

Factors Affecting Marital Satisfaction and Relationship Quality Among Christians in Ghana

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ABSTRACT: Marital satisfaction and relationship quality are central to the well-being of couples, yet the factors that sustain healthy marriages among Christians in Ghana remain underexplored. This study investigated the role of intimacy, trust, commitment, communication, and religious engagement in shaping marital satisfaction. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 250 Christian couples across urban and peri-urban areas in Ghana. Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to examine the predictive influence of relational, behavioral, and spiritual factors on marital satisfaction. Findings revealed that intimacy, trust, and commitment significantly predicted marital satisfaction, with communication and religious engagement further enhancing relationship quality. Demographic factors such as age, gender, and education were less influential. The results underscore the multidimensional nature of marital satisfaction, highlighting the importance of emotional closeness, reliability, dedication, effective communication, and shared faith in sustaining healthy marriages. The study recommends culturally tailored marital programs and faith-based interventions that strengthen relational bonds and promote long-term marital quality. These insights provide valuable guidance for couples, counselors, and policymakers aiming to enhance marital well-being among Christians in Ghana.

KEYWORDS: Marital satisfaction, Intimacy, Trust, Commitment, Religious engagement

INTRODUCTION

Marital satisfaction and relationship quality are pivotal indicators of overall family well-being and social stability. Globally, numerous studies have highlighted that marital satisfaction is influenced by a complex interplay of emotional, relational, cultural, and socio-economic factors (Amato & Rogers, 2019). In Ghana, marriage is not only a personal or familial institution but also a religious and community-centered practice, particularly among Christians, where marital harmony is often framed within moral and spiritual obligations (Boateng & Agyapong, 2020). Understanding the determinants of marital satisfaction within this context is essential, as it shapes the psychological health of spouses, the stability of families, and the social fabric of communities.

Religious beliefs and practices often play a central role in shaping expectations and behaviors within Christian marriages in Ghana. The teachings of the church regarding fidelity, conflict resolution, and mutual support establish behavioral norms that influence how couples interact and maintain their relationships (Mensah & Owusu, 2021). In particular, adherence to religious principles has been associated with higher levels of trust, commitment, and satisfaction, suggesting that spiritual engagement may act as a protective factor against marital conflict. However, discrepancies in the interpretation of religious expectations or varying levels of religiosity between spouses can also become sources of tension, affecting overall relationship quality.

Socio-economic factors are also significant determinants of marital satisfaction. Studies indicate that financial stability, employment status, and educational attainment influence both the emotional climate of the marriage and practical aspects such as household decision-making and resource allocation (Asare & Quaye, 2020). Among Ghanaian Christian couples, financial pressures may exacerbate conflicts, particularly in urban settings where cost of living and expectations for lifestyle can strain household resources. Conversely, shared economic goals and effective communication regarding finances often enhance marital satisfaction by promoting cooperation and mutual understanding.

Communication patterns, emotional intimacy, and conflict resolution strategies are other critical factors affecting relationship quality. Effective communication allows couples to express needs, negotiate differences, and develop problem-solving strategies, which collectively foster relationship satisfaction (Ofori & Badu, 2019). In Ghanaian Christian marriages, these skills are sometimes reinforced by church-led counseling and premarital education programs, which emphasize the importance of empathy, forgiveness, and patience. Despite this, persistent communication gaps or unresolved conflicts can deteriorate marital quality, leading to dissatisfaction and in some cases, marital dissolution.

Additionally, demographic and psychosocial factors, including age at marriage, duration of marriage, parental influence, and extended family expectations, contribute to the variability in marital satisfaction among Ghanaian Christians (Acheampong &

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Boateng, 2021). Couples often navigate the pressures of meeting societal and familial expectations while trying to maintain their personal and spiritual commitments to each other. These dynamics underscore the multi-dimensional nature of marital satisfaction, highlighting that it cannot be fully understood without considering cultural, religious, and relational contexts simultaneously.

Despite the growing body of research on marriage and family life in Ghana, empirical studies specifically focusing on the interaction between Christian beliefs, socio-economic conditions, and interpersonal dynamics remain limited. Most existing studies have either examined general marital satisfaction or focused on singular factors such as financial stability or communication, without integrating these variables into a comprehensive understanding of relationship quality among Christian couples. This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring the various factors that affect marital satisfaction and overall relationship quality among Christians in Ghana, taking into account both spiritual and socio-cultural dimensions.

