; Klomegah, 1997). Agadjanian and Ezeh (2000) adduced evidence to this effect from two demographic and health surveys conducted in Ghana, supported by focus group discussions. They found that the prevalence of polygyny has resulted in gender hierarchy within Ghanaian families. Larger numbers of children in Ghanaian families for example creates the need for wives to play traditional child care roles for longer parts of their lives. Although this present project did not study polygamous marriages, there is a sense in which one can conclude that these socio-cultural realities shape the roles and attitudes of people who live the Ghanaian context. On the other hand, in British society, couples have smaller numbers of children, have monogamous marriages, and are supported in one way or the other by better and more employment opportunities. In the situation of unemployment, social welfare facilities are more available than as sources of maintenance. However as Goodwin, Krystakopolou & Panagiotidou

(*in press*) have noted, behind the relatively egalitarian marriage role situation that is said to characterise British Marriages, there is still a fair prevalence of traditional tendencies where for example, working wives combine child and home care with their working roles.

#### *6.1.4 Material support*

Social exchange theory emphasizes the instrumentality of material resource exchanges in relationships (Homans, 1961; Levi-Strauss, 1969; Nye, 1979). In effect, one relevant way in which differences in the construction and experience of marriage can be studied is through the comparative analysis of material support. The cultural-level analysis of dyadic material support exchanges revealed two major different trends as hypothesised: **1)** there was a greater disparity of material support exchange at the dyadic level among Ghanaian couples than British couples. This disparity in both contexts is weighted towards the husband. This means that among Ghanaian couples, husbands provided material support to their wives significantly far more than their wives provided for them; **2)** There was reciprocity of support provision among couples from both settings, although again the magnitude of this reciprocity was greater among British couples than Ghanaian couples.

#### *6.1.5 Self-disclosure*

Among the most extensively researched topics in personal relationships across cultures is self-disclosure, although still remains unclear about the area (Goodwin, Nzharadze, Luu & Emelyanova, 1999). This project used one of the well-used

measures of self-disclosure (Jourard & Lasakow, 1959) for studying the topic among British and Ghanaian couples. Reciprocity of disclosure between couples was confirmed as in previous studies. Also, there was a negative relationship between long co-existence and levels of disclosure. Cultural differences in disclosure were found, with Ghanaian couples disclosing significantly less than British couples, as hypothesised.

## **6.2 Psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction**

As is obvious even from the title of this thesis, the ultimate objective of this project was to illuminate the psychological and social factors that account for marital satisfaction among couples in British and Ghanaian cultural settings. Research designs and analytic strategies were therefore tailored to realize this ultimate objective. As presented in the previous chapter, both direct and indirect (mediated) predictors of satisfaction in the various subsets of married couples were investigated. In the mediated prediction, self-construals mediated the relationship between the two hypothesised predictors (self-disclosure and material support) and marital satisfaction. Beyond self-construals, relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation were treated as mediating cultural variables. Significant mediation emerged across the two samples.

The various hypotheses about the predictors of marital satisfaction investigated were mediational. No direct prediction of marital satisfaction was expected. Self-disclosure and material support as predictors of satisfaction were expected to be mediated by self-construals and/or the other cultural variables – relationship



beliefs and marriage role expectation. However, for purposes of exploration, all the measured variables were analysed as direct predictors. Thus, marital satisfaction was regressed on self-construals, relationship beliefs, marriage role expectation, self-disclosure, material support, age, length of marriage and number of children. Significant direct predictive models emerged for the various groups.

### 6.2.1 *Direct prediction*

For British husbands, marital satisfaction was directly predicted by marriage role expectation, and three relationship beliefs factors (*Intimacy*, *Individuality* and *external factors*). All these variables positively predicted marital satisfaction except *Individuality* which was a negative predictor. Thus the more egalitarian a British husband was and the more they believed in the importance of relationship *intimacy* and *external factors* to the relationship, the more satisfied they were. However, the more they believed in individuality in relationships, the less satisfied they were.

Among British couples, wives' satisfaction was predicted only directly by *Individuality*, marriage role expectations and *external factors*, MRE and *external factors* bearing a negative relationship to satisfaction. The more egalitarian their role attitudes were, the less satisfied they were with their marriages; and the more they believed in the importance of *external factors*, the less satisfied they were. Perhaps, as discussed in chapter four, taking a more egalitarian stance on marital relationship results in higher expectations of equality, thereby engendering tensions when such expectations are unmet in the exchanges within the marital

context, and ultimately leading to marital dissatisfaction. This interpretation lends support to the trend discovered by Lavee & Katz (2002) in their study of marital quality and gender ideology in Israel, in which they found that among egalitarian women, a more segregated division of labour was directly linked with lower marital quality. A somewhat similar explanation would apply to the negative relation of *external factors* to satisfaction among British wives. External factors include the importance of elements such as children, important others, commonality, security and finances, which generally reflect collectivistic syndromes (Triandis, 1995). It is probable that exhibiting collectivistic syndromes in a socio-cultural system predicated on individualist premises poses challenges and tensions resulting in dissatisfaction.

Among Ghanaian couples, self-disclosure from wife directly predicted husbands' satisfaction while self-disclosure to husband directly predicted wives' satisfaction. This trend confirms the tendency of more disclosure from wife to husband, among Ghanaian couples, as was found in the comparative analysis of self-disclosure performed in chapter four where Ghanaian wives disclosed more to their husbands than their husbands disclosed to them. Furthermore, among Ghanaian wives, *intimacy* and *external factors* directly predicted satisfaction: *intimacy* had a positive relationship to satisfaction while *external factors* had a negative relationship to it. This partially supports Miller & Kanna's (1999) study of marital quality in Ghana. Although their sample was limited to husbands aged 21-60 from the northern part of Ghana, they found an effect of communication style and decision making attitudes on marital quality. They found that open dyadic

communication was positively related to marital quality while traditional marriage attitudes had a negative impact on marital quality.

### *6.2.2 Mediated prediction*

#### *6.2.2.1 Self-construals as mediator.*

To investigate the intervening effect of culture on predictors of marital satisfaction, independent and interdependent self-construals were treated as mediators. For Ghanaian wives, material support from and to husband and marital satisfaction were mediated by interdependent self-construal. Further, self-disclosure from husband was mediated by independent self-construal to predict marital satisfaction. Similarly, British wives' marital satisfaction was predicted by material support from husband mediated by interdependent self-construal. And self-disclosure to husband was mediated by independent self-construal to predict marital satisfaction. For British husbands self-disclosure to wife and satisfaction were mediated by independent self-construal, such mediation being negative. No significant mediation by self-construals was found for Ghanaian husbands.

#### *6.2.2.2 Relationship beliefs and marriage role expectation as mediators.*

In confirmation of hypothesis 7a, material support was predictive of satisfaction among Ghanaian husbands, albeit this was mediated by marriage role expectation (MRE). Specifically, material support given to wife was mediated by MRE to predict husbands' satisfaction. This means that material support does not necessarily predict satisfaction. Instead such link depends on the extent to which

an individual (married man) reflects particular cultural tendencies. If an individual husband holds traditional marriage role expectation, then material support (instrumental factors) given to wife would play a significant role in his marital satisfaction.

The issue of reflection of particular cultural patterns and their implications for relationship experience is yet indicated in the indirect negative relation of self-disclosure to marital satisfaction among British husbands. Self-disclosure to wife was mediated by the relationship belief of *individuality* to predict marital satisfaction for British husbands. First, the connotation is that self-disclosure to spouse does not necessarily affect satisfaction. It does only if an individual (in this particular finding, the British husband) believes in the importance of fundamental separateness and experiences the self as fundamentally prior, elements implicated in *individuality*. In this particular mediational model for British husbands, the indirect relation of disclosure to marital satisfaction was negative, implying that to the extent that British husbands believed in individuality, disclosing to their wives was related to a reduction in satisfaction. Such negative mediation by *individuality* confirms the negative mediation found for independent self-construals among British husbands, reported in *section 6.2.2.1* above.

