

**COMMUNICATION, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND FINANCIAL UNITY  
AMONG MARRIED COUPLES FROM CHURCHES IN MAKADARA  
CONSTITUENCY, KENYA**

**BY**

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## **STUDENT DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and that it has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than the United States International University - Africa in Nairobi for academic credit.

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This report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

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## ABSTRACT

Whereas marriage is associated with satisfaction and happiness, several factors are widely acknowledged as necessary for a happy marriage. According to research in Counseling Psychology, satisfactory communication, conflict resolution and financial unity are key determinants for happiness in marriage. For instance, some known causes of divorce are listed as financial problems and lack of communication. It is with this understanding that this study sought to find out how communication, conflict resolution and financial unity change across different durations of marriage, and discover if they improve with increase in marriage duration. The precise objectives were establishing the differences in communication styles, conflict resolution styles and financial unity depending on duration of marriage. This study was conducted using a mixed method research design, with the target population being married respondents from various churches in Makadara constituency. The sample churches were selected using stratified sampling, with 15 churches being selected from 140 churches. A sample of 390 respondents was chosen from the sample number of churches using simple random sampling, with 13 couples selected from each church, though there were some changes in the overall study. A questionnaire was developed as a tool for collecting data. The researcher analyzed data using SPSS which utilized frequency distribution tables, percentages, chi square, and an additional analysis, correlation. The research results showed that passive aggressive style and assertive style were significant to duration of marriage, with  $\chi^2 (16, N=401) = 26.331, p=0.05$  and  $\chi^2 (16, N=401) = 28.034, p=0.031$  respectively. Passive aggressive style was significant to duration of marriage, with  $(F (4, N=396) = 2.558, p=0.038)$ , and it tended to decrease as duration of marriage increased. The mean values of positive communication styles increased as duration of marriage increased. With conflict resolution, compromise style and collaborative style were significant to marriage, with  $\chi^2 (16, N=401) = 34.436, p=0.005$  and  $\chi^2 (16, N=399) = 33.371, p=0.007$  respectively. Compromise style was positively correlated with duration of marriage at  $p=0.018$ , as it tended to increase as duration of marriage increased. The mean values of positive conflict resolution styles increased as duration of marriage increased. With financial unity, awareness of one's spouse's accounts was significant to duration of marriage, with  $\chi^2 (16, N=401) = 26.264, p=0.05$ . Preferring to save rather than purchase items was negatively correlated to duration of marriage at  $p<0.01$ , as it tended to decrease as duration of marriage increased. The results showed that there was improvement of the three categories with increase in marriage duration, with positive styles getting better as duration of marriage increased and vice versa. There were implications drawn from the study, with the researcher suggesting programs be set up to help marriages thrive, from before marriage, to after marriage.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my parents; James and Reginah Wakaba, my siblings; Kim, Riri and Ellen, my niece and nephew; Sheena and Allan, and all the married people who keep working on their marriages. I also dedicate this work to my future husband, wherever God may be keeping him, and I pray that the lessons from this work will be of benefit to us.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The following chapter focuses on background research, the study of the problem, conceptual variables (independent and dependent) and how they will be utilized throughout the study. In addition, the relationship between the variables will be deduced through the hypotheses.

#### **1.1 Study background**

Married people have higher mental and physical health than unmarried people (Glaser & Newton, 2001). Marriage is generally associated with satisfaction and happiness and it is viewed as a necessary step in life (Wilmoth & Blaney, 2016). It also brings with it many responsibilities and challenges. Some reasons to get married include getting to share one's life with someone else, tradition, love, support system, maturity, children, financial dependability, having a lifetime partner and meaning to life. These reasons encourage the union between both man and women with a desire to establish something satisfactory and permanent (Ricard, 2016). Marriage connects people and unites hearts and minds. It is well recognized across governments, cultures and religions (Anderson, 2013). Though there are new definitions of marriage cropping up in society today, the following study defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman who make a permanent and exclusive commitment to each other of the type that is naturally fulfilled by bearing and rearing children together (Girgis, George & Anderson, 2012). Marriage matters because it benefits the society, it ensures safety of children, it brings about

economic well-being, encourages freedom to live and love and there is assurance of moral values being passed on (Anderson, 2013).

Sprecher and Hatfield (2015) posit that many people have positive attitudes about the institution of marriage. Healthy marriages shape adult and child outcomes. The environment affects marital outcomes because it can constrain or enhance communication, problem solving and other relationship processes. The quality of a couple's communication and problem solving is related to marital outcomes over time. In addition, programs that help with communication can affect problem solving and therefore there is a better chance of a long lasting marriage (Karney & Bradbury, 2005).

When it comes to marriage, people have a different marriage mentality. Marriage mentality is the step that moves marriage from an ideal to reality. Some get married so as to be seen as adults, and others get married only after they feel they are adults (Kefalas, Furstenberg, Carr, & Napolitano, 2011). Whatever the reason for marriage, which many times is highly cultural, marriages still happen. Married people generally engage in a long term relationship which involves commitment and a mutually rewarding exchange. If people were not happy when getting married and are not happy in the marriage itself, there are chances that they may divorce (Stutzer & Frey, 2006).

Swihart and Wooten (2006) hold the view that since couples are still getting married, understanding the marriage setup is important. A lot of focus is usually placed in the first five years of marriage because they see that it predicts which marriages flourish and which ones don't. It can be a time of rapid personal and relational growth or disappointment and deterioration. Marital stressors are more intense at this stage. Apart from this, some factors that are researched to be necessary for a happy marriage are

satisfaction with communication, handling differences creatively, discussing problems well and agreeing on how to spend money (Olson, 2016).

According to Nartey (2014), communication is an important element in successful marriages and families. Good communication is essential for a proper marriage relationship because it helps a married couple set goals, and achieve those goals (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Communication is the exchange of information between people, entailing both verbal and nonverbal communication. Only 7% of information is shared through words, 32% through voice tone and 58% through body language. It comprises what we say, how we say it and when we say it. One good way to enhance agreement between married couples is active communication (Nartey, 2014). Proper communication is intentional. Time has to purposely be set aside to talk. Knowing the time to talk is crucial as it gives both parties in a marriage a chance to be present for the talk, as the time would suit them well. Communication should not just occur on big issues, but also on small, daily issues. These aspects ensure unity between the couple (Amulega & Amulega, 2009).

Fincham, Beach and Davila (2004) view conflict resolution as an integral part of a successful relationship. Conflict arises due to a state of discomfort between two or more persons because of differing wants, goals, or principles. The issue is not the conflict in and of itself, but how the conflict is managed. How the conflict is resolved can lead to either increased negativity or increased intimacy (Iqbal, Gillani, & Kamal, 2013). The manner in which a conflict is dealt with in a marriage is known to be a great predictor of marital success. Stable marriages are created by sharing respect, power and decision-making. Resolving conflict does not mean that there is a winner and a loser, but that all parties in a marriage are able to feel satisfied and understood (Taylor, 2005).

Married couples have to discuss financial planning so that they can run the home well. They may differ in bargaining power and preference for various financial choices. How decisions are made, especially when it comes to investments, could be determined by the more financially knowledgeable spouse, the older spouse, or the more financially stable spouse (Lyons, Neelekantan, Fava, & Scherpf, 2007). Financial literacy is one's ability to understand and use financial matter. Married people have been found to be more literate financially (Taft, Hosein, Mehrizi, & Roshan, 2013). When it comes to financial matters, the married couple should work as a team, and this could be through writing a budget, setting down achievable goals in regards to desired uses of finances, learning to prioritize and planning out the financial journey together (Balmet & Balmet, 2013).

There is not much known about how communication, conflict resolution and financial unity happen in marriage, and more so over different lengths of marriage. This study then seeks to understand the changes in communication, conflict resolution and financial unity that occur over different lengths of marriage and the impact they have in contributing to general satisfaction in marriage. Additionally, this study will be carried out in Makadara constituency, targeting those who are married, and are in the church. The aim of the study is to prepare married couples for what lies ahead of them in their marriage life.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

According to Stetzer (2014), couples who are active in their faith are less likely to divorce. For Catholics it is 31% less likely, 35% less likely for Protestants and 97% less likely for Jews. According to U.S. Divorce Rates and Statistics (2016), the 50 percent statistic of divorce is not true. However, Cohn (2013) states that the U.S. marriage rate is low, as only 51% of adults married in 2011. 61% of men and women who have never been married would like to get married, while 12% do not want to marry and 27% are not

sure. According to Kenya's 2009 population census, a total of 12.6 million Kenyans were married by 2009, and as of 2016, only 15% of unions in Kenya ended up in divorce as compared to its neighbours, where most had rates going above 30% (Kubania, 2016). The biggest predictor of marriage problems is poor communication. It is possible to predict which newlywed couples would later divorce based on watching their communication dynamics for a short time (Scott, 2016). Krull (2016) lists the following mistakes when communicating with a spouse: yelling, having a competitive attitude, and making marriage about 'me' instead of 'we'. These common mistakes lead to trouble and tension. Parrott and Parrott (2013) point out the biggest areas of conflict for couples as money, sex, work, children and chores. Arnold (2016) concurs that disagreements about money are one of the most difficult conflicts for people in relationships to resolve. If married couples manage finances wrongly, it can mess everything up. Yet, it is difficult for couples to talk about money issues and resolve them. Scott (2016) further argues that financial stress can cause general stress about other factors such as work, raising children and even one's health. Based on these observations, this study investigates the dynamics of communication, conflict resolution and financial unity over varying lengths of marriage duration in order to support married couples in their marriages.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the research is to understand the differences in communication, conflict resolution and financial unity among married couples depending on how long they have been married.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The primary objective is to understand the differences in communication, conflict resolution and financial unity among married couples depending on the duration of the marriage.

There are also specific objectives addressed in the study:

- 1) To study the differences in communication styles in marriages depending on the duration of the marriages;
- 2) To establish the differences in conflict resolution styles in marriages depending on the duration of the marriages;
- 3) To determine the differences in financial unity in marriages depending on the duration of the marriages;

#### **1.5 Research questions**

These research questions were handled:

- 1) What are the differences in communication styles among married couples and do they improve the longer a couple is married?
- 2) What are the differences in conflict resolution styles among married couples and do they improve the longer a couple is married?
- 3) What are the differences in financial unity among married couples and do they improve the longer a couple is married?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

The significance of this study is to highlight how certain factors that are considered important in marriage change in the Kenyan household. The findings may add on to literature already known about successful marriages, bringing in an additional outlook from Kenyan marriages. Since marriages still happen today, the results would be able to help newlywed couples understand the dynamics of marriage, and also support married couples who are well into the marriage and desire to grow better together. The study sought to elicit interest in these changes for those who take couples through premarital counseling, so that concrete data could be used to help couples prepare well for the real changes in marriage. Lastly and most importantly, this study may help couples learn to consciously adapt to each other so that marriages thrive and families do not break.

## **1.7 Limitations and delimitations**

The researcher expects to encounter various challenges in conducting the study. The research may be limited by the fact that some participants may be unwilling to share information they considered to be sensitive because of being unsure of how confidential it would be. The researcher will deal with this problem by informing the participants that confidentiality will be upheld fully and that the research will only be used for this study. The research may also be limited in being able to easily get access to the participants who will be involved in the study because the researcher is not married and the participants could have reservations discussing marriage matters with an unmarried person. To counter this, the researcher will work with important persons in the institutions where the information is retrieved so that these reputable persons will build confidence in the participants regarding the credibility of both the researcher and this study. Another limitation is that it will take time to both distribute and collect the questionnaires and the

researcher cannot do that by themselves. Therefore, the researcher will work with an assistant to ensure that data is collected in reasonable time, and that privacy and confidentiality is upheld.

### **1.8 Operational definition of terms**

**Marriage:** The description of marriage in this study is “the union of a man and a woman who make a permanent and exclusive commitment to each other of the type that is naturally fulfilled by bearing and rearing children together” (Girgis et al., 2012).

**Communication:** This is the process of transmitting information and common understanding from one person to another. It entails having a common, shared understanding with another person, using verbal or nonverbal means (Lunenborg, 2010).

**Conflict:** The definition entails disagreements that lead to tension within and between people. It deals with both an issue and a relation (Vestergaard, Helvard, & Sorensen, 2011).

**Conflict Resolution:** It is described as an intervention aimed at alleviating or eliminating discord through conciliation (Conflict Resolution, 2016). In marriage, conflict resolution is the way couples handle arising issues effectively.

**Financial Unity:** Here, the couple jointly agree and stick to the plan they come up with on how to use the finances they receive. It is a clear cut process of talking and uniting in the utilization of financial resources, in regards to every financial decision (Financial Unity, 2016).

## **1.9 Summary**

As there are varying statistics on the rate of marriages and divorces, it is important to understand the dynamics that then encourage marriage success, and that could at the same time, if not handled well, lead a married couple to thoughts of divorce. The chapter discusses the background of communication, conflict resolution and financial unity in marriage. The research problem looks at the problems that arise out of the failure of the named three factors. The significance of the study is well delineated. In addition, the purpose, objectives and operational definition of terms are outlined and explained. The researcher also shares expected limitations and their intention to handle them.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

The following chapter, based on research derived from different scholarly sources, looks at how communication, conflicts and finances influence marriage, and how they are affected by marriage itself. This chapter first views different thoughts on marriage from America and Africa, premarital considerations and stages of marriage. The chapter also addresses communication, conflicts and finances, and how to handle them in marriage. The final section reviews the theoretical framework that serves as the basis for the study.

#### **2.1 Different perspectives of marriage**

Traditionally, marriage was expected to be permanent (Waite & Lehrer, 2003) but these days that is not always the case. Marriage serves many functions such as intimacy, economic sharing of responsibilities, child rearing and social roles and status (Strong, DeVault, & Cohen, 2008). According to the African perspective, marriage is considered very sacred (Mawere & Mawere, 2010). In Africa, marriage is a union between man and woman, it is seen as a time when a woman leaves her family to live with her husband, and it is a time when not only the two people in it agree, but the larger clan should also agree on it. In African marriages, some people have their spouses already chosen for them. Regardless of how people got a spouse, it was expected that people would get married (Kyalo, 2012).

According to Mawere and Mawere (2010), though African traditions had their own values for marriage, colonization brought up a modernized option and thus some African countries conduct marriages in a way that fully embraces that perspective. A practice that

falls under such modernization is where a man asks for the hand of the woman from her parents, with her informed consent. This practice is called 'kukumbira' among the Shona people. Therefore the woman is given an opportunity to marry a man of her choice. Such a practice enhances the value of women and keeps them from abuse (Mawere & Mawere, 2010). Despite these facts, divorce is still a very real issue today. Divorce could follow an enduring dynamics model, where certain traits were visible from the beginning of the marriage and led to the divorce, or an emergent distress model, where problems worsened over time but may not have been perceived at the beginning of the marriage (Williamson, Nguyen, Bradbury, & Karney, 2015). The ideal though, is for spouses to remain married.

Marks (2003) argues that religious beliefs influence family relationships positively, regardless of cultural background, and that they potentially help avoid divorce. There is correlation between religious beliefs in marriage and marital satisfaction; studies of long term marriages show that similarities in religious beliefs and faith are crucial factors in marital success. Religion influences the activities couples engage in and leads to more efficiency and less conflict when spouses share the same religious values. In contrast, divorce tends to be higher among spouses with very different religious beliefs (Waite & Lehrer, 2003). Shared faith-based beliefs between spouses may encourage marital fidelity and looking to God for marital support (Marks, 2003).

A study was done with couples who were married for over forty years, who were religious, and who had gone through some trauma in their childhood, like the death of a loved one. According to the study, religion brings about positive outcomes in marriage when religious repertoires align with the couples' experiences of long term marriage. The inverse is also true. Factors that were important for such couples to agree on as they

moved on in life were prayer, communion and worship services, and sermons. Agreeing on such aspects benefited the marriages greatly (Mullins, 2016).

## **2.2 Premarital overview and stages of marriage**

According to Bradbury, Fincham and Beach (2000), there is a strong correlation between the age of a couple when they get married and overall marital satisfaction. Heaton (2002) found that divorce tends to be lower among women who had more education or who were older when they got married, as they tend to have stability in their marriages. However, the stability is threatened if the woman is older or more educated than the husband. Hansen (2006) viewed a positive correlation between courtship period and marital satisfaction, meaning the longer a couple had in their courtship, the more likely they were satisfied in their marriage.

Edmunds (2011) noted that those who court for about two years on average tend to stay married for seven years or longer. Those who marry after dating for less than a year are known to be passionate and impulsive, and such couples are more likely to divorce. Couples who marry after dating for 1-3 years are more likely to succeed in marriage because they are steady and have gotten to know each other well, and so they take those realistic life lessons to the marriage. Those who dated for over three years before getting married are also as likely to divorce as those who dated for less than one year before marriage. Alder (2010) realised from her research that if courtship length is divided into before engagement and after engagement times, the longer a couple was engaged, the less likely they would be able to adjust in marriage.

Another study done with 3,000 married couples to determine factors that predicted divorce found that couples who dated for at least three years before getting engaged were

less likely to divorce as compared to couples who had dated for less than a year before engagement. Financial stability helped cut divorce risk by half, and being churchgoers also helped (Khazan, 2014). However, how long a couple dates before getting married is not as crucial as if they created healthy communication and are able to handle conflict well and still stay committed to each other (Torgerson & Jacobson, n.d.)

Niehuis, Skogrand and Huston (2006) discussed 168 newlywed couples who were observed for 13 years, although only 164 couples gave follow-up data. Out of the 164 couples, 8 couples were excluded from the study because of death of a spouse or lack of follow-up data from both spouses, leaving 156 couples. Ten couples got divorced before two years of marriage, 21 couples divorced between 2-7 years of marriage and 25 couples divorced after at least 7 years of marriage. The other 100 couples remained married (Huston, Caughlin, Houts, Smith, & George, 2001). Those who had few changes in their perception of each other during the first two years remained married over 13 years and those who experienced numerous changes in the aspect of affection and responsiveness in the first two years got divorced. The study showed that those who got divorced between 2-7 years of marriage were aware of their problems, they did not love each other as much as normal courting couples do, and they had long courtships and dated casually for a long time. Those who were married for at least 7 years before they divorced were very affectionate when they got married but became significantly less affectionate during the first two years of marriage. This group of people had very romantic courtships, they courted usually for less than one year, they rarely cohabited but had the highest number of premarital pregnancies and their commitment to becoming married also changed often (Niehuis et al., 2006).

Courtship patterns affected marriage in the early years, for example if there were frequent conflicts before marriage or if there was dissatisfaction before marriage then early years of marriage were affected. The decline in affection at the early years of marriage could be because couples dated either for a shorter or longer than average amount of time, and also if the courtship had extreme or little passion. The couples who stayed married for at least 13 years had realistic feelings and behaviours towards their partners and knew where the relationship was heading to. Therefore, moderate feelings of passion and average length of courtship may be characteristic of stable married couples (Niehuis et al., 2006).