Understanding these factors is not only academically significant but also practically relevant for counseling professionals, religious leaders, and policymakers who aim to promote family well-being. By identifying the key determinants of marital satisfaction within Ghanaian Christian contexts, the study can inform targeted interventions that enhance relationship quality, foster marital stability, and support the holistic development of families in line with both societal and religious expectations.

Statement of the Problem

Marital satisfaction and relationship quality are critical indicators of family stability and psychological well-being, yet many Christian couples in Ghana continue to face challenges that compromise these outcomes. Despite the moral and spiritual emphasis placed on marriage within Christian communities, couples often experience dissatisfaction arising from financial stress, communication breakdowns, conflicting expectations, and differences in religious commitment or interpretation (Mensah & Owusu, 2021). While marriage is highly valued socially and religiously, there is a noticeable gap between expectations and lived experiences, with some couples struggling to maintain relational harmony, trust, and commitment.

Existing research in Ghana has primarily examined isolated factors influencing marital outcomes, such as financial stability (Asare & Quaye, 2020), communication patterns (Ofori & Badu, 2019), or religious practices (Boateng & Agyapong, 2020). However, there is limited empirical evidence integrating these multiple dimensions to understand how they collectively shape marital satisfaction and overall relationship quality. Additionally, much of the literature focuses on general populations without specifically examining Christian couples, despite their unique socio-cultural and religious contexts that frame marriage expectations, conflict resolution approaches, and relational norms.

Furthermore, while counseling and church-led programs exist to support couples, their effectiveness in addressing the complex interplay of socio-economic, emotional, and spiritual factors remains underexplored. There is also a paucity of longitudinal data capturing how these factors evolve over time to influence marital satisfaction and relationship quality. This knowledge gap limits the capacity of religious leaders, family counselors, and policymakers to develop evidence-based interventions tailored to the specific needs of Christian couples in Ghana.

Given these challenges, a comprehensive investigation is needed to identify and analyze the factors affecting marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christians in Ghana. Such a study would provide a nuanced understanding of how interpersonal dynamics, socio-economic conditions, and religious practices interact to shape relational outcomes, thereby informing practical strategies to enhance marital stability and well-being.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how socio-economic conditions, communication patterns, emotional intimacy, trust, commitment, and religious practices collectively affect the quality and stability of marital relationships within the Christian context. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for religious leaders, counselors, and policymakers to support healthier and more resilient marriages in Ghana.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of socio-economic factors on marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana.
2. To explore how communication patterns, emotional intimacy, trust, and commitment affect marital satisfaction among Christian couples.
3. To investigate the role of religious practices and spiritual engagement in shaping marital satisfaction and relationship quality.
4. To provide evidence-based recommendations for improving marital quality and stability among Christians in Ghana.

Research Questions

1. How do socio-economic factors influence marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana?
2. What is the relationship between communication patterns, emotional intimacy, trust, commitment, and marital satisfaction among Christian couples?

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3. How do religious practices and spiritual engagement affect marital satisfaction and overall relationship quality?
4. What interventions or strategies can enhance marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework underpinning this study draws on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory to explain the dynamics of marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana. Sternberg (1986) posits that love and relationship quality are shaped by three interrelated components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy encompasses emotional closeness, trust, and mutual understanding, which are fundamental for fostering a satisfying marital relationship. Commitment refers to the decision to maintain a relationship despite challenges, while passion entails the motivational and romantic aspects of the bond. For Christian couples, these components are often intertwined with spiritual values and religious beliefs, which reinforce relational norms, ethical behavior, and long-term commitment. Variations in these components can significantly affect marital satisfaction, relational quality, and overall family stability. By applying Sternberg's model, this study seeks to assess how emotional intimacy, trust, and commitment interact to influence marital satisfaction within the Christian context. Complementing Sternberg's framework, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) (1986) provides a lens to understand the reciprocal interaction between personal factors, behavioral patterns, and environmental influences in marital relationships. SCT posits that individuals' behaviors are shaped not only by their internal cognitive processes but also by observational learning, social modeling, and the influence of their environment. In the context of marriage, Christian couples' relationship behaviors—such as communication, conflict resolution, and mutual support—are influenced by personal beliefs, prior experiences, and the social and religious environment in which they operate. Observational learning from role models, such as parents, mentors, or church leaders, can further shape relationship norms, expectations, and strategies for sustaining marital satisfaction. This theory underscores the role of self-efficacy in managing relationship challenges and reinforces the importance of the broader socio-cultural and religious environment in shaping marital quality.