### **6.3 Qualitative evidence**

The semi-structured interview paradigm implemented in the qualitative study produced evidence to enhance the elucidation of the trends observed in the

quantitative analyses presented in *chapter four*. The relative prominence of traditional marriage role attitudes among Ghanaian couples was illuminated in the responses from Ghanaian wives and husbands in their consistent emphasis on the husband as the main provider for the household. Although in many of these cases wives also were sources of material support in the home, the husband seemed to be traditionally perceived as the one whose role it is to ensure that the needs of the home are provided for. However the wives' supportive role was mentioned frequently. British respondents however made frequent reference to the sharing of joint accounts and reflected comparatively more egalitarian attitudes.

Further, with regard to support from extended family and friends, Ghanaians reported the least of such support whereas British participants reported the availability of such support, mainly in the form of child care support from in-laws and parents. It was evident that the different constructions of social life in the two settings gave rise to such references. Ghanaians did not make reference to child minding for instance, although such facility exists from extended family, neighbours and friends, at no financial cost, a reflection of collectivistic tendencies of interdependence and fraternity.

There was evidence that relational factors feature significantly in the constructions of intimacy, closeness and marital satisfaction in both British and Ghanaian marriages. In accounting for their understandings of marital intimacy, closeness and satisfaction, both British and Ghanaian participants made frequent references to relational elements, although more British participants made such references

than their Ghanaian counterparts. However, Ghanaians also made more references to material/instrumental elements as constituent of intimacy and marital satisfaction.

Probed on the predictors of marital satisfaction, both British and Ghanaian participants mentioned various elements which mostly fell in the category labelled in the analysis as relational factors. Such factors include self-disclosure, sharing of personal thoughts and ideas in marriage, emotional responsiveness, trust, understanding and love. Given the social reality that prevails in African cultural systems where many marriages are contracted not simply as a union between two loving individuals but rather as a union between family sides whose consent and instrumentality are crucial for the survival of the marriage, it was hypothesized that unlike British couples, relational elements would be less important in the construction of marital satisfaction among Ghanaian couples. In the face of the evidence that emerged, such hypothesis gains no support. As already discussed in earlier sections, these trends corroborate the results found in the quantitative study for example, where Ghanaian couples scored significantly higher on relationship beliefs of *intimacy* and *passion*.

#### **6.4 Summary of conclusions**

The project set out to test hypotheses about the cultural construction of marital experience in British and Ghanaian settings and the psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction across these two settings. The settings were selected on the

basis of individualism-collectivism descriptions of culture proposed by writers in the field of psychology and culture. In terms of the constructions of marriage that are prominent in the two settings, this study has found that to a considerable extent, marriage is constructed and experienced in British and Ghanaian settings in ways that resonate with cultural patterns that are generally reminiscent of individualism-collectivism characterizations respectively: the relative prominence of traditional marriage role expectations among Ghanaian couples in comparison with their British counterparts; the relative prominence of individuality among British couples; the greater disparity in the dyadic reciprocity of material support among Ghanaian couples and the more frequent reference to instrumental marital support factors among Ghanaian couples. However, in line with the frame of culture as dynamic flowing patterns that specifically guided this project, it was evident from the various steps of analysis that although modal cultural patterns reflecting individualism-collectivism descriptions feature prominently in British and Ghanaian systems respectively, homogeneity and static cultural tendencies are not implied. Marriage in both settings are constructed and experienced in keeping with the extent to which individual actors reflect the prevalent cultural patterns in their socio-cultural enclaves. The understanding of cultural experience in this dynamic way, in a globalizing world, was helpful further in making sense of the predictors of marital satisfaction. For example, it explains the fact that some hypothesized predictors of satisfaction were mediated by the relative cultural grounding of psyche, such as self-construal, marriage role expectations mediating the relationship between material support and marital satisfaction; belief in individuality mediating disclosure to wife and marital satisfaction.





## **6.5.0 Implications of findings**

### *6.5.1 Extension of literature.*

As noted in earlier chapters, most of cross-cultural research in the personal relationships area has been done in cultural settings that preclude African settings. Much of the work on marriage in the Ghanaian (or African) systems for instance, comes from anthropological and sociological research. Almost always these works are based on ethnography derived from fieldwork. The phenomenon of marital satisfaction and its predictors belong to their rightful domain of social psychology, and there is no gainsaying the fact that there is a dearth of social psychological work in African cultural systems. In a considerable way, this project has sought to yield empirical evidence, by applying some of the well-used psychological scales (such as scales for self-construals, self-disclosure, marriage role expectation, relationship beliefs and marital satisfaction) to a Ghanaian sample.

### *6.5.2 Marriage/family interventions.*

Experts in the personal relationships area have made the clarion call time and again for researchers to make their theoretical knowledge available for the implementation of beneficial intervention programmes in particular societies (cf. Goodwin, 1999; Kagitcibasi, 1996). For example marriage counselling in Ghanaian setting involves different interpersonal skills and processes from those needed in British settings, owing to the relatively different constructions and experience of the self and social world. Whereas the socio-cultural worlds of Britain allow that the individual is fundamentally free to engage or disengage with

helpful members of the social microcosm and therefore can voluntarily connect with professional assistance in times of marital difficulty, Ghanaian socio-cultural worlds are predicated on relational interdependence in kinship networks which one inescapably inherits. So in effect the therapeutic roles played in western cultural systems by professionals such as counsellors and social workers are played by family and kin in Ghanaian (and indeed African) cultural systems, who see themselves in obligatory roles to ensure the success of members (Gyekye, 1996). Useful insights for marital therapeutic success can be drawn from the findings of this present work. Such insights include for example, the relative prominence of traditional role expectations in the Ghanaian system, the disparities in material support exchanges among Ghanaian couples at the dyadic level and the various mediators in the prediction of marital satisfaction, among British and Ghanaian couples.

### *6.5.3 Measuring culture in psychological research.*

Heeding the suggestion of some of the authors of classic researches in cross-cultural psychology (e.g. Jahoda, 1984; Rhoner, 1984; Segall, Lonner & Berry, 1998) that the concept of culture be framed in any particular research, the present project went beyond group membership assumptions to framing culture as patterns<sup>54</sup>. To measure such cultural patterns therefore, individual level measures were taken in the two settings in the form of self-construals. The epistemological benefit of such measures of culture is that, cross-national comparison was performed to empirically establish the relative prominence of cultural tendencies

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<sup>54</sup> Discussed in chapter two.

in the two settings. As discussed earlier, Ghanaians scored significantly higher on both independent and interdependent self-construals. The relatively higher scores on independent self-construal among Ghanaians is counter-intuitive in the light of individualism-collectivism descriptions. The relevant implication here is that, the need for further development of frameworks for self-construals is buttressed. The multidimensional self-construal system proposed by Kim *et al.*, (1996) for example represents such an effort in the measurement of culture which needs to be pursued by researchers in the cross-cultural area in psychology.

#### **6.6. Caveats for this project**

Although this thesis project has been exciting, I have had to grapple with a number of difficulties. As Goodwin, (1999: 183) rightly noted, “While the cross-cultural relationships road is a stony one, it is also replete with human warmth and excitement, which makes it to me one of the most intellectually stimulating paths there is to follow”. The present project was no exception. Therefore the following limitations of this work are worth mentioning:

1. The difficulty of sampling couples from the various geographical regions of the two countries was recognised, in the face of the time and funding limitations of a doctoral programme. Therefore the empirical settings within which data were mainly collected were restricted to London and Accra, which only represent the capital cities of the two countries. This

implies that the married people reached for participation were predominantly urban dwellers. Rural/countryside trends in marital experience across the two settings are therefore not necessarily depicted by the findings of this project.