Waite and Lehrer (2003) define cohabitation as a situation where two people carry out a trial marriage before making the real commitment. Such an arrangement leads to more divorce rates in Western countries. The long term commitment in marriage encourages spouses to invest in the relationship. Married couples are viewed to have better quality relationship and emotional health than cohabiters. Economic wellbeing is also higher in a marriage because spouses are able to combine finances and support each other. Gordon (2012) notes that religious people tend to cohabite less, and they are also less likely to divorce. People who cohabite may decide to get married because they have already been living together and the struggle of separating belongings may seem tedious and difficult. Couples in such an arrangement consider the cost of separation very high, and since they have been living together they may not have had opportunities to meet other people.

According to Giblin (2016), there are about four stages of marriage; transitioning through the stages is not a linear process but rather a cyclic one. Stage one is categorized as the romance, passion, expansion and promise stage. Here, spouses work well with each other and constantly consider one another. Dreams and love are shared. Stage two is

called settling down and realization. At this stage, spouses do their best to be able to communicate better despite falling into the mundane actions of life. Differences are highly noticed and spouses learn that they have to work so as to make their marriage thrive.

In stage three, named rebellion and power struggles, spouses realize how easily they disappoint each other because expectations are not being met. As differences seem magnified at this stage, being able to make it through requires the spouses to find effective ways of communicating with each other and being able to handle conflicts amicably. Independence naturally crops up at this stage and being able to handle matters constructively, including talking to a community that supports the spouses, is paramount. The last stage is discovery, reconciliation, and beginning again. If spouses are able to make it this far, the tension they have gone through brings about heightened connection. There is a renewed desire to learn each other and be empathic toward each other. Spouses at this stage have learnt how to handle the need for both being together and being apart. When at this stage, there is a new level of maturity and a renewed hope for the marriage (Giblin, 2016).

### **2.3 Communication in marriage**

Communication entails sharing information, listening and understanding. The quality of a marriage depends on how well spouses can share with each other verbally. Nonverbal communication is as important as verbal communication. The silent treatment can be used by both spouses, though it is not effective (Pelt, 2009). A study of 600 respondents showed that there is a significant difference in marital adjustment and communication of spouses who are married for a long time versus those who are recently married (Esere, Yusuf & Omotosho, 2011). Pelt (2009) further states that communication can deteriorate

if married couples do not pay attention to each other's words and feelings. To communicate effectively, it is important to know the right time to talk, have a warm tone, talk specifically without ambiguity, learn to be positive with the talk, respect the other person's thoughts, understand what the other person needs and feels, and learn how to converse more.

According to Phillips, Wilmoth, and Marks (2012), lack of proper communication can cause marital problems. They are of the view that when there is miscommunication between spouses, it tends to happen in four styles. *Placaters* go with whatever the other spouse wants and so how they actually feel is usually unknown. *Blamers* lack the patience to listen and tend to accuse the spouse of everything that goes wrong, meaning they do not take up any responsibility for any action. *Computers* do not express feelings and their affect is constantly regulated so that they avoid any show of emotions. *Distractors* also avoid anything that would spur on openness of feelings and so they easily change subjects, trying as much as possible to stay clear of difficult topics. Without proper communication, there is disharmony and strain in tackling problems. Communication thus should not reduce, time to talk should often be made, spouses should work on being good communicators and working schedules should be adjusted after marriage so that the spouse is priority. Since communication can reduce after marriage as the spouses now live together, there has to be intentional plans to talk every day, and talk about everything (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Talking has to be done intentionally, and the time to talk created during the day. Engaging in fun activities reignites interest in each other and a desire to talk freely with each other (Pelt, 2008). Daily communication also enhances a married couple's chances of being able to evaluate factors that play a part in their marriage and make adjustments accordingly (Amulega & Amulega, 2009).

### **2.3.1 Ways of communicating effectively**

UK Violence Intervention and Prevention Centre (VIP Centre, 2014) highlights four communication styles; passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive. In passive communication, people avoid sharing how they feel. They build up their feelings until it comes out as lashing because they could not keep it in longer anymore. They feel ashamed because of this, and thus go back to being passive. Aggressive communication is practised by those who demand for their rights regardless of how it violates other people's freedom. They are dominant, impulsive, they do not listen and they also interrupt frequently. They tend to blame others for what happens to them.

Those who practice passive-aggressive communication look passive from outside, but constantly undermine whatever causes them resentment. They may feel stuck, and since they cannot face what is bothering them head on, they subtly discredit their source of discomfort. Assertive communication is used by people who can state how they feel and what they think, and who are able to do what is right for them without infringing on other people's rights. They value themselves and others, they use a lot of "I" statements, are good listeners, speak calmly and with a clear tone, and they feel connected to others (UK Violence Intervention and Prevention Centre [VIP Centre], 2014).

The ideal communication happens when couples air out their issues instead of shout about them. It is good to not communicate when angry because that can be a disaster. Good communication also entails knowing when to talk and when not to. Interrupting when one's spouse is talking shows lack of respecting the other person's opinions. This is why active listening is very important. Not talking is also a way of communicating, but it is not effective in fostering a happy marriage. Part of the communication skills is to know when, where and how to talk (Madison, 2009).

Since communication requires both talking and listening, learning how to listen effectively is important. Some barriers to effective listening are a boring listener who feels there is nothing new being said, a selective listener who decides what to hear, a defensive listener who turns everything that is said into something negative about themselves, interrupting listeners who only think of what to say next and say it, and insensitive listeners who do not understand what the other person feels as they talk (Pelt, 2009). Even though listening constitutes a substantial part of effective communication, it is not automatic. It has to be intentionally done at all times. To be intentional is listening not only to what is said but also the feelings behind what is said, rephrase the feelings back to the person who talked, let them confirm if they agree about its accuracy, and provide appropriate feedback (Pelt, 2008). To listen well then requires understanding the nonverbal expressions, encouraging the other person to talk more, and perceiving the feelings behind what the other person is saying and communicating the same to them (Pelt, 2009).

Sometimes married couples have difficulty communicating because of what they learnt and believed as they grew up, and how they were taught to socialize with others. Temperaments also have a part to play on how people communicate. About 70% of our time is spent communicating, whether through words or nonverbal mannerisms. When talking, words count for 7% of the conversation, tone and gestures take 38% and what is expressed through the face takes 55%. Though nonverbal messages are ambiguous, they are more intense and expressive (Pelt, 2008). Nonverbal communication shows what someone is feeling, and that is why even without words, a person's body language portrays a lot about their emotions. According to Gottman, there are four actions that

reflect troubled relationships. These are showing contempt, criticism, avoiding, and defensiveness (Phillips, Wilmoth, & Marks, 2012).

Dialogue between spouses requires openness and being able to receive relevant words from one's spouse. So as to communicate better, spouses should look at what the action was rather than who did the action. This ensures that the objective action can be changed, and one's spouse does not feel attacked. Comments should also be based on what is seen, not what is assumed. Talking about different thoughts works better than advice-giving. Responses given during a discussion should add value to the other spouse and the marriage in general, and should be given at an adequate location and hour. Negative behaviour is learnt, and can be unlearned (Phillips et al., 2012). I-messages encourage expression of emotions without hurting the other person. Since these messages do not attack, a spouse would be more willing to listen and communicate on the same (Pelt, 2008). How messages are shared could bring about satisfaction or pain. Messages go beyond what the other person says; it includes the tone, and nonverbal aspects. Tone comprises of volume or rhythm. What is said many times means different things to the parties in communication. How messages are interpreted depends on the condition of the marriage. The interaction pattern of a couple does determine if they will be successful (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004).

### **2.3.2 Differences in communication between men and women**

Melgosa and Melgosa (2004) say that men and women communicate differently. Women have a desire to share more on their emotions and desire the men to do the same, but this does not come easy for men. Women look for mutual acceptance in their conversations, whereas men see communication as where one wins and one does not. In

addition, women enjoy freely talking with their spouse so as to build their relationship, whereas men view talking as talking; nothing special about it.

Being able to talk at all levels of marriage is crucial to enhancing effective communication. The levels here include moving from superficial discussions, to matter of fact talks, to sharing ideas, to including emotions with the ideas, to being completely open and understanding toward the other person. Getting here requires one to be able to listen well to their spouse. This can be done by keenly paying attention to the nonverbal and consequently expressing one's notice of the same (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004).

According to Pelt (2008), men tend to focus on facts and logic whereas women tend to be more emotional and accommodating in their talk. Women may want to talk over things so that they can relate better with their spouses, and men prefer to not bring up things so that there is no possible conflict. Women are more expressive verbally and nonverbally. Men tend to speak less in comparison to women (Phillips et al., 2012).

Women talk so as to ensure rapport and enhance relationships whereas men talk to pass on facts. Women express their thoughts so as to be heard, while men do it so that they can get helpful answers. Demand-withdraw communication is where one spouse may demand something, and this causes the other spouse to withdraw. It may seem as a short term effort to avoid conflict, but it serves as a hindrance to real growth and development in the relationship (Phillips et al., 2012).

## **2.4 Understanding conflict in marriage**

Conflict theory states that people are constantly in conflict with each other, therefore it is important to know the competing forces. Since married couples have different

personalities and tastes, there are many opportunities to have conflicts (Strong et al., 2008).

At the onset of marriage, conflict can arise if there is difficulty in being able to merge and adjust, if the spouses did not know each other adequately before marriage, and if there was prior cohabitation. Being able to merge values before and after the wedding helps reduce unnecessary conflict. Trivial issues are not foreign in marriage and that is why understanding the different upbringings is important. Figuring out how to sort out miniscule challenges helps newlywed couples grow stronger in their marriage (Amulega & Amulega, 2009).

Conflicts could also arise due to a crisis that affects the spouses and shakes the marriage, such as death of loved ones, job loss, accident and the like. When a crisis occurs, there is strain, and disorganization sets in. During this time of trying to figure out the new changes, a lot of support and encouragement from outside people is needed. Afterwards comes the time for getting back on one's feet and regaining part of one's old normal life. This stage too can be hard but is manageable with adequate support. Finally, during the time of regaining balance, one is able to forge a normal life after the crisis, even if it does not resemble the normal life one once had. Crisis is inevitable in marriage and it is good for married couples to understand the stages so that they can go through the motions successfully (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004). When crisis happens, the right thing to do is not fight about it but work through it together. Marriages survive conflicts when partners learn to forgive and forget (Madison, 2009).

According to Melgosa and Melgosa (2004), there are five styles that apply in conflict; competitive style, compromise style, avoidance style, accommodating style and collaborative style. When a couple uses the competitive style, they seek control, which

hinders them from seeing other factors that are necessary for effective communication.

With the compromise style, both spouses try to be fair and equal with meeting each other's needs, but this may be difficult when it comes to issues where there is no possible middle ground. Avoidance style is where spouses disregard or push away problems, having little interest in meeting each other's needs. This style is destructive because problems are put aside and yet they reappear with greater potency.

With the accommodating style, one spouse tries to meet the other's needs but does not actually deal with the problem. This is seen as a way to avoid conflict, but it will be very frustrating to the spouse who is constantly giving in. This communication style takes away any opportunity to share effectively so as to forge new paths and decisions. The collaborative style is seen as the ideal because spouses look for mutually agreeable results. The goal is a fulfilling conclusion for both spouses (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004).

Phillips et al. (2012) have the view that ways of handling conflict could be learnt from family of origin, which could cause couples to develop marital paradigm. This is where a couple learns how to conduct marriage, based on what they had observed from their own homes. Attachment theory says how people attach predicts how conflict is shown in marriage. For example, spouses who had secure parent-child relationships tend to be comfortable with others and trust others more. The inverse is considered likely for those who had insecure parent-child relationships.

Secure spouses look for how to maintain the relationship, and are willing to compromise so that the marriage can thrive. Marital conflicts can lead to mental health issues like depression, physical concerns such as chronic pain, can cause poor parent-child relationships which can also affect the health of the children, and can lead to destructive consequences in children (Phillips et al., 2012).

According to Phillips et al. (2012), men and women deal with conflict differently. Women tend to bring up issues in the relationship more often so that they can be addressed, whereas men have a higher chance of avoiding negative marital discussions. Another difference is that though men are more likely to approach conflict with the thought of solving problems, women discuss conflicts so that there is closer intimacy.

#### **2.4.1 Conflict resolution skills**

Conflict in and of itself is not bad. The problem is how spouses handle the conflict. There are two types of conflict. Basic conflicts touch on expected roles of a marriage, for example if a woman decides not to support her husband and yet it is expected. Non basic conflicts touch on issues that are major but the core of the marriage is not shaken. For example, a man may want to invest in one sector, and the wife may want to invest in another sector. Since they both agree that investment is important, they have the ability to resolve the disagreement and decide the way forward (Phillips et al., 2012). Having a happy marriage does not depend so much on the choice of spouse as compared to how conflicts are handled. Knowing how to fight fair goes a long way in ensuring closeness and togetherness (Pelt, 2008).

Many conflicts can be avoided if a couple asks themselves if the concern is worth quarrelling about. Since spouses know quite a bit of what the other person dislikes, being able to stay away from doing the dislikes will go a long way in avoiding unnecessary conflict. Disagreeing is expected in marriage because spouses have different thoughts. What matters is that spouses can talk out the differences and respect each other's opinions. A good way to handle matters is to start with praise or empathy before criticism. It is possible to argue without quarrelling, since sharing different opinions does not have to get out of hand. Unhealthy conflicts need the two spouses since no one can

quarrel on their own (Madison, 2009). When deciding to handle conflict in the marriage, know when and where to bring up the concerns, be clear about what the problem is, handle one problem at a time, be respectful at all times, look for appropriate solutions and work with one that both spouses can agree on (Pelt, 2009).

There is a relationship between negative conflict resolution styles and marital conflicts. In addition, positive conflict resolution styles reduce such conflicts (Navidian, Bahari, & Kermansaravi, 2014). Presently, there is destructive and constructive conflict management. Destructive conflict management uses negative behaviour like manipulation, avoidance and the like. Constructive conflict management however has the motive of both spouses learning from each other's differences. Being able to handle conflicts well was mostly detected among couples who were able to summarize, paraphrase, validate each other and clarify. Therefore it was found that being able to work through conflicts together was important because using more negative and less positive statements ensured conflicts (Phillips et al., 2012).

The Conflict Resolution Styles Inventory looks at four styles of conflict resolution. These are positive problem solving, conflict engagement, withdrawal and compliance. Positive problem solving looks at how couples tend to resolve conflict. Conflict engagement view different ways spouses may attack each other. Withdrawal applies in how spouses may refuse to continue talking on an issue. Compliance is where spouses may accommodate without desiring to. A study done on Black South African couples who had been married for at least ten years revealed that those who utilized the collaborative style of conflict management were the most satisfied in their marriages (Phillips et al., 2012). When looking at Iranian divorcing couples, it was found that there are no significant differences in their conflict handling styles and marital conflicts.

However, there was positive correlation between avoidance and competition styles and a negative one between compromise, accommodation and cooperation styles with marital conflicts (Navidian et al., 2014).

Some conflict may be important for a healthy marital relationship, but too much or too little signals destructive possibilities. Some good ways suggested for resolving conflict are supporting one's spouse through a strategy like active listening, assertion, and negotiation. Negotiation looks at choosing to agree, bargaining and coexistence. Married couples can choose to agree so that they can move on beyond the conflict. Bargaining entails both spouses looking for what works best for their relationship. Sometimes differences may not be resolved, and so if a married couple has to live with certain factors that they cannot fully agree on, they should be able to find a way to live with them (Phillips et al., 2012).

Resolving conflict in marriage is possible. This starts by knowing why the conflict has arisen in the first place and handling it amicably. Conflict can be handled by understanding the concern at hand, focusing on it and not the people portraying it, evaluating possible actions to help deal with the concern, understanding and acknowledging each person's contribution to the concern and working out a mutual agreement. Couples may have conflict in the first place because of not having enough quality time, strains when dealing with children, differing desires to be met in the marriage, lack of being able to set and implement workable decisions in the home, and lack of personal values altogether. When married couples try to come up with different ideas to help with the conflict they have, it is important for them to be able to negotiate so that there is mutual satisfaction. The decisions then should be looked over to ensure that they are meaningful to the concerns that came up (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004).

## **2.5 Effects of lack of adequate communication and conflict**

Even when married couples start out very happy and satisfied in their marriage, and it extends for a number of years, they can be prone to divorce later on in life if there is negative communication and interpersonal skills in general (Lavner & Bradbury, 2012).

According to Waite and Lehrer (2003), there is an identified link between some mental health problems and lack of marital satisfaction. Poor communication, finances, inappropriate conflict resolution skills among other reasons are the most common factors for separation and divorce. Destructive communication and conflict may negatively affect the physical and psychological health of spouses. There is a positive relationship between length of marriage and communication patterns. Dissatisfied spouses lack communication skills, thus are not able to communicate effectively. Becoming defensive or withdrawing from a conflict situation only makes the matter worse (Askari, Noah, Hassan, & Baba, 2013).

When spouses learn communication and conflict resolution skills, they are better equipped to thrive in their marital relationship. A study was conducted to see if communication and conflict resolution improved among couples who were taught using PREPARE/ENRICH program. Under communication skills, assertiveness and active listening were emphasized. In conflict resolution, they studied different styles of conflict resolution and destructive and constructive approaches to resolving conflict. They concluded based on the results that when spouses are taught about communication and conflict resolution skills, these factors improve, and they end up having better mental health (Askari et al., 2013).

## **2.6 Financial considerations in marriage**

Financial problems and lack of communication are among the leading reasons given for why people divorce (Amato & Previti, 2003). Money is easily a matter that causes conflict among spouses because it is a source of power in the home. Spouses may also have different plans for money and they may differ on what is considered priority. Making financial interdependence work in marriage is not easy (Phillips et al., 2012). Papp, Cummings and Goeke-Morey (2009) discovered that conflicts regarding finances tend to be more intense than conflicts about other topics; they lasted longer, were old problems that kept recurring, and had higher current and long-term influence to couples' relationships. In a study conducted to view stressful factors in elderly couples who had been married for a long time, discussing finances proved to be a huge stress factor for them (Henry, Miller, & Giarrusso, 2005). Marital problems are more likely to be there if a husband is not employed full time, regardless of the employment status of the wife (Killewald, 2014).

Marriage improves individuals' lives financially, physically, socially and emotionally. Many Black Americans enjoy marriage and are positive towards it. A test was conducted among Black American couples in Mississippi, married between 15-60 years, to determine how marriages which had stayed for so long were able to do it. When asked how they had been able to survive, good communication ranked third with 23%. In regards to the biggest challenges the couples had to face in their marriage, communication issues ranked second with 24%, and finances was fourth with 10%. When asked about the one thing they had disagreed about the most, money was in the lead with 24%, followed by communication with 20% (Phillips et al., 2012).

Married couples could be able to handle financial matters better if they talked about it. This, though, is not easy because many people find it difficult to discuss financial matters. This may be because one spouse may seem selfish for the decisions they want to make in regards to finances, or gender roles could be a hindrance for open expression and candid discussions (Phillips et al., 2012). A study was done with spouses who were White and Mexican-American and who had been married for more than twenty years, with a mean marriage length of 35 years. It was found that conflict management styles in previous years shaped the styles of the participants and how they saw their spouses' styles in recent years. That means that how couples dealt with conflict at the early stage of their marriage influenced how they dealt with it in recent years. They were able to adapt to this pattern because of communication about communication, selective understanding and recognition of balances (Mackey, Diemer, & O'Brien, 2000). Couples with great marriages agree about managing and debt in regards to finances. Having less debt makes couples happy. One spouse tends to handle day to day financial matters. Couples who were able to agree on the use of finances and dealt with conflict amicably stated that they had a great and happy marriage (Horrocks, 2010).

