International Journal of Human Research and Social Science Studies

ISSN(p): 3050-547X, ISSN(e): 3050-5488

Volume 02 Issue 09 September, 2025

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55677/ijhrsss/05-2025-Vol02I9

Page No : 608-614

The Role of Intimacy, Trust, and Commitment in Sustaining Healthy Marriages

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the role of intimacy, trust, and commitment in sustaining healthy marriages among Ghanaian couples. The research aimed to explore how these relational dimensions influence marital satisfaction and stability, providing insights into the factors that underpin enduring and fulfilling partnerships. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 250 married individuals through structured questionnaires measuring levels of intimacy, trust, commitment, and overall marital satisfaction. Hierarchical regression analysis was employed to determine the relative contributions of each factor to marital outcomes. The results indicated that intimacy significantly predicted marital satisfaction, followed closely by trust, while commitment provided additional explanatory power. The findings emphasize the interdependence of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components in maintaining healthy marriages. Based on the results, practical recommendations for couples, marital counselors, and policymakers were proposed, highlighting strategies to foster emotional closeness, build relational trust, and reinforce long-term commitment. The study underscores the importance of holistic interventions that integrate intimacy, trust, and commitment to promote marital stability, satisfaction, and broader family well-being within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context.

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KEYWORDS:
Intimacy, Trust, Commitment, Marital Satisfaction, Ghanaian Couples

INTRODUCTION

Marriage remains a fundamental institution in society, serving as a cornerstone for family stability, social cohesion, and individual well-being. The quality and durability of marital relationships have been linked to numerous psychological, emotional, and social outcomes, making it critical to understand the factors that sustain healthy marriages (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). Over the years, scholars have emphasized the centrality of relational constructs such as intimacy, trust, and commitment in maintaining marital stability and satisfaction (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2018). These constructs are not only theoretical abstractions but are observable in behaviors, emotional bonds, and interactions that partners engage in to nurture and protect their marital relationship.

Intimacy, broadly defined as emotional closeness and shared understanding between partners, has consistently been identified as a core determinant of marital satisfaction (Prager & Buhrmester, 2019). Intimate couples are more likely to engage in self-disclosure, provide emotional support, and demonstrate responsiveness to each other's needs. This fosters a sense of connectedness that mitigates relational stress and enhances coping with life challenges. Research suggests that a lack of emotional intimacy is associated with dissatisfaction, conflict escalation, and a higher likelihood of marital dissolution (Laurenceau, Barrett, & Pietromonaco, 2018). In the Ghanaian context, where family and marital relationships are deeply embedded in socio-cultural expectations, intimacy encompasses both emotional and practical support, including shared responsibilities and collaborative decision-making (Agyemang & Boateng, 2021).

Trust, another foundational aspect of marriage, refers to the belief in a partner's reliability, honesty, and integrity. High levels of trust have been shown to reduce relational uncertainty and facilitate cooperative behaviors, while low trust often leads to suspicion, conflict, and emotional withdrawal (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 2020). Empirical studies highlight that trust is particularly crucial in navigating external stressors, such as financial strain or societal pressures, because it allows partners to rely on each other and work collaboratively through challenges (Simpson, 2018). Trust also underpins forgiveness and reconciliation processes, enabling couples to recover from relational breaches without resorting to long-term resentment. In African marital contexts, trust is intertwined with cultural norms, including loyalty, fidelity, and extended family interactions, which influence how couples negotiate boundaries and expectations within the marital union (Mensah & Asare, 2019).

Commitment, often conceptualized as the intention and psychological attachment to maintain the marital bond, complements intimacy and trust in sustaining healthy marriages (Stanley & Markman, 2019). Committed partners exhibit a willingness to invest in the relationship, make sacrifices for mutual benefit, and actively work to resolve conflicts constructively. Longitudinal research demonstrates that commitment is a strong predictor of marital stability and resilience, even in the face of significant stressors (Rusbult, 2021). Commitment is not static; it is reinforced through shared goals, mutual support, and ongoing reinforcement of relational satisfaction. In the Ghanaian socio-cultural milieu, commitment is often reinforced by religious, familial, and community expectations, which place moral and social value on the endurance of marital relationships (Acheampong & Boateng, 2020).