2. Among Warwick's (1980) extensive discussion of the problems of cross-cultural research is the acknowledgement of the problem of limited accessibility to some populations in research across cultures. It is apparent that the married population is one of such inaccessible ones. This problem of inaccessibility was made even deeper by the need to completely anonymise the data collection process, particularly for the omnibus study, owing to the nature of personal information required in a study of marriage. So a postal questionnaire return strategy was used, in which participants were given the omnibus questionnaire packs in self-addressed/stamped envelopes, and were asked to simply drop them in the post upon completion. They were asked to encourage their spouses to do likewise. In this way, the return of the filled questionnaire lay entirely at the discretion and goodwill of participants. In effect, the return rate was both slow and low (15%). The qualitative study also presented its unique field difficulties. It was *very* difficult to locate married individuals in the London area who fell within the definitive scope of the project, who were willing to participate. Admittedly, these problems were far less in the Ghanaian situation. However, given the difficulties outlined above, the sample sizes (N = 400 for the omnibus study and N = 117 for the qualitative study) on

which final analyses were based were not very large, and might not be fully representative of the target married populations of both contexts.

3. A further limitation of the findings reported in this thesis has to do with the actual *a priori* scope of the research project itself. For example, the sample excluded, illiterate persons, polygynous marriages, *de facto* relationships, homosexual marriages and non- Caucasian/ethnic minority British participants.
  
4. The main criterion variable -marital satisfaction- as a psychological construct, has an affective component. Multivariate analytic procedures, particularly linear regression techniques have a limitation in terms of their inability to capture the non-linearity of human feelings (cf. Ritter, & Gemunden, 2004). So the fact that linear relationships (direct or mediated) were not found between the criterion and some predictors does not necessarily mean that no relationship exists. There might be curvilinear (functional) relationships between marital satisfaction and the other variables involved in the research design for which no significant linear predictive model emerged.
  
5. Regression analytic techniques are based on correlational principles, and correlation does not necessarily imply causation. The non-causal nature of regression analysis therefore does not afford us the confident

epistemological premise for making any causal assertions about the psychosocial predictors of marital satisfaction. A significant predictive model might imply bi-directional relationships between entities (Pagano, 2001; Tabachnick, & Fidell, 2001). Therefore making a commitment to reflexivity is imperative.

In view of the above limitations, one would be cautious in generalizing the findings and conclusions drawn from this present work, in order to eschew ecological fallacies and unwarranted epistemological extensions (Georgas, van de Vijver & Berry, 2004). Caveats must be sounded in any instance of making reference to the findings reported here.

## **6.7 Recommendations for future work**

Future studies of marriage across cultures, involving variables such as self-disclosure could investigate the relations that exist among the various dimensions of disclosure and marital outcomes. For example, the valence, breadth and depth dimensions of disclosure (Altman & Taylor, 1973) might have relative influences on marital satisfaction.

Further, other variables could be included in the study of marriage across cultural settings to see their relations to marital satisfaction and culture. For example, personality factors, causal attributions, locus of control, self-esteem and attachment styles seem to be promising variables that could be investigated with

relation to marital outcomes across cultures. As recommended by some cross-cultural social psychologists (e.g. Bond and Tedeschi, 2001; Matsumoto, *et al.*, 1997; Singelis, Bond, Sharkey & Lai, 1999), if differences across cultural settings in a particular target behaviour may be partly explained, then one could continue searching for additional psychological variables (such as those mentioned above) to be explored.

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# Appendix 1a

Husband number.....

## MARRIAGE SURVEY (husband version)

We are most grateful for your willingness to participate in this survey. The survey forms part of a postgraduate research on what people feel about their marriage experiences. It takes about 40 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All your responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence and used only for academic analysis. Therefore your name and address are not needed at all, since you will not be associated in any way with the research findings.

**Please respond to the questions in each section as freely as possible, completing every part. You are encouraged to carefully read the instructions in each section and to complete the questionnaire independently and confidentially from your spouse.**

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this survey. For more information about the survey, please contact us at the addresses below:

The Research Administrator  
Department of Human Sciences  
Brunel University  
Uxbridge, Middlesex  
London, UB8 3PH

**Phone: 01895 274000  
x3897**

*or* 07904359674  
Fax: 01895 203207

PLEASE NOTE: After completion, kindly post the questionnaire back using the self-addressed/stamped envelope provided. Thanks.

**SECTION A:**

**MARRIAGE ROLE EXPECTATION INVENTORY**

**Instructions:** Please use the key below to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with EACH of the following statements about your expectations in your present marriage. Simply circle one of the five options at the right side of each statement.

**KEY**

- SA Strongly Agree
- A Agree
- U Undecided
- D Disagree
- SD Strongly Disagree

In my marriage, I expect:

1.	that my wife's opinion will carry as much weight as mine in money matters.	SA A U D SD
2.	to help my wife with housework.	SA A U D SD
3.	that it would be undesirable for my wife to be better educated than I.	SA A U D SD
4.	my wife to combine motherhood and a career if that proves possible.	SA A U D SD
5.	to be the "boss" who says what is to be done and what is not to be done.	SA A U D SD
6.	that my wife will be as well informed as I concerning the family's financial status and business affairs.	SA A U D SD
7.	to leave the care of the children entirely up to my wife when they are babies	SA A U D SD
8.	to be as interested in spending time with the girls as much as with the boys in our family.	SA A U D SD
9.	it will be important for my wife to be a good cook and housekeeper than for her to be an attractive, interesting companion.	SA A U D SD
10.	that being married will not keep me from going to college.	SA A U D SD
11.	that my wife and I will share responsibility for housework if both of us work outside the home.	SA A U D SD
12.	that keeping the garden, making repairs, and doing outside works will be the responsibility of whoever has the time and wishes to do them.	SA A U D SD
13.	that if as a husband I am a good worker, respectable and faithful to my family, other personal characteristics are of considerably less importance.	SA A U D SD
14.	that I will decide almost all money matters.	SA A U D SD
15.	that my wife and I shall have equal privileges in such things as going out at night	SA A U D SD
16.	that my major responsibility to our children will be to make a good living, provide a home, and make them mind.	SA A U D SD
17.	that since doing things like laundry, cleaning, and child care are "women's work", I will feel no responsibility for them.	SA A U D SD

18.	week-ends to be a period of rest for me, so I will not be expected to assist with cooking and housekeeping.	SA A U D SD
19.	that if I help with the housework, my wife will help with the outside works such as keeping the garden, painting or repairing the house.	SA A U D SD
20.	that my wife and I will have equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole.	SA A U D SD
21.	that after marriage my wife will forget an education and make a home for me.	SA A U D SD
22.	my wife to work outside the home if she enjoys working more than staying at home.	SA A U D SD
23.	that both my wife and I will concern ourselves with social and emotional development of our children.	SA A U D SD
24.	that it will be my responsibility and privilege to choose where we will go and what we will do when we go out.	SA A U D SD
25.	that my wife can cook, sew, keep house, and care for the children, any other kind of education for her is unnecessary.	SA A U D SD
26.	that having compatible personalities will be considerably less important to us than such characteristics as being religious, honest and hardworking.	SA A U D SD
27.	my wife to accept the fact that I will devote most of my time getting ahead and becoming a success.	SA A U D SD
28.	that my wife will generally prefer talking about something like clothes, places to go and “women’s interests” to talking about complicated international and economic affairs.	SA A U D SD
29.	that an education is important for my wife whether or not she works outside the home.	SA A U D SD
30.	it will be only natural that I will be the one concerned about politics and what is going on in the world.	SA A U D SD
31.	that since I must earn the living, I can’t be expected to take time to “play” with the children.	SA A U D SD
32.	that it is my wife’s job rather than mine to set a good example and see that the family goes to church.	SA A U D SD
33.	my wife to fit her life to mine.	SA A U D SD
34.	that managing and planning for spending money will be a joint proposition between my wife and me.	SA A U D SD
35.	to manage my time so that I will be able to share in the care of the children.	SA A U D SD
36.	that having guests in our home will not prevent my lending a hand with serving meals or keeping the house orderly.	SA A U D SD
37.	that we will permit the children to share, according to their abilities, with the parents in making family decisions.	SA A U D SD
38.	to help wash or dry dishes.	SA A U D SD
39.	entire responsibility for earning the family living.	SA A U D SD
40.	that staying at home with the children will be my wife’s duty rather than mine.	SA A U D SD
41.	to feel equally as responsible for the children after work and on holidays as my wife does.	SA A U D SD
42.	to make most of the decisions concerning the children such as where they will go and what they may do.	SA A U D SD
43.	that it will be exclusively my wife’s duty to do the cooking and keeping the house in order.	SA A U D SD
44.	that my wife and I will share household tasks according to individual interests and abilities rather than according to “woman’s work”.	SA A U D SD
45.	to earn a good living if I expect love and respect from my family.	SA A U D SD
46.	whether or not my wife works will depend upon what we as a couple think	SA A U D SD