According to Addo and Sassler (2010), cohabiters are less likely to manage money together, unless they have children or if they end up actually getting married. A collectivist approach gives meaning to sharing resources with others as a way of enhancing group purpose. Couples with this mindset have joint accounts because it is viewed as more beneficial and it can strengthen bonds due to common interests. Joint investments lead to higher levels of marital quality. Couples that handle finances individually have lower relationship satisfaction and have poorer methods of resolving conflict.

In a study of biracial participants, women in relationships of less than 5 years were 2.25 times more likely to state that at least one spouse had a separate account along with a joint account as compared to women in relationships that lasted longer than 15 years. Those in a relationship for less than 5 years were also more likely to have separate accounts only as compared to those in relationships between 5-10 years. Such money-independent women were also more likely to either be cohabiting or had cohabited before marriage. The same applied to the Black males. Men who had only separate accounts said they had lower levels of relationship satisfaction, and had poorer conflict resolution skills (Addo & Sassler, 2010).

Being able to handle finances well is important in any marriage (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004). Planning how to manage finances before getting married and working out that plan with necessary adjustments after marriage ensures a stable future. Agreement should be sought through uniting monies for the benefit of the home. Discussing finances openly helps the home run well, trust is enhanced, and married couples are able to live within their means. There is no standard financial formula; it depends on the married couple (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Creating a budget is not beneficial if it is not accompanied with certain principles that help it be a success. These principles comprise of aspects such as planning for necessities, annual projects/plans, contingencies, obeying the budget with reasonable flexibility and working on the budget together. Financial considerations on issues such as loans and lines of credit need to be made (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004).

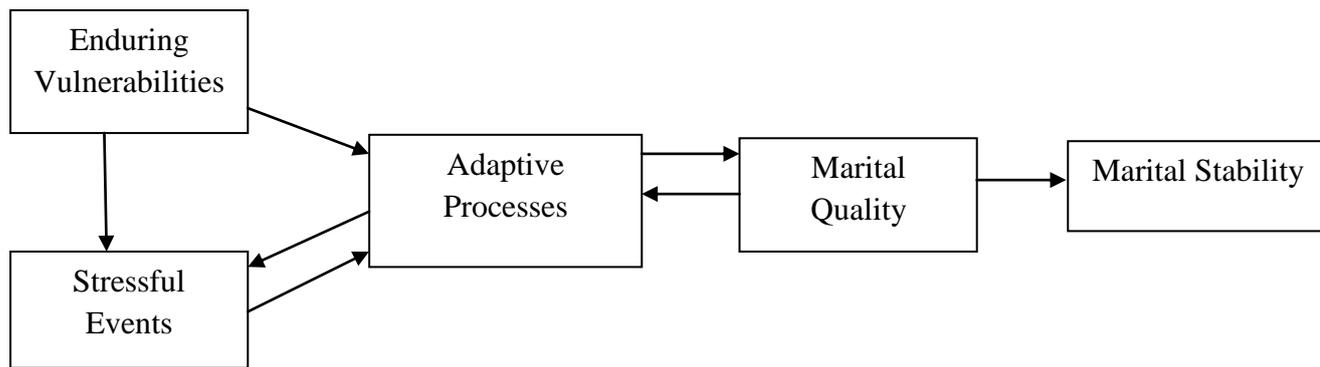
Adjustment in the budget should be made when children come into the picture. In addition, having savings and putting aside money for investments creates a hope for a better future even in the light of possible job loss or retirement. Saving and investing needs to be agreed on together, as well as how to help relatives. If a married couple does

not prioritize and separate needs from wants, they will get sidetracked and it will greatly affect their marriage life. Being able to plan for what is urgent, and then later dealing with what can wait is very important. Factors such as job loss can disrupt normal daily living, and so quickly recovering from that and planning the way forward helps life get back on track. Outside support is good at such a difficult time and unity and love really keeps the marriage going (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Excess money and lack of funds both have the potential to cause conflict in marriage. Regardless of the situation, money should not be the basis of the marriage, but instead it should be mutual support (Madison, 2009).

## **2.7 Theoretical framework**

Family stress theory looks at how family members as individuals and a group respond to stressors they face, and the responses depend on what resources are present to help with the occurring changes, individual and group characteristics, and how the family views the stressors and the ability of their own resources. The outcome is measured by looking at the impact of these factors on personal and family health, satisfaction with life, and how adaptive the family is. This breakdown has its foundation from the ABC-X Model of Family Stress. Factor A is the stressor event, which interacts with factor B, the family's resources to help them with the crisis, and factor C, how the family defines the event, which results in X, the crisis (Malia, 2006). This theory supports the theory that is foundational in this study, which is the vulnerability-stress-adaptation theory.

### 2.7.1 Vulnerability-stress-adaptation-theory



*Figure 2.1: The Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation (VSA) Model of Marital Development*  
(Adopted from Hanzal & Segrin, 2009)

VSA shows how marriages change over time. According to this model, individuals bring vulnerabilities to the marriage, which could be personality traits or experiential factors. There are also stressful events and circumstances that occur. Adaptive processes are interactions between spouses that arise as they respond to stress and this could be positive or negative. The link between the three leads to change in marital satisfaction and marital stability (Figure 2.1) (Langer, Lawrence, & Barry, 2008). Twenty five percent of couples are married but face serious marital discord. The vulnerability-stress-adaptation (VSA) theory explains that adaptive behaviours are how spouses compromise on differences of opinions or changes. Spouses face numerous challenging situations that they must adapt or adjust to, and if they keep being unsuccessful in adapting, there is marital distress. In addition, supportive behaviours and problem-solving behaviours among spouses help them manage their marriages (Lawrence et al., 2008).

Lawrence et al. (2008) conducted a study and realised that decision-making and control, and communication/conflict management predicted changes in husbands' marital satisfaction, whereas only communication and conflict management predicted changes in

marital satisfaction in wives, with conflict management being a higher predictor. Since the VSA model talks of vulnerabilities as individual differences, these vulnerabilities affect how spouses adapt to stressors. They argue that spousal skills and interactions at the beginning of marriage act as vulnerabilities or buffers for marital satisfaction in the long run (Williamson et al., 2015).

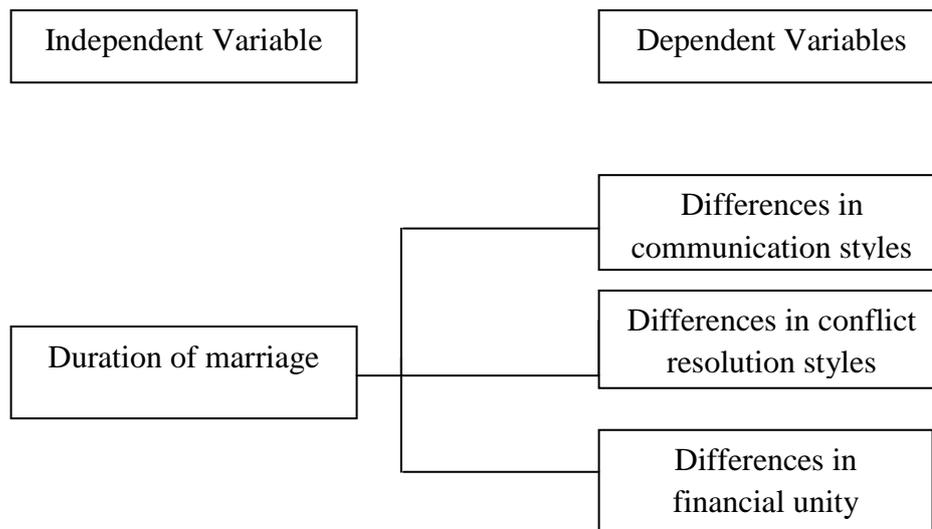
According to Hanzal and Segrin (2009), a married couple's interactions influence marital quality. Studies show that effects that encourage marital satisfaction fall under enduring vulnerabilities, stressful events and adaptive processes. VSA model of marital development highlights that marital outcomes like marital quality are a function of these three factors. The VSA model discusses how quality and stability of marriage changes over time. Enduring vulnerabilities are steady characteristics people bring into a relationship, like personality, which means spouses handle issues differently depending on their personality. Adaptive processes are how spouses handle marital problems. They are influenced in some way by enduring vulnerabilities and they predict marital quality.

How spouses argue affects the marriage more than what they argue about. Responding with demand, withdrawal, contempt or criticism negatively affects the marriage. Positive communication predicts happiness and marital satisfaction. People with negative affectivity use problematic conflict resolution strategies like conflict engagement, compliance and withdrawal. Marriage quality depends on the enduring vulnerabilities and adaptive processes. Looking at marriage satisfaction as part of marital quality, it is the goodness that spouses see in their marriage (Figure 2.1) (Hanzal & Segrin, 2009).

A study was carried out where negative affectivity was seen as an enduring vulnerability, conflict styles as an adaptive process and marital satisfaction as a sign of marital quality. The test was done with newlyweds. Results showed that negative

affectivity can influence increased interpersonal conflict and lower marital quality, brought about more negative conflict resolution styles and brought down satisfaction in marriage, but marital quality can improve with positive communication and problem solving (Hanzal & Segrin, 2009).

## 2.8 Conceptual framework



*Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework*

(Source: Researcher, 2016)

The conceptual framework highlights how the independent variable affects the dependent variables. Longevity of marriage is the independent variable, and differences in communication styles, conflict resolution styles and financial unity are the dependent variables. The duration of marriage is thought to affect communication styles (passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive) in marriage. Conflict resolution styles (competitive, compromise, avoidance, accommodating and collaborative) may also be influenced by duration of marriage. Financial unity (how spouses agree about the use of their finances together) is also conceptualized to be affected by how long spouses are married.

## **2.9 Summary**

Varied literature has been researched on in this study, looking at the marriage perspectives of America and Africa, stages of marriage, how communication works or fails to work and what that means for a marriage, possible reasons for conflict and how to resolve conflict, and also the effect of finances on spouses and the marriage as a whole. The theoretical framework covers vulnerability-stress-adaptation theory, as the conceptual framework addresses how the dependent variables can be influenced by the independent variable.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the research methodology used for obtaining information is explained. This includes the procedures for carrying out the research, the strategies for analysis and presenting the collected data. This chapter concentrates on the research design, population, a sample from the population, ideal sampling method, technique for collecting data and analysis of data that was used in the study. At the end of the chapter, the ethical consideration that was used when collecting data is described.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This research study utilized a mixed method research design. Mixed method research design is an approach where researchers collect, analyze and collaborate quantitative and qualitative data so as to answer research questions. The reason this method was suitable is because qualitative or quantitative research by itself does not help to fully understand the problem (Creswell, 2013). Mixed methods uses predetermined and emerging methods, has both open and close-ended questions and utilizes statistical and text analysis (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative research seeks to give a hypothesis that can be rejected or accepted, whereas qualitative research purely produces a hypothesis. Better objectivity and ability to generalize results from quantitative research, and qualitative research is better known for how it gives greater understanding to a study. Mixed method research design handles a greater range of research questions, gives a more comprehensive conclusion, and unites the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Ethical expectations for both research designs are more so considered when they are

combined. Mixed methods design answers the questions of “how much” and “why” (Caruth, 2013).

Mixed method research design was used in this study because it gave a greater opportunity to analyze data effectively. It made sense to use a mixed method research design because it gives the chance to test how agreeable results are based on two different instruments, the two methods build on and correct each other, and the results drawn from one method can impact and fully explain the results of the other.

### **3.2 Study location**

The study was conducted in Makadara constituency, Kenya. Makadara constituency is an electoral constituency with four wards, and it is part of Eastlands, which is to the South-East of Nairobi province.

### **3.3 Population**

A population is individuals or units of interest (Hanlon & Larget, 2011). The target population for this study was married couples in churches in Makadara constituency.

According to Africa Center for Missions- Finish the Task Afriserve (ACM-FTT Afriserve, 2004), there were 1097 churches in Nairobi before they conducted their study, with an expected projection of a total of 2656 churches in 2004 and 3240 churches in 2010, in Nairobi. The same organization noted that there were 65 churches in Makadara constituency before their research, and they projected that by 2004 there would be 245 churches and 298 churches by 2010. However, after visiting the ground, the researcher saw that the churches may not be that many. After consulting with a few key people in the constituency, the researcher learnt that the churches in the constituency are over 100, but there are already set plans by those key people to research on the exact number of

churches this year, 2017. Therefore, since the only known information was that they are over 100 churches currently in Makadara constituency, the researcher worked with a rough estimate of 140 churches.

*Table 3.1: Target Population*

<b>Wards</b>	<b>Churches</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Maringo/Hamza	40	4
Viwandani	35	4
Harambee	30	3
Makongeni	35	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>15</b>

Source: J. Ndanu (personal communication, March 10, 2017)

### **3.4 Sampling and sample size considerations**

A sample is a subset of the units or individuals in a population. If a sample is representative of the population, then the inferences that are made from the sample are able to be relatively generalized to the population (Hanlon & Larget, 2011). The target population is the total group of individuals from where a sample is drawn (McLeod, 2014). The population is usually unobservable, so inference is made about it from the sample (Benoit, 2010). Sampling is the means of choosing a representative group from the population under study (McLeod, 2014). Probability sampling techniques are mostly used in quantitative studies as such samples seek to get a representative outcome of the whole population. Purposive sampling techniques are used in qualitative studies. Here, selection is based on required purposes which are related with answering the research questions. Using both gives concrete and rich information (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). This

study utilized two probability sampling techniques. Stratified sampling technique was used to get the sample number of churches in each ward because the wards already represent strata from which sample data can be gotten. This technique is advantageous in that it covers all the strata outlined and the sample can be highly representative of the target population, making it possible to generalize the results.

Simple random sampling was then used to select married couples in the sample churches (McLeod, 2014). Using a sample that is at least 10% of the population is considered reasonable (Bryman, 2008). The target population in this study was 140 churches and the selected sample was 15 churches, which was 11% of the total number of churches in Makadara. Utilizing simple random sampling, 13 married couples were randomly chosen from every church in the sample, which brought the number of married couples under study to 195 couples (390 individuals). However, due to the challenge of people not returning the questionnaires, the researcher ended up sampling 23 churches instead of 15 churches, which was 16% of the total number of churches. Additionally, most respondents saw no need for both spouses to fill the questionnaire, so there were few couples who filled it, with most being individual married respondents.

*Table 3.2: Sample frame*

<b>Number of Churches</b>	<b>Sampling technique</b>	<b>Number of sampled churches</b>	<b>Sampling technique</b>	<b>Total number of married couples</b>
140	Stratified sampling	15	Simple random sampling	195

Source: Researcher (2017)

### **3.5 Data collection strategy and procedures**

A structured questionnaire was developed and utilized by the researcher in the collection of data. Considering the fact that mixed method research was in use, both open and closed ended items were in the questionnaire. Closed ended questions helped the researcher be able to analyze data quickly, but they limited the possible answers of the participants. Such questions lacked the richness of the participants' answers and explanations for their answers. Open ended questions required the researcher to know how to analyze the data. In addition, the analysis needed proper planning in terms of time, skills and resources (Boynton & Greenhalgh, 2004). Questionnaires are relatively inexpensive, cover a wider scope of people and avoid interviewer bias, which made them an ideal tool (Meadows, 2003).

According to Meadows (2003), pre-testing a questionnaire highlights problems that may be present, as this piloting is done using a smaller but representative sample of participants before the main study. The questionnaire was pre-tested to ensure its reliability and validity before administration. This allowed for proper corrections to be done so that the adjustments made suit the participants. Data was then collected with the final questionnaire.

#### **3.5.1 Formation of the questionnaire**

This study utilized a questionnaire that viewed the general profile of the participants including their background in the first section. Section B evaluated the history of the marriage of the participants. The last section, which is C, utilized the ENRICH program. The reason this program was used was due to its ability to address marital concerns regardless of cultural differences (Olson & Olson, 2000).

ENRICH inventory contains 165-items that measure couple relationship in 20 areas. There are 12 content areas, 4 personality scales and four scales that look at family of origin. Categories include idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality assessment, communication, conflict resolution, partner style and habits, financial management, forgiveness, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, role relationship and spiritual beliefs. Two family-of-origin scales look at family cohesion and family flexibility, and two other scales assess couple cohesion and couple flexibility. The four personality scales look at assertiveness, self-confidence, avoidance and partner dominance (Olson & Olson, 2000). This study used a 5-points Likert-type scale where 1= *strongly disagree*, 2=*disagree*, 3=*neutral*, 4=*agree* and 5=*strongly agree*.

The ENRICH inventory was adequate for this study because it addressed issues that occur in marriages effectively, a number of which were brought up in the study itself. Additionally, studies conducted with this inventory created information that helped adjust the inventory, so that it cannot only talk about issues in marriage but also factors that are beneficial to the improvement of marriage in general (Olson, Larson, & Olson, 2009).

### **3.6 Reliability and validity and the protocol to use**

#### **3.6.1 Reliability**

Reliability measures the accuracy of an instrument. This means that the measurement for reliability looks at how consistent the results are if the instrument is used in a similar situation, and a number of times (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In reliability, a scale should consistently show the construct being measured. This means that individual items or sets of items should give results that match with the questionnaire (Field, 2005). To maintain

reliability, a researcher uses many repeat sample groups to reduce the chance of an abnormal sample group. A good experiment happens when the results are as reliable as possible, and if the same experiment is repeated by anyone else, there should be a good estimate of statistical reliability (“Study Finds”, 2013).

Since reliability focuses on the consistency of a measure, different techniques are used to ensure this consistency. One such technique is internal consistency, which was used in this study. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured with Cronbach’s alpha, as it is the most common measure for determining the internal consistency of an instrument. With this measure, the average of the correlations is determined. The resulting number should be between 0 and 1, and a good reliability score starts from 0.7 going up (Heale & Twycross, 2015). The nearer the coefficient is to 1.0, the better the internal consistency of the scaled items (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). In this study, there was good internal consistency reliability because the coefficient for the pilot test instrument was 0.614, and the Cronbach’s alpha score for the sampled population was 0.708.

### **3.6.2 Validity**

Validity is the extent to which a unit is accurately measured in a study. Content validity addresses whether the instrument tackles the entire construct it was supposed to measure. Construct validity looks if inferences can be drawn about test scores that come from the concept under study. Criterion validity is the extent to which other instruments that measure the variable(s) are related with the instrument used in the study (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

For validity purposes, the instrument (questionnaire) utilized in this study was reviewed by the supervisor and other experts in the department. The adjustments made

were then added to the instrument. Pre-testing the instrument also added to the validity. Construct validity, which was utilized, ensured the theoretical framework agreed with the procedure, and content validity was used by adjusting the instrument based on the views of experts.

