

**Research Article**

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## Perceived impacts of acceptance, conversation and inheritance issues on relationships happiness among couples in Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana

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**Abstract:** Conversation either verbal or non-verbal is an important aspect of a marital relationship that brings about marital happiness. This study sought to investigate the impacts of acceptance, lack of conversation and inheritance issues on relationship happiness among inter-and-intra ethnic relationships in the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region, Ghana. The researchers used descriptive research survey design. The study employed a qualitative research approach. The data for the study were gathered from inter-and-intra ethnic spouses who are above 20 years of age, have been married for 2 years to 60 years and with an academic background of Junior High School (JHS) and above. Ten (10) couples were used for the study. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the couples from the accessible population. Interviews were used to gather the data. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. Major findings of the study revealed that couples in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships were not happy with respect to their children inheriting their parents. It was therefore, recommended that couples in inter- and intra- ethnic relationships should be schooled to prepare a Will whiles living with the assistance of religious leaders and counsellors. Further, properties acquired during their relationship should be recorded in the names of their children to prevent uncertainty and conflicts after they are dead when the state employs the implementation of PNDC Law 111, 1985 of Ghana. It was also found out that, couples in both inter- and intra-ethnic relationships chose a common medium of expression. It is recommended that, couples from different backgrounds should use a common language for better understanding and to do away with suspicions in the relationships to bring about marital happiness.

**Keywords** – Acceptance, Conversation, Counselling, Inheritance, Inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic, Marital happiness and Perceived effect

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Bentil (2021), marriage is considered as the lifelong connection that ensures a man and a woman consent to engage in sexual activity, which is recognized by the cultural and religious beliefs of the community to which they belong. Bentil (2021) asserts that marriage is a social institution that most persons (a man and a woman) who reach the requisite age would wish to participate in unless there are certain factors preventing them from doing so. An adult man and woman who decide to live as a couple for the rest of their lives or until the relationship is legally ended are said to be married. Due to the fact that different communities place varied emphasis on various aspects of marriage and culture, Sarfo, Yendork and Naidoo (2020) contend that marriage should be seen from its cultural perspective.

Happiness in life frequently depends on one's expectations and how well those expectations are associated with what one really encounters. In the majority of Western and African nations, including Ghana, people get married at some stage of time life (Rahmani, Khoei, Sedeghi & Gholi, 2011). The motivations behind marriage might vary. As examples, think of affection, social assistance, financial assistance, emotional assistance, love, and sex. People get married in order to have happy lives that encompass their physical, emotional, physiological, and well-being (Rahmani, 2011). However, the majority of their goals are abandoned owing to a number of factors, such as personal happiness and union fulfilment. People tend to look for and marry partners who have more similarities than differences in their personalities, backgrounds, cultures, hobbies, and behavioural patterns (Bruch & Skovholt, 1985). This is one of the most common and well-studied characteristics of relationship happiness (Bruch & Skovholt, 1985).

Relationships between two people (a man and a woman) who share ethnic traits such as food eaten, cultural activities, languages spoken, attire, hereditary traits, belief systems, and values are referred to as intra-ethnic marriages (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2013). Couples who are more alike in terms of culture and personality may experience fewer arguments, fights, misunderstandings, and other conflicts or negative interactions than partners who may not have many shared interests or characteristics (Rao, 2002). Inter-ethnic marriages are becoming more occurrence events in Ghana because of urbanization. In Ghana, relationships connecting couples of inter-ethnicities, the clan of birth, local tongue, or cultural origin are increasingly becoming widespread (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2013). The inter-ethnic relationship simply refers to the union of two people with different cultural origins who had different sociocultural upbringings. Inter-ethnic marriages could be a way to bring people together in a culture where maintaining peace is necessary for social coexistence, making it more difficult for families to fight or cause conflict. Couples can become more respectful of one another by using the opportunity to learn about one another's cultural background. These significantly reduce ethnic tensions (Taniguchi & Kaufman, 2013).

Inter-ethnic relationships are usually associated with communication challenges because of linguistic disparities, according to Oduro-Frimpong (Oduro-Frimpong, 2007). For instance, English is frequently used in Ghanaian communities as a form of communication. Children may become confused about which local dialect they should learn or speak at home since partners may not comprehend one another's dialects. This necessitated doing the research in Ghana's Kumasi Metropolis.