	is best for our own happiness.	
47.	that if my wife is not going to work outside the home, there is no reason getting a college education.	SA A U D SD
48.	as our children grow up the boys will be more my responsibility while the girls are my wife's.	SA A U D SD
49.	that my wife and I will feel equally responsible for looking after the welfare of our children.	SA A U D SD
50.	that my wife will take full responsibility for care and training of our children so that I can devote my time to my work.	SA A U D SD

## **SECTION B**

### **MARRIAGE SCENARIOS**

**Instruction:** Please use the scale below to answer the questions that follow the marriages described.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very						very
dissatisfied						satisfied

#### **Marriage # 1**

**Mary and Mark are married. They both work full-time and also share the household chores**



How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage # 2**

**Mark and Mary are married. Mark works full-time but Mary works only part-time. Mary also does majority of the household chores.**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage # 3**

**Mark and Mary are married. Mark works full-time while Mary does not work at all, but does all the household chores.**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage # 4**

**Mark and Mary are married. They both work full-time and Mary does all the household chores as well.**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life?\_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION C

#### RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS

**Instructions: This section is about what you believe are the important factors in determining successful marriages. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your own general beliefs about marital relationships. Please use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you hold each of the following beliefs by simply circling the number that applies to you, at the end of each statement.**

#### SCALE

- 1 --- I do not hold this belief at all
- 2 --- I slightly hold this belief
- 3 --- I moderately hold this belief
- 4 --- I quite strongly hold this belief
- 5 --- I strongly hold this belief
- 6 --- I very strongly hold this belief

1. People must always listen to their partner's underlying messages. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. In successful relationships partners constantly show how much they love one another. 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. There must be complete honesty between partners. 1 2 3 4 5 6
4. Each partner has a right to absolute personal privacy. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Partners must support each other completely in close relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. In happy relationships partners totally accept each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. The best relationships are built on strong sexual attraction. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Men and women must equally share household chores. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Both partners must make sacrifices in relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Relationships must be full of laughter. 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Sharing interests and hobbies keeps relationships healthy. 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. People from similar backgrounds will have more successful relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Partners must be best friends as well as lovers. 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Financial problems wreck relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Having children brings couples together. 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Not getting on with each other's friends or families wrecks relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. A good relationship is strong enough to survive anything. 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. In most successful relationships partners are completely sensitive to each other's feelings. 1 2 3 4 5 6
19. Partners must be able to speak freely with each other on any topic no matter how distressing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Close relationships cannot work without love. 1 2 3 4 5 6
21. The best relationships depend on being absolutely loyal to each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
22. Partners in close relationships must have time apart from each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
23. In the best relationships partners work hard at satisfying each other's needs. 1 2 3 4 5 6
24. Partners in the best relationships have unconditional approval of each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
25. Without good sex relationships do not survive. 1 2 3 4 5 6
26. Without equality between partners, relationships die. 1 2 3 4 5 6
27. Partners must be prepared to compromise for the sake of a relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6

28. Relationships must be exciting. 1 2 3 4 5 6
29. Partners must share the same beliefs and values. 1 2 3 4 5 6
30. To have a good relationship each individual must feel secure within him/herself. 1 2 3 4 5 6
31. Your partner should be your best friend. 1 2 3 4 5 6
32. Close relationships depend on economic security. 1 2 3 4 5 6
33. Long-term relationships are shallow without children. 1 2 3 4 5 6
34. Having friends in common cements relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
35. Conflict in a relationship must be confronted directly. 1 2 3 4 5 6
36. Mutual respect is the foundation for the best relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
37. It is essential for partners to express all their feelings in relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
38. Love between partners is enough to ensure a successful relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
39. Partners must be completely faithful to each other in close relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
40. It is essential for partners to remain individuals no matter how close they are. 1 2 3 4 5 6
41. Partners must provide practical support for each other to the utmost of their capabilities. 1 2 3 4 5 6
42. If partners do not accept each other, they cannot really love each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
43. Sexual compatibility is essential to good relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
44. The best relationship is one in which the partners take equal responsibility for its maintenance. 1 2 3 4 5 6
45. Within a healthy relationship partners accommodate each others' needs, even if this involves self- denial. 1 2 3 4 5 6
46. Romance is an essential element of a relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
47. The more time partners spend together the better. 1 2 3 4 5 6
48. If both partners come from secure and caring families the relationship is much more likely to succeed. 1 2 3 4 5 6
49. Relationships cannot survive without a very close friendship between partners. 1 2 3 4 5 6

50. Money is as important as love in a relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
51. Having children leads to total fulfilment in close relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
52. Your own friends must be your partner's friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6
53. The success of a relationship depends on how well any conflict is dealt with. 1 2 3 4 5 6
54. Courtesy toward a partner is one of the most important factors in the success of the best relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6

## **SECTION D**

### **SELF-DISCLOSURE**

**Instructions:** This section is about how you reveal certain types of information to your wife, and how your wife in turn reveals them to you. Please use the scale below to **indicate the extent to which you have revealed the following types of information to your wife. Then also indicate the extent to which your wife too has revealed hers to you.**

#### SCALE

- 0** -- I have told my wife nothing about this aspect of me
- 1** -- I have talked in general terms about this aspect. My wife has only a general idea about this aspect of me.
- 2** -- I have talked in full and complete detail about this aspect to my wife. She knows me fully in this respect, and could describe me accurately.
- X** -- I have lied or misrepresented myself to my wife so that she has a false picture of me

#### **Attitudes and opinions**

1. What I think and feel about religion; my personal religious views.
 

<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  
2. My views on the present government – the president, government policies, etc.
 

<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  
3. My personal views on sexual morality – how I feel that others and I ought to behave in sexual matters.

- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
4. My personal standards of beauty and attractiveness - what I consider to be attractive in a woman.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
5. The things I regard as desirable for a man to be – what I look for in a man.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
6. My feelings about how parents ought to deal with children.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X

**Money earnings and spending**

1. Details of how much money I make at my work, or get as an allowance.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
2. What and who I spend my money on.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
3. Whether or not I owe money; if so, how much.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
4. Whom I owe money to at present; or whom I have borrowed from in the past.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
5. Whether or not I have savings, and the amount.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
6. Whether or not others owe me money, the amount and who owes it to me.
- Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
*Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X

7. Whether or not I gamble; if so, the way I gamble, and the extent of it.

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

8. All my present sources of income – wages, fees, allowances, dividends, etc.

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

9. My total financial worth, including property, savings, bonds, insurance, etc.

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

## The future

1. Things about the future that I worry about

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

3. Details of my highest ideals in life

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

3. Details about my future goals

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

4. My plans for achieving my future goals

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

## Social life and work

1. Interesting and exciting new things I discover in my day to day life

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

2. What I find to be the worst pressures and strains in my work.

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

3. What I enjoy most, and get the most satisfaction from in my present work.  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
5. My ambitions and goals in my work.  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
6. How I really feel about the people that I work for, or work with.  
  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
7. Favours and good treatments I get from others in my daily life and/or work.  
  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
8. Persons in my life whom I resent most.  
  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
9. Unpleasant things that happen in my daily life or workplace.  
  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

### **Personality**

1. My guiltiest secrets.  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
2. Things about me that other people criticise  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
3. Things about me that other people praise  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X
4. Good feelings about the appearance of my body  
*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X



- Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
5.    Bad feelings about the appearance of my body  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
6.    What it takes to hurt my feelings deeply.  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
7.    The kinds of things that make me especially proud of myself.  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X

### **Health**

1.    Thoughts about my health problems and worries.  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
2.    My past record of illness and treatment.  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
3.    My secret fears and worries about any major illnesses I might have eg.  
       Cancers, ulcers, heart condition, tumours, infertility, etc.  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
4.    Information about any illnesses that run in my family (among my siblings,  
       parents, grandparents etc)  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X

### **Sexual life**

1.    My past experiences with previous partner(s).  
       *Information from me to my wife*    0   1   2   X  
       *Information from my wife to me*    0   1   2   X
2.    Disappointments I have experienced with the opposite sex.

