

# Spousal Selection for Marriage by Tertiary Students in Wa Municipality of Ghana: Internal Factors in Perspective

Gideon K. Amuasi and Eliasu Alhassan

## ABSTRACT

In contemporary society marriage is seen as the foundation of all social relations and it has remained an important goal for youngsters to achieve in the future. Spouse selection over the years especially, among adults had received extensive attention in the academic tertiary institutions in Ghana, yet little is known precisely about the internal determining factors influencing spouse selection for marriage especially among tertiary students. This current study seek to unearth the internal factors that informs individual choice for marriage among students in the public universities in Ghana. Stimulus-Value-Role (SVR) theory anchored the study and also a simultaneous mixed design was used for the study. The public Universities were sampled Ninety-three respondents were interviewed. Both primary and secondary data were sourced and descriptive statistics was used for the analyses. The findings showed that more than 93% of the students (both sexes) consider issues such as intelligence, emotional stability, dependable attitude, maturity and religion of their prospective spouses as important in the selection process. Agreeableness which is one of the extraversion dimensions and talks about how friendly and compassionate a person is was identified as the most effective element considered in the selection process. The study concluded that students varied in the exact factors they anticipated, desiring potential mates with compatibility factors truly want to find spouses who exemplified what they preferred. The study recommended that the counsellors of the tertiary institutions should endeavour to organize marriage seminars for students to educate them on the need to be cautious of the desired factors. The desired factors predict significantly on students' choices of a spouse for marriage.

**Keywords:** Determinants, Marriage, Mate, Spouse Selection, Students, Tertiary

**Published Online:** March 18, 2022

**ISSN:** 2736-660X

**DOI:** 10.24018/ejdevelop.2022.2.2.74

**G. K. Amuasi\***

University of Business and Integrated  
Development Studies, Ghana

(e-mail: macgideon09@gmail.com)

**E. Alhassan**

University for Development Studies,  
Ghana

(e-mail: aeliasu@uds.edu.gh)

*\*Corresponding Author*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Society anticipates males and females to marry, not only for the intention of satisfying their sexual drive but also for reproduction and mate ship. Sociologists assented that definitions of marriage vary. For example, Nadal (2013) case in point, explains marriage as a sex relationship between a male and a female which is expected to last eternally. He views marriage as a contract for the creation and maintenance of children. Also, in accordance with Crooks and Baur (2015). Marriage can condition a feeling of permanence in one's life and a sense of belonging. Additionally, the intimacy and trust produce by marriage can lead to rich relationships and intense caring.

Reiss (2015) views marriage as a socially gratifying union of individuals in husband and wife roles with the key function of authorized of parenthood. Marriage is seen as a social union or legal contract that institutes rights and responsibilities between the partners, between partners and their off springs and between the partners and their in-laws (Havilland, 2011). Marriage can also be explained as: "The act by which a man and woman unite for life with the aim to deliver toward society and one another those duties which ensue from the relation of the partners (Braby, 2018)." The act of union, having been once established, and the term comes later on to indicate the relation itself (Surra & Boelter, 2013). From the definitions man is sociable by nature and cannot dwell in isolation. However, marriage is the only institution which acknowledges and authenticates these relationships with legitimate authorization. Consequently, in spite of several cultural patterns, religious orientations and ethnic attention, importance of marriage is universally well-known.

Marital selection exists in all human societies and is one important decisions people make during their

life. Spousal selection refers to the manner in which a person moves from single to married and this is defined by a unique process involving choice between and among available alternatives. It entails a determined, focused and motivated behavior by an individual and sometimes families to pair people they deem fit for each other. The selection of a spouse however is hardly an individual choice when people consider spouse selection, it is generally not merely a personal matter rather a cultural one as well. However, in as much as marriage is an institution, it may differ in form, purpose, dynamics, as well as significance in one culture to the other, and no all-inclusive explanation is readily accessible (Maisiri, 2016). It implies a genuine contract (written or verbal) in practically all civilizations, and the degree to which this contract can be fractured varies.