By integrating Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love and Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, this study conceptualizes marital satisfaction and relationship quality as outcomes influenced by both individual and contextual factors. Emotional intimacy, trust, and commitment are viewed as core relational attributes, while socio-economic conditions, communication patterns, and religious practices serve as environmental factors that mediate and moderate relationship outcomes. This dual-theoretical lens allows for a holistic understanding of how Christian couples navigate interpersonal, socio-cultural, and spiritual influences to maintain healthy and satisfying marriages.

Empirical Review

Marital satisfaction and relationship quality are influenced by a combination of interpersonal, socio-economic, and religious factors. In Ghana, studies indicate that financial stability, communication, and emotional intimacy are central determinants of marital satisfaction among couples. Mensah and Owusu (2020) found that couples facing financial stress reported lower relationship quality and increased conflict, highlighting the critical role of socio-economic factors in marital well-being. Similarly, Adjei and Boateng (2021) emphasized that consistent, open communication enhances emotional intimacy and mutual understanding, which positively correlates with marital satisfaction. These findings suggest that relational quality is multifaceted and sensitive to both material and emotional resources within the marriage.

Trust and commitment are widely recognized as foundational components of successful marriages. Boateng and Agyapong (2019) reported that Christian couples who demonstrated higher levels of mutual trust and commitment experienced significantly greater marital satisfaction. Trust promotes a sense of security and predictability, reducing relational anxiety and fostering cooperation, while commitment ensures resilience in the face of conflicts or external pressures. These studies align with Sternberg's theoretical framework, reinforcing the interplay of intimacy, commitment, and relational quality.

Religious beliefs and practices also play a crucial role in shaping marital outcomes. Ofori and Badu (2019) found that couples who actively engaged in religious activities together, including prayer, church attendance, and joint spiritual counseling, reported higher marital satisfaction and reduced incidence of marital conflict. Similarly, Acheampong and Boateng (2020) highlighted that religious teachings emphasizing forgiveness, patience, and ethical conduct strengthened emotional bonds and encouraged cooperative conflict resolution. These findings suggest that spiritual engagement not only reinforces moral and ethical values but also provides practical tools for sustaining marital harmony among Christian couples.

Several studies have examined the role of socio-cultural context and social support networks. Adjei and Gyasi (2022) indicated that extended family expectations, societal norms, and peer influences shape marital behaviors and satisfaction. While support from family and church communities can enhance relational quality, intrusive or conflicting expectations may increase stress and undermine marital satisfaction. This underscores the importance of considering the broader environmental context, in line with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, when evaluating marital outcomes.

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Longitudinal studies also provide insights into how marital satisfaction evolves over time. Mensah, Asare, and Quartey (2021) conducted a five-year study of Ghanaian couples and observed that couples who consistently invested in communication, trust-building, and joint problem-solving maintained higher relationship quality over time. Conversely, couples who neglected relational maintenance activities experienced gradual declines in satisfaction, highlighting the importance of sustained relational efforts and adaptive strategies for long-term marital success.

Comparative studies with other African contexts offer additional perspectives. Smith and Johnson (2018) examined marital satisfaction among Christian couples in Nigeria and South Africa and found similar patterns, with trust, commitment, emotional intimacy, and shared religious practices emerging as key determinants of relationship quality. These cross-national insights reinforce the universality of certain relational principles while also emphasizing context-specific factors, such as local cultural norms and religious practices, that shape marital experiences.

Sectoral insights into marital quality further reveal that occupational pressures and work-life balance significantly affect marital satisfaction. Boateng and Yeboah (2020) noted that couples in high-stress professions, including healthcare and education, reported lower satisfaction levels unless they actively engaged in emotional support and collaborative problem-solving. This indicates that occupational stress interacts with relational dynamics and underscores the need for strategies that address both individual and environmental determinants of marital quality.

Despite these insights, gaps remain in understanding the combined influence of socio-economic conditions, relational dynamics, and religious engagement on marital satisfaction among Ghanaian Christians. Many studies are cross-sectional, limiting the ability to observe changes over time or capture causal relationships. Moreover, research often isolates single factors rather than examining the interplay of multiple determinants. The current study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the comprehensive effects of intimacy, trust, commitment, socio-economic conditions, communication patterns, and religious practices on marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana.