## 2. LITERATURE SURVEY

### 2.1. Tolerance and marital satisfaction

Tolerance leads to peace in every marriage. When it comes to contentious topics, acceptance may also signify a "let's agree to disagree" attitude. It does not imply that one must accept or support actions, statements, or concepts that go against their core beliefs and convictions. It simply implies that one should agree to accept and honour his or her spouse's sentiments in any situation (Hira & Warda, 2016). Tolerance in relationships may help couples enjoy brief moments of happiness and fulfilment in a satisfying relationship as well as strengthen their bonds. People differ in a variety of ways, including their thoughts, actions, values, and attributions. Life is a dynamic phenomenon. Situations and other factors change it, and couples are willing to change their behaviour at any time

in an effort to achieve marital pleasure. Many new couples encounter and learn about tolerance when they first get married (Hira & Warda, 2016).

According to Alex (2011), another key facet of marriage that is often overlooked is tolerance in marital relationships. In their study, Shahid and Shahid (2016) discovered that at the beginning of married life and marital connection, couples find it challenging to handle one other's partner's good and bad behaviours. However, as time passed by, things improve and relax in marital partnerships, but only if individuals can tolerate their spouse's unpleasant attitudes. Dhammananda (2005) identified patience, tolerance, and understanding as key elements of a happy marriage. One will be able to reduce the amount of time they spend feeling enraged and distant from their spouse if they can develop the aptitude or skill to endure when their spouse deviates from what they had hoped for (Watson & Waston, 2010). Due to a lack of tolerance and compassion, many individuals view marriage as a curse rather than a privilege.

## 2.2. Communication in marriage and marital satisfaction

Communication involves conversations about current events as well as other vital responsibilities in relationship and it is a useful aspect in establishing effective marital connections. According to Schmitt, Kliegel and Shapiro (2007), free conversation is essential in relationships to make sure parties understand one another. Communication is a dynamic process that involves transmitting meaningful messages to partners (Olson, Olson-Sigg & Larson, 2008). The most important component of a happy relationship is effective communication (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2005: 63). How a couple communicates is an important sign of the quality and stability of their partnership (Carroll, 2012). According to Ojukwu and Obiji (2016), free conversation in marriages is the oil that keeps the sustenance of romance from decreasing. They emphasised that poor communication is one of the bad things that arise when one of the marital partners becomes dissatisfied with the attitude of the other. This conclusion concurs with Eseré (2006), who emphasized that significant lack of communication between couples accounts for more than half of broken relationships. According to a research done in Chile in 1999 by Roizblatt et al. (1999) having effective communication is a crucial component of keeping couples happy in their relationship.

According to one survey, honest communication is seen as being essential for both marital happiness and personal well-being for many Americans (Caughlin, 2003). Communication issues between couples are the main cause of unsuccessful relationships (Amato & Previti, 2003). According to one study, communication style and conflict topics both contribute to unhappy marriages. According to research by Zainah et al. (2015), good communication between partners is a crucial component of a fulfilling relationship.

## 2.3. The inheritance pattern in Ghana

Primarily, patrilineal ethnic groups in Ghana include the Ga, the Ewe, the Dagomba and Nanumba, and the Akwapim. In a patrilineal family, both the male and the female are related to their father tribe but not to their mother tribe. However, only men pass on to the offspring aspects of their family identity, such as titles and names (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012). A female's children belong to her husband's father's line. According to patrilineal traditions, a person's kinship group includes their father, siblings, half-siblings by the same man, offspring, uncles and aunties. Individuals' ancestry includes their half-sister and sister who share the same father, but not their offspring. This is because they are a sister or half-sister of the husband's relations. Similarly, grandchildren through a son are regarded to be a person's family, whereas grandchildren through a daughter are considered to be a person's patrilineal lineage only (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012).

*Figure. 1, The circle and the square stand for male and female respectively. One's lineage constitutes all descendants (white) of common male ancestors through male relationships. Children of both male and female belong to their father's but not their mother's lineage. One is thus connected to all members of one's father's lineage but not to one's mother's lineage.*