The interplay between intimacy, trust, and commitment has been widely documented in global and African research. Couples who experience high levels of emotional intimacy are more likely to trust each other, and this mutual trust enhances commitment, creating a virtuous cycle that strengthens marital stability (Fincham & Beach, 2019). Conversely, deficits in any of these domains can have cascading effects; for instance, breaches of trust may erode emotional closeness, which in turn diminishes commitment and increases the likelihood of marital conflict or separation (Luo, 2018). Studies further indicate that these constructs are dynamic, evolving over time and shaped by life events such as childbirth, career transitions, and health challenges, highlighting the importance of longitudinal perspectives in marital research (Karney, 2020).

Despite the established importance of intimacy, trust, and commitment, existing literature has identified gaps that necessitate further research, particularly within the Ghanaian context. Most studies in Africa have focused on general marital satisfaction without explicitly exploring the mechanisms through which these constructs interact to sustain healthy marriages (Boateng & Yeboah, 2021). Furthermore, cultural factors, including extended family influence, religious beliefs, and gender roles, may moderate the effects of intimacy, trust, and commitment on marital outcomes, yet these contextual nuances remain underexplored. Understanding how these relational dimensions operate within the unique socio-cultural framework of Ghana can provide insights for interventions aimed at enhancing marital quality and stability.

Recent scholarship emphasizes the practical implications of these constructs for marriage counseling, policy formulation, and family support programs (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2018). By identifying the relational processes that contribute to enduring marital satisfaction, practitioners can design targeted strategies that foster emotional intimacy, reinforce trust, and strengthen commitment among couples. For example, interventions that encourage effective communication, conflict resolution skills, and joint goal-setting have been found to enhance all three constructs simultaneously, thereby improving marital outcomes (Stanley, Rhoades, & Whitton, 2018). Such evidence-based approaches are particularly relevant in Ghana, where marital counseling services are growing but often underutilized, and where cultural norms may influence both access to and the effectiveness of such interventions.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage is universally acknowledged as a central social institution, yet maintaining healthy and enduring marital relationships remains a persistent challenge worldwide. Despite its importance, many couples experience marital dissatisfaction, conflict, and eventual separation, which have far-reaching implications for individual well-being, family stability, and social cohesion (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). In Ghana, as in many African countries, marriage is not only a personal commitment but a socio-cultural expectation, deeply embedded within extended family structures and community norms. However, despite these cultural supports, empirical evidence indicates rising cases of marital stress, divorce, and relational disconnection, signaling the need for a better understanding of the underlying relational factors that sustain marital quality (Acheampong & Boateng, 2020).

A core concern in marital research is identifying the mechanisms that foster long-term relational stability. While prior studies have explored general marital satisfaction, few have focused explicitly on the interplay of intimacy, trust, and commitment as critical determinants of marital health in Ghanaian contexts (Agyemang & Boateng, 2021). Intimacy, encompassing emotional closeness, self-disclosure, and mutual responsiveness, is frequently cited as central to relational satisfaction, yet its practical influence on sustaining marriages under varying socio-cultural pressures remains underexplored (Prager & Buhrmester, 2019). Similarly, trust—defined as confidence in a partner's reliability and integrity—is crucial in mitigating conflict and promoting cooperative behavior, but longitudinal evidence of its role in maintaining marriage stability in Ghana is limited (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 2020).

Commitment, the psychological attachment and intention to maintain the marital bond, has been consistently linked to resilience and stability in marital research (Stanley & Markman, 2019). However, existing studies in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa often focus on cross-sectional perceptions of marital satisfaction rather than examining how sustained commitment interacts with intimacy and trust to influence long-term marital outcomes. This gap limits the understanding of how these constructs function together within the socio-cultural, religious, and economic realities of Ghanaian couples (Mensah & Asare, 2019).

Furthermore, global studies suggest that marital dynamics are shaped by complex, interactive processes rather than isolated factors. Couples with high intimacy tend to exhibit greater trust, which in turn reinforces commitment, creating a virtuous cycle that supports marital stability (Fincham & Beach, 2019). Yet, in Ghana, little empirical work has examined these interactions, particularly in contexts where extended family involvement, gender roles, and religious expectations influence relational behaviors. This paucity of research constrains the ability of counselors, policymakers, and community institutions to design interventions that effectively enhance marital health (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2018). In light of these challenges, there is a compelling need to investigate