Globally, it is presumed that most youngsters at the university select their spouses in order to gain identity as alluded by Gibbs (2013). In Ghana, most youth, particularly tertiary students have a problem of identity, especially on facilitating factors for spousal selection (Asante & Andoh-Arthur, 2015). Tertiary students do not possess a unique sense of identity because few factors are well-defined and many others are not crystal clear for mate selection. These pose a lot of challenges to tertiary students when deciding on spousal selection. In many instances, result to a breakup of the relationships where few students especially women are emotionally traumatized (Asante & Andoh-Arthur, 2015).

## II. THEORETICAL BASES

### A. Stimulus-Value-Role Theory

The study used the Stimulus-Value-Role (SVR) theory to guide the study. It is one of the spousal selection theories proposed by Bernard (Murstein, 1970). The theory reveals that spousal selection among individuals consists of three stages. The stages allow people to seek different types of information. Research works like (Luo, 2017, Toelle & Harris, 2015, Taylor *et al.* (2011) revealed that couple similarity in mate selection on stimulus characteristics as well as the role of such similarities in marital satisfaction. The three stages of spousal selection include stimulus, value and role (Luo *et al.*, 2015). First, the stimulus is the trait (usually physical) that draws mates' attention to the potential partner or person. The potential daters perceive the external attributes of each other, thus, physical behavior and appearance (Little & Roberts, 2012), and the two persons evaluate their own characteristics in terms of how appealing they may be to a would-be spouse (Sugiyama, 2015).

Comparatively, individuals assess the possibility that their attraction will be reciprocated and that future interactions with the other would be gratifying. Barelds and Dijkstra (2009) argue that if the estimate of attraction is positive (i.e., if one feels that the other would like him or her and find his or her traits appealing, and if each believes that more engagement will be beneficial), this same individuals are advanced to the next level. Second, the value stage (notions of what is desirable or undesirable), on the basis of many values and attitudes, potential daters assess their compatibility (Hitsch *et al.*, 2010). Mates might continue to examine the prospective advantages or rewards of the relationship through the value evaluation process (Fox, 2015). Third, role stage is the final stage, this is where the spouse evaluates themselves for suitability in various roles (e.g. being a boyfriend/girlfriend, spouse, and parent), and it usually entails cohabitation, exclusive dating, marriage or engagement, (Wu *et al.*, 2019). According to Muennich (2017), the stages in the theory are seen as relatively distinct; for example, during the initial interaction, stimulus information is gathered. During the second to seventh interactions, value information is gathered, and role evaluations are done during and after the eighth meeting. He does, however, points out that people make stimulus, value, and role judgments of one another throughout the courting process; each aspect merely becomes more apparent at different stages.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted simultaneous mixed design. Simultaneous mixed method design is a design in which the supplementary and core components are conducted at the same time (Morse, 2016; Creswell, 2014). A complex phenomenon like spousal selection requires different research methods to grasp the complex phenomenon. In this respect, the researcher was versatile and adept to employ both qualitative and quantitative methods.

The study was conducted in the Wa Municipality of Ghana. The Ghana Statistical Service (GSS, 2014) report depicts that the Wa Municipal Assembly is bordered by the Wa West District to the west and south, the Wa East District to the east and south, and the Nadowli-Kaleo District to the north. It is positioned between latitudes 1°40'N to 2°45'N, and longitudes 9°32' to 10°20'W. Wa Municipal Assembly's capital is Wa, which also serves as the Upper West Region's regional capital. From the report, about 45.4% of the population aged 12 years and above are married. Those who have not married are 48.2% have never married and insignificant percentage of 0.5 are in consensual unions. Widowed constitute 4.0 percent and those who

are divorced constitute 1.1 percent, 55.0 percent of those who have married have no education (GSS, 2014).

The Municipality has a campus of the University for Development Studies, Nusrat Jahan Ahmadiyya College of Education, Wa Polytechnic, Wa College of Health, privately and publicly owned tertiary school who run distance and sandwich programmes and a proliferation of SHS, both public and private. Even though the Municipality is endowed with a number of tertiary institutions, University for Development Studies and Wa Polytechnic were purposively selected based on the regularity of their programmes.