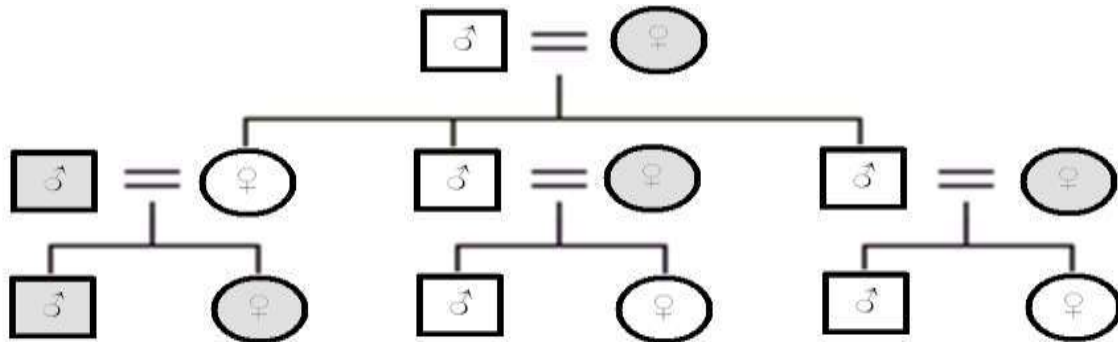


Figure 1: Patrilineal relationships

Children born of patrilineal lineage receives their paternal fortune, whereas women whose husbands are dead are look up to their children for assistance (Ollennu, 1996). Individuals of a similar patrilineal tribe (in white) who is descended from individuals who are typically viewed as relatives in the West (in grey), but who are not considered as relations in a patrilineal tradition (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012). Almost 48% of Ghana's population are Akans, and the two largest ethnic groups, Kutsoati and Morck, are called matrilineal in terms of tradition. Akans are found in Ashanti, the Central and Western Regions, and Lobi, Tampoles, and Baga in northern Ghana (Kutsoati and Morck). Maternal descent that follows a female lineage is generally termed as matrilineal descent. If two individuals may come from the same female ancestor through females, they are said to be blood relation. Only a daughter may pass on inheritance lineage to her kids, even if both male and female children are relatives of the matrilineal ethnic group (O'Neil, 2006). In matrilineal traditions, the predominance of the mother's brother is typically reflected in the inheritance for men. For example, a king often transfers his royal title to his sister's son in the Ashanti Kingdom of Central Ghana. Since a king's biological son does not accede to the throne since he is not a relation of the royal matrilineal family group (Awusabo-Asare, 2014). Female relations usually inherits status and assets directly from their mothers in matrilineal communities.

Figure. 2, The circle and the square both stand for female and male. One's lineage involves all descendants (white) of female ancestors by female blood lineage. Children of both genders belong to their mother's, but not their fathers' lineage. One is associated to one's mother, but not one's father, and to all members of one's mother lineage but not to members of one's fathers' lineage.

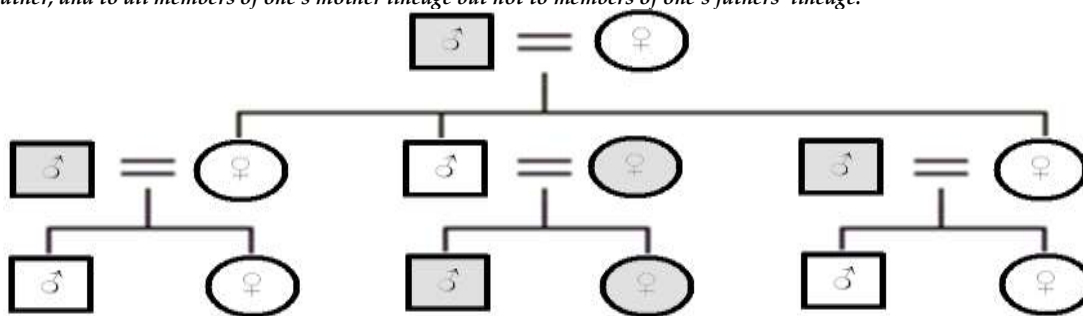


Figure 3: Matrilineal relationship

The dual descent pattern is the consequence of combining patrilineal and matrilineal lineage. The person comes from both parents' lineage. One of the most powerful impacts in traditional African society, especially in Ghana, has been an individual's strong feeling of kinship. Kinship describes the associations between people who are typically regarded as belonging to the same family or having blood links. Blood, engagement, and marriage ties are taken into consideration when relating to kinship. In certain ethnic groups, kinship regulates interpersonal interactions. It controls marital traditions and laws and establishes how people should behave toward one another in the society. Families and entirety of ethnic groups are united through this association (Higgs, 2003).

In Ghanaian culture, specifically, kinship is usually social in nature. Where social kinship and biological kinship vary, the former predominates. Kinship encourages a life of interdependence, closeness, community, and treating people with consideration. The immediate families are often accorded respect and responsibility (Awusabo-Asare, 2014).