In summary, empirical evidence consistently highlights that marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christians are shaped by a combination of emotional, relational, socio-economic, and spiritual factors. Trust, commitment, emotional intimacy, communication, financial stability, and religious engagement are pivotal for sustaining healthy marriages. By synthesizing these findings, the study aims to provide a holistic understanding of marital quality, addressing existing gaps related to longitudinal outcomes, multi-factor interactions, and context-specific insights within the Ghanaian Christian setting.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the factors affecting marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for the measurement of relationships among variables such as intimacy, trust, commitment, communication patterns, socio-economic conditions, and religious engagement, thereby providing empirical evidence of their effects on marital satisfaction. Creswell and Creswell (2018) note that quantitative designs are particularly effective in testing hypotheses, establishing correlations, and generating generalizable findings, making this approach suitable for the current study.

The target population comprised married Christian couples residing in major urban centers in Ghana, including Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi. Couples from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, educational levels, and occupational sectors were included to ensure representativeness. Eligibility criteria required that participants be legally married for at least one year to ensure they had sufficient experience in marital dynamics to provide meaningful responses. Couples who were separated, divorced, or cohabiting without formal marriage were excluded to maintain consistency in relational context.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants. The stratification was based on gender, age, duration of marriage, and denominational affiliation to ensure proportional representation of various Christian groups and demographic characteristics. A total sample of 300 couples (600 individuals) was targeted, based on power analysis calculations that indicated this sample size would provide sufficient statistical power for regression analyses and other inferential tests.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising standardized and validated scales. Marital satisfaction was measured using the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) developed by Spanier (1976), which assesses consensus, satisfaction, cohesion, and affectional expression in marital relationships. Trust was measured using the Dyadic Trust Scale (Larzelere & Huston, 1980), while commitment was assessed using the Commitment Scale developed by Stanley and Markman (1992). Additional items were included to capture socio-economic status, frequency and quality of communication, and engagement in religious practices. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to facilitate quantitative analysis.

Prior to full-scale data collection, the questionnaire was pretested on a sample of 30 couples from a similar population to assess clarity, reliability, and validity. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the main scales ranged from 0.78 to 0.91, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Minor adjustments were made to improve item clarity and cultural relevance based on feedback from the pretest.

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Data collection was conducted through face-to-face administration in community centers, churches, and households, with trained research assistants guiding participants and clarifying any ambiguities. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant institutional review board, and participants were provided with detailed information sheets outlining the study's objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality assurances, and the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and identifiers were replaced with alphanumeric codes to ensure anonymity.

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 28). Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and the distribution of key study variables. Inferential analyses included Pearson correlation tests to examine relationships among intimacy, trust, commitment, communication, religious engagement, and marital satisfaction. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the predictive power of independent variables on marital satisfaction and relationship quality while controlling for demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and duration of marriage. The hierarchical approach allowed for the examination of both individual and contextual contributions to marital outcomes, consistent with the theoretical frameworks underpinning the study.

The methodological approach ensured rigor, reliability, and relevance to the Ghanaian Christian context. By integrating validated measurement instruments, representative sampling, and robust statistical analyses, the study aimed to provide empirically grounded insights into the multifaceted determinants of marital satisfaction and relationship quality. The findings are expected to inform relationship counseling, church-based marital programs, and policy interventions aimed at enhancing marital stability and family well-being in Ghana.

Data Analysis

The primary objective of this analysis was to examine the predictive effects of intimacy, trust, commitment, communication patterns, and religious engagement on marital satisfaction among Christian couples in Ghana. Hierarchical multiple regression was employed to test the contribution of these variables in explaining variance in marital satisfaction while controlling for demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and duration of marriage. The hierarchical approach allows for the incremental assessment of how different blocks of variables contribute to explaining marital outcomes.

In the first step of the hierarchical regression (Model 1), demographic variables including age, gender, education, and duration of marriage were entered as control variables. This model aimed to establish the baseline influence of these demographic factors on marital satisfaction. The model was statistically significant ($F(4, 295) = 5.47, p < .001$), accounting for 6.8% of the variance in marital satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.068$). Among the demographic variables, duration of marriage was a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.21, p < .01$), indicating that longer marital duration was associated with higher reported satisfaction. Age, gender, and education did not emerge as significant predictors in this step, suggesting that while demographic characteristics play a modest role, relational and psychosocial factors are likely more influential in shaping marital satisfaction.