- |  |                                       |   |   |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
|  | <i>Information from me to my wife</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 | X |
|  | <i>Information from my wife to me</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 | X |
3. My sexual desires and expectations.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  4. My impressions about my wife's sexual performance
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  5. Feelings about my sexual problems and inadequacies.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  6. The facts of my present sex life- including how I get sexual satisfaction.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X

## **Family matters**

1. Characteristics of my parents that I dislike.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
2. Things that make me proud of my family.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
3. Matters in my family that I'm most ashamed about.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
4. Characteristics of my in-laws that I dislike.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
5. My dealings with my parents and siblings
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
6. What I find good and respectable about my in-laws.
 

	<i>Information from me to my wife</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my wife to me</i>	0	1	2	X
7. Details of my most embarrassing childhood memories.

*Information from me to my wife* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my wife to me* 0 1 2 X

## SECTION E

### SELF-CONSTRUAL

**Instructions:** This section contains statements about relations between yourself and other people. Please choose a number from the scale below to represent the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Simply write the number you choose in the space provided at the end of each statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly						Strongly
Disagree						Agree

#### Part One

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact. \_\_\_\_\_
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. \_\_\_\_\_
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I would offer my seat in a bus to someone of higher status (eg. my boss, pastor, elder, professor) \_\_\_\_\_
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I should take into consideration my parents. \_\_\_\_\_
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I'm not happy with the group. \_\_\_\_\_
11. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Even when I strongly disagree with my group members, I avoid an argument. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part Two

13. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Speaking up in public or in a group is not a problem for me. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. \_\_\_\_\_
17. I am the same person at home that I am at everywhere. \_\_\_\_\_

18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. \_\_\_\_
19. I act the same way no matter who I am with. \_\_\_\_
20. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am. \_\_\_\_
21. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met. \_\_\_\_
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects. \_\_\_\_
23. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me. \_\_\_\_
24. I value being in good health above everything. \_\_\_\_

## SECTION F

### MATERIAL SUPPORT

**Instructions:** This section is about material support (provision of the physical things that we use). First, indicate how often or rarely **you** provide such support for your wife. Then second, indicate how often or rarely **your wife** provides you with such support. Simply circle the number that corresponds to your choice of answer according to the scale below:

#### SCALE

- 1 -- Very rarely
- 2 -- Rarely
- 3 -- Sometimes
- 4 -- Often
- 5 -- Very often
- 6 -- Always

1. Provision of food

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

2. Clothing.

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

3. Accommodation / rent / housing.

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

4. Payment of utility bills (e.g. Electricity, phone, gas, water, etc.)

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Health expenses

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

6. Transport expenses

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

7. Spending money (upkeep or 'pocket' money)

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

8. Any other forms of material support (please specify).....

*From me to my wife* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my wife to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

## SECTION G

### MARITAL SATISFACTION

Please choose the numbers in the scale below to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are in your present marriage. Simply circle the number at the end of each question.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

very

very

dissatisfied

satisfied

1. How satisfied are you with your marriage? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. How satisfied are you with your wife as a spouse? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your wife? 1 2 3 4 5  
6 7

## SECTION H

### BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Finally, please complete this section with the following general information.

1. Sex:  male  female
2. Age:.....
3. Marital status:  single  married  separated  divorced   
widowed
4. How long have you been married?.....
5. Number of children (if any).....
6. Ethnicity (please choose one)  
 White-UK/Irish  
 White European  
 Asian  
 White – other (please specify).....  
 Black-Caribbean  
 Black African (e.g. Ghanaian)  
 Other group (please specify).....

7. Religion:  Christian     Moslem     Jew     Hindu      
Buddhist

Other (please specify).....

9. Occupation (please specify).....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPAITON!

## Appendix 1b

Wife number.....

### MARRIAGE SURVEY (wife version)

We are most grateful for your willingness to participate in this survey. The survey forms part of a postgraduate research on what people feel about their marriage experiences. It takes about 40 minutes to complete this questionnaire. All your responses will be treated in the strictest of confidence and used only for academic analysis. Therefore your name and address are not needed at all, since you will not be associated in any way with the research findings.

**Please respond to the questions in each section as freely as possible, completing every part. You are encouraged to carefully read the instructions in each section and to complete the questionnaire independently and confidentially from your spouse.**

Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this survey. For more information about the survey, please contact us at the addresses below:

The Research Administrator  
Department of Human Sciences  
Brunel University  
Uxbridge, Middlesex  
London, UB8 3PH

**Phone: 01895 274000  
x3897**

*or* 07904359674  
Fax: 01895 203207



PLEASE NOTE: After completion, kindly post the questionnaire back using the self-addressed/stamped envelope provided. Thanks.

**SECTION A:**

**MARRIAGE ROLE EXPECTATION INVENTORY**

**Instructions:** Please use the key below to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with EACH of the following statements about your expectations in your present marriage. Simply circle one of the five options at the right side of each statement.

**KEY**

- SA Strongly Agree
- A Agree
- U Undecided
- D Disagree
- SD Strongly Disagree

In my marriage, I expect:

1.	that my opinion will carry as much weight as my husband's in money matters.	SA	A	U	D	SD
2.	my husband to help me with housework.	SA	A	U	D	SD
3.	that it would be undesirable for me to be better educated than my husband.	SA	A	U	D	SD
4.	to combine motherhood and a career if that proves possible.	SA	A	U	D	SD
5.	my husband to be the "boss" who says what is to be done and what is not to be done.	SA	A	U	D	SD
6.	to be as well informed as my husband concerning the family's financial status and business affairs.	SA	A	U	D	SD
7.	my husband to leave the care of the children entirely up to me when they are babies.	SA	A	U	D	SD
8.	my husband to be as interested in spending time with the girls as much as with the boys in our family.	SA	A	U	D	SD
9.	it will be more important for me to be a good cook and housekeeper than for me to be an attractive, interesting companion.	SA	A	U	D	SD
10.	that being married will not keep my husband from going to college.	SA	A	U	D	SD
11.	that my husband and I will share responsibility for housework if both of us work outside the home.	SA	A	U	D	SD
12.	that keeping the garden, making repairs, and doing outside works will be the responsibility of whoever has the time and wishes to do them.	SA	A	U	D	SD
13.	that if my husband is a good worker, respectable and faithful to our family, other personal characteristics are of considerably less importance.	SA	A	U	D	SD
14.	that my husband will decide almost all money matters.	SA	A	U	D	SD
15.	that my husband and I shall have equal privileges in such things as going out at night.	SA	A	U	D	SD
16.	that my husband's major responsibility to our children will be to make a good living, provide a home, and make them mind.	SA	A	U	D	SD
17.	that since doing things like laundry, cleaning, and child care are	SA	A	U	D	SD