### **3.7 Analysis of data**

Data analysis is done so that the results can give meaning to the research expectations (Noble & Smith, 2014). Due to the proposed nature of this study, the researcher used percentages and Chi Square (which is based on frequency values). Chi-square is a statistical tool that compares observed data to expected data, and it utilizes numerical values not percentages or ratios (Fisher & Yates, n.d.).

The filled questionnaires were edited to ensure they are complete. The data gathered was then coded so that the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the results can be explained. Data was analyzed using content analysis, which is the method used to sum up any content by counting various factors of the content. It allows for a more objective evaluation, and it is used to analyze qualitative data. The results from content analysis are numbers and percentages ("Study Finds", 2012). Data was also analyzed using Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 that comprises of frequency distribution tables, percentages and Chi Square statistic. Correlation was added as a supplementary analysis.

### **3.8 Ethical consideration**

Before carrying out the study, the researcher sought permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The researcher got the approval from IRB, as was seen from the letter of approval (see Appendix I). The purpose of the study was communicated to the

participants so that they understood what exactly the study desired to fulfil. Research from participants was not conducted without their consent, and the participants were not pressured to sign consent forms (see Appendix II). Religious, gender and other differences were respected. Participants clearly knew the extent to which research was being conducted, and they received equal treatment. Deception was not used, but if it became absolutely necessary for collecting truthful responses, then the researcher debriefed the participants afterwards to ensure that there was no harm done (Creswell, 2014). A debrief form was also given to the participants in case any issues arose and they needed some form of psychological help (see Appendix III).

Leading questions were avoided and private information was not disclosed. However, the participants were requested to become part of the research process with the researcher. Participants should not feel used but instead should feel encouraged in the participation, from beginning to end. The researcher stuck to the questions that were necessary so that harm was not caused to participants (see Appendix IV). Multiple sides should be reported, including contrary results. The privacy of participants was ensured. Information was not disclosed in a manner that would compromise participants' identity, so confidentiality was maintained all through. The language used was clear, appropriate, and unbiased (Creswell, 2014).

### **3.9 Summary**

This study used a mixed method research design, the target group being married couples in churches that are in Makadara constituency. Stratified sampling was used to select the sample churches in the four wards. Having a population of 140 churches, 15 were selected as a sample, which was 11% of the total population. Simple random sampling gave the sample of participants who were part of the research study, which were

195 married couples (390 participants), though there were a few changes to this based on logistics on the ground. A questionnaire was developed for the collection of data, and it had a part that focused on ENRICH inventory. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS. This study also expounded on reliability and validity factors, and ethical considerations before, during and after the research process.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESEARCH RESULTS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights and explains results from statistical analyses that were used in investigating possible association among variables in the study. The chapter looks at the characteristics of the sample and the respondents' background, and their answers to various items in the study. It also explains the results derived from the analyses, and how they relate to the study's research questions.

#### 4.1 Data Response and Reliability

The data was collected from the four different wards in Makadara constituency; Maringo/Hamza, Viwandani, Harambee and Makongeni. Respondents were married people in a church setting. The overall required sample size was 390. The researcher was able to collect 402 filled questionnaires, but only 382 questionnaires were considered valid. Therefore, the valid questionnaires were 97.9% of the expected sample size, and 95.3% of the overall 402 questionnaires. This was partly due to the care taken in administering the instrument, and also the respondents' choice to participate in the study.

The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's alpha, as its coefficient is popular for measuring the internal consistency of the instrument (Heale & Twycross, 2015). A good instrument is determined by a higher coefficient value, and a value of 0.7 and above shows good reliability. The findings of this study showed good internal consistency reliability, just as was highlighted in Chapter three, with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.708.

## 4.2 Respondents' Background

In Tables (4.1-4.5) below, the demographic characteristics of the respondents showed that more than half of them were male at 225 (56.3%). The number of respondents kept increasing as duration of marriage increased, with the largest number of respondents having been married for over 15 years (37.2%). Majority of the respondents' parents (69.6%) were married and a few of their parents (1.5%) had never been married. The respondents mostly got married between the ages of 25-30 years old (40%) followed closely by those who got married between the ages of 20-25 years old (34.8%). Of all the respondents who had valid responses in the study, (93%) of them were still in their first marriage, which made it easier to test duration of marriage to other variables in the study.

*Table 4.1: Gender*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	225	56.0	56.3	56.3
	Female	175	43.5	43.8	100.0
	Total	400	99.5	100.0	
Missing	999	2	.5		
Total		402	100.0		

The table shows that 225 (56.3%) of the respondents were male and 175 (43.8 %) were females (Table 4.1).

Table 4.2: In which ward is your church located

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Maringo/Hamza	148	36.8	37.2	37.2
	Viwandani	31	7.7	7.8	45.0
	Makongeni	86	21.4	21.6	66.6
	Harambee	133	33.1	33.4	100.0
	Total	398	99.0	100.0	
Missing	999	4	1.0		
	Total	402	100.0		

In the table the respondents in the wards were split as follows: Maringo/Hamza had 148 (37.2%) respondents, 31 (7.8%) came from Viwandani, 86 (21.6%) came from Makongeni and Harambee had 133 (33.4%) respondents in the study (Table 4.2).

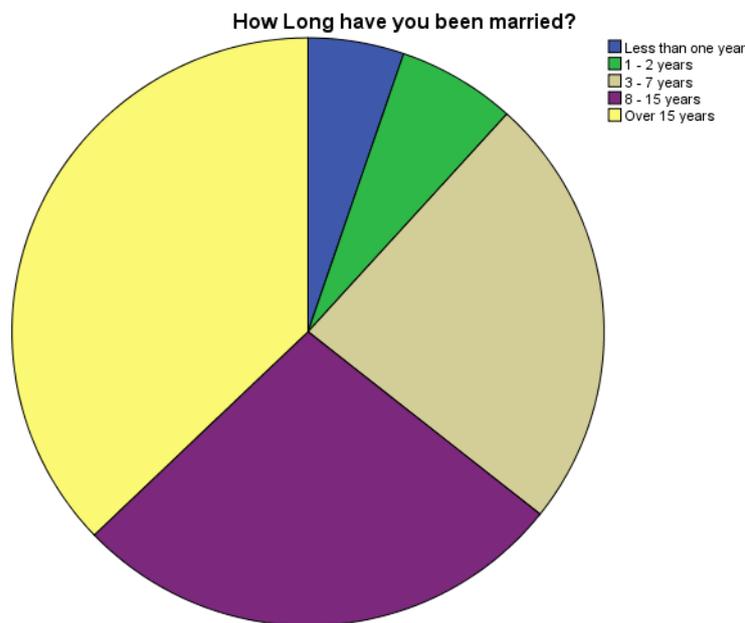


Figure 4.1: Duration of Marriage of the respondents

The participants were married for various durations. Some 21 (5.2%) of the respondents were married for less than one year, 26 (6.5%) had 1 to 2 years in marriage, 96 (23.9%) had 3 to 7 years in marriage, 109 (27.2%) had 8 to 15 years in marriage, and 149 (37.2%) of the total respondent had over 15 years in marriage (Figure 4.1).

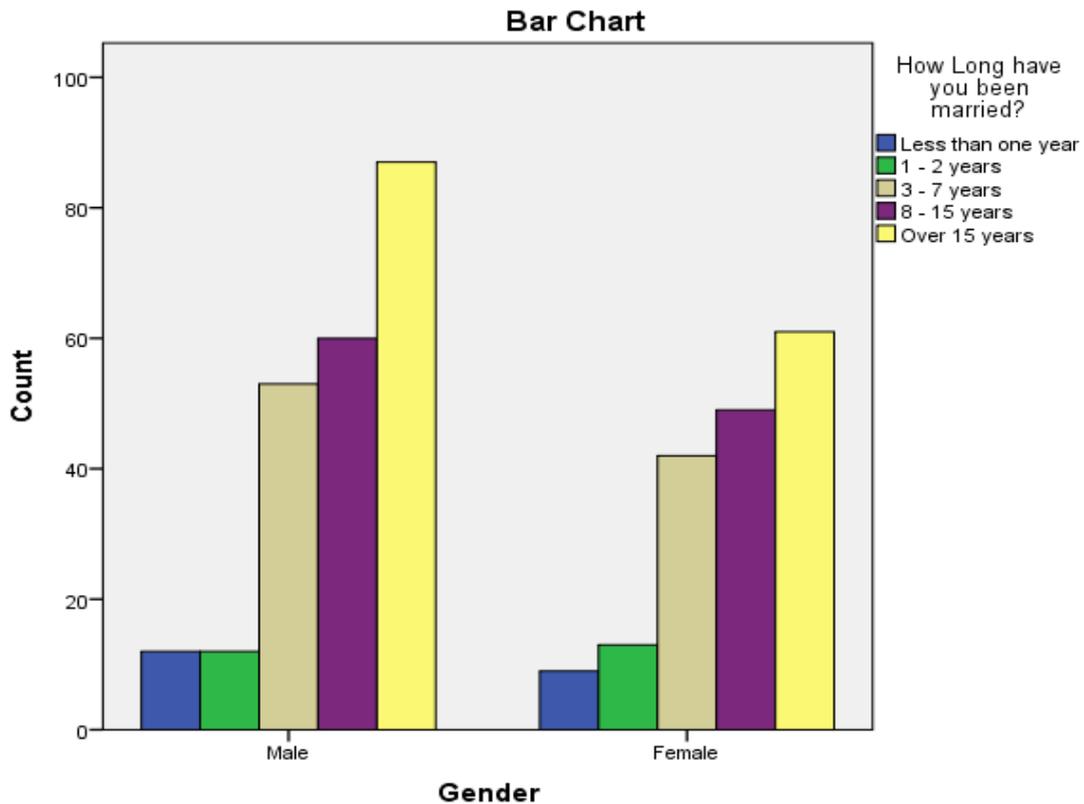


Figure 4.2: Comparison of Gender and Duration of Marriage of the respondents

The figure shows the duration of marriage for males and females in the study. More males than females were married for most of the years listed, but slightly more females were married between 1-2 years than males (Figure 4.2).

*Table 4.3: Marital status of your parents*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	279	69.4	69.6	69.6
	Separated	29	7.2	7.2	76.8
	Divorced	12	3.0	3.0	79.8
	Widowed	75	18.7	18.7	98.5
	Never Married	6	1.5	1.5	100.0
	Total	401	99.8	100.0	
Missing	999	1	.2		
	Total	402	100.0		

When the respondents were asked about the marital status of their parents, 279 (69.6%) had married parents, 29 (7.2%) had separated parents, 12 (3%) had divorced parents, 75 (18.7%) had widowed parents and 6 (1.5%) had parents who never got married (Table 4.3).

*Table 4.4: Age at marriage*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 20	18	4.5	4.5	4.5
	20-25	139	34.6	34.8	39.3
	26-30	160	39.8	40.0	79.3
	31-35	67	16.7	16.8	96.0
	36-40	11	2.7	2.8	98.8
	Over 40	5	1.2	1.3	100.0
	Total	400	99.5	100.0	

Missing	999	2	.5		
Total		402	100.0		

The respondents in the study had different ages of when they got married. As noted, 18 (4.5%) of the respondents married while under 20 years old, 139 (34.8%) married while between 20 to 25 years old, 160 (40%) married while between 26 to 30 years old, 67 (16.8%) married while between 31 to 35 years old, 11 (2.8%) married between 36 to 40 years old, and 5 (1.3%) married at over 40 years of age (Table 4.4).

*Table 4.5: Number of marriages*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	First marriage	372	92.5	93.0	93.0
	Second marriage	25	6.2	6.3	99.3
	Third marriage	1	.2	.3	99.5
	Fourth marriage	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	400	99.5	100.0	
Missing	999	2	.5		
Total		402	100.0		

As noted, 372 (93%) of the respondents were in their first marriage, 25 (6.3%) were in their second marriage, 1 (0.3%) was in their third marriage, and 2 (0.5%) were in their fourth marriage (Table 4.5).

### **4.3 What are the differences in communication styles among married couples and do they improve the longer a couple is married?**

#### **4.3.1 Comparing differences in communication styles and duration of marriage**

The researcher looked at communication and how it related to duration of marriage, according to the respondents. Communication was broken down into communication styles for ease of understanding. The communication styles were then compared to duration of marriage, and their chi-squares were compared to each other to see if there was a significant relationship between the communication styles and duration of marriage. The significance used for the entire study was  $p=0.05$ . A cross tabulation was formed for any communication style that showed significance. Additionally, the mean values of the communication styles and gender were compared to each other, and an ANOVA was derived to check for significance. Mean values of the communication styles as they related to duration of marriage were also compared to each other, and ANOVA was used to test for significance. This was the format used throughout the study to report the results of the research questions.

The different communication styles are passive style, passive-aggressive style, aggressive style and assertive style (VIP Centre, 2014), and these were the communication styles used in the study. One wishing that they could share more stood for the passive style, one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times stood for the passive-aggressive style, domineering conversations stood for the aggressive style, being able to share thoughts confidently stood for the assertive style, while understanding and being understood by one's spouse supported the assertive style.

The findings of the cross tabulations in the entire study were split between disagree, neutral and agree, with strongly disagree/disagree being joined, and strongly agree/agree also being joined. The mean values in the study reflected the direction the variables tended to lean towards, with strongly disagree =1, and strongly agree=5.

*Table 4.6: Chi square of Communication Styles and Duration of Marriage*

<b>Communication</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
I wish I could share more	16	20.887	0.183
Many times my spouse is hurt by my words	16	26.331	0.050*
I tend to domineer conversations	16	9.984	0.867
I am able to share thoughts confidently	16	28.034	0.031*
I understand and I am understood	16	22.426	0.130

The findings show that when the different communication styles were compared to duration of marriage, two of the communication styles showed some significance. When a spouse being hurt by one's word many times was related to duration of marriage, it showed  $\chi^2(16, N=401) = 26.331, p= 0.05$ . Being able to share thoughts confidently was also related to duration of marriage, and the results showed  $\chi^2(16, N=401) = 28.034, p= 0.03$ . The two items had significance to duration of marriage (Table 4.6).

Table 4.7: Cross tabulation of Hurting Words and Duration of Marriage

		Many times my spouse is hurt by my words				
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Duration of marriage	Less than one year	Count	8	3	10	21
		Percent (%)	38.1%	14.3%	47.6%	100.0%
	1 - 2 years	Count	6	6	14	26
		Percent (%)	23.1%	23.1%	53.9%	100.0%
	3 - 7 years	Count	31	30	35	96
		Percent (%)	32.3%	31.3%	36.5%	100.0%
	8 - 15 years	Count	50	29	30	109
		Percent (%)	45.8%	26.6%	27.6%	100.0%
	Over 15 years	Count	55	32	62	149
		Percent (%)	37%	21.5%	41.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	150	100	151	401
		Percent (%)	37.4%	24.9%	37.7%	100.0%

According to the findings, 8 of the 21 (38.1%) respondents who are married for less than one year disagreed that many times their spouse is hurt by their words. The percentage reduced as duration of marriage increased, but it picked up again with 50 of the 109 (45.8%) respondents who had been married for 8-15 years disagreeing that many times their spouse is hurt by their words. It went down again, with 55 of the 149 (37%) respondents who are married for over 15 years disagreeing. For those who are married for less than one year, 10 of the 21 (47.6%) agreed that many times their spouse is hurt by their words. The percentage increased with 14 of the 26 (53.9%) respondents who are married for 1-2 years agreeing with the statement. As duration increased, the percentage of respondents kept reducing, but it increased again with 62 of the 149 (41.6%)

respondents who are married for over 15 years agreeing that many times their spouse is hurt by their words. The percentages under neutral increased until it reached 30 of the 96 (31.3%) respondents who had been married for 3-7 years, and then from there it decreased as duration of marriage increased. At 1-2 years of marriage, the percentage of those who disagreed and those who gave neutral responses was the same. The percentages of those who disagreed and those who were neutral at 3-7 years of marriage were close to each other, and the percentages of those who were neutral and those who agreed at 8-15 years of marriage were also close to each other (Table 4.7).

The results show that as duration of marriage increased, those who disagreed at 1-2 years reduced, but then there was increase of those who disagreed that many times their spouse is hurt by their words, and then there was a decrease at over 15 years of marriage. The opposite happened with those who agreed, because there was an increase at 1-2 years of marriage, and then the percentages reduced as duration of marriage increased, which changed at over 15 years of marriage as there was an increase at this stage of marriage. Therefore there was generally more increase with those who disagreed that many times their spouse is hurt by their words and a decrease of those who agreed, but those percentages were different at 1-2 years of marriage and at over 15 years of marriage. The percentage of those who agreed at over 15 years of marriage was less than for those who agreed at less than one year of marriage, showing that it went down as duration of marriage increased.

Table 4.8: Cross tabulation of Sharing Thoughts Confidently and Duration of Marriage

		I'm able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently				
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Duration of marriage	Less than one year	Count	3	2	16	21
		Percent (%)	14.3%	9.5%	76.2%	100.0%
	1 - 2 years	Count	7	6	13	26
		Percent (%)	26.9%	23.1%	50%	100.0%
	3 - 7 years	Count	11	8	77	96
		Percent (%)	11.5%	8.3%	80.2%	100.0%
	8 - 15 years	Count	9	9	91	109
		Percent (%)	8.2%	8.3%	83.5%	100.0%
	Over 15 years	Count	16	13	120	149
		Percent (%)	10.7%	8.7%	80.5%	100.0%
Total		Count	46	38	317	401
		Percent (%)	11.5%	9.5%	79%	100.0%

The findings show that 16 of the 21 (76.2%) respondents who are married for less than one year agreed that they can share their thoughts confidently with their spouse. The percentage went down as duration increased, then it kept increasing, where 91 of the 109 (83.5%) respondents who are married for 8-15 years agreed on the same. It then dropped a little for those married over 15 years (80.5%). Those who disagreed followed an opposite percentage pattern with those who agreed as duration of marriage increased. Of those who had been married for 1-2 years, 7 of the 26 (26.9%) respondents disagreed that they can share their thoughts confidently with their spouse, which was the highest percentage of those who disagreed. This same group had the highest neutral percentage,

with 6 of the 26 (23.1%) giving a neutral response to being able to share their thoughts with their spouse confidently (Table 4.8).

These results highlight that as duration of marriage increased, respondents increased in them being able to share their thoughts with their spouses confidently, as the agreeing stabilized over time. Those who are married for 1-2 years had the most significant changes with half of the respondents agreeing, and the other half were between disagreeing and neutral responses. From there the agreeing responses as seen by percentage increased and stabilized.