## 2.4. Dual descent and inheritance

The principal patrilineal tribes in Ghana include the Ga, the Ewe, the Dagomba and Nanumba, and the Akwapim. Female and male patrilineal descendants belong to their father's kin group but not to their mother's. However, only men carry on their father's identity to their progeny, for instance as titles and names. A woman's offsprings are patrilineal descendants of her spouse (Awusbo-Asare, 2014). In patrilineal traditions, one's extended family comprise their father, half-siblings, siblings through the same father, aunts, and uncles in addition to their offsprings. One's lineage includes their sister and half-sister who share the same father, but not their offspring. This is because they are a part of the husband's family who is a sister or half-sister. Similarly, grandkids via a son are considered to be a person's family, but grandchildren through a daughter are considered to be a person's father's family and are not considered to be a person's blood relations (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012).

## 2.5. Traditional inheritance

Inheritance rights of couples and children in relationships are really being influenced by the form of relationships and lineage cultural practice among the community members. Relationships in Ghana can be monogamous, polygamous, ordinance or customary (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012). Awusabo-Asare (1990) claimed that traditional relationship was the most common among Ghanaians and that they accounted for up to 80% of all relationships in Ghana at the time. In terms of customary inheritance, the family inherits the whole estate of an individual who passes on without leaving a Will (an intestate decedent).

Traditionally, one's relation is regarded as their lineage. "The larger lineal family descended from a common ancestor or ancestress" (Kludze 1983: 60). A "successor" is often chosen by the family head to assume the duties, rights, and estates of the deceased in the family's stead. Traditional marriage law in Ghana is applied differently to different ethnic or racial groupings. Every ethnic tradition is an obscure system of expectations, commitments, and laws. Traditional marriage law, can only be overruled by a formal Will, and few Ghanaians make one. In Ghana, the two main types of customary law systems for inheritance are called patrilineal and matrilineal traditions (Kutsoati & Morck, 2012).

Matrilineal tribes in Ghana do not consider a dead man's children or wife to be related, while the West, patrilineal rituals are usually seen as benevolent and in support of the children and widow. In addition, a widow in a matrilineal tribe with a rich brother can be far more kind than a woman whose husband is dead in a father's tribe whose spouse is poor and left her children with a meagre inheritance (Awusbo-Asare, 2014).

Interstate succession Law (PNDC Law 111, 1985) lays forth how to split a spouse's estate when they pass away without leaving a will. The PNDC law 111, according to Woodman (1985), is the most significant legislative change yet to be made to Ghanaian private law. Residual asset classification under interstate succession law (PNDC Law 111, 1985). The formulae used to divide up the decedent's residue, which includes any asset that is not considered household chattels or lineage assets, among heirs. Business buildings, commercial cars, secondary residential assets, savings, bank accounts, and investments are instances of residual assets. Which of the deceased person's relatives is still alive will determine the appropriate formula (Awusbo-Asare, 2014).



**Table 1:** Residue asset Classification under interstate succession Law (PNDC Law 111, 1985).

Distribution of Residence Law 111					
Living Conjured and Extended	Spouse	Children	Parents	Lineage	State
1. If all survive	3/16	9/16	1/8	1/8	0
2. No living partner	-	¾	1/8	1/8	0
3. No living children	½	-	¼	¼	0
4. No living partner or children	-	-	¾	¼	0
5. No living partner, children or parents	-	-	-	1	0
6. No surviving known relatives	-	-	-	-	1

- a. Classifying in line with the cultural lineage.
- b. In trust for any individual, subsequently identified as adequately related to a dead person to be legitimate heir.

In Ghanaian societies, the mother ethnic group does not consider a dead man's wife or children to be his relatives, although in the West, patrilineal customs are often seen as being supportive and helpful to the widow and children. More so, a widow from a father's ethnic group whose poor husband left her children a small estate or asset, a widow in a matrilineal ethnic group with a wealthy brother may be of great assistance because the members provide the widow with financial support and serve as custodian for her children. There would not be many issues with dividing the man's estate if both of the marriages are patrilineal. The woman will receive the property that the children will naturally inherit from their dads. Most couples are often unhappy when their inheritance has to be divided under the terms of interstate succession law (PNDC Law 111, 1985), which might lead to marital disagreements and, ultimately, marital discontent.

### 3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The researchers are counsellors in their respective churches in the Kumasi Metropolis as professional counsellors. During some of their counselling sessions, it came to light that, most spouses who have married from inter-ethnic were not happy and satisfied as well as their children inherited each of the spouses, especially the wives in case of the death of their husbands. This was the case if an Ewe woman marries an Ashanti man or an Akwapim woman married a fante man, the children may not have any inheritance if the couple do not write out a will. The Fante and Ashantis inherit from the maternal line while the Ewes and the Akwapims inherit from the paternal line. It is critical to quickly add that, spouse losing their inheritance to the extended family is on the increase in Kumasi Metropolis. More so, there are over 8 ethnic groups and about 79 dialects spoken in Ghana. Therefore, spouses resort to a second language, which is gradually destroying our local dialects. For these and other reasons, the researchers examined how, poor communication, and inheritance problems affected inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships in Kumasi Metropolis, Ashanti Region.