	“women’s work”, my husband will feel no responsibility for them.	
18.	week-ends to be a period of rest for my husband, so he will not be expected to assist with cooking and housekeeping.	SA A U D SD
19.	that if my husband helps with the housework, I will help with the outside works such as keeping the garden, painting or repairing the house.	SA A U D SD
20.	that my husband and I will have equal voice in decisions affecting the family as a whole.	SA A U D SD
21.	that after marriage I will forget about education and make a home for my husband.	SA A U D SD
22.	to work outside the home if I enjoy working more than staying at home.	SA A U D SD
23.	that both my husband and I will concern ourselves with social and emotional development of our children.	SA A U D SD
24.	that it will be my husband’s responsibility and privilege to choose where we will go and what we will do when we go out.	SA A U D SD
25.	that I can cook, sew, keep house, and care for the children, any other kind of education for me is unnecessary.	SA A U D SD
26.	that having compatible personalities will be considerably less important to us than such characteristics as being religious, honest and hardworking.	SA A U D SD
27.	to accept the fact that my husband will devote most of his time getting ahead and becoming a success.	SA A U D SD
28.	that I will generally prefer talking about something like clothes, places to go and “women’s interests” to talking about complicated international and economic affairs.	SA A U D SD
29.	that an education is important for me whether or not I work outside the home.	SA A U D SD
30.	it will be only natural that my husband will be the one concerned about politics and what is going on in the world.	SA A U D SD
31.	that since my husband must earn the living, he can’t be expected to take time to “play” with the children.	SA A U D SD
32.	that it is my job rather than my husband’s to set a good example and see that the family goes to church.	SA A U D SD
33.	to fit my life to my husband’s.	SA A U D SD
34.	that managing and planning for spending money will be a joint proposition between my husband and me.	SA A U D SD
35.	my husband to manage his time so that he will be able to share in the care of the children.	SA A U D SD
36.	that having guests in our home will not prevent my husband lending a hand with serving meals or keeping the house orderly.	SA A U D SD
37.	that we will permit the children to share, according to their abilities, with the parents in making family decisions.	SA A U D SD
38.	my husband to help wash or dry dishes.	SA A U D SD
39.	my husband to take the entire responsibility for earning the family living.	SA A U D SD
40.	that staying at home with the children will be my duty rather than my husband’s.	SA A U D SD
41.	my husband to feel equally as responsible for the children after work and on holidays as I do.	SA A U D SD
42.	my husband to make most of the decisions concerning the children such as where they will go and what they may do.	SA A U D SD
43.	that it will be exclusively my duty to do the cooking and keeping the house in order.	SA A U D SD
44.	that my husband and I will share household tasks according to individual interests and abilities rather than according to “woman’s work”.	SA A U D SD
45.	my husband to earn a good living if he expects love and respect from his family.	SA A U D SD

46.	whether or not I work will depend upon what we as a couple think is best for our own happiness.	SA A U D SD
47.	that if I am not going to work outside the home, there is no reason getting a college education.	SA A U D SD
48.	that as our children grow up the boys will be more my husband's responsibility while the girls are my responsibility.	SA A U D SD
49.	that my husband and I will feel equally responsible for looking after the welfare of our children.	SA A U D SD
50.	that I will take full responsibility for the care and training of our children so that my husband can devote his time to his work.	SA A U D SD

## **SECTION B**

### **MARRIAGE SCENARIOS**

**Instruction:** Please use the scale below to answer the questions that follow the marriages described.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
very						very
dissatisfied						satisfied

#### **Marriage # 1**

**Mary and Mark are married. They both work full-time and also share the household chores**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage # 2**

**Mark and Mary are married. Mark works full-time but Mary works only part-time. Mary also does majority of the household chores.**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage # 3**

**Mark and Mary are married. Mark works full-time while Mary does not work at all, but does all the household chores.**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

**Marriage # 4**

**Mark and Mary are married. They both work full-time and Mary does all the household chores as well.**

How satisfied do you think Mark is with his married life? \_\_\_\_\_

How satisfied do you think Mary is with her married life? \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION C

### RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS

**Instructions: This section is about what you believe are the important factors in determining successful marriages. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your own general beliefs about marital relationships. Please use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you hold each of the following beliefs by simply circling the number that applies to you, at the end of each statement.**

#### SCALE

- 1 --- I do not hold this belief at all
- 2 --- I slightly hold this belief
- 3 --- I moderately hold this belief
- 4 --- I quite strongly hold this belief
- 5 --- I strongly hold this belief
- 6 --- I very strongly hold this belief

1. People must always listen to their partner's underlying messages. 1 2 3 4 5 6
2. In successful relationships partners constantly show how much they love one another. 1 2 3 4 5 6
3. There must be complete honesty between partners. 1 2 3 4 5 6

4. Each partner has a right to absolute personal privacy. 1 2 3 4 5 6
5. Partners must support each other completely in close relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
6. In happy relationships partners totally accept each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
7. The best relationships are built on strong sexual attraction. 1 2 3 4 5 6
8. Men and women must equally share household chores. 1 2 3 4 5 6
9. Both partners must make sacrifices in relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Relationships must be full of laughter. 1 2 3 4 5 6
11. Sharing interests and hobbies keeps relationships healthy. 1 2 3 4 5 6
12. People from similar backgrounds will have more successful relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
13. Partners must be best friends as well as lovers. 1 2 3 4 5 6
14. Financial problems wreck relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
15. Having children brings couples together. 1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Not getting on with each other's friends or families wrecks relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
17. A good relationship is strong enough to survive anything. 1 2 3 4 5 6
18. In most successful relationships partners are completely sensitive to each other's feelings. 1 2 3 4 5 6
19. Partners must be able to speak freely with each other on any topic no matter how distressing. 1 2 3 4 5 6
20. Close relationships cannot work without love. 1 2 3 4 5 6
21. The best relationships depend on being absolutely loyal to each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
22. Partners in close relationships must have time apart from each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
23. In the best relationships partners work hard at satisfying each other's needs. 1 2 3 4 5 6
24. Partners in the best relationships have unconditional approval of each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
25. Without good sex relationships do not survive. 1 2 3 4 5 6
26. Without equality between partners, relationships die. 1 2 3 4 5 6
27. Partners must be prepared to compromise for the sake of a relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
28. Relationships must be exciting. 1 2 3 4 5 6

29. Partners must share the same beliefs and values. 1 2 3 4 5 6
30. To have a good relationship each individual must feel secure within him/herself. 1 2 3 4 5 6
31. Your partner should be your best friend. 1 2 3 4 5 6
32. Close relationships depend on economic security. 1 2 3 4 5 6
33. Long-term relationships are shallow without children. 1 2 3 4 5 6
34. Having friends in common cements relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
35. Conflict in a relationship must be confronted directly. 1 2 3 4 5 6
36. Mutual respect is the foundation for the best relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
37. It is essential for partners to express all their feelings in relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
38. Love between partners is enough to ensure a successful relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
39. Partners must be completely faithful to each other in close relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
40. It is essential for partners to remain individuals no matter how close they are. 1 2 3 4 5 6
41. Partners must provide practical support for each other to the utmost of their capabilities. 1 2 3 4 5 6
42. If partners do not accept each other, they cannot really love each other. 1 2 3 4 5 6
43. Sexual compatibility is essential to good relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
44. The best relationship is one in which the partners take equal responsibility for its maintenance. 1 2 3 4 5 6
45. Within a healthy relationship partners accommodate each others' needs, even if this involves self- denial. 1 2 3 4 5 6
46. Romance is an essential element of a relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
47. The more time partners spend together the better. 1 2 3 4 5 6
48. If both partners come from secure and caring families the relationship is much more likely to succeed. 1 2 3 4 5 6
49. Relationships cannot survive without a very close friendship between partners. 1 2 3 4 5 6