*Table 4.9: Mean Comparisons of Communication Styles based on Gender*

Gender		I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship	Many times my spouse is hurt by my words	I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse	I'm able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently	I understand my spouse and I also feel understood
Male	Mean	3.77	2.92	2.65	4.05	3.93
	N	225	225	225	225	225
	Std. Deviation	1.084	1.089	.998	.872	.856
Female	Mean	3.83	3.06	2.67	3.79	3.70
	N	175	175	175	175	175
	Std. Deviation	1.110	1.102	1.141	1.211	1.101
Total	Mean	3.80	2.98	2.66	3.94	3.83
	N	400	400	400	400	400
	Std. Deviation	1.095	1.096	1.061	1.041	.976

According to the findings, females were closer to agreeing that they wish they could share more about what they want than the males, although both took a neutral mean stance. Females were neutral when it came to stating that their spouses are hurt by their

words many times, whilst males disagreed but were very close to neutral. Both females and males disagreed that they tend to domineer in conversations. Females gave a neutral mean response to being able to share their thoughts confidently, while men agreed that they are able to confidently share their thoughts. Both females and males were neutral when it came to understanding and feeling understood, but males were very close to agreeing, and females were not far off from the males (Table 4.9).

The results from the mean values show that females would wish to share more about what they want as compared to males, females were neutral about their spouses being hurt by their words many times while men disagreed on doing the same, both disagreed on domineering conversations, males agreed they can share their thoughts confidently while females were neutral about that, and males tended to understand and feel more understood as compared to females. According to the high mean values of the positive communication styles, males seemed to be able to communicate better and more effectively than females, although both had good mean values when it came to positive communication styles.

Table 4.10: ANOVA of Communication Styles Mean Comparisons with Gender

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.366	1	.366	.305	.581
	Within Groups		477.634	398	1.200		
	Total		478.000	399			
Many times my spouse is hurt by my words * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.733	1	1.733	1.446	.230
	Within Groups		477.144	398	1.199		
	Total		478.878	399			
I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.043	1	.043	.038	.845
	Within Groups		449.394	398	1.129		
	Total		449.438	399			
I'm able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		6.671	1	6.671	6.237	.013*
	Within Groups		425.639	398	1.069		
	Total		432.310	399			
I understand my spouse and I also feel understood * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		5.491	1	5.491	5.829	.016*
	Within Groups		374.949	398	.942		
	Total		380.440	399			

There was significance between ability to share thoughts confidently and gender, with (F (1, 398) = 6.237, p= 0.013). Additionally, significance was found between being understood and understanding one's spouse, and gender, with (F (1, 398) = 5.829, p= 0.016) (Table 4.10). This supports the results of the mean comparisons of positive communication styles and gender (Table 4.9), as they show significance.

*Table 4.11: Comparing Communication Styles Means with Duration of Marriage*

Duration of marriage		I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship	Many times my spouse is hurt by my words	I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse	I'm able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently	I understand my spouse and I also feel understood
Less than one year	Mean	3.86	3.24	3.00	3.90	3.81
	N	21	21	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	1.195	1.375	1.095	1.136	1.030
1 - 2 years	Mean	3.65	3.31	2.77	3.46	3.50
	N	26	26	26	26	26
	Std. Deviation	1.129	1.087	1.210	1.503	1.241
3 - 7 years	Mean	3.77	3.06	2.73	3.94	3.75
	N	96	96	96	96	96
	Std. Deviation	1.100	1.034	1.000	1.024	1.066
8 - 15 years	Mean	3.89	2.72	2.61	4.11	3.97
	N	109	109	109	109	109
	Std. Deviation	1.066	1.079	1.079	.936	.866
Over 15 years	Mean	3.79	3.02	2.59	3.91	3.85
	N	149	149	149	149	149
	Std. Deviation	1.100	1.093	1.053	1.002	.925
Total	Mean	3.81	2.98	2.66	3.94	3.84
	N	401	401	401	401	401
	Std. Deviation	1.094	1.100	1.060	1.042	.976

The results show that at less than one year of marriage, there was a neutral mean response to all the communication styles, with more emphasis of people tending to head towards agreeing when it came to them wishing they could share more, being able to share thoughts confidently, and being understood and understanding one's spouse. The

mean responses of most of the communication styles reduced at 1-2 years of marriage. At this duration of marriage, there was an increase in one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times, and disagreeing about domineering conversations. At 3-7 years of marriage, most of the communication styles mean values increased, but for one's spouse being hurt by one's words and domineering conversations, the mean values reduced. For the other communication styles, the mean values increased at 8-15 years of marriage then decreased at over 15 years of marriage. However, for domineering conversations, the mean value kept decreasing, and for one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times, the mean value reduced at 8-15 years of marriage, and increased at over 15 years of marriage. At 8-15 years of marriage is the only place where, from the mean value, the people agreed that they can share their thoughts confidently. Additionally, it is the only duration where the mean value showed that people disagreed that one's spouse is hurt by one's words many times.

The findings highlight that as duration of marriage increased, the mean value of domineering conversations kept decreasing, meaning more people over the years of marriage disagreed that they domineer conversations with their spouse. Even with the fluctuations seen in most of the communication styles over the years, the mean value of wishing they could share more about what they want had reduced at over 15 years of marriage as compared to how it was at less than one year of marriage. The same was true with them stating that one's spouse is hurt by one's words many times. For being able to share thoughts confidently, and understanding and being understood, the mean values at over 15 years of marriage were higher than they were at less than one year of marriage. These showed that the mean values of positive communication styles were better as duration of marriage increased, and the mean values of negative communication styles got less as duration of marriage increased (Table 4.11).

Table 4.12: ANOVA of Communication Styles Mean Comparisons with Duration of Marriage

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	1.607	4	.402	.333	.855
	Within Groups	477.221	396	1.205		
	Total	478.828	400			
Many times my spouse is hurt by my words * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	12.185	4	3.046	2.558	.038*
	Within Groups	471.656	396	1.191		
	Total	483.840	400			
I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	4.134	4	1.034	.919	.453
	Within Groups	445.417	396	1.125		
	Total	449.551	400			
I'm able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	9.304	4	2.326	2.166	.072
	Within Groups	425.260	396	1.074		
	Total	434.564	400			
I understand my spouse and I also feel understood * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	5.730	4	1.432	1.511	.198
	Within Groups	375.407	396	.948		
	Total	381.137	400			

Significance was found between one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times and duration of marriage ( $F(4, 396) = 2.558, p = 0.038$ ) (Table 4.12). The significance is supported by the mean comparison of one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times and duration of marriage (Table 4.11), where the mean value reduced at over 15 years of marriage as compared to the mean value that was there at less than one year of marriage, and the trend was a decrease except for 1-2 years of marriage and the slight increase at over 15 years of marriage. This shows that this negative communication style has

significance to duration of marriage, and its mean value tended to keep reducing, with the highest mean being a neutral stance on the communication style.

### 4.3.2 Comparing the different communication styles to duration of marriage to test for correlation

Table 4.13: Correlation of Communication Styles and Duration of Marriage

		Duration of marriage	I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship	Many times my spouse is hurt by my words	I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse	I'm able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently	I understand my spouse and I also feel understood
Duration of marriage	Pearson Correlation	1	.010	-.070	-.090	.047	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.845	.164	.072	.353	.185
	N	401	401	401	401	401	401
I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship	Pearson Correlation	.010	1	.150**	.057	.185**	.159**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.845		.003	.258	.000	.001
	N	401	402	402	402	402	402
Many times my spouse is hurt by my words	Pearson Correlation	-.070	.150**	1	.269**	-.134**	-.101*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.164	.003		.000	.007	.043
	N	401	402	402	402	402	402
I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse	Pearson Correlation	-.090	.057	.269**	1	-.104*	-.098*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.258	.000		.037	.049
	N	401	402	402	402	402	402
I'm able to share my	Pearson Correlation	.047	.185**	-.134**	-.104*	1	.592**
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N						

thoughts with my spouse confidently	Sig. (2-tailed)	.353	.000	.007	.037		.000
	N	401	402	402	402	402	402
I understand my spouse and I also feel understood	Pearson Correlation	.066	.159**	-.101*	-.098*	.592**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.185	.001	.043	.049	.000	
	N	401	402	402	402	402	402

The researcher used correlation as a supplementary analysis so as to determine if there was significance between the various communication styles and duration of marriage. Significance would be able to help the researcher know the direction the variables tended to follow, and if there was improvement as duration of marriage increased. According to the findings, none of the communication styles were correlated to duration of marriage. This means that none of the changes in the communication styles was directly caused by duration of marriage (Table 4.13).

#### **4.4 What are the differences in conflict resolution styles among married couples and do they improve the longer a couple is married?**

##### **4.4.1 Comparing differences in conflict resolution styles and duration of marriage**

The researcher looked at conflict resolution and how it related to duration of marriage, based on what was shared by the respondents. Conflict resolution was better understood by breaking it down to conflict resolution styles. The breakdown of the format in this research question was what was used in the initial research question.

The different conflict resolution styles are compromise style, avoidant style, accommodating style, competitive style, and collaborative style (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004), and these are the conflict resolution styles used in the study. Compromise in conflict stood for the compromise style, shutting out conflict stood for the avoidant style,

easily accepting so as to not disagree stood for the accommodating style, liking to win in every conflict stood for the competitive style, resolving conflicts objectively stood for the collaborative style, and recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts supported the assertive style.

*Table 4.14: Chi Square of Conflict Resolution Styles and Duration of Marriage*

<b>Conflict Resolution</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
I compromise with spouse	16	34.436	0.005*
I tend to shut out conflicts	16	12.038	0.741
I easily accept so as not to disagree	16	17.097	0.379
I like to win in every conflict	16	15.173	0.512
I tend to resolve conflicts objectively	16	33.371	0.007*
I am able to recognize need to constructively handle conflicts	16	16.769	0.401

The findings show that when the different conflict resolution styles were compared to duration of marriage, two of the communication styles showed significance. When compromising with one's spouse during conflict was related to duration of marriage, it showed  $\chi^2(16, N=401) = 34.436, p= 0.005$ , which emphasizes significance. Tending to resolve conflicts objectively was also related to duration of marriage, and the results showed  $\chi^2(16, N=399) = 33.371, p= 0.007$ , which highlights significance. The two items had significance to duration of marriage (Table 4.14).

Table 4.15: Cross tabulation of Compromise in Conflicts and Duration of Marriage

		I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts				
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Duration of marriage	Less than one year	Count	10	4	7	21
		Percent (%)	47.6%	19.0%	33.3%	100.0%
	1 - 2 years	Count	5	7	14	26
		Percent (%)	19.2%	26.9%	53.9%	100.0%
	3 - 7 years	Count	37	22	37	96
		Percent (%)	38.5%	22.9%	38.6%	100.0%
	8 - 15 years	Count	21	32	56	109
		Percent (%)	19.3%	29.4%	51.4%	100.0%
	Over 15 years	Count	33	31	85	149
		Percent (%)	22.2%	20.8%	57.1%	100.0%
Total		Count	106	96	199	401
		Percent (%)	26.4%	23.9%	49.7%	100.0%

According to the findings, 10 of the 21 (47.6%) respondents who are married for less than one year disagreed that they compromise with their spouse in conflict. The percentage went down to 5 of the 26 (19.2%) of respondents who are married for 1-2 years disagreeing on the same, then it rose to 37 of the 96 (38.5%) respondents who are married for 3-7 years disagreeing about compromising during conflicts. It went down again to 21 of the 109 (19.3%) respondents who are married for 8-15 years disagreeing on the same statement, but slightly rose for those married for over 15 years, with 33 of the 149 (22.2%) respondents disagreeing about compromise in conflict.

Of those married for less than one year, 7 of the 21 (33.3%) respondents agreed that they compromise in conflicts. The percentage went up, to 14 of the 26 (53.9%)

respondents married for 1-2 years agreeing on the same. From there, the percentage went down to 37 of the 96 (38.6%) respondents who are married for 3-7 years agreeing that they compromise in conflicts, and then it kept increasing until 85 of the 149 (57.1%) respondents married for over 15 years agreed on the same. Neutral responses followed an up-down percentage pattern, but they did not fluctuate too much from each other as duration of marriage increased.

The results show that at less than one year of marriage, more people disagreed than agreed that they compromise in conflict. At 1-2 years of marriage, more people agreed than disagreed with the same. When it came to 3-7 years of marriage, the number of people who agreed and disagreed that they compromise in conflict was the same. At both 8-15 years of marriage and over 15 years of marriage, more people agreed than disagreed that they compromise in conflict. The findings highlight that even with the fluctuations over the years, and equal responses for those married for 3-7 years, the percentage of those who agreed kept increasing as duration increased, and for those who disagreed that they compromise in conflict, the percentage kept reducing as duration of marriage increased. There was clear difference of the increase when comparing those who agreed at less than one year of marriage and those who agreed at over 15 years of marriage. Decrease was also seen for those who disagreed at less than one year of marriage versus over 15 years of marriage. The results then emphasize that compromise in conflict tends to increase as duration of marriage increases (Table 4.15).

*Table 4.16: Cross tabulation of Resolving Conflict Objectively and Marriage Duration*

		I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner				
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Duration of marriage	Less than one year	Count	5	3	13	21
		Percent (%)	23.8%	14.3%	61.9%	100.0%
	1 - 2 years	Count	2	9	15	26
		Percent (%)	7.6%	34.6%	57.7%	100.0%
	3 - 7 years	Count	12	13	69	94
		Percent (%)	12.8%	13.8%	73.4%	100.0%
	8 - 15 years	Count	7	13	89	109
		Percent (%)	6.4%	11.9%	81.6%	100.0%
	Over 15 years	Count	20	9	120	149
		Percent (%)	13.4%	6.0%	80.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	46	47	306	399
		Percent (%)	11.6%	11.8%	76.7%	100.0%

The findings show that 5 of the 21 (23.8%) respondents who are married for less than one year disagreed that they resolve conflicts objectively. The percentage greatly reduced for those married for 1-2 years, with 2 of the 26 (7.6%) respondents also disagreeing. At 3-7 years of marriage, 12 of the 94 (12.8%) respondents disagreed that they resolve conflicts objectively. The percentage decreased with 7 of the 109 (6.4%) respondents married for 8-15 years disagreeing, and then it increased slightly, with 20 of the 149 (13.4%) respondents married for over 15 years also disagreeing.

Of those married for less than one year, 13 of the 21 (61.9%) of the respondents agreed that they resolve conflicts objectively. The percentage reduced for those married for 1-2 years, with 15 of the 26 (57.7%) respondents agreeing. It then increased until 89 of the

109 (81.6%) respondents agreed that they resolve conflicts objectively. The percentage then slightly reduced to 120 of the 149 (80.6%) respondents who are married for over 15 years agreeing that they resolve conflicts objectively. With the neutral responses, there was an increase for those who had been married for 1-2 years, with 9 of the 26 (34.6%) respondents giving a neutral stance. From there, the percentages kept reducing until 9 of the 149 (6%) respondents who are married for over 15 years gave a neutral response to resolving conflicts objectively (Table 4.16).

The findings show that those who disagree with the statement that they resolve conflicts objectively kept reducing, and any increases over the years were not many. However, for those who agreed with the statement, even though the percentage reduced at 1-2 years of marriage, it kept increasing, and reduced minimally at over 15 years of marriage. Therefore, resolving conflicts objectively had good, relatively increasing percentages as duration of marriage increased, which could be seen with the difference between being married for less than one year and married for over 15 years. The percentage of those who disagreed kept reducing, and even though there were fluctuations, the percentage at being married for over 15 years was still lower than those who had been married for less than one year.

Table 4.17: Mean Comparisons of Conflict Resolution Styles based on Gender

Gender		I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts	I tend to shut out conflicts with my spouse when we disagree	I easily accept what my spouse says so that we do not disagree	I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse	I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner	I'm able to recognise when I need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse
Male	Mean	3.50	2.88	2.71	2.32	3.95	4.08
	N	225	225	224	225	225	225
	Std. Deviation	1.061	1.180	1.132	1.046	.927	.763
Female	Mean	2.98	2.88	2.59	2.44	3.71	3.77
	N	175	175	175	175	173	173
	Std. Deviation	1.186	1.146	1.135	1.070	1.088	.971
Total	Mean	3.27	2.88	2.66	2.38	3.85	3.95
	N	400	400	399	400	398	398
	Std. Deviation	1.145	1.164	1.133	1.057	1.006	.872

The findings show that males compromise in conflict more than women, although men gave a neutral response and women disagreed that they compromise in conflict even if they were close to the neutral stance. Males and females both do not shut out conflict, and on this, they had the same mean value. Both genders disagreed that they easily accept what their spouse says to avoid disagreement, but men were heading towards being neutral, more than the women. Both also disagreed that they like to win in every conflict, although women had a higher mean value than the men. When it came to resolving conflicts objectively, both had a neutral mean stance, but the mean value of males was higher than that for the females. In recognizing the need to handle conflicts constructively, the mean value for males showed they agreed, while the mean value for females was neutral (Table 4.17).

The males had higher mean values in the styles except when it came to shutting out conflict and liking to win in every conflict. They had neutral mean responses when it came to compromise and resolving conflict objectively, but moved to agree when it came to ability to recognize need to constructively handle conflict. In general, males utilized positive conflict resolutions styles more than females, according to the mean values.

*Table 4.18: ANOVA of Conflict Resolution Styles Mean Comparisons with Gender*

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		26.100	1	26.100	20.893	.000**
	Within Groups		497.197	398	1.249		
	Total		523.298	399			
I tend to shut out conflicts with my spouse when we disagree * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.000	1	.000	.000	1.000
	Within Groups		540.240	398	1.357		
	Total		540.240	399			
I easily accept what my spouse says so that we do not disagree * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.415	1	1.415	1.101	.295
	Within Groups		509.909	397	1.284		
	Total		511.323	398			
I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.314	1	1.314	1.177	.279
	Within Groups		444.436	398	1.117		
	Total		445.750	399			
I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		5.639	1	5.639	5.639	.018*
	Within Groups		396.011	396	1.000		
	Total		401.651	397			
I'm able to recognise when I	Between Groups (Combined)		9.124	1	9.124	12.341	.000**
	Within Groups		292.768	396	.739		

need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse *	Total	301.892	397			
Gender						

The ANOVA findings show that there was significance between compromise during conflicts and gender, with ( $F(1, 398) = 20.893, p < 0.01$ ). There was significance between resolving conflicts objectively and gender, with ( $F(1, 396) = 5.639, p = 0.018$ ). Significance was also found with recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts and gender, with ( $F(1, 396) = 12.341, p < 0.01$ ) (Table 4.18). These findings support the results of the mean comparisons of these conflict resolution styles and gender (Table 4.17), with some of them being positive conflict resolution styles.