The study targeted final year undergraduate students, patrons of campus religious fellowships, students' religious leaders and counsellors from the tertiary institutions such as the University for Development Studies (UDS-Wa Campus) and the Wa Polytechnic in the Wa Municipality of the Upper West Region. The study selected final year undergraduate students who had gone through the levels from year one to year three and whose responses were significant to the study.

It is important to note that where the total population of student of schools (that is University for Development Studies and Wa Polytechnic) is 1243, a sampled size of 93 was used. Taking into account the overall number of tertiary schools in the Wa Municipality of Ghana, a proportionate stratification was used. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the sample size of final year students.

TABLE I: PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Tertiary Institution	Faculties	No. Final Year of Students	Proportionate final year students
			Sample size
UDS	FIDS	154	17
	FOE	497	56
Wa Polytechnic	SB	111	13
	SAADGS	58	7
Total		820	93

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

From Table I two faculties were proportionally selected from University for Development Studies and Wa Polytechnic namely Faculty of Integrated Development Studies (FIDS), Faculty of Education (FOE), and School of Business (SB) and School of Applied Art, Design and General Studies (SAADGS) respectively. Additionally, 18 respondents who have rich information and experiences were selected for the qualitative data. These respondents include: patron of religious fellowships (5), religious students' leaders (10) and counsellors of the institutions (3). Generically, the desired sampled size for quantitative and qualitative data was 111.

Both probability and non-probability sampling were employed for the study. The probability sampling was used to select respondents for the quantitative (proportionate and simple random) aspect of the study whereas the non-probability sampling was used for the qualitative (purposive sampling). Simple random sampling technique was adopted by the researchers to select respondents for the study. The adoption of simple random sampling technique was very imperious, because it gives equal opportunities or chances to all potential respondents for being either selected or excluded as indicated by Kumekpor (2002) cited in Mensah, (2018). Primary data were solicited through the questionnaires (quantitative) and the interview guides (qualitative) to garner firsthand information from the participants. Secondary data were composed from, journals, articles, reports, data archive, text books and published and unpublished academic thesis. These published or unpublished documents were relevant to spousal selection.

The most common mixed method technique is the semi-structured interview, because it integrates both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection (Jamshed, 2014). The semi-structured interviews were organized around the topic under discussion and it helped the researcher to facilitate conversation in a standardized way while allowing sufficient opportunity for relevant issues to emerge as pointed by O'Keeffe *et al.* (2016). In-depth interview is a technique that was used to seek depth information about how respondents understand the stimulus of spousal selection. This helped the respondents to provide a complete picture of spousal selection and also it helped the researcher to associate their experiences and information with the study topic.

The data was collected through questionnaires from the respondents. These questionnaires comprised both closed and open-ended questions which covered the factors that inform spousal selection among tertiary institutions in the Wa Municipality of Ghana. Interview guide was used for the qualitative data of the study. This tool was used for patrons of the selected religious fellowships, leaders of religious fellowships and counsellors of the selected institutions.

It enabled the interviewees to share their experiences on rich cases about factors influencing spousal selection among individuals in the tertiary schools.

The data were input into statistical model known as Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS version 21), from which descriptive statistics were done. The data were later generated into frequencies,

percentages, tables and charts for easy comprehension and interpretation. In addition, the qualitative data were meticulously edited and coded with which constant comparative analysis was used where ideas and concepts were categorized into themes and sub-themes. This allowed the researchers to validate or refute all information lump together from the field with the questionnaires. Informed consent was the major ethical consideration employed by the researchers to gain clearance from both tertiary institutions.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS OF MAJOR FINDINGS

##### A. Internal Factors Influencing Spousal Selection among Tertiary Students

This section discusses the intrinsic factors that influence individuals to select a spouse for marriage. It is believed that persons of marriage age consider certain factors before entering into a relationship. This prompted the researcher to investigate internal factors that are mostly considered by the youth before spousal selection. Again, before, discussing the issue on the internal factors influencing respondents to choose a spouse for marriage, 85% of the singled respondents indicated that they are into a relationship and they are still observing their partners to find out whether they possess the features required of them while 25% of them indicated that they are still searching for life partner.