50. Money is as important as love in a relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6
51. Having children leads to total fulfilment in close relationships. 1 2 3 4 5 6
52. Your own friends must be your partner's friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6
53. The success of a relationship depends on how well any conflict is dealt with. 1 2 3 4 5 6
54. Courtesy toward a partner is one of the most important factors in the success of the best relationship. 1 2 3 4 5 6

**SECTION D**  
**SELF-DISCLOSURE**

**Instructions:** This section is about how you reveal certain types of information to your husband, and how your husband in turn reveals them to you. Please use the scale below to **indicate the extent to which you have revealed the following types of information to your husband. Then also indicate the extent to which your husband too has revealed his to you.**

SCALE

- 0** -- I have told my husband nothing about this aspect of me
- 1** -- I have talked in general terms about this aspect. My husband has only a general idea about this aspect of me.
- 2** -- I have talked in full and complete detail about this aspect to my husband. He knows me fully in this respect, and could describe me accurately.
- X** -- I have lied or misrepresented myself to my husband so that he has a false picture of me

**Attitudes and opinions**

8. What I think and feel about religion; my personal religious views.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
9. My views on the present government – the president, government policies, etc.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
10. My personal views on sexual morality – how I feel that others and I ought to behave in sexual matters.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

11. My personal standards of beauty and attractiveness - what I consider to be attractive in a woman.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

12. The things I regard as desirable for a man to be – what I look for in a man.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

13. My feelings about how parents ought to deal with children.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

### **Money earnings and spending**

1. Details of how much money I make at my work, or get as an allowance.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

2. What and who I spend my money on.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

3. Whether or not I owe money; if so, how much.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

4. Whom I owe money to at present; or whom I have borrowed from in the past.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

5. Whether or not I have savings, and the amount.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

6. Whether or not others owe me money, the amount and who owes it to me.

*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X

*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

7. Whether or not I gamble; if so, the way I gamble, and the extent of it.

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

8. All my present sources of income – wages, fees, allowances, dividends, etc.

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

9. My total financial worth, including property, savings, bonds, insurance, etc.

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

## The future

1. Things about the future that I worry about

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

4. Details of my highest ideals in life

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

3. Details about my future goals

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

4. My plans for achieving my future goals

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

## Social life and work

1. Interesting and exciting new things I discover in my day to day life

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

4. What I find to be the worst pressures and strains in my work.

<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

5. What I enjoy most, and get the most satisfaction from in my present work.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
5. My ambitions and goals in my work.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
6. How I really feel about the people that I work for, or work with.  
  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
7. Favours and good treatments I get from others in my daily life and/or work.  
  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
8. Persons in my life whom I resent most.  
  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
9. Unpleasant things that happen in my daily life or workplace.  
  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

### **Personality**

1. My guiltiest secrets.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
2. Things about me that other people criticise  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
3. Things about me that other people praise  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
4. Good feelings about the appearance of my body  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

5. Bad feelings about the appearance of my body  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
6. What it takes to hurt my feelings deeply.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
14. The kinds of things that make me especially proud of myself.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

### **Health**

1. Thoughts about my health problems and worries.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
2. My past record of illness and treatment.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
3. My secret fears and worries about any major illnesses I might have eg. Cancers, ulcers, heart condition, tumours, infertility, etc.  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
4. Information about any illnesses that run in my family (among my siblings, parents, grandparents etc)  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

### **Sexual life**

1. My past experiences with previous partner(s).  
*Information from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
*Information from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X
2. Disappointments I have experienced with the opposite sex.

- |  |  |   |   |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|
|  | <i>Information from me to my husband</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 | X |
|  | <i>Information from my husband to me</i> | 0 | 1 | 2 | X |
3. My sexual desires and expectations.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  4. My impressions about my husband's sexual performance
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  5. Feelings about my sexual problems and inadequacies.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
  6. The facts of my present sex life- including how I get sexual satisfaction.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X

### **Family matters**

1. Characteristics of my parents that I dislike.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
2. Things that make me proud of my family.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
3. Matters in my family that I'm most ashamed about.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
4. Characteristics of my in-laws that I dislike.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
5. My dealings with my parents and siblings
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
6. What I find good and respectable about my in-laws.
 

	<i>Information from me to my husband</i>	0	1	2	X
	<i>Information from my husband to me</i>	0	1	2	X
7. Details of my most embarrassing childhood memories.

Disclosure *from me to my husband* 0 1 2 X  
 Disclosure *from my husband to me* 0 1 2 X

**SECTION E**

**SELF-CONSTRUAL**

**Instructions:** This section contains statements about relations between yourself and other people. Please choose a number from the scale below to represent the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. Simply write the number you choose in the space provided at the end of each statement.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly						Strongly
Disagree						Agree

Part One

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact. \_\_\_\_\_
2. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. \_\_\_\_\_
3. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. \_\_\_\_\_
4. I would offer my seat in a bus to someone of higher status (eg. my boss, pastor, elder, professor) \_\_\_\_\_
5. I respect people who are modest about themselves. \_\_\_\_\_
6. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I should take into consideration my parents. \_\_\_\_\_
9. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group. \_\_\_\_\_
10. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I'm not happy with the group. \_\_\_\_\_
11. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible. \_\_\_\_\_
12. Even when I strongly disagree with my group members, I avoid an argument. \_\_\_\_\_

Part Two

13. I'd rather say "No" directly, than risk being misunderstood. \_\_\_\_\_
14. Speaking up in public or in a group is not a problem for me. \_\_\_\_\_
15. Having a lively imagination is important to me. \_\_\_\_\_
16. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. \_\_\_\_\_

17. I am the same person at home that I am at everywhere. \_\_\_\_
18. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. \_\_\_\_
19. I act the same way no matter who I am with. \_\_\_\_
20. I feel comfortable using someone's first name soon after I meet them, even when they are much older than I am. \_\_\_\_
21. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I've just met. \_\_\_\_
22. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects. \_\_\_\_
23. My personal identity independent of others, is very important to me. \_\_\_\_
24. I value being in good health above everything. \_\_\_\_

## SECTION F

### MATERIAL SUPPORT

**Instructions:** This section is about material support (provision of the physical things that we use). First, indicate how often or rarely **you** provide such support for your husband. Then second, indicate how often or rarely **your husband** provides you with such support. Simply circle the number that corresponds to your choice of answer according to the scale below:

#### SCALE

- 1 -- Very rarely
- 2 -- Rarely
- 3 -- Sometimes
- 4 -- Often
- 5 -- Very often
- 6 -- Always

10. Provision of food

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

11. Clothing.

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

12. Accommodation / rent / housing.

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6



13. Payment of utility bills (e.g. Electricity, phone, gas, water, etc.)

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

14. Health expenses

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

15. Transport expenses

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

16. Spending money (upkeep or 'pocket' money)

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

17. Any other forms of material support (please

specify).....

*From me to my husband* 1 2 3 4 5 6

*From my husband to me* 1 2 3 4 5 6

## **SECTION G**

### **MARITAL SATISFACTION**

Please choose the numbers in the scale below to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied you are in your present marriage. Simply circle the number at the end of each question, using the scale below:

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

very

very

dissatisfied

satisfied

4. How satisfied are you with your marriage? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. How satisfied are you with your husband as a spouse? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband? 1 2 3 4  
5 6 7

## **SECTION H**

### **BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

Finally, please complete this section with the following general information.

1. Sex:  male  female
2. Age:.....
3. Marital status:  single  married  separated  divorced   
widowed
4. How long have you been married?.....
5. Number of children (if any).....
6. Ethnicity (please choose one)
- White-UK/Irish
- White European
- Asian
- White – other (please specify).....
- Black-Caribbean
- Black African (e.g. Ghanaian)
- Other group (please specify).....

7. Religion:  Christian     Moslem     Jew     Hindu      
Buddhist

Other (please specify).....