Table 4.19: Comparing Conflict Resolution Styles Means with Duration of Marriage

Duration of marriage		I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts	I tend to shut out conflicts with my spouse when we disagree	I easily accept what my spouse says so that we do not disagree	I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse	I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner	I'm able to recognise when I need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse
Less than one year	Mean	2.81	2.76	2.62	2.29	3.57	3.86
	N	21	21	21	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	1.250	.889	1.396	1.007	1.076	1.014
1 - 2 years	Mean	3.62	3.23	2.80	2.54	3.62	3.96
	N	26	26	25	26	26	26
	Std. Deviation	1.203	1.210	1.080	1.174	.941	.824
3 - 7 years	Mean	2.97	2.94	2.47	2.49	3.80	3.81
	N	96	96	96	96	94	95
	Std. Deviation	1.147	1.204	1.160	1.026	1.033	1.003
8 - 15 years	Mean	3.36	2.77	2.67	2.38	4.01	3.99
	N	109	109	109	109	109	109
	Std. Deviation	1.143	1.176	1.155	1.104	.866	.887
Over 15 years	Mean	3.42	2.85	2.76	2.28	3.85	4.02
	N	149	149	149	149	149	148
	Std. Deviation	1.072	1.159	1.070	1.034	1.076	.742
Total	Mean	3.27	2.87	2.66	2.37	3.85	3.95
	N	401	401	400	401	399	399
	Std. Deviation	1.144	1.165	1.135	1.058	1.006	.870

According to the mean values, those who had been married for less than one year disagreed about compromising in conflict, shutting out conflict, easily accepting so as not to disagree and liking to win in every conflict. They gave a neutral stance for resolving

conflict objectively and recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts, with the latter heading more towards agreeing than the point of resolving conflict objectively. At 1-2 years of marriage, all the conflict resolution styles mean values increased, with compromise in conflicts and shutting out conflicts moving to a neutral stance. They still disagreed with easily accepting so as not to disagree and liking to win in every conflict, and recognizing need to constructively handle conflicts was very close to an agreeing mean. At 3-7 years of marriage, most of the conflict resolution styles mean values went down. They disagreed with compromise in conflict, shutting out conflict, easily accepting so as not to disagree and liking to win in every conflict, although compromise in conflict and shutting out conflict were still at the neutral stance. Recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts reduced, but resolving conflict objectively increased and was very close to the mean value for recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts.

At 8-15 years of marriage, compromise in conflict increased to a neutral stance, but shutting out conflict reduced, as they still disagreed. The mean values showed that they still disagreed on easily accepting so as not to disagree and liking to win in every conflict, but the mean value of easily accepting so as not to disagree increased and the mean value of liking to win in every conflict reduced. The mean values of resolving conflict objectively and recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts increased, with the mean value showing they agree that they resolve conflict objectively, and the mean value of recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts being very close to an agreeing stance. At over 15 years of marriage, the mean value of compromise in conflict increased and it was still neutral, and the mean value of shutting out conflict increased, and it was still disagreed on at this duration of marriage. They still disagreed about easily accepting

so as not to disagree and liking to win in every conflict, but the mean value of easily accepting so as not to disagree increased, and the mean value of liking to win in every conflict reduced. The mean value of resolving conflict objectively reduced from agreeing to a neutral not far from agreeing, and the mean value of recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts increased from being close to agreeing, to actually agreeing (Table 4.19).

The findings show that compromise in conflict, shutting out conflict, easily accepting so as not to disagree and liking to win in every conflict increased at 1-2 years of marriage and decreased at 3-7 years of marriage, with neutral mean responses with compromise in conflict and shutting out conflict at 1-2 years of marriage. From there, the mean value of compromise in conflict kept increasing, with both mean values at 8-15 years of marriage and over 15 years of marriage having a neutral stance. Starting from 3-7 years of marriage, the mean value of shutting out conflict reduced at 8-15 years and increased at over 15 years, but for easily accepting so as not to disagree, the mean value kept increasing with increase in duration of marriage. The mean value of liking to win in every conflict kept reducing as duration of marriage increased. When it came to resolving conflict objectively, the mean value kept increasing as duration of marriage increased, with the mean value of 8-15years agreeing with the conflict resolution style, but then the mean value reduced slightly at over 15 years of marriage. The mean values of recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts were reasonably high on a neutral stance; the mean value increased at 1-2 years of marriage, reduced at 3-7 years of marriage, and then kept increasing until there was agreement of the conflict resolution style at over 15 years of marriage. The mean values of the communication styles at over 15 years of marriage

were higher than of less than one year of marriage, except for liking to win every conflict, which reduced at over 15 years of marriage.

These results from the mean values show that, in most cases, respondents disagreed with some of the conflict resolution styles. There was a neutral stance for compromise in conflict as duration of marriage increased, but different mean values of disagreeing for shutting out conflict, easily accepting so as not to disagree, and liking to win in every conflict. Resolving conflict objectively and recognizing the need to constructively hand conflicts had neutral and agreeing stances as duration of marriage increased. These showed that the mean values of positive conflict resolution styles increased as duration of marriage increased, with neutral and agreeing stances at 8-15 years of marriage and over 15 years of marriage.

*Table 4.20: ANOVA of Conflict Resolution Styles Mean Comparisons and Marriage Duration*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	20.280	4	5.070	3.987	.003*
	Within Groups	503.545	396	1.272		
	Total	523.825	400			
I tend to shut out conflicts with my spouse when we disagree * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	5.189	4	1.297	.955	.432
	Within Groups	538.068	396	1.359		
	Total	543.257	400			
I easily accept what my spouse	Between Groups (Combined)	5.489	4	1.372	1.066	.373
	Within Groups	508.271	395	1.287		

says so that we do not disagree * Duration of marriage	Total		513.760	399			
I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse * Duration of marriage	Between Groups	(Combined)	3.414	4	.854	.760	.551
	Within Groups		444.476	396	1.122		
	Total		447.890	400			
I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner * Duration of marriage	Between Groups	(Combined)	6.081	4	1.520	1.509	.199
	Within Groups		396.897	394	1.007		
	Total		402.977	398			
I'm able to recognise when I need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse * Duration of marriage	Between Groups	(Combined)	2.945	4	.736	.973	.422
	Within Groups		298.052	394	.756		
	Total		300.997	398			

According to the findings, there was significance between compromise in conflicts and duration of marriage, with ( $F(4, 396) = 3.987, p = 0.003$ ) (Table 4.20). The significance is supported by the mean comparison of compromise in conflicts and duration of marriage (Table 4.19), where although they disagreed about it at 3-7 years of marriage, they kept an increasing neutral stance as duration of marriage increased. This shows that this communication style has significance to duration of marriage, and its mean value tended to keep increasing, but there was no agreeing that it tended to happen in the marriage even as the duration increased.

#### 4.4.2 Comparing the different conflict resolution styles to duration of marriage to determine correlation

Table 4.21: Correlation of Conflict Resolution Styles and Duration of Marriage

		Duration of marriage	I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts	I tend to shut out conflicts with my spouse when we disagree	I easily accept what my spouse says so that we do not disagree	I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse	I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner	I'm able to recognise when I need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse
Duration of marriage	Pearson Correlation	1	.118*	-.039	.055	-.057	.074	.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018	.433	.272	.253	.142	.148
	N	401	401	401	400	401	399	399
I compromise with my spouse when we have conflicts	Pearson Correlation	.118*	1	.134**	.292**	.025	.113*	.118*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018		.007	.000	.611	.023	.018
	N	401	402	402	401	402	400	400
I tend to shut out conflicts with my spouse when we disagree	Pearson Correlation	-.039	.134**	1	.224**	.213**	-.142**	-.031
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.433	.007		.000	.000	.004	.537
	N	401	402	402	401	402	400	400
I easily accept what my spouse says so that	Pearson Correlation	.055	.292**	.224**	1	.152**	-.002	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.272	.000	.000		.002	.965	.549

we do not disagree	N	400	401	401	401	401	399	399
I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse	Pearson Correlation	-.057	.025	.213**	.152**	1	-.122*	-.101*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.253	.611	.000	.002		.014	.043
	N	401	402	402	401	402	400	400
I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner	Pearson Correlation	.074	.113*	-.142**	-.002	-.122*	1	.417**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.142	.023	.004	.965	.014		.000
	N	399	400	400	399	400	400	398
I'm able to recognise when I need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse	Pearson Correlation	.073	.118*	-.031	.030	-.101*	.417**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.148	.018	.537	.549	.043	.000	
	N	399	400	400	399	400	398	400

There was a significant correlation between compromise in conflicts and duration of marriage, with a positive  $R^2$  of 0.118 and  $p=0.018$ . This shows that as duration of marriage increased, compromise in conflict also increased (Table 4.21).

#### **4.5 What are the differences in financial unity among married couples and do they improve the longer a couple is married?**

##### **4.5.1 Comparing differences in financial unity and duration of marriage**

The researcher looked at financial unity, and related it to duration of marriage. Financial unity looks at how well couples agree on finances, carry out financial decisions in agreement, and share financial information openly with each other. How well these

factors are utilized in marriage differs from couple to couple. Couples who agree on the use of finances and deal with conflict amicably state that they have a great and happy marriage (Horrocks, 2010).

Therefore, the variables used in the research question showed different aspects that make up financial unity, and the breakdown of the format in this research question was what was used in the other research questions.

*Table 4.22: Chi Square of Financial Unity and Duration of Marriage*

<b>Financial Unity</b>	<b>df</b>	<b><math>\chi^2</math></b>	<b>p</b>
I can freely discuss finances	16	14.556	0.557
I set goals and achieve them	16	17.021	0.384
I handle finances and budget	16	16.432	0.423
I am aware of my spouse's accounts	16	26.264	0.050*
We agree how to use finances	16	13.269	0.653
I prefer to save than purchase items	16	25.208	0.066

According to the findings, only one item had some significance. When awareness of one's spouse's accounts was related to duration of marriage, it showed  $\chi^2 (16, N=401) = 26.264, p=0.05$ , which shows some significance. It had significance to duration of marriage (Table 4.22).

Table 4.23: Cross tabulation of Awareness of Bank Accounts and Duration of Marriage

		I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse may have				
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Total
Duration of marriage	Less than one year	Count	7	0	14	21
		Percent (%)	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	100.0%
	1 - 2 years	Count	8	2	16	26
		Percent (%)	30.7%	7.7%	61.5%	100.0%
	3 - 7 years	Count	17	7	72	96
		Percent (%)	17.7%	7.3%	75%	100.0%
	8 - 15 years	Count	17	12	80	109
		Percent (%)	15.6%	11.0%	73.4%	100.0%
	Over 15 years	Count	36	12	101	149
		Percent (%)	24.1%	8.1%	67.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	85	33	283	401
		Percent (%)	21.2%	8.2%	70.6%	100.0%

The findings show that 14 of the 21 (66.7%) respondents married for less than one year agreed that they are aware of their spouse's accounts. The percentage reduced to 16 of the 26 (61.5%) respondents married for 1-2 years agreeing on the same. It increased again with 72 of the 96 (75%) respondents married for 3-7 years agreeing that they are aware of their spouse's accounts, and then the percentage kept reducing until 101 of the 149(67.7%) respondents married for over 15 years agreed on the same. Those married for less than one year had no neutral response. It followed an increase and decrease pattern, with the highest neutral percentage being 12 of the 109 (11%) respondents who are married for 8-15 years. There were 7 out of the 21 (33%) respondents who disagreed that they are aware of their spouse's accounts. The percentage kept decreasing until 17 of the

109 (15.6%) respondents married for 8-15 years also disagreed with the statement. The percentage increased with those married for over 15 years, with 36 of the 149(24.1%) respondents also disagreeing that they are aware of their spouse's accounts.

These results show that most respondents agreed that they are aware of their spouse's accounts, although from after 3-7 years the percentage kept reducing. The neutral stance was not present at less than one year of marriage, and the highest neutral stance was seen at 8-15 years of marriage. Respondents' disagreeing with the statement kept reducing until at over 15 years of marriage where there was an increase. Therefore, accounting also for the fluctuations, the respondents' responses of both agreeing and disagreeing kept reducing, but the percentage of those who agreed was still higher at over 15 years of marriage than at less than one year of marriage. The percentage of those who disagreed at over 15 years of marriage was lower than of those who disagreed at less than one year of marriage. This shows that there was an increase in those who agreed that they are aware of their spouse's accounts at over 15 years of marriage, and there was a decrease of those who disagreed on the same, based on an increase in duration of marriage (Table 4.23), which shows financial unity.

Table 4.24: Mean Comparisons of Financial Unity based on Gender

Gender		I can freely discuss finances with my spouse	I set financial goals with my spouse and I achieve them	I handle finances and budget in the home	I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse have	I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances	I prefer to save rather than purchase items
Male	Mean	4.08	3.85	3.46	3.83	3.91	3.31
	N	225	222	224	225	225	223
	Std. Deviation	.974	.966	1.045	1.134	.978	1.043
Female	Mean	3.80	3.62	3.33	3.48	3.60	3.31
	N	174	170	175	175	174	175
	Std. Deviation	1.136	1.177	1.233	1.330	1.162	1.123
Total	Mean	3.96	3.75	3.40	3.68	3.78	3.31
	N	399	392	399	400	399	398
	Std. Deviation	1.055	1.067	1.132	1.234	1.072	1.078

The results show that males agree that they can freely discuss finances while females gave a neutral mean stance. Both genders gave a neutral mean stance for setting financial goals and achieving them, handling finances and budget at home, awareness of one's spouse's accounts and agreeing on how to use the available finances, but the males had a higher mean value in each of these items than the females. When it came to preferring to save rather than purchase items, both genders had the same neutral mean stance.

These findings show that except for handling finances and budget at home, and preferring to save rather than purchase items, males had high neutral mean responses that were not far from agreeing, and there was already agreement with them being able to freely discuss finances. For females, the high neutral mean values stances were for them being able to freely discuss finances, setting financial goals and achieving them, and

agreeing on how to use the available finances (Table 4.24). The results show that males illustrate better financial unity than females, according to the mean values.

*Table 4.25: ANOVA of Financial Unity Mean Comparisons with Gender*

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I can freely discuss finances with my spouse * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		7.442	1	7.442	6.778	.010*
	Within Groups		435.916	397	1.098		
	Total		443.358	398			
I set financial goals with my spouse and I achieve them * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		5.258	1	5.258	4.658	.032*
	Within Groups		440.242	390	1.129		
	Total		445.500	391			
I handle finances and budget in the home * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		1.767	1	1.767	1.381	.241
	Within Groups		508.073	397	1.280		
	Total		509.840	398			
I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse have * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		11.830	1	11.830	7.901	.005*
	Within Groups		595.920	398	1.497		
	Total		607.750	399			
I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		9.288	1	9.288	8.233	.004*
	Within Groups		447.860	397	1.128		
	Total		457.148	398			
I prefer to save rather than purchase items * Gender	Between Groups (Combined)		.000	1	.000	.000	.994
	Within Groups		460.987	396	1.164		
	Total		460.987	397			

The findings for the ANOVA show that there was significance between being able to freely discuss finances and gender, with  $(F(1, 397) = 6.778, p = 0.01)$ . There was significance between setting financial goals and achieving them, and gender, with  $(F(1, 390) = 4.658, p = 0.032)$ . Significance was also found with awareness of one's spouse's accounts and gender, with  $(F(1, 398) = 7.901, p = 0.005)$ . Additional significance was there between agreeing on how to use the available finances and gender, with  $(F(1, 397)$

= 8.233,  $p=0.004$ ) (Table 4.25). These findings support the results of the mean comparisons of financial unity and gender (Table 4.24), where the significant items had high mean values for both genders.

*Table 4.26: Comparing Financial Unity Means with Duration of Marriage*

Duration of marriage		I can freely discuss finances with my spouse	I set financial goals with my spouse and I achieve them	I handle finances and budget in the home	I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse have	I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances	I prefer to save rather than purchase items
Less than one year	Mean	3.81	3.85	3.45	3.62	3.76	3.90
	N	21	20	20	21	21	21
	Std. Deviation	1.327	.988	1.191	1.465	1.375	1.044
1 - 2 years	Mean	3.80	3.84	3.46	3.62	3.69	3.85
	N	25	25	26	26	26	26
	Std. Deviation	1.323	1.214	.989	1.329	1.158	.925
3 - 7 years	Mean	3.90	3.82	3.45	3.86	3.81	3.33
	N	96	95	96	96	96	96
	Std. Deviation	1.081	1.041	1.169	1.148	1.029	1.121
8 - 15 years	Mean	4.07	3.86	3.46	3.76	3.84	3.26
	N	109	106	109	109	109	109
	Std. Deviation	.969	1.009	1.050	1.121	.964	1.075
Over 15 years	Mean	3.98	3.62	3.32	3.52	3.72	3.16
	N	149	147	149	149	148	147
	Std. Deviation	1.017	1.112	1.192	1.313	1.124	1.032
Total	Mean	3.97	3.76	3.40	3.68	3.78	3.31
	N	400	393	400	401	400	399
	Std. Deviation	1.057	1.069	1.133	1.236	1.073	1.077

According to the findings, there was a neutral mean stance for all the items at less than one year of marriage, with most of them not being far from an agreeing stance, and the highest mean value being preferring to save rather than purchase items. At 1-2 years of marriage, the mean values for being able to freely discuss finances, setting financial goals and achieving them, agreeing on how to use the available finances and preferring to save rather than purchase items decreased, the mean value for handling finances and budget at home increased, and the mean value for awareness of one's spouse's accounts stayed the same. Within 3-7 years of marriage, the mean values of being able to freely discuss finances, awareness of one's spouse's accounts and agreeing on how to use the available finances increased, while the mean values of setting financial goals and achieving them, handling the finances and budget at home and preferring to save rather than purchase items reduced. At 8-15 years of marriage, the mean of being able to freely discuss finances increased, and it showed that there was agreement on this item. The mean values for setting financial goals and achieving them, handling finances and budget at home, and agreeing on how to use the available finances increased, while the mean values for awareness of one's spouse's accounts and preferring to save rather than purchase items reduced. At over 15 years of marriage, all the mean values reduced.

The findings show that all the mean values were neutral except the mean value of being able to freely discuss finances, at 8-15 years of marriage, which was agreeing with the item. The mean values of preferring to save rather than purchase items kept decreasing as duration of marriage increased. Other than being able to freely discuss finances at over 15 years of marriage which was higher than less than one year in marriage, all the other mean values at over 15 years of marriage were lower than at less than one year in marriage. However, when it came to 8-15 years in marriage, other than

the mean value of preferring to save rather than purchase items being lower than at less than one year in marriage, the mean values of the other items were higher than at less than one year in marriage (Table 4.26). This shows that these items of financial unity improve to some extent with duration of marriage, but the mean values reduce at over 15 years of marriage.

*Table 4.27: ANOVA of Financial Unity Mean Comparisons with Duration of Marriage*

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I can freely discuss finances with my spouse * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	2.961	4	.740	.661	.620
	Within Groups	442.549	395	1.120		
	Total	445.510	399			
I set financial goals with my spouse and I achieve them * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	4.624	4	1.156	1.011	.401
	Within Groups	443.412	388	1.143		
	Total	448.036	392			
I handle finances and budget in the home * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	1.808	4	.452	.350	.844
	Within Groups	510.390	395	1.292		
	Total	512.198	399			
I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse have * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	7.830	4	1.958	1.285	.275
	Within Groups	603.312	396	1.524		
	Total	611.142	400			
I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	1.234	4	.308	.266	.900
	Within Groups	457.964	395	1.159		
	Total	459.198	399			
I prefer to save rather than purchase items * Duration of marriage	Between Groups (Combined)	18.727	4	4.682	4.166	.003*
	Within Groups	442.736	394	1.124		
	Total	461.464	398			

According to the findings, there was significance between preferring to save rather than purchase items and duration of marriage, with (F (4, 394) =4.166, p=0.003) (Table

4.27). This significance is supported by the mean comparison of preferring to save rather than purchase items and duration of marriage (Table 4.26), where although all its mean values were neutral, the mean values kept reducing as duration of marriage increased. This shows that this item of financial unity has significance to duration of marriage, and the neutral mean stances were heading towards disagreeing, meaning it was heading towards supporting purchasing items more than saving.