On the part of those who had already married or divorced or separated, questions were asked as to find out whether they consider internal factors before making a choice or not and 70% of them indicated that they considered internal factors before considering entering into a marriage relationship while 30% of them failed to consider those internal factors. Table II presents the number of responses regarding a variable considered for spousal selection. This was measured on a Likert scale on the degree of agreement or disagreement as shown in table II below.

TABLE II: INTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING SPOUSAL SELECTION AMONG THE TERTIARY STUDENTS

Statement on internal factors	Strongly agree [Freq. [% ]]	Agree [Freq. [% ]]	Neutral [Freq. [% ]]	Disagree [Freq. [% ]]	Total [Freq. [% ]]
Mutual attraction and love	73 (79%)	19(20%)	1(1%)	-	93 (100 %)
Intelligence	50 (54%)	43 (46%)	-	-	93 (100%)
Dependable Attitude	43 (46%)	34 (37%)	13(14%)	3(3%)	93 (100%)
Emotional stability	45 (48%)	36 (39%)	9 (10%)	3(3%)	93 (100%)
Maturity	42 (45%)	44(47%)	1(1%)	6(7%)	93(100%)
Religion (spirituality)	49 (53%)	39 (42%)	1(1%)	4(4%)	93 (100%)
Age similarity	34(37%)	37 (40%)	7(8%)	16(17%)	93(100%)
Ambition & industriousness	35(38%)	42(45%)	2(2%)	14(15%)	93(100%)
Talent (sports, music & arts)	38(41%)	11(12%)	7(8%)	37(39%)	93 (100%)
Supportive & responsible	46(50%)	41(44%)	1(1%)	5(5%)	93 (100%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Table II presents results on factors influencing tertiary students to choose a spouse for marriage. The results on the internal factors as represented by table 2 revealed that, 99% of the respondents indicated that they preferred getting married to or choosing a person whom they would have a mutual attraction for and loved before considering any other factor while an insignificant percent of the respondents is uncertain of what to decide on. The respondents indicated mutual love and attraction are the most important factor that influenced them to choose a life partner.

The respondents maintained that effective friendship that has the potential for spousal selection starts with attraction, thus, the person they preferred to get married to must be attracted to them after which mutual love would be developed. An interviewed contacted with the patron of non-denomination of All Souls' Gatherings (ASG) of the UDS revealed that most students first consider attraction when selecting a spouse. The patron indicated that the attraction in most cases brings the love which prepares them to begin to like each other. This was emphasized by the chaplain of the Wa Polytechnic who indicated that mutual attraction brings intimacy and intimacy helped "the potential would be spouse" to gradually develop feelings of commitment and connection towards each other.

This indicates that the powerful feeling of attraction initiates romantic love to fulfil a role of commitment which sustains long-term bonds of relationship which help the students to decide on whom to select for marriage. This is contrary to the findings of Asante and Andoh-Arthur (2015), who asserted that attraction rarely leads to love and in most cases, it results to a breakup of relationships, where few students, especially

women are emotionally traumatized. The study observed that mutual attraction serves as ‘an appetizer’ that wets the tongue of the love arousal for a spouse to be selected for marriage. It is universally accepted that across all cultures in the world, that love maintains mate selection which leads to marriage. This stands to reason marriage is primarily based on the ability of a person to love the other without fear (Singh, 2013). In the writings of Singh (2013), discloses that love is an effective tool that contribute to the power of different in intimate relations that lower women, to the writer love and romance had been naturalized as feminine commodity. The writer suggest that youngsters are mostly entrapped within gendered discourse of romantic love that restrict men and women from exploring alternative stands within future ideals of marriage. It was evidenced from his findings that youngsters mostly comply with gender existing regimes that perpetuate gender inequalities where women are considered as the vulnerable. In this way, most people particularly men, look for women who will love them, because, culturally women are mandated to love as asserted by the author. He stresses that even though love among women shapes their lives especially in the selection process, they face lots of vulnerabilities which include their weakness to protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases.

Again, 100% of the respondents considered intelligence of a person before finalizing on choosing a life partner. The study observed that all the respondents consider the intelligence of an individual before considering them for marriage. The study sought to find out why the respondents preferred intelligence of persons before considering persons for marriage. The respondents indicated that persons, particularly female intelligence had positive effects on children than males.