### 4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 4.1. Research design

The qualitative (phenomenological), approach which was founded on interpretivism, the approach was used for the study. Investigating and comprehending the significance that individuals attribute to social issues or phenomena are the goals of the qualitative approach. The process of qualitative research, according to Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011), entails creating research items and methods of gathering data in interviewee's natural

environment, building an inductive data analysis from specific to general themes, and providing interpretations of the data's significance. A qualitative study is an interpretive and naturalistic method to its subject matter (Creswell, 2014). Participants were studied in their own natural settings and attempted to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning the participants bring to them (McLeod, 2019). The qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because the researchers want to investigate and delve deep into the phenomenon concerning the issues under discussion.

**4.2. Population**

The 10 participants were spouses who were in a relationship from age 20 years and above, have lived, and are still in their relationships for more than two years (Creswell, 2014).

**4.3. Sampling procedures**

Using purposive and simple random sampling, the population was split into nine (9) sub-metros, and five (5) of those sub-metros, namely Oforikrom, Bantama, Manhyaia, Suame, and Asokwa, were selected using the lottery method. The study's ten (10) participants were chosen using the simple random, lottery method. Creswell (2014) provided guidance in the choice of the ten (10) participants, stating that up to ten (10) people are sufficient for a phenomenological investigation. As a result, the sample consisted of five (5) couples who were content with their relationships from either inter-ethnic or intra ethnic, and five (5) other couples who were not happy with their relationships from either inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic, with scores above 105 and below 45, respectively on the Marital Satisfaction Inventory instrument adopted for the study.

**4.4. Instrument**

The questionnaire, Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI) developed by Essuman (2010) was adopted and used to select participants who were extremely satisfied in their marriages and those who were extremely not satisfied in their marriages for the study. The reliability coefficient of the MSI was 0.85 which was ascertained. This was followed using an open-ended interview guide which was constructed by the researchers and was scrutinized by experts to check the content and face validity of the items to ensure their trustworthiness of the items. The interview guide was covered out of literature that comprises of two parts. Section A comprises 8 demographic statements while section B also consists of 13 open-ended statements on the sub-themes.

**5. DATA ANALYSIS**

Themes and sub-themes for Caregivers

**Table 2: Themes and Sub-themes**

Themes	Sub-themes
Forms of communication	Use of similar language
	Impact of similar language on marital happiness
Nature of conversation	Friendly
	Apathetic
Influence of children's inheritance	
Tolerance	

Source: Field Data, 2022

### Forms of communication

The conversation was a frequent feature for interviewees. In their description, it was evident that interviewees have a form of communication. That is interviewees have agreed on a common language for themselves and their kids.

### Use of similar language(s)

Most of the interviewees interacted with indicated they have agreed on a common language(s) as a means of conversation. Interviewees in intra-ethnic relationships explained that they spoke the same language as their spouses. Some interviewees said:

*We are both Ashantis so we speak Twi and speak with our children.... (Participant 4)*

*We both speak Fanti". (Participant 6)*

*We come from the Volta region, so we cannot afford to speak any language apart from Ewe (fegbe). Even though there is some slight difference in our language, we try to understand each other. Oh yeah! We speak Ewe with our children". (Participant 8)*

Participants in interethnic relationships also mentioned they shared a common language with their partners. However, they also communicate with their spouses and kids in English in addition to Twi. Several participants clarified:

*Yes, we both speak Twi and English, so basically because though I am an Akwapim but they didn't stay in the Akwapim land we are not even using the Cherepon [Okere] language in the home though I speak it all right. So, we decided to go by the community's language that is the Twi which we use..... (Participant 1)*

*We are used to the Akan [Twi] even though I am an Akwapim and she is a Fante. Though my language is little different from her language, when I speak, she understands and when the children are involved, we speak English ... (Participant 2)*

*My spouse and I use Akan (Akyem Twi) despite the fact that I am from Akyem Kibi and he is from Akropong Akwapim, the intonations in the two dialects are a little bit different but we try to understand each other by agreeing to speaking the Akyem twi. For our children, we speak English language with them due to our educational background. We felt they would learn our language when they grow up.... (Participant 10)*

### Impact of similar language on marital happiness

The use of a common language or languages was cited by the interviewee in both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic groups as being crucial to marital satisfaction. The use of a common language or language during a conversation, according to the participants, decreased distrust and improved understanding. It therefore, had a positive effect on their marital pleasure. Some participants in interethnic relationships said:

*With marital happiness, once we speak the same language, we do understand ourselves better when communicating, it wouldn't look like you make a statement and it is misunderstood. So, in a way I will say yes, it is also a factor that influence my marital satisfaction in a positive way. (Participant 4)*

*Some way somehow it influences my marital satisfaction, because we need to get whatever that is happening around you very clear. You don't have any suspicion whether your partner is saying something negative. (Participant 6)*

*Using the same language has really, really helped us a lot and made us feel related and satisfied in our marriage because it brought about co-existence and reduced the suspicion when our family members visit us. Sometimes when we go outside the home and there arises a situation when we need to communicate in secrecy, it becomes easier because we use our dialect and it makes us feel safe and happy. I feel satisfied in my marriage because of this. (Participant 8)*

Also, the interviewee in an inter-ethnic relationship said:



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*I feel the use of the similar language influences our happiness since at the end of the day we understand each other..... (Participant 3)*

### **Nature of communication**

Interviewees described the tone of the conversation between themselves and their partner as "cordial" and "lukewarm," respectively. Most participants thought that their spouses and had friendly contact, although a small number of them also thought that it was lukewarm. As a result, the sub-themes for the main theme, the nature of communication, was "cordial" and "lukewarm."

### **Friendly**

Interviewees in inter-ethnic relationships perceived pleasant conversations between themselves and their spouses. Individuals in this study revealed that the nature of their interactions with their spouses was quite amicable. This is because they interacted with one another in a nice and open manner about anything and everything. Participants mentioned how they spoke and played together at home, demonstrating how friendly their relationship was. As an example, some participants stated:

*I may say fifty-fifty, depending on the situation on ground; if nothing seriously is taking place, we normally communicate nicely but maybe, if there is something that needs to be done and it has not been done as expected, communication becomes a bit rough, that is, I may have to talk to her a bit harsh (Participant 1)*

He included that:

*If she were here, she would have responded to that for you but I think my home is a happy one. We discuss our challenges at work and map out strategies to remediate them, and have fun together. (Participant 1)*

*Since we were already friends, the cordial relationship exist to the extent that sometimes we joke, catcalls, names calling and many more. (Participant 2)*

*Eiii! John is the kind of person who does not talk that much, would not involve himself in an issues unless it is extremely relevant but then once a while, when he needs to talk, he shouts at me. In all I would say it is still a friendly relationship because of the respect he accord me. (Participant 7)*

*You hardly would see my spouse angry. She is always full of smiles and it makes our relationship and home very lively. (Participant 9)*

### **Apathetic**

Apathetic conversation was how interviewees in intra-ethnic relationships described their relationship with their spouses. This is due to the fact that their communication was not particularly kind or courteous, and they did not perceive it to be particularly harsh. The following is an example of how a couple described how she and her spouse communicated:

*I can't say he is too harsh on me and he is not too friendly. It is like apathetic (Participant 4)*

Similarly, another interviewee said:

*It is not so cordial and other times a bit harsh, sometimes he will even ignore you (Participant 6)*

*Ooh! I won't say she is disrespectful but sometimes she is a little bit snobbish and ignores me. Naturally, she is the quiet type. (Participant 7)*

### **Impact of children's inheritance**

Most people involved in interethnic relationships weren't happy with their inheritance. They gave their reasons for not being happy with their children's inheritance. This is due to the fact that their wives registered the assets they had bought in their names (husbands). These individuals said that because they were displeased with their

partners' choices, it influenced how happy they felt in their marriage. As a result, they were unhappy in their marriages. This viewpoint was demonstrated by a participant:

*The assets we have bought are in the man's name so if the children are to inherit from their mother line (my side), what are they going to inherit since I am a mother and the man does most of the things (assets) and it is in his name. So, it's kind of a problem to me. We have discussed it a few times but we always quarrel so I have left it, all that I am trying is praying that my children learn very well and try to acquire their own possessions and not rely on that of their father's. **Participant 6***

She added that:

*I will say based on his reaction towards my concern about my children's lineage I am not satisfied and it also leads to how I will be satisfied about the marriage. So, I will say at the moment, I am not satisfied **(Participant 4)***

*In fact, whenever I try to suggest we register our properties in our names or in the names of our children it becomes a problem and there will be this cold attitude or silent trade in the house and this makes me feel my children and I are losers when it comes to inheritance. Although no one knows, who will die first but I think when it is registered in the names of our children that will be better. Who knows there can be divorce oo. Since we did acquire the properties together, I suggested to him that we write a Will but he refused. Our tradition is such that the children will have to inherit from me, their mother's line. Here is the case, neither my children nor myself have any property registered in our names, which makes me feel unsatisfied and unhappy in my marriage. I know in case of anything the intestate succession Law will be used but do not like it that way since we are both educated. **(Participant 7)***

Inter-ethnic marriage participants showed satisfaction with their children's heritage.