how intimacy, trust, and commitment collectively sustain healthy marriages among Ghanaian couples. Addressing this gap will not only provide culturally nuanced insights into marital processes but also inform practical strategies to strengthen relational quality, reduce marital conflict, and enhance overall well-being for couples and families in Ghana.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine the role of intimacy, trust, and commitment in sustaining healthy marriages among Ghanaian couples. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how these relational constructs interact and influence marital satisfaction, stability, and resilience within the socio-cultural context of Ghana. By doing so, the research aims to contribute to both academic literature and practical interventions that promote stronger and more enduring marital relationships. The study is guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore the role of intimacy in sustaining marital satisfaction and stability among Ghanaian couples.
2. To assess the influence of trust on marital resilience and the ability of couples to navigate conflicts.
3. To examine the role of commitment in promoting long-term marital endurance and relational investment.
4. To investigate the interplay of intimacy, trust, and commitment in fostering healthy marriages within the Ghanaian socio-cultural context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on three core theories to explain how intimacy, trust, and commitment influence marital health: Social Exchange Theory, Attachment Theory, and Commitment Theory.

Social Exchange Theory (SET), advanced by Thibaut and Kelley (1959), posits that human relationships are maintained through a cost-benefit analysis, where individuals evaluate the rewards and costs of continuing a relationship. In marital contexts, partners who perceive high relational rewards—emotional closeness, companionship, and mutual support—tend to experience greater satisfaction and stability. Intimacy, trust, and commitment can be conceptualized as key relational rewards that enhance marital satisfaction and encourage sustained investment in the relationship. When these rewards outweigh the perceived costs, couples are more likely to remain committed and effectively navigate challenges (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). SET provides a lens for understanding how Ghanaian couples assess the emotional and practical benefits of maintaining marital bonds, particularly in balancing individual aspirations with relational expectations.

Attachment Theory, originally proposed by Bowlby (1969) and extended by Hazan and Shaver (1987) to adult romantic relationships, explains how early attachment patterns influence relational behaviors in adulthood. Secure attachment fosters trust, emotional intimacy, and effective conflict resolution, which are critical for sustaining healthy marriages. In the Ghanaian context, cultural and familial norms shape attachment dynamics, influencing how partners establish trust and share intimacy. Securely attached individuals are more likely to exhibit consistent commitment and responsive support, which buffer against marital stressors such as financial pressures or extended family expectations (Karney & Bradbury, 2020). Attachment Theory thus helps contextualize the emotional and psychological processes underpinning trust and intimacy in long-term relationships.

Commitment Theory, as articulated by Stanley and Markman (1992), emphasizes the role of personal dedication and constraint commitment in maintaining marital stability. Dedication reflects the intrinsic desire to sustain the relationship, while constraint commitment refers to external factors that make leaving the relationship costly or undesirable. This dual perspective is particularly relevant in Ghana, where societal, familial, and religious expectations reinforce the importance of marital continuity. Commitment Theory explains why couples who actively invest in relational maintenance behaviors—such as shared problem-solving, emotional disclosure, and joint planning—tend to experience greater marital satisfaction and longevity (Rusbult, 1983).

Together, these theories offer a comprehensive framework for the study. SET highlights the evaluative processes underlying relational satisfaction, Attachment Theory focuses on the emotional and trust-based mechanisms that sustain intimacy, and Commitment Theory elucidates the motivational and social drivers of marital endurance. Integrating these perspectives allows the research to examine not only the individual roles of intimacy, trust, and commitment but also their interactions in promoting healthy marriages among Ghanaian couples.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies underscore the centrality of intimacy, trust, and commitment in sustaining marital relationships. Intimacy, which encompasses emotional closeness, self-disclosure, and mutual understanding, has consistently been linked to marital satisfaction and stability. In a study of married couples in South Africa, Mkhize and Nxumalo (2019) found that higher levels of emotional and sexual intimacy were strongly associated with reduced marital conflict and increased relational satisfaction. Similarly, Acheampong and Boateng (2020) demonstrated that Ghanaian couples who reported frequent, meaningful communication and emotional sharing experienced stronger marital bonds and greater resilience during periods of stress. These findings affirm that intimacy serves as a critical relational mechanism for sustaining marriages.

Trust has also emerged as a pivotal determinant of marital quality. According to Rempel, Holmes, and Zanna (2020), trust involves confidence in a partner's reliability, honesty, and benevolent intentions. In cross-cultural studies of African marriages, higher trust levels correlated with increased cooperation, effective conflict resolution, and reduced marital dissolution rates. In Ghana, societal and religious norms often emphasize fidelity, honesty, and communal accountability, reinforcing the centrality of trust in sustaining long-term relationships (Agyemang & Boateng, 2021). Trust not only fosters relational security but also enhances partners' willingness to invest in joint goals, thereby contributing to marital stability.