#### 4.5.2 Comparing financial unity differences to duration of marriage to establish correlation

Table 4.28: Correlation of Financial Unity and Duration of Marriage

		Duration of marriage	I can freely discuss finances with my spouse	I set financial goals with my spouse and I achieve them	I handle finances and budget in the home	I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse have	I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances	I prefer to save rather than purchase items
Duration of marriage	Pearson Correlation	1	.056	-.075	-.045	-.059	-.012	-.183**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.267	.137	.369	.235	.807	.000
	N	401	400	393	400	401	400	399
I can freely discuss finances with my spouse	Pearson Correlation	.056	1	.660**	.227**	.522**	.621**	.116*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.267		.000	.000	.000	.000	.020
	N	400	401	394	400	401	400	399
I set financial goals	Pearson Correlation	-.075	.660**	1	.238**	.452**	.590**	.137**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.137	.000		.000	.000	.000	.006

with my spouse and I achieve them	N	393	394	394	393	394	393	392
I handle finances and budget in the home	Pearson Correlation	-.045	.227**	.238**	1	.204**	.283**	.123*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.369	.000	.000		.000	.000	.014
	N	400	400	393	401	401	400	399
I'm aware of any bank accounts that my spouse have	Pearson Correlation	-.059	.522**	.452**	.204**	1	.630**	.171**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.235	.000	.000	.000		.000	.001
	N	401	401	394	401	402	401	400
I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances	Pearson Correlation	-.012	.621**	.590**	.283**	.630**	1	.129**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.807	.000	.000	.000	.000		.010
	N	400	400	393	400	401	401	399
I prefer to save rather than purchase items	Pearson Correlation	-.183**	.116*	.137**	.123*	.171**	.129**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.020	.006	.014	.001	.010	
	N	399	399	392	399	400	399	400

Significant correlation was found between preferring to save rather than purchase items and duration of marriage, with a negative  $R^2$  of -0.183 and  $p < 0.01$  (Table 4.28). This showed that as duration of marriage increased, preferring to save rather than purchase items decreased, and this is supported by the comparison of preferring to save rather than purchase and duration of marriage (Table 4.26), and the result of the ANOVA

significance of preferring to save rather purchase items and duration of marriage (Table 4.27).

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

The findings of the differences in communication styles and evaluating if there was improvement as duration of marriage increased showed that of the different communication styles, one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times and being able to share thoughts confidently had significance, with generally more people tending to disagree that their spouse is hurt by their words many times, and more people tending to agree that they are able to share their thoughts confidently, as duration of marriage increased. Males utilized positive communication styles more than females, according to the mean values, and these positive communication styles had ANOVA significance with gender. When the communication styles were compared to duration of marriage, the positive communication styles had higher mean values, one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times had ANOVA significance as it kept reducing as duration of marriage increased, and there was no direct correlation between the communication styles and duration of marriage. The results of the differences in conflict resolution styles and determining if there is improvement with increase in marriage duration showed that compromise in conflicts and tending to resolve conflicts objectively had significance, with both tending to increase as duration of marriage increased. Males used positive conflict resolution styles more effectively than females, according to the mean values, and compromise in conflict, tending to resolve conflicts objectively and being able to recognize the need to constructively handle conflicts showed ANOVA significance when compared to gender. When the conflict resolution styles were compared to duration of marriage, these three particular conflict resolution styles tended to increase as duration of

marriage increased, based on their mean values, compromise in conflict had ANOVA significance to duration of marriage, and it is also the only conflict resolution style that had positive correlation with duration of marriage. This means it increased as duration of marriage increased. The findings of the differences in financial unity and establishing if there is improvement as duration of marriage increased showed that awareness of one's spouse's accounts had significance, and although it tended to reduce with increase in duration of marriage, the percentage at over 15 years of marriage was higher than the percentage at less than one year of marriage. Males had better financial unity than females, according to the mean values, being able to freely discuss finances, setting financial goals and achieve them, awareness of one's spouse's accounts and agreeing with one's spouse on how to use the available resources having ANOVA significance with gender. When the different variables under financial unity were compared to duration of marriage, there was an increase of most of the variables mean values at 8-15 years of marriage, though most of them reduced at over 15 years of marriage. Preferring to save rather than purchase items had ANOVA significance to duration of marriage, and had a negative correlation to marriage duration. This means as duration of marriage increased, there were less married people who preferred to save, and more of them preferred to purchase items.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from the study in light of each research question, and relates it to the supporting literature. Conclusions are made on each research question findings and implications are derived from the results. There are recommendations given from the findings, which are practicable to implement, and suggestions are made for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of key findings

Certain key findings were derived from the study. When communication styles were related to duration of marriage, there was a decrease of those who reported that their spouse is hurt by their words many times and an increase of those who said that they are able to share their thoughts with their spouse confidently as duration of marriage increased. Males utilized positive communication styles better than females, and positive communication styles tended to increase as duration of marriage increased, as noted by the respective mean values of the communication styles.

Looking at the mean comparisons of conflict resolution styles in relation to duration of marriage, compromise in conflict increased and resolving conflict objectively tended to increase as duration of marriage increased. In addition, the mean comparisons of communication styles and gender showed that males were more engaged in the positive conflict resolution styles than women. The mean values of positive conflict resolution styles tended to increase as duration of marriage increased, and there was a positive correlation between compromise in conflict and duration of marriage. When it came to

financial unity factors being related to duration of marriage, the mean values showed that though there was decreased awareness of the accounts of one's spouse as duration of marriage increased, generally there was some increase when being married at less than one year was compared to being married at the other marriage durations. The mean comparisons of financial unity and gender highlighted that males demonstrated better financial unity than females, and the mean values of the financial unity factors had very little increase as duration of marriage increased, with there being decrease at over 15 years of marriage. Preferring to save rather than purchase items was negatively correlated to duration of marriage, meaning as duration of marriage increased, there was a direct decrease of those who preferred to save rather than purchase items.

Significance in the entire study represented a significant relationship between two factors, such as duration of marriage to any style discussed in the study. Additionally, since the study also looked at correlation, significance to this regard emphasized not only a relationship, but a direct correlation between two factors. There was one positive communication style, but because it was split into two questions, it was counted as positive communication styles. This was the same case with conflict resolution styles, where only one style was considered positive, but because it was split into two questions, it was counted as positive conflict resolution styles. This was important because at various points of the study, the questions would be looked at individually, and if they were all named one style, there would be confusion.

## **5.2 Discussion of findings**

### **5.2.1 Comparing differences in communication styles and improvement based on duration of marriage**

The study showed there were significant relationships between some communication styles and duration of marriage, as was seen with one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times, and being able to share thoughts confidently, based on chi square analysis. The positive communication styles had a significant relationship to the mean comparisons of communication styles and gender. Additionally, one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times had a significant relationship to duration of marriage, based on the mean comparisons of duration of marriage and communication styles.

According to Giblin (2016), there are about four stages of marriage and transitioning through the stages is not a linear process but a cyclic one. In stage one, spouses work well with each other and constantly consider one another. At stage two, spouses do their best to be able to communicate better despite falling into the mundane actions of life. Differences are highly noticed and spouses learn that they have to work so as to make their marriage thrive. A lot of focus is usually placed in the first five years of marriage because they see that it predicts which marriages flourish and which ones don't. Marital stressors are more intense at this stage (Swihart & Wooten, 2006). In stage three, spouses realize how easily they disappoint each other because expectations are not being met. As differences seem magnified at this stage, being able to make it through requires the spouses to find effective ways of communicating with each other and being able to handle conflicts amicably. With the last stage, if spouses are able to make it this far, there is a renewed desire to learn each other and be empathic toward each other (Giblin, 2016). Research shows that some factors which contribute to a happy marriage include

satisfaction with communication, handling differences creatively, discussing problems well and agreeing on how to spend money (Olson, 2016). This is the structure that was expected to come out clearly from the results of this study.

According to Nartey (2014), communication is an important element in successful marriages and families. Communication is the exchange of information between people, entailing both verbal and nonverbal communication. Good communication is essential for a proper marriage relationship (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Communication entails sharing information, listening and understanding. The quality of a marriage depends on how well spouses can share with each other verbally (Pelt, 2009).

VIP Centre (2014) outlines four communication styles; passive, aggressive, passive-aggressive and assertive. In passive communication, people avoid sharing how they feel. Aggressive communication is practised by those who demand for their rights; they are dominant, they do not listen and they also interrupt frequently. Those who practice passive-aggressive communication look passive from outside, but constantly undermine whatever causes them resentment. Assertive communication is used by people who can state how they feel and what they think, and who are able to do what is right for them without infringing on other people's rights. According to Phillips et al. (2012), lack of proper communication can cause marital problems. These are the communication styles used in the study, with only the assertive style being considered a positive communication style, but it was broken down into two questions, thus counting as positive communication styles.

The findings of the present study show that one's spouse being hurt by one's words many times which is under the passive-aggressive style, decreased, and sharing thoughts confidently which is under assertive style, increased, as the duration of marriage

increased. This is supported by a study of 600 respondents which showed that there is a significant difference in marital adjustment and communication of spouses who are married for a long time versus those who are recently married (Esere et al., 2011). The biggest predictor of marriage problems is poor communication. It is possible to predict which newlywed couples would later divorce based on watching their communication dynamics for a short time (Scott, 2016).

Melgosa & Melgosa (2004) say that men and women communicate differently. Women have a desire to share more on their emotions and desire the men to do the same, but this does not come easy for men. In addition, women enjoy freely talking with their spouse so as to build their relationship, whereas men view talking as talking; nothing special about it. The results of this study supported that because females had a higher mean value than males when it came to them wishing they could share more about what they want in the relationship, which is under the passive communication style. According to Pelt (2008), men tend to focus on facts and logic whereas women tend to be more emotional and accommodating in their talk. Women are more expressive verbally and nonverbally. Men tend to speak less in comparison to women (Phillips et al., 2012). This was also supported by the fact that women had higher mean values when it came to hurting their spouse's more with their words and domineering conversations as compared to males. However, males had better mean values when it came to positive communication styles, as compared to females, and these positive communication styles had a significant relationship to gender.

The results of the study showed that the mean values of the positive communication styles tended to increase when duration of marriage increased, and the passive-aggressive communication style had a significant relationship to duration of marriage (Table 4.12),

as it kept reducing as duration of marriage increased. The results are supported by Madison (2009), where ideal communication happens when couples air out their issues instead of shout about them. It is good to not communicate when angry because that can be a disaster. Good communication also entails knowing when to talk and when not to. Pelt (2009) further states that communication can deteriorate if married couples do not pay attention to each other's words and feelings. To communicate effectively, it is important to know the right time to talk, have a warm tone, talk specifically without ambiguity, learn to be positive with the talk, respect the other person's thoughts, understand what the other person needs and feels, and learn how to converse more. Daily communication also enhances a married couple's chances of being able to evaluate factors that play a part in their marriage and make adjustments accordingly (Amulega & Amulega, 2009).

There is a positive relationship between length of marriage and communication patterns. Dissatisfied spouses lack communication skills, thus are not able to communicate effectively (Askari et al., 2013). Being able to talk at all levels of marriage is crucial to enhancing effective communication. The levels here include moving from superficial discussions, to matter of fact talks, to sharing ideas, to including emotions with the ideas, to being completely open and understanding toward the other person (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004). Listening well requires understanding the non verbal expressions, encouraging the other person to talk more, and perceiving the feelings behind what the other person is saying and communicating the same to them (Pelt, 2009). Negative behaviour is learnt, and can be unlearnt (Phillips et al., 2012).

## **5.2.2 Comparing differences in conflict resolution styles and improvement based on duration of marriage**

The results showed that there were significant relationships between compromise in conflict and resolving conflicts objectively to duration of marriage, based on chi square analysis. Compromise in conflict and the positive communication styles had a significant relationship to the mean comparisons of conflict resolution styles and gender.

Compromise in conflict had a significant relationship to duration of marriage, based on the mean values of duration of marriage and communication styles, and it was also positively correlated to duration of marriage.

Fincham et al. (2004) view conflict resolution as an integral part of a successful relationship. Conflict arises due to a state of discomfort between two or more persons because of differing wants, goals, or principles. The issue is not the conflict in and of itself, but how the conflict is managed. How the conflict is resolved can lead to either increased negativity or increased intimacy (Iqbal et al., 2013). The manner in which a conflict is dealt with in a marriage is known to be a great predictor of marital success. Stable marriages are created by sharing respect, power and decision-making. Resolving conflict does not mean that there is a winner and a loser, but that all parties in a marriage are able to feel satisfied and understood (Taylor, 2005). Conflict theory states that people are constantly in conflict with each other therefore it is important to know the competing forces. Since married couples have different personalities and tastes, there are many opportunities to have conflicts (Strong et al., 2008).

According to Melgosa and Melgosa (2004), there are five styles that apply in conflict; competitive style, compromise style, avoidance style, accommodating style and collaborative style. When a couple uses the competitive style, they seek control, which

hinders them from seeing other factors that are necessary for effective communication. With the compromise style, both spouses try to be fair and equal with meeting each other's needs, but this may be difficult when it comes to issues where there is no possible middle ground. Avoidance style is where spouses disregard or push away problems, having little interest in meeting each other's needs. With the accommodating style, one spouse tries to meet the other's needs but do not actually deal with the problem. The collaborative style is seen as the ideal because spouses look for mutually agreeable results. The goal is a fulfilling conclusion for both spouses. There is a relationship between negative conflict resolution styles and marital conflicts. In addition, positive conflict resolution styles reduce such conflicts (Navidian et al., 2014). These are the conflict resolution styles used in the study, with only the collaborative style being considered as positive conflict resolution styles, but because it was covered in two questions, it was counted as positive conflict resolution styles.

The findings show that compromise in conflict, which is under compromise style, and resolving conflicts objectively, which, is under collaborative style, tended to increase as duration of marriage increased. This can be linked with a study done on Black South African couples who had been married for at least ten years that revealed that those who utilized the collaborative style of conflict management were the most satisfied in their marriages (Phillips et al., 2012). When looking at Iranian divorcing couples, it was found that there are no significant differences in their conflict handling styles and marital conflicts. However, there was positive correlation between avoidance and competition styles and a negative one between compromise, accommodation and cooperation styles with marital conflicts (Navidian et al., 2014). Having a happy marriage does not depend

so much on the choice of spouse as compared to how conflicts are handled. Knowing how to fight fair goes a long way in ensuring closeness and togetherness (Pelt, 2008).

According to Phillips et al. (2012), men and women deal with conflict differently. Women tend to bring up issues in the relationship more often so that they can be addressed, whereas men have a higher chance of avoiding negative marital discussions. Another difference is that though men are more likely to approach conflict with the thought of solving problems, women discuss conflicts so that there is closer intimacy. This was supported by the findings of this study, where the mean values for easily accepting so as not to disagree and compromise in conflict were higher for males than females. However, males tended to have better positive conflict resolution styles mean values than females. This was further emphasized with the significant relationship of gender to compromise in conflict, resolving conflicts objectively and recognizing the need to constructively handle conflicts. Marital conflicts can lead to mental health issues like depression, physical concerns such as chronic pain, can cause poor parent-child relationships which can also affect the health of the children, and can lead to destructive consequences in children (Phillips et al., 2012). What matters, then, is that spouses can talk out the differences and respect each other's opinions. Unhealthy conflicts need the two spouses since no one can quarrel on their own (Madison, 2009).

The results showed that the mean values of the positive conflict resolution styles tended to generally increase when duration of marriage increased and compromise style had a significant relationship to duration of marriage, as it kept increasing as duration of marriage increased. This was further supported by the positive correlation of compromise style and duration of marriage. Figuring out how to sort out miniscule challenges helps newlywed couples grow stronger in their marriage (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). A study

was done with spouses who were White and Mexican-American and who had been married for more than twenty years, with a mean marriage length of 35 years. It was found that conflict management styles in previous years shaped the styles of the participants and how they saw their spouses' styles in recent years. That mean values that how couples dealt with conflict at the early stage of their marriage influenced how they dealt with it in recent years (Mackey et al., 2000). Marriages survive conflicts when partners learn to forgive and forget (Madison, 2009).

Generally, positive conflict resolution styles are important for a working marriage, as becoming defensive or withdrawing from a conflict situation only makes the matter worse (Askari et al., 2013). When deciding to handle conflict in the marriage, know when and where to bring up the concerns, be clear about what the problem is, handle one problem at a time, be respectful at all times, look for appropriate solutions and work with one that both spouses can agree on (Pelt, 2009). A study was conducted to see if conflict resolution improved among couples who were taught using PREPARE/ENRICH program. In conflict resolution, they studied different styles of conflict resolution and destructive and constructive approaches to resolving conflict. They concluded based on the results that when spouses are taught about conflict resolution skills, these factors improve, and they end up having better mental health (Askari et al., 2013).

### **5.2.3 Comparing differences in financial unity and improvement based on duration of marriage**

According to the chi square analysis, the findings of the study showed that awareness of the accounts of one's spouse had a significant relationship to duration of marriage. Freely discussing finances, setting financial goals and achieving them, awareness of one's spouse's accounts, and agreeing on how to use available finances had a significant

relationship to the mean comparisons of financial unity and gender. Preferring to save rather than purchase items had a significant relationship to duration of marriage, based on the mean comparisons of duration of marriage and financial unity, and it was also negatively correlated to duration of marriage.

Financial literacy is one's ability to understand and use financial matter. Married people have been found to be more literate financially (Taft et al., 2013). When it comes to financial matters, the married couple should work as a team, and this could be through writing a budget, setting down achievable goals in regards to desired uses of finances, learning to prioritize and planning out the financial journey together (Balmet & Balmet, 2013). Papp et al. (2009) discovered that conflicts regarding finances tend to be more intense than conflicts about other topics; they lasted longer, were old problems that kept recurring, and had higher current and long-term influence to couples' relationships.

Financial unity looks at how well couples agree on finances, carry out financial decisions in agreement, and share financial information openly with each other. How well these factors are utilized in marriage differs from couple to couple. Couples who agree on the use of finances and deal with conflict amicably state that they have a great and happy marriage (Horrocks, 2010). These are the financial unity factors considered in the study, and all of them proved useful to enhancing financial unity in marriage.

The results show that awareness of one's spouse's bank accounts decreased as duration of marriage increased, but the percentage who agreed at over 15 years of marriage was higher than the percentage who agreed at less than one year of marriage, which shows slight improvement. In light of these findings, generally, married couples could be able to handle financial matters better if they talked about it. This, though, is not easy because many people find it difficult to discuss financial matters. This may be because one spouse

may seem selfish for the decisions they want to make in regards to finances, or gender roles could be a hindrance for open expression and candid discussions (Phillips et al., 2012).