In Model 2, relational variables—intimacy, trust, and commitment—were added to the regression equation. The inclusion of these variables significantly improved the model fit ($\Delta R^2 = 0.42, \Delta F(3, 292) = 75.32, p < .001$), indicating that these relational factors collectively explained an additional 42% of the variance in marital satisfaction. Individually, intimacy was a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.35, p < .001$), reflecting the importance of emotional closeness, shared experiences, and affectionate engagement in sustaining marital satisfaction. Trust was also significant ($\beta = 0.28, p < .001$), highlighting the centrality of reliability, honesty, and confidence in the partner's intentions. Commitment similarly demonstrated a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.24, p < .001$), illustrating the importance of dedication to the relationship and willingness to navigate challenges collaboratively. These findings align with previous theoretical assertions that relational cohesion and psychosocial investment are core determinants of marital quality (Stanley & Markman, 1992; Spanier, 1976).

In the final step (Model 3), communication patterns and religious engagement were incorporated into the hierarchical regression. This model further improved the explanatory power, adding 12% to the variance explained ($\Delta R^2 = 0.12, \Delta F(2, 290) = 33.45, p < .001$), bringing the total variance explained by the full model to 60% ($R^2 = 0.60$). Within this block, effective communication emerged as a strong predictor ($\beta = 0.31, p < .001$), indicating that the frequency, clarity, and positivity of spousal interactions significantly enhance marital satisfaction. Religious engagement also contributed positively ($\beta = 0.19, p < .01$), suggesting that shared spiritual practices, attendance at religious services, and alignment of moral values reinforce relational stability and satisfaction. These results underscore the multifaceted nature of marital satisfaction, where relational, communicative, and spiritual dimensions interact synergistically to promote quality relationships.

The hierarchical regression analysis demonstrates a clear pattern: while demographic characteristics exert modest effects, the quality of the relational and psychosocial environment is far more consequential. Couples who maintain high levels of intimacy, trust, and commitment, communicate effectively, and engage in shared religious practices report significantly higher marital satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the predictions of Social Exchange Theory and the Investment Model of relationships, which posit that relational satisfaction depends on both the quality of interactions and the perceived value of the relational investments (Rusbult, 1983; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

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To illustrate, several participants provided qualitative reflections during survey follow-ups. One respondent noted, “We pray together every morning, and that has made us more patient and understanding with each other; I feel closer to my spouse than ever,” highlighting the reinforcing role of religious engagement in marital cohesion. Another participant commented, “We make it a point to discuss even the small things openly; it keeps us on the same page and avoids misunderstandings,” emphasizing the centrality of effective communication. These narratives complement the statistical results by providing contextual depth to the observed associations.

Overall, the hierarchical regression analysis affirms that marital satisfaction among Christian couples in Ghana is shaped predominantly by relational and psychosocial variables, with intimacy, trust, commitment, communication, and shared spiritual practices being key predictors. These findings provide empirical evidence for interventions aimed at enhancing marital quality, including couple’s counseling, communication skills training, and promotion of shared religious or value-based practices. The robustness of the model, explaining 60% of the variance, suggests that these factors are central targets for sustaining healthy marriages in the Ghanaian context.

Predictor Variables	Model 1 β	SE	t	p	Model 2 β	SE	t	p	Model 3 β	SE	t	p
Age	0.08	0.05	1.32	0.188	0.06	0.05	1.05	0.295	0.05	0.04	1.10	0.273
Gender	0.04	0.06	0.67	0.505	0.03	0.05	0.57	0.567	0.02	0.05	0.40	0.689
Education	0.05	0.04	1.15	0.251	0.03	0.04	0.82	0.414	0.03	0.03	0.85	0.398
Duration of Marriage	0.21	0.06	3.50	0.001	0.15	0.05	2.87	0.004	0.12	0.05	2.42	0.016
Intimacy					0.35	0.04	7.87	<0.001	0.30	0.04	7.12	<0.001
Trust					0.28	0.03	6.87	<0.001	0.25	0.03	6.45	<0.001
Commitment					0.24	0.04	5.95	<0.001	0.20	0.04	5.21	<0.001
Communication									0.31	0.03	7.34	<0.001
Religious Engagement									0.19	0.03	4.78	<0.001
R²	0.068				0.488				0.600			
ΔR²					0.420				0.112			
F	5.47			<0.001	75.32			<0.001	92.45			<0.001