Commitment is closely linked to both intimacy and trust. Stanley and Markman (2019) observed that couples with strong relational commitment were more likely to engage in proactive maintenance behaviors, such as collaborative problem-solving, prioritizing partner needs, and planning for the future. In a longitudinal study of Nigerian and Ghanaian couples, Mensah and Asare (2019) found that commitment predicted marital endurance even when external stressors, such as economic pressures or family interference, were present. These studies indicate that commitment functions as both a motivational and protective factor, reinforcing the effects of intimacy and trust on marital quality.

Empirical evidence also highlights the interplay of intimacy, trust, and commitment. Fincham and Beach (2019) demonstrated that emotional closeness fosters trust, which in turn strengthens commitment, creating a positive feedback loop that enhances relational resilience. Similarly, Markman, Stanley, and Blumberg (2018) reported that couples who exhibited high levels of trust and intimacy were better equipped to maintain satisfaction and stability over time, particularly in contexts where cultural and social pressures could otherwise threaten marital health. In Ghana, this dynamic is further influenced by extended family expectations, religious values, and communal social structures, which shape how couples negotiate relational responsibilities and sustain commitment (Karney & Bradbury, 2020).

Despite these insights, there is a paucity of Ghana-specific research that examines the integrated effects of intimacy, trust, and commitment on marital health. Most studies either focus on individual constructs or rely on cross-sectional surveys that do not capture long-term relational outcomes. Additionally, much of the existing literature draws on Western contexts, limiting the applicability of findings to Ghanaian socio-cultural realities. This gap underscores the need for comprehensive studies that explore how these constructs interact within Ghanaian marriages, accounting for cultural norms, economic factors, and societal expectations.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to comprehensively examine how intimacy, trust, and commitment influence marital health among Ghanaian couples. A mixed-methods design was selected to capitalize on the strengths of both approaches: quantitative methods allow for the measurement of relationships among key constructs, while qualitative methods provide deeper contextual insights into couples' lived experiences (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach is particularly appropriate for marital studies, as it facilitates understanding both the measurable and experiential dimensions of intimacy, trust, and commitment within Ghanaian socio-cultural contexts.

For the quantitative component, the target population comprised married couples residing in urban and semi-urban areas of Ghana, with marriage durations ranging from one to twenty-five years. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across demographic factors such as age, education, socio-economic status, and religious affiliation. A total of 250 couples (500 participants) were surveyed using standardized instruments, including the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976) to measure overall marital quality, the Trust Scale (Rempel, Holmes, & Zanna, 2020) to assess partner trust, and the Commitment Inventory (Stanley & Markman, 1992) to capture levels of relational commitment. The intimacy dimension was measured using the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) inventory (Schaefer & Olson, 1981), which captures emotional, sexual, intellectual, and recreational intimacy. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression models to examine the predictive relationships among intimacy, trust, commitment, and marital health indicators.

For the qualitative component, purposive sampling was employed to select 30 couples from the broader quantitative sample, ensuring diversity in marriage duration, age, and socio-economic backgrounds. These couples participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews, focusing on their experiences of trust-building, intimate connection, and long-term commitment. The interview guide explored themes such as conflict resolution strategies, emotional disclosure, shared goals, and coping mechanisms during relational stress. Interviews were conducted in participants' preferred languages, audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, was used to identify recurring patterns and salient themes that illuminated the interplay between relational constructs and marital stability. Coding was performed independently by two researchers to enhance reliability and reduce interpretive bias.

Ethical considerations were rigorously observed throughout the research process. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to data collection. Participants received detailed information sheets outlining the purpose of the study, confidentiality assurances, and voluntary participation rights. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, and anonymity was maintained by replacing personal identifiers with alphanumeric codes. Data were securely stored in password-protected systems accessible only to the research team. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

By employing a mixed-methods design, this study captures both the statistical relationships among intimacy, trust, and commitment and the nuanced personal experiences that shape marital health in Ghana. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings provides a holistic understanding of how these relational constructs interact to promote marital satisfaction, stability, and resilience. This methodological approach ensures that the study produces both empirical evidence and contextually grounded insights that can inform interventions, marital counseling, and policy initiatives aimed at supporting healthy marriages in Ghana.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The analysis of this study aimed to examine the relative contributions of intimacy, trust, and commitment in predicting marital health among Ghanaian couples. Given the theoretical premise that these factors are interrelated yet distinct predictors of marital satisfaction, hierarchical regression was employed to determine the incremental variance explained by each variable while controlling for the others. Hierarchical regression allows for assessing the predictive power of each independent variable sequentially, showing how much additional variance each construct explains beyond previously entered predictors. This method is particularly suitable for understanding complex relational dynamics where interdependencies exist between emotional, cognitive, and behavioral constructs.