Interviewees expressed their satisfaction since all of the possessions they have bought are in the children's. Interviewees explained that as a result, they had no concerns about their children's inheritance. One member shared the following:

*Yes, maybe we have not gone that far to even think about that but looking at some properties or things we try to acquire, what we normally say is that, it is for the children. So, basically, we are not saying that something is for me or it is for her and so it is for them or not for them. So, I think all that we acquired is for the children, it is for the children. So, I think we are working together, we are not using. **(Participant 1)***

*Yes, personally I don't have issues. With the properties I acquired before marriage they are in my name and the one, I acquired after marriage it is in our name or I use the children's name. **(Participant 3)***

*I would say it's cool. With regards to our customs, our children inherit through their father's line (patrilineal) so, I am comfortable and very satisfied, even though the properties are registered in both of us names. **(Participant 10)***

### Tolerance

Interviewees were unanimous in their assessment of how their wives tolerate them. Participants noted that their wives accommodate them owing to the fact they love and respect them. The interviewees also believe that their wives tolerate them with regard to the food they enjoy eating as well as other cultural traditions such as attire, festivals, and naming rituals. Interviewees believed that their tribe identity had little bearing on how they tolerated or were tolerated by their wives. This was shared by both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic marriage interviewees. According to an Interviewee in intra-ethnic relationships.

*No, maybe when I show a sign of demeaning towards her, that is where that thing will come in, but I respect her and respect her background and she also respects me and my family. So, there is high level of tolerance and that is a plus with respect to my marital satisfaction. **(Participant 6)***

*Awooo! We do not have any problem with tolerance at all. We are both Notherners and Dagatis so we perfectly understand each other with respect. (Participant 8)*

*Some participants from inter-ethnic marriages explained:*

*Yes, she tolerates me. I think we do not have any challenge such as you are from this tribe and I am from that tribe and you are not doing the thing the way I want you to do it, so we don't have any challenges with the tribal issues. So, I will say for that has a positive effect when it comes to my satisfaction. (Participant 1)*

*Not at all, for the past 15 years that we are married, there has not been any intolerance because of our tribal differences. We tolerate each other because we love ourselves. In fact, nothing has come up that is linked to tribal issues. (Participant 2)*

*During our counselling period before our marriage, we were made to understand that we are from different background and have lived with certain attitudes, beliefs and characteristics for a long time before taking the decision to be joined together, therefore, we need to adjust and appreciate one another's culture and family. I might say that, it has been helpful to us. In fact, in terms of food, we do not have any issues even though we are from different tribes. We eat anything we feel like. (Participant 10)*

## 6. DISCUSSIONS

### **Impacts of acceptance on marital happiness in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships**

Tolerance studies found that couples in both intra-tribal and inter-ethnic relationships accept and are accepted by their couples regarding the food they consume, traditions for example naming, festivals, and the type of clothes they put on. It is also clear that acceptance of a partner was founded on the love couples had for each other in both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships. This conclusion might be explained by the fact that the couples in this research were very much educated, as it is commonly stated that a person's tolerance increases with their degree of knowledge. This research demonstrated that acceptance positively affected couples' marital happiness. In comparison, the current study's results are consistent with earlier research (Shahid & Shahid, 2016; Khojasteh et al., 2018), which indicated that a positive relationship between acceptance and relationship happiness.

### **Impacts of lack of conversation on marital happiness in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships**

The research's results showed that couples in both inter- and intra-ethnic unions had chosen a medium of expression. It was clear that the couples in interethnic and intra-ethnic relationships spoke Twi and/or Fanti as their native tongues. Twi is a common language used by the majority of people in Ghana and the Ashanti Region, including those who are not Akans, and it is said to be used by couples in both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships. Additionally, it was clear that spouses in interethnic unions speak the English language in addition to either Twi or Fanti. The usage of the English language by couples in inter-ethnic relationships might be felt in light of the demographic data, which revealed that all interviewees in the research had a tertiary degree. Donovan (2004) discovered that couples in inter-ethnic relationships utilized the English language in annexation to their local dialect, which is similar to the findings of this study. Furthermore, the findings of this research support Cools' (Cool, 2006) argument that spouses in inter-ethnic relationships use a variety of languages.