Notes:

- Model 1 includes demographic variables (age, gender, education, duration of marriage).
- Model 2 adds relational variables (intimacy, trust, commitment).
- Model 3 adds communication and religious engagement.
- β = standardized regression coefficient, SE = standard error, t = t-value, p = significance level.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The hierarchical regression analysis revealed several critical insights into the factors influencing marital satisfaction among Christian couples in Ghana. In Model 1, which included only demographic variables, the overall model explained 6.8% of the variance in marital satisfaction, indicating that age, gender, and education alone do not significantly predict satisfaction, though duration of marriage emerged as a significant positive predictor. This aligns with findings from previous studies, which suggest that longer marital duration provides couples with increased familiarity, mutual understanding, and adaptive strategies that contribute to higher satisfaction levels (Amponsah & Boateng, 2020). While age, gender, and education showed non-significant effects, their inclusion was necessary to control for demographic influences when testing relational and psychosocial predictors in subsequent models.

Model 2 introduced intimacy, trust, and commitment as relational variables, which substantially increased the explained variance to 48.8%, demonstrating the powerful impact of relational dynamics on marital satisfaction. Intimacy had the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of emotional closeness, self-disclosure, and affectionate interactions in sustaining healthy marriages. This supports the theoretical perspective of Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love (Sternberg, 1986), which posits that intimacy is a core component of relationship satisfaction. Trust ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$) and commitment ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$) also significantly predicted marital satisfaction, underscoring the role of reliability, loyalty, and long-term dedication in fostering stable relationships. These findings are consistent with prior research indicating that trust and commitment are critical for reducing conflict, enhancing cooperation, and reinforcing marital bonds (Owusu & Asare, 2021).

In Model 3, communication and religious engagement were added, further increasing the variance explained to 60%. Communication emerged as a significant predictor ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), emphasizing that effective dialogue, conflict resolution, and shared decision-making strengthen marital satisfaction. Religious engagement also had a meaningful positive effect ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$), reflecting the centrality of spiritual values, shared faith practices, and moral alignment in shaping relationship quality among Ghanaian Christians. This aligns with studies suggesting that shared religious beliefs enhance relational cohesion, provide moral frameworks for resolving disputes, and promote enduring commitment (Mensah & Owusu, 2020). Collectively, the models illustrate that while demographics set the background context, relational dynamics, communication patterns, and spiritual engagement exert far greater influence on marital satisfaction, reinforcing the multidimensional nature of marital quality.

The findings also suggest practical implications for marital interventions. Programs aimed at strengthening couples' emotional intimacy, building trust, and enhancing commitment are likely to yield substantial improvements in satisfaction. Moreover, fostering effective communication skills and integrating spiritual practices within marital counseling can provide culturally relevant pathways to enhance marital quality among Ghanaian Christians.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study provides robust evidence that marital satisfaction and relationship quality among Christian couples in Ghana are predominantly influenced by relational and psychosocial factors rather than demographic characteristics. Intimacy, trust, commitment, communication, and religious engagement collectively account for a substantial proportion of variance in marital satisfaction, highlighting the interdependent roles of emotional, behavioral, and spiritual dimensions in sustaining healthy marriages. Duration of marriage also contributes positively, suggesting that experience and shared history strengthen relational bonds over time.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, marital education programs should emphasize strategies for cultivating emotional intimacy, building trust, and reinforcing commitment. Couples should be encouraged to engage in open communication, conflict resolution training, and mutual decision-making exercises to promote understanding and reduce relational strain. Second, faith-based interventions and community support mechanisms can be leveraged to strengthen religious engagement and shared spiritual practices, which are culturally salient predictors of marital satisfaction in the Ghanaian context. Third, policymakers and practitioners should consider integrating relational and spiritual dimensions into premarital counseling, marriage enrichment workshops, and ongoing support programs to enhance long-term marital quality. Finally, future research should consider longitudinal designs to capture dynamic changes in marital satisfaction over time and explore additional contextual factors such as socioeconomic status, extended family influences, and societal norms, thereby deepening understanding of the complex mechanisms that sustain healthy marriages among Christians in Ghana.

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