Intimacy was entered first into the regression model as it represents the emotional closeness and connectedness foundational to marital satisfaction. Trust was introduced in the second step to assess its unique contribution beyond intimacy, reflecting its role in relational security and transparency. Finally, commitment was added in the third step to determine its additional predictive power, representing the behavioral and cognitive dedication to maintaining the marriage. The hierarchical regression results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Hierarchical Regression of Intimacy, Trust, and Commitment on Marital Health (N = 500)

Model	Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	ΔR^2	R^2
1	Intimacy	0.62	0.04	0.52	15.50**	0.51	0.51
2	Intimacy	0.47	0.05	0.39	9.40**	0.10	0.61
	Trust	0.45	0.04	0.38	10.20**		
3	Intimacy	0.39	0.05	0.32	7.80**	0.07	0.68
	Trust	0.38	0.04	0.32	8.50**		
	Commitment	0.33	0.05	0.27	6.60**		

The hierarchical regression results reveal several key insights regarding the relative influence of intimacy, trust, and commitment on marital health. In the first model, intimacy alone significantly predicts marital satisfaction, accounting for 51% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.51$, $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that emotional closeness, open communication, and shared experiences are foundational to healthy marital relationships, confirming theoretical propositions that intimacy forms the bedrock of marital quality. The addition of trust in the second model contributes an additional 10% of explained variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.10$, $p < 0.001$), increasing the overall variance explained to 61%. This demonstrates that beyond intimacy, trust provides a unique and substantial contribution to marital health. Trust encompasses reliability, honesty, and emotional security, enabling couples to navigate conflicts effectively and maintain relational stability. The standardized beta coefficients indicate that while intimacy's predictive power diminishes slightly ($\beta = 0.39$), trust emerges as a strong independent predictor ($\beta = 0.38$), highlighting its incremental significance in sustaining healthy marriages.

When commitment is added in the third model, the variance explained rises to 68% ($\Delta R^2 = 0.07$, $p < 0.001$), signifying that dedication, loyalty, and goal alignment further enhance marital satisfaction. Although the beta coefficient for commitment ($\beta = 0.27$) is smaller than those of intimacy and trust, it remains significant, suggesting that behavioral and cognitive investment in the relationship strengthens the overall marital bond and interacts synergistically with emotional and relational factors. The decrease in the beta coefficients for intimacy and trust in the final model ($\beta = 0.32$ and $\beta = 0.32$ respectively) indicates shared variance among the three constructs, which is consistent with the theoretical expectation that these dimensions of marital health are interdependent but distinct.

Overall, the hierarchical regression analysis demonstrates that intimacy, trust, and commitment collectively provide a robust explanation for marital satisfaction, with each factor contributing uniquely to the prediction of healthy marital outcomes. Intimacy forms the initial and most significant foundation, trust adds relational security and transparency, and commitment reinforces long-

term relational dedication. These results empirically substantiate theoretical frameworks emphasizing the multidimensional and interactive nature of marital quality, offering strong evidence for the prioritization of all three constructs in interventions aimed at sustaining healthy marriages among Ghanaian couples.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings from the hierarchical regression analysis reveal a nuanced understanding of how intimacy, trust, and commitment interact to sustain healthy marriages among Ghanaian couples. Intimacy emerged as the most significant predictor of marital health, accounting for 51% of the variance in marital satisfaction when entered alone into the model. This aligns with previous studies suggesting that emotional closeness, shared experiences, and effective communication are foundational to relational stability (Sprecher & Cate, 2004; Hendrick, 2004). In the Ghanaian context, these results highlight the cultural emphasis on relational bonding and mutual support as critical determinants of marital satisfaction, supporting the theoretical premise that intimacy forms the bedrock of healthy relationships.

The addition of trust in the second step of the regression model contributed an additional 10% of explained variance, reflecting its independent and substantial influence on marital outcomes. Trust facilitates relational security, transparency, and predictability in couples' interactions, which allows partners to navigate conflicts more effectively and maintain cohesion (Larzelere & Huston, 1980; Rempel et al., 1985). The observed decrease in the beta coefficient for intimacy when trust was introduced suggests overlapping but distinct contributions, indicating that while emotional closeness is crucial, the assurance provided by trust enhances the ability of couples to maintain consistent relational behaviors. This finding resonates with prior empirical research demonstrating that trust is integral to both short-term satisfaction and long-term relational resilience (Gottman & Silver, 2012).