The results also indicated that using a common language had an influence on how happy couples were with their marriage. The employment of a common language, according to couples in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships, had an impact on their relationship happiness since it enhanced understanding of difficulties and prevented mistrust that may cause discontent among spouses. This implies that understanding and a climate free of mistrust are essential for couples' satisfaction, regardless of the spouses' tribe identity. This result does not agree with Tili and Barker's conclusion (Tili & Barker, 2015). Tili and Barker discovered language as a significant cause of spouse conflict in an intra-ethnic relationship, which contributed to the discontent of the spouses. The outcomes of

this research differ from those of Tili and Barker (2015) because couples who participated in their study did not speak the spouses' adopted language well.

There are differences between inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships in the kind of communication that couples engage in. The results indicated that whereas couples in intra-ethnic relationships spoke lukewarmly, couples in inter-ethnic relationships had friendly exchanges. These results may be explained by the fact that, in comparison to couples in intra-ethnic relationships, those from inter-tribal marriages have become particularly adept at adjusting. It is also possible that couples in inter-tribal relationships were more adaptable and willing to tolerate one other's dissimilarities than couples in intra-tribal relationships, as proposed by Sung (Sung, 1990).

#### **Impacts of inheritance issues on relationship happiness among couples in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships**

A person's accumulated physical assets can be transferred through inheritance, or a person might be excluded from the transfer of another person's accumulated assets. Additionally, it is a method for parents to pass on material possessions or resources to their offspring (Cooper, 2011). In Ghana, inheritance has historically been determined by a person's tribe's customs. Individuals can pass on patrilineal or matrilineal inheritance to their descendants. However, legally, if a spouse passes on without leaving a will at the time of his or her death, provisions are made for couples and children under the Intestate Succession (PNDC) Law 111, 1985, and 1998 Children's Act 560.

### **7. RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS COUNSELLING**

1. Counsellors should encourage couples to appreciate and respect each other's cultural practices, beliefs and attitudes to promote tolerance in the marriage.
2. Counsellors should make couples understand that communication plays an important role in marriage satisfaction and therefore should equip couples with strategies for effective communication in marriage.
3. Marriage counsellors need to be abreast with the various systems of inheritance for the purpose of educating couples especially during premarital counselling before couples commit themselves to the marriage. Again, counsellors should encourage couples to write their Wills in the acquisition of property.

### **8. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

1. The results of this research would help relationship counsellors educate themselves with the knowledge they need to support premarital counselling for would be couples and throughout relationship therapy (for spouses) in terms of the impacts on their relationships' ethnic or cultural origins in terms of inheritance on their relationships.
2. The study's conclusions will depict ethnic misconceptions and discrepancies in inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic relationships in the Kumasi Metropolis that can be implemented to reduce tribal bitterness, which the researchers want to propagate the knowledge throughout the Metropolis to improve healthy relationships.
3. The study will also enlighten would be couples, relations, and individual who want to understand more about the consequences of ethnic factors in relationships.

### **9. FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

The research was qualitative in approach. Future studies should focus on using a mixed method to give an in-depth understanding and comprehensive information on the causes of marital dissatisfaction, the effects of marital satisfaction and how married spouses could manage their home for a healthy marriage and family interaction.

### **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. The study recommended that prospective couples be encouraged and trained to freely use a medium of expression in their communication.

2. The study recommends that couples in both interethnic and intra-ethnic relationships receive education and support from their counsellors and attorneys in order to pen their wills while still alive. To minimize confusion and disputes following their passing when the state invokes Ghana's PNDC Law 111 (Interstate Succession Law, 1985), properties acquired during their relationships should also be registered in their children's names.
3. It is thus advised that counsellors host presentations and symposiums on these factors for both prospective couples and existing spouses in order to inform them of the significance of these factors in order to create fulfilling marriages.

## 11. CONCLUSION

Generally, based on the projections of the couples from the two ethnic groups, it is concluded that although the couples' cultural contexts differ, they share similar challenges in that the perceived parenting practices and decision-making becomes a major challenge in their relationships. Intriguingly, the results showed that spouses in interethnic unions are content with the inheritance given to their offspring.

According to the results of this study, inter-ethnic couples who marry register their earned physical wealth in their names or the names of their children. For the foreseeable future, this gives both couples and their kids a feeling of security. This may help to explain why interethnic couples are content with the legacy left to their offspring. Because they lack a will or are unaware of the inheritance provisions created for minors under the Intestate Succession (PNDC) Law 111, 1985, spouses in intra-ethnic marriages may not have been pleased.

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