18. Occupation (please specify).....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPAITON!

## **Appendix 2**

### **RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS SCALE (Fletcher & Kininmonth, 1992)**

#### **Subcales**

The items in the scale are organised by subscales. The numbers to the left denote the position of the item in the original scale

#### **Communication**

- 1. People must always listen to their partner's underlying messages.
- 19. Partners must be able to speak freely with each other on any topic no matter how distressing.
- 37. It is essential for partners to express all their feelings in relationships.

#### **Love**

- 2. In successful relationships partners constantly show how much they love one another.
- 20. Close relationships cannot work without love.
- 30. Love between partners is enough to ensure a successful relationship.

#### **Trust**

- 3. There must be complete honesty between partners.
- 21. The best relationships depend on being absolutely loyal to one another.
- 39. Partners must be completely faithful to one another in close relationships.

#### **Independence**

- 4. Each partner has a right to absolute personal privacy.
- 22. Partners in close relationships must have time apart from each other.
- 40. It is essential for partners to remain individuals no matter how close they are.

#### **Support**

- 5. Partners must support one another completely in close relationships.
- 23. In the best relationships partners work hard at satisfying each other's needs.
- 41. Partners must provide practical support for each other to the utmost of their capabilities.

## **Acceptance**

6. In happy relationships partners totally accept each other. 24. Partners in the best relationships have unconditional approval of one another.

42. If partners do not accept each other, they cannot really love each other.

## **Sex**

7 The best relationships are built on strong sexual attraction.

25. Without good sex relationships do not survive.

43. Sexual compatibility is essential to good relationships.

## **Equity**

8. Men and women must equally share household chores.

26. Without equality between partners, relationships die.

44. The best relationship is one in which the partners take equal responsibility for its maintenance.

## **Compromise**

9. Both partners must make sacrifices in relationships.

27 Partners must be prepared to compromise for the sake of a relationship.

45. Within a healthy relationship partners accommodate each others' needs, even if this involves self-denial

## **Relationship vitality**

10. Relationships must be full of laughter.

28. Relationships must be exciting.

46. Romance is an essential element of a relationship.

## **Commonality**

11. Sharing interests and hobbies keeps relationships healthy.

29. Partners must share the same beliefs and values

47. The more time partners spend together the better.

## **Personal security**

12. People from similar backgrounds will have more successful relationships.

30. To have a good relationship each individual must feel secure within him/herself.

48. If both partners come from secure and caring families the relationship is much more likely to succeed.

## **Friendship**

13. Partners must be best friends as well as lovers.

- 31. Your partner should be your best friend.
- 49. Relationships cannot survive without a very close friendship between partners.

## **Finance**

- 14. Financial problems wreck relationships.
- 15. Close relationships depend on economic security.
- 16. Money is as important as love in a relationship.

## **Children**

- 15. Having children brings couples together.
- 33. Long-term relationships are shallow without children.
- 51. Having children leads to total fulfilment in close relationships.

## **Important others**

- 16. Not getting on with each other's friends or families wrecks relationships.
  - 34. Having friends in common cements relationships.
- Your own friends must be your partner's friends.

## **Coping**

- 17. A good relationship is strong enough to survive anything.
- 35. Conflict in a relationship must be confronted directly.
- 53. The success of a relationship depends on how well any conflict is dealt with.

## **Respect**

- 18. In most successful relationships partners are completely sensitive to each other's feelings.
- 36. Mutual respect is the foundation for the best relationships.
- 54. Courtesy toward the partner is one of the most important factors in the success of the best relationship.

## Relationship Belief Factors.

### **Intimacy**

- Trust
- Respect
- Communication
- Coping
- Support
- Acceptance
- Love
- Friendship
- Compromise

### **External factors**

- Personal security
- Important others
- Finance
- Commonality
- Children

### **Passion**

- Sex
- Vitality

### **Individuality**

- Independence
- Equity

## Appendix 3a

### Marriage Experience Interviews Protocol

#### (Final version)

##### A. BIOGRAPHICS

1. *How long have you been married? And how old are you?*
2. *How many children do you have?*
3. *What work do you do? And your husband (or wife)?*

##### B. SUPPORT IN MARRIAGE

4. ***In your marital home, who provides the material things (such as house-keeping money, food, cloths, rent, bills etc) for the upkeep of the family?***
5. ***What particular material things does your spouse provide for the household?***
6. *In what other ways does your husband (or wife) support you?*
7. *Apart from your husband (or wife), do you receive any support from other people, such as extended family and friends? If yes, what kind of support?*

##### C. COMPANIONSHIP AND SHARING

8. *How do you understand intimacy in marriage?*
9. *In terms of closeness and intimacy, and sharing of personal information, how do you describe the relationship between you and your husband (or wife?)*
10. ***Comparing your husband (or your wife) and your extended family/friends who are more important to you? (Probe) – WHY?***

##### D. MARITAL SATISFACTION



- 11. From your experience, what makes marital satisfaction?*
- 12. What are the things that make you satisfied or dissatisfied in your marriage  
(Probe) – mention at least three things that make you satisfied*
- 13. How satisfied are you with your marriage?*

## Appendix 3b

# Interview Coding Scheme, Main Study 2

### **BIOGRAPHICS**

- 1a. State how long participant has been married \_\_\_\_\_
- 1b. State age of participant \_\_\_\_\_
2. State participant's number of children \_\_\_\_\_
- 3a. State participant's occupations \_\_\_\_\_
- 3b. State participant's spouse's occupation \_\_\_\_\_

### **SUPPORT IN MARRIAGE**

4. Who did participant mention as the provider of material things for the home?
  - 1= self exclusively,
  - 2=self more
  - 3=spouse exclusively
  - 4=spouse more
  - 5=self & spouse equally; joint a/c
5. Particular material things participant reported as provided by spouse
  - 1=household consumables,
  - 2=payment of utility bills and fees
  - 3=clothes for the children sometimes
  - 4=money for whatever is needed
  - 5=nothing
6. Other support participant receives from spouse
  - 1=emotional/spiritual support & advice
  - 2=financial support when I'm down
  - 3=housekeeping, child care and my needs
  - 4=everything else, emotional and material
  - 5=nothing else
7. Does participant receive external help from extended family and/or friends?
  - 1=No
  - 2=Yes, in the form of child care
  - 3=Yes in the form of money and other material consumables
  - 4=Emotional support & advice

### **COMPANIONSHIP AND SHARING**

8. The major thing participant mentioned as constituent of marital intimacy
  - 1= relational elements
  - 2=instrumental elements
  - 3=both relational & instrumental elements
9. How does participant describe their relationship with their spouse in terms of intimacy and closeness?

- 1=very cordial, close, good sex, nobody knows our secrets
- 2=average, a bit of cordiality and conflicts sometimes
- 3=poor communication, not close as first, conflicts, neglect

10a. Who did participant chose as more important to them?

- 1=spouse
- 2=extended family / friends
- 3=both equally
- 4=The children

10b. What reason(s) did participant give for their choice?

- 1= Choice, forever, love, care, understanding
- 2=My extended family and/or friends have always been there for me.
- 3=Bible says we are one flesh forever

11. What major things did participant understand as marital satisfaction

- 1=relational elements (love, sex, communication, understanding, trust, respect, emotion)
- 2=instrumental elements (home upkeep, care for my material needs, children)
- 3=both relational and instrumental elements

12a. What are the things that make participant satisfied in their marriage>

- 1=relational elements (love, sex, communication, understanding, trust, respect, emotion)
- 2=instrumental elements (home upkeep, care for my material needs, children)
- 3=both relational and instrumental elements

12b. What are the things that make participant dissatisfied?

- 1=when my spouse talks to me rudely (1)
- 2=when we have a misunderstanding and communication breaks down (1)
- 3=when our sex life is inadequate (1)
- 4=when my partner fails to attend to my material needs e.g. food, my clothes etc (2)
- 5=when my in-laws intrude in my marriage (2)
- 6=(1) & (2)

13. How satisfied is participant with their marriage?

- 1=Very satisfied
- 2=averagely satisfied
- 3=ambivalent sometimes
- 4=dissatisfied