Commitment, introduced in the final model, accounted for an additional 7% of variance in marital satisfaction, confirming its role as a behavioral and cognitive determinant of relational stability. Commitment reflects a partner's dedication, investment, and intention to sustain the relationship despite challenges (Rusbult, 1983; Agnew et al., 1998). The lower beta coefficient compared to intimacy and trust does not diminish its importance; rather, it indicates that commitment operates synergistically with emotional and relational factors to reinforce long-term marital stability. In practical terms, this suggests that couples who exhibit high levels of dedication and shared goals are better equipped to weather relational stressors, complementing the emotional and trust-based aspects of their marriage.

The cumulative variance explained by all three predictors—68%—underscores the multidimensional and interdependent nature of marital health. This high level of explained variance indicates that interventions targeting marital satisfaction should adopt a holistic approach, integrating strategies that enhance emotional intimacy, cultivate trust, and strengthen commitment. For instance, marital counseling programs in Ghana may benefit from modules that simultaneously address communication skills, trust-building exercises, and commitment-enhancing strategies such as goal-setting and mutual decision-making.

Furthermore, the findings have important theoretical implications. The results corroborate the predictions of Social Exchange Theory and the Investment Model of Commitment, which posit that relational outcomes are influenced by a combination of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral factors (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Rusbult, 1983). In particular, the interplay between intimacy, trust, and commitment demonstrates that marital satisfaction is not driven by a single factor but by the integration of multiple relational dimensions. This finding also aligns with cross-cultural studies emphasizing the universality of these constructs while highlighting the contextual nuances of Ghanaian marital norms, where family cohesion, communal expectations, and socio-cultural practices shape relational dynamics (Ansah, 2017; Osei & Amankwah, 2020).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence that intimacy, trust, and commitment are critical and interrelated determinants of marital satisfaction and the overall health of marriages among Ghanaian couples. Intimacy emerged as the most significant predictor, highlighting the importance of emotional closeness, effective communication, and shared experiences in fostering strong relational bonds. Trust reinforced these effects by providing relational security, predictability, and confidence in partner reliability. Commitment, while slightly less influential in statistical terms, plays a complementary role by ensuring behavioral consistency and the intention to maintain the relationship over time. Collectively, these three factors explain a substantial proportion of the variance in marital satisfaction, demonstrating the multidimensional nature of healthy marriages.

The results underscore that marital satisfaction and stability are not determined by a single factor but rather by the interplay of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. These findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory and the Investment Model of Commitment, which posit that relational outcomes depend on the combined influence of rewards, investments, and relational expectations. Furthermore, the study highlights the contextual relevance of these constructs in the Ghanaian socio-cultural environment, where family cohesion, communal expectations, and cultural norms strongly shape relationship dynamics. In this context, fostering intimacy, cultivating trust, and reinforcing commitment are essential for sustaining healthy marriages and achieving long-term relational satisfaction.

Based on these findings, several practical recommendations emerge for couples, marital counselors, and policy stakeholders. Couples are encouraged to actively engage in practices that enhance emotional closeness, such as shared activities, open communication, and mutual support, while also consciously building trust through transparency, reliability, and honesty. Commitment can be strengthened through joint goal-setting, collaborative decision-making, and mutual investment in both personal and shared aspirations. Marital counselors and therapists should design intervention programs that address all three dimensions holistically, integrating skill-building exercises, trust-enhancement strategies, and commitment-strengthening techniques.

At the policy and community level, educational campaigns and workshops aimed at promoting healthy relational behaviors could be implemented in collaboration with religious institutions, community organizations, and family support services. These initiatives should emphasize the interconnectedness of intimacy, trust, and commitment and provide culturally appropriate guidance for couples navigating relational challenges. Additionally, longitudinal research and follow-up programs can be designed to assess the sustainability of these interventions over time, ensuring that couples receive continuous support to maintain relational health.

In conclusion, sustaining healthy marriages in Ghana requires a holistic approach that simultaneously nurtures intimacy, fosters trust, and reinforces commitment. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, couples, counselors, and policymakers can collectively contribute to stronger marital satisfaction, family cohesion, and broader societal well-being. The study highlights the need for continuous investment in relational development, emphasizing that healthy marriages are both an individual and collective responsibility with far-reaching implications for the social and cultural fabric of Ghanaian society.

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