Being able to handle finances well is important in any marriage (Melgosa & Melgosa, 2004). Planning how to manage finances before getting married and working out that plan with necessary adjustments after marriage ensures a stable future. Agreement should be sought through uniting monies for the benefit of the home. Discussing finances openly helps the home run well, trust is enhanced, and married couples are able to live within their mean values. There is no standard financial formula; it depends on the married couple (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Relating this to individual spouses, the results show that the mean values were higher for males than females in all the factors except preferring to save rather than purchase items, where they were equal mean values. This showed that males had better financial unity in general than females. Additionally, freely discussing finances, setting financial goals and achieving them, awareness of one's spouse's accounts and agreeing on how to use available finances had a significant relationship to the mean comparisons of financial unity and gender.

The findings showed that most of the mean values of the financial unity factors had some increase as duration of marriage increased, up to 8-15 years of marriage, but at over 15 years of marriage, all the mean values reduced. However, the mean values at 8-15 years of marriage for most of the financial unity factors were higher than the mean values at less than one year of marriage, indicating some increase. This challenge was seen with a test that was then conducted among Black American couples in Mississippi, married between 15-60 years, to determine how marriages which had stayed for so long were able to do it. When asked about the biggest challenges the couples had to face in their

marriage, finances ranked fourth with 10%. When asked about the one thing they had disagreed about the most, money was in the lead with 24% (Phillips et al., 2012). In this study, there was significance of preferring to save rather than purchase items to duration of marriage. Spouses may have different plans for money and they may differ on what is considered priority. Making financial interdependence work in marriage is not easy (Phillips et al., 2012), but it is necessary.

Preferring to save rather than purchase items was negatively correlated to duration of marriage, meaning the more marriage duration increased, the less the respondents preferred to save as compared to purchase items. Couples with great marriages agree about managing and debt in regards to finances. Having less debt makes couples happy. One spouse tends to handle day to day financial matters. Couples who were able to agree on the use of finances and dealt with conflict amicably stated that they had a great and happy marriage (Horrocks, 2010). Joint investments lead to higher levels of marital quality. Couples that handle finances individually have lower relationship satisfaction and have poorer methods of resolving conflict (Addo & Sassler, 2010).

In light of everything, adjustment in the budget should be made when children come into the picture. In addition, having savings and putting aside money for investments creates a hope for a better future even in the light of possible job loss or retirement. Saving and investing needs to be agreed on together, as well as how to help relatives (Amulega & Amulega, 2009). Excess money and lack of funds both have the potential to cause conflict in marriage. Regardless of the situation, money should not be the basis of the marriage, but instead it should be mutual support (Madison, 2009). If a married couple does not prioritize and separate needs from wants, they will get sidetracked and it

will greatly affect their marriage life. Being able to plan for what is urgent, and then later dealing with what can wait is very important (Amulega & Amulega, 2009).

### **5.3 Conclusion of findings**

Looking at the differences of communication styles and their relation to duration of marriage, passive-aggressive style and assertive style had significance to duration of marriage, according to the chi square analysis; as duration of marriage increased, assertive style increased, and passive aggressive style decreased. Males tended to use positive communication styles better than females, based on the mean comparisons of communication styles and gender, which was not expected. There was increase of positive communication styles mean values as duration of marriage increased, and the passive-aggressive style had significance to duration of marriage. The differences of the communication styles were seen by their mean values, which were related to gender, and duration of marriage. Positive communication styles generally increased with duration of marriage, showing that communication got better as duration of marriage increased. There was no correlation though, meaning that none of the communication styles were directly influenced by duration of marriage. So, there was improvement as duration of marriage increased, with significance seen with passive-aggressive style, which decreased. This gives hope to the longevity of marriage. Therefore, there was improvement in some communication styles as duration of marriage increased.

When it came to the differences of conflict resolution styles in relation to duration of marriage, chi square analysis showed that compromise style and collaborative style had significance to duration of marriage; as duration of marriage increased, both styles increased. Males tended to use positive conflict resolution styles more than females, based on their mean values, and this was reasonably expected because they would want to

minimize conflict as much as possible. There was increase of positive conflict resolution styles mean values as duration of marriage increased, and the compromise style had significance to duration of marriage. The differences of the conflict resolution styles were seen by their mean values, which were related to gender, and duration of marriage. Positive conflict resolution styles generally increased with duration of marriage, showing that conflict resolution got better as duration of marriage increased. There was positive correlation between compromise style and duration of marriage, meaning compromise style was directly influenced by duration of marriage; the more duration of marriage increased, the more compromise increased. Compromise style was not a positive conflict resolution style, but it could be viewed positively. This is because, compromise would mean that spouses are willing to deliberate on matters and come to a conclusion that would work for both. There was improvement as duration of marriage increased, with there being significance of compromise style, which increased. Also, there was improvement in relevant conflict resolution styles as duration of marriage increased.

Relating the differences of financial unity to duration of marriage, chi square analysis showed that awareness of one's spouse's accounts had significance to duration of marriage; as duration of marriage increased, this factor decreased, but the percentage at over 15 years of marriage was higher than the percentage at less than one year of marriage, showing there was some slight increase generally. Males tended to have better financial unity than females, based on the mean comparisons of financial unity and gender, which was understandable because males are the head of the home and are expected to provide and discuss finances with their spouses. The mean values of the financial unity factors tended to generally have some increase as duration of marriage increased, but it was limited to 8-15 years of marriage, where the mean values were

higher than at less than one year of marriage, and at over 15 years of marriage, all the mean values reduced. Preferring to save rather than purchase items had significance to duration of marriage. The differences of financial unity factors were seen by their mean values, which were related to gender, and duration of marriage. Financial unity factors generally increased with duration of marriage, showing that financial unity tended to get better as duration of marriage increased, but only up to 8-15 years of marriage. There was negative correlation between preferring to save rather than purchase items and duration of marriage, meaning that as duration of marriage increased, there was less preference to save as compared to purchase items. This indicates that there was interest to purchase things as duration of marriage increased. So, there was improvement as duration of marriage increased, with significance seen with preferring to save rather than purchase items, which reduced. Additionally, there was improvement in most financial unity factors as duration of marriage increased.

Some implications can be derived from this study. There is need to understand the basics that couples receive even as they get married, so that the church, and the government as a whole, can ensure that there is adequate information shared to help marriages thrive as much as possible. Additionally, the attorney general could provide more instructions to those who plan to get married, so that, apart from the other items that need to be fulfilled, couples can intentionally work on their forthcoming marriage as part of a legal requirement.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study highlighted how different factors varied according to duration of marriage, and if there was a general improvement of key factors as duration of marriage increased. The researcher saw that some Kenyans have already taken up the mandate to try and

come up with materials that would be useful for couples, both before and after marriage. However, more people taking an interest in such a crucial area of life would help add more literature to the African continent, and additionally, improve the marriages of couples in Kenya. Premarital classes are helpful in society today, but information given should constantly be updated so that couples getting into marriage are aware of what awaits them. The first five years are usually considered very sensitive, and that is why research on how certain factors change in marriage over the years would give couples hope to not give up in the early stages of marriage, when things are not going as they expected.

The office of the attorney general could also formulate a program that supports premarital counsel before marriage, and post-marital sessions after marriage. When families thrive, the economy thrives, and that can only happen when the backbone of families, which is marriage, thrives. The formation of a national program would also give room for the different Kenyan and tribal cultural beliefs that couples have, so that those matters can be openly addressed before marriage. The researcher saw that there would be need to help those planning to get married gain a good support system, so that in case of challenges, they can have others to help them. Churches could have systems in place that are specifically for people waiting to get married, and even for those who are already married, so that the church can play its part as a support system. This would help to alleviate fear from people about being judged by the church, and instead it would assist more people in getting the tools they need for a successful marriage.

The study had more males and females, and that unbalanced design could have allowed the study to favour men more than women. Therefore future research should look into comparing certain factors in marriage when both men and women are of equal

number, preferably couples. Because of the unbalanced design, the results may not be easily generalized to actual couples. Additionally, the study focused on married people from Makadara constituency. The views of those from this area may not be generalized to married people from other areas, therefore future research could look at how different areas feel about their marriages, and these results could even be compared to each other for a greater chance of generalization.

In this study, the focus was married people from church. Their views may not fully capture how other people who are married, from that area, but do not go to church would feel. Therefore future research could address married people without including the aspect of faith, unless deemed necessary. Additionally, even with the focus being on married people in churches, the mode of collecting data was focused on churches where people understood English and could fill in a questionnaire. Makadara constituency has people from different backgrounds, and a number of churches were not included in the study because they did not speak or read English. Therefore, since the results of this study may be limited when it comes to generalizing to different social economic status areas, future research could come up with a bilingual questionnaire, or focus purely on those who may not be fully versed in English, if that would be the target group.

Additionally, when on the ground, some key people kept suggesting to the researcher areas of marriage that would be good to address. These areas could not be reached by the researcher, but there was need for them to be addressed. Therefore if a seminar is held for married people and certain facts about marriage and taught to them so as to encourage them that would be a good place to start when getting information for future research.

The study incorporated factors that were thought to be important, and these are what arose in the questionnaire. Therefore future research could look into other key areas of

marriage life as would be relevant in that day and age. The analysis used gave a brief understanding of the information, but there are areas that the analysis may not have reached. Future research then would be beneficial as more complex analytical measures could be used to understand both quantitative and qualitative data to its fullest.

### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

There were a few limitations of the study. Since the information collected comprised mostly of men, the results might not be fully generalized to married couples in general. Additionally, the results were derived from churches in Makadara constituency, with more support given to churches that understood English, which limited the number of churches used from the slum areas. The results then may not fully be generalized throughout the country, because of the limitation of English-speaking churches, and the small sample size that was collected. The study also used a limited range of analytical measures to interpret the information received.

### **5.6 Summary**

The findings of differences in communication styles and determining improvement based on duration of marriage showed that passive-aggressive style decreased and assertive style increased as duration of marriage increased. Mean comparisons of communication styles and gender showed that males utilized positive communication styles more than females. The mean values of positive communication styles increased as duration of marriage increased, and passive-aggressive style had significance to duration of marriage. Therefore, though there was no direct correlation between the communication styles and duration of marriage, communication in general tended to improve with increase in duration of marriage, as positive communication styles increased, and the negative communication style decreased with increase in duration of

marriage. The results of differences in conflict resolution styles and establishing possible improvement related to duration of marriage showed that compromise style and collaborative style increased as duration of marriage increased. The mean comparisons of conflict resolution styles and gender highlighted how males tended to have better positive conflict resolution styles mean values than females. The mean values of positive conflict resolution styles increased as duration of marriage increased, compromise style had significance to duration of marriage, and it also had a positive correlation with duration of marriage. In summary, conflict resolution tended to improve the longer one was married, and compromise style increased proportionally with duration of marriage, which was not bad because it entailed being able to adjust in conflict so that the marriage could thrive. The findings of differences in financial unity and seeking possible improvement related to duration of marriage highlighted that awareness of a spouse's accounts tended to reduce as duration of marriage increased, but there was an overall increase at over 15 years of marriage as compared to at less than one year of marriage. When it came to gender, males had better financial unity than females, according to the mean comparisons of financial unity and gender. Even with all the fluctuations, there tended to be some increase with the mean values of financial unity factors in comparison to duration of marriage, but preferring to save rather than purchase items kept reducing. The significant increase was noted up to 8-15 years of marriage, which was clear when compared to less than one year of marriage. However, all the mean values at over 15 years of marriage reduced. Preferring to save rather than purchase items had significance to duration of marriage, and it had a negative correlation with duration of marriage. The results emphasize that financial unity tended to increase as duration of marriage increased, but that all reduced at over 15 years of marriage. Additionally, preferring to save rather than purchase items reduced as duration of marriage increased, probably

highlighting the need to use more, which could be from increased responsibilities or increased need to prepare for the future. In summary, communication, conflict resolution and financial unity do improve as duration of marriage increases, and their transitions in marriage differ just as much as each marriage is unique.

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## APPENDIX I: IRB RESEARCH APPROVAL



### USIU-A Institutional Review Board (IRB)

15<sup>th</sup> March 2017,

USIU-A/IRB/17/S06

**Sharon T. Wakaba,**  
Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology,  
Student ID NO: 647475  
Email: [sharon22.tugi@gmail.com](mailto:sharon22.tugi@gmail.com)

#### IRB-RESEARCH APPROVAL

The USIU-A IRB has reviewed and granted ethical approval for the research proposal titled "Communication, Conflict Resolution and Financial Unity among Married Couples." The approval is for six months from the date of IRB. Please submit a completed copy of the study to the IRB office, soft copy is acceptable.

You are advised to follow the approved methodology and report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events and potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

Should you or study participants have any queries regarding IRB's consideration of this project, please contact [irb@usiu.ac.ke](mailto:irb@usiu.ac.ke).

for Chair: 

Prof. Damary Sikalieh,  
Chair | IRB | USIU-Africa,  
[dsikalieh@usiu.ac.ke](mailto:dsikalieh@usiu.ac.ke)  
Office 20 3606 112.

CC: Research Office

## **APPENDIX II: IRB INFORMED PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

My name is Sharon T. Wakaba, a student at United States International University-Africa, currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology. As part of my degree requirements I am conducting a research study and I would like that you be included in the study. My research supervisor at USIU-A is Dr. M. Kihara and he may be reached by email (mkihara@usiu.ac.ke) or phone (0722805290) if you have any questions.

A written consent from you to participate is necessary so that I can confirm that you have been informed of the study and that you agreed to participate. Feel free to refuse or stop your participation during the study if you desire to do so. Information acquired in this study will be confidential. To ensure this, a number will be given to research forms so as to protect your privacy. Your name or identity will not be given in any report or publication at any time.

The main aim of the research is to better understand how communication, conflict resolution and financial unity change depending on the duration of marriage. These findings will add on to the existing numerous papers available and the literature information showing how married couples are affected by how they communicate, handle conflict and agree on financial matters, and how that forms a foundation for marital stability over the years. There will be three forms that you will be requested to fill so as to get your output on this research. Do kindly answer the questions as honestly as you can. The forms will take between 30-40 minutes to complete if done in one sitting. Questions regarding your age and other pertinent information will also be included. The data collected will be stored in a safe place by the researcher. Your participation in this research is voluntary and there will be no compensation given if you take part in the research.

The results of this research will be summarized and used in my study, and your information will be kept private and confidential and will not be used for anything else outside of this study.

### **My Consent to Participate:**

**By signing below, I consent to participate in this study.**

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Principal Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date

**Participant Number to be used on all other documents:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX III: IRB PARTICIPANT DEBRIEF FORM**

Dear Participant:

I appreciate you for taking part in this research study. The main aim of the research is to better understand how communication, conflict resolution and financial unity change depending on the duration of marriage. These findings will add on to the existing numerous papers available and the literature information showing how married couples are affected by how they communicate, handle conflict and agree on financial matters, and how that forms a foundation for marital stability over the years. Your participation will help researchers better understand the stages of marriages and how to prepare for them and handle them.

In case you experience aversive reactions to the questions present in this study, you may desire to see a counselor for assistance. There are a number of counseling centres you may visit to obtain such support:

1. Tumaini Counseling Centre – phone number: 0728606911 (Silanga Road, Karen)
2. Gem Counseling Services – phone number: 020 2719243 (Jabavu Road, Nairobi)
3. Amani Counseling and Training Center – phone number: 0722626590 (Mbagathi Way, Nairobi)

If you have any questions or comments after the research, you may contact me on my email or number which are written below, or you may reach my thesis supervisor at USIU-A, Dr. M. Kihara, by email (mkihara@usiu.ac.ke) or phone (0722805290). Thank you again for participating.

Sincerely,

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Principal Investigator

### Contact

Phone number: 0724495494

Email: sharon22.tugi@gmail.com

## APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MARRIED COUPLES

### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
2. In which ward is your church located? <input type="checkbox"/> Maringo/Hamza <input type="checkbox"/> Viwandani <input type="checkbox"/> Makongeni <input type="checkbox"/> Harambee
3. How long have you been married? <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3-7 years <input type="checkbox"/> 8-15 years <input type="checkbox"/> over 15 years
4. What is the marital status of your parents? <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Separated <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/> Never married
5. Age when you got married: <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 20 <input type="checkbox"/> 20-25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26-30 <input type="checkbox"/> 31-35 <input type="checkbox"/> 36-40 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 40
6. Number of marriage you are in: <input type="checkbox"/> First marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Second marriage <input type="checkbox"/> Third marriage <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <sup>th</sup> or more marriage

### B. PREMARITAL/MARITAL LIFE

1. Did you live together before getting married?  Yes  No
2. If yes, did you live together before getting engaged or after:  Before  After
3. How long did you date before getting married?  
 Less than one year  1-3 years  Over 3 years
4. What was the duration of your engagement period?  
 A few months  A year  1-2 years  Over 2 years
5. Did you receive any premarital counsel as a couple?  
 Yes, in church  Yes, from family and friends  Yes, from mentors  No  
 Any other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

6. Did you and your spouse share religious beliefs and values before getting married?

Yes  No

7. How was the communication between you and your spouse before getting married?

Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

8. Rate how well you and your spouse handled conflicts before marriage:

Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

9. Did you and your spouse discuss and agree on financial matters before marriage?

Yes  No

10. What is your highest level of education?

Primary School  Secondary School  Certificate/diploma  Bachelors degree

Post graduate Masters/PhD

11. Your spouse's highest level of education:

Primary School  Secondary School  Certificate/diploma  Bachelors degree

Post graduate Masters/PhD

12. Do you have children?

Yes  No

13. Did you and your spouse discuss what kind of marriage you would want?

Yes  No

14. If yes, rate the state of your marriage in comparison to the discussions before marriage:

Better than what the two of you had planned

The present life is close to the initial discussion

It is not near what had been shared but it is fair

The present life is very far from what the two of you had desired

15. How many times have you and your spouse received any counseling after marriage?

Not at all  Rarely  Somewhat frequently  Very frequently

16. How frequently do you feel motivated to work on your marriage?

Not at all  Rarely  Somewhat frequently  Very frequently

**C. ENRICH INVENTORY (Tick one box per question)**

<b>Item statement</b>					
<b>Communication</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
1. I wish I could share more about what I want in the relationship					
2. Many times my spouse is hurt by my words					
3. I tend to domineer conversations when I talk with my spouse					
4. I am able to share my thoughts with my spouse confidently					
5. I understand my spouse and I also feel understood					
<b>Conflict Resolution</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
6. I compromise with my spouse when we have a conflict					
7. I tend to shut out conflict with my spouse if we disagree					
8. I easily accept what my spouse says so that we do not disagree					
9. I like to win in every conflict I have with my spouse					
10. I tend to resolve conflicts with my spouse in an objective manner					
11. I am able to recognise when I need to constructively handle conflicts with my spouse					

<b>Finances</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
12. I can freely discuss finances with my spouse					
13. I set financial goals with my spouse and I achieve them					
14. I handle the finances and budget in the home					
15. I am aware of any bank accounts that my spouse may have					
16. I agree with my spouse on how to use the available finances					
17. I prefer to save rather than purchase items					
<b>Spiritual Beliefs</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
18. My spiritual life affects the decisions I make					
19. I share similar religious values with my spouse					