The respondents reported that educated mothers might have the opportunity to assist children to have right to education by directing them to pronounce or understand certain elements. They reported that educated females help to guide their children to make a good career choice. A study conducted Arslan *et al.* (2014) revealed that there is a positive correlation between intelligent of parents the development of children’s intelligence quotient (IQ). It can be argued that respondents considered intelligent of their potential life partner because of the level of education. Generically, both sexes want more intelligent and better educated mates, but young males are much interested in getting married intelligent young females.

Although, intelligence is highly considered by respondents before deciding on whom to get married to, it came to light that some persons intentionally select intelligent individuals for academic excellence. To throw more light on this, the counsellor of the UDS stated that:

*“Some students, especially female students consider persons with high IQ for their academic works. The ladies look out for male students who can support them academically in terms of helping them in group studies, assignments or copying from them during examinations. A male student reported an issue to me regarding a female lady whom he had helped to improve her academic from the lower class to the upper class and after their final year long essay defence the lady dumped him. According to the student, they had dated for two years. A thorough investigation was done regarding this issue and the lady disclosed that she was not interested in the relationship and that she only needed the guy to just complete the course without trailing. Surprisingly, even though they had dated for three years, the lady alleged that she had ‘a serious boyfriend’ at home and cannot continue the relationship again”* (interview with the Counsellor, UDS, May, 2020).

It must be emphasized from the above narration that some respondents do consider intelligence for spousal selection for only academic work. The study observed that although, respondents are interested in a person’s academic ability for their academic excellence, a minority of the respondents consider intelligence for spousal selection, because they believed that such individuals had a brighter future.

Again, 83% of the respondents revealed that dependable attitudes of the ‘would be spouse’ is preferable since that minimized challenges and conflicts in relationships while 17% of the respondents did not subscribe to the idea that dependable attitude really help when choosing a life partner or choosing a spouse for marriage. This stands to reason that dependable attitudes among individuals do matter during spousal selection. According to the respondents, dependable attitudes implied individuals who are well-cultured and whose behaviours are socially accepted. This is similar to the findings of Sandhya and Somashekarappa (2019) who reported that attitudes, values and believes among persons mostly influenced individuals during spousal selection. Also Maliki (2011) maintains that inner drives of an individual borders on two filters. These filters include attitude and belief and role fit. According to the author, the attitude and belief is where a person doing the selection matches his/her ideas in areas such as politics or religion. He continues that the role fit factor looks at the idea that rally behind the relationship whether it matches with the person whom he or she wants to marry or not. The scholars added that the educational background of persons influenced them to portray dependable attitudes. Although, the attitudes of individuals are very crucial keys for spousal selection, dependable attitudes are not only shaped by the educational background of individuals as anticipated by the scholars. It must be noted that well-cultured attitudes are portrayed when individuals are well moulded by parents with traditional customs and values.



Emotionally, a chunk number of the respondents (87%) reported that the emotional stability of an individual helped them to choose a spouse while few (13%) of the respondents disagreed with the assertion. The respondents disclosed that an emotionally stable person helps to avoid conflict and help to promote peace at home. The respondents emphasized that emotionally unstable persons are usually moody and makes the home uncomfortable place to live. Therefore, it came to light that emotional influence individuals to decide on mate selection. The respondents reported that emotional stable person is able to handle stress and manage anger. Additionally, this finding of the study is in line with the study by scholars (Souza *et al.*, 2016) who believed that emotional intelligence seems to be emotional self-efficacy which indicates a set of individual comprehensive and behavioural characteristics that relates to individual comprehension to and enable persons identify and accomplish emotional information for the choice of mate selection. The respondents believed that persons with emotional stability are chosen for marriages, because persons who are able to control their emotions, especially in difficult situations showed signs of maturity.

Additionally, Kumar (2014) argues that there is a great dichotomy between emotional stability and maturity. He explained that emotional intelligence can be learnt while emotional maturity is a matter of choice. In this regard, 95% of the respondents sincerely admitted that maturity among individuals influenced their decisions when choosing a spouse while insignificant percentage of five (5) of the respondents are either not certain or disagreed with the notion. The respondents did not relate maturity to age. They indicated that maturity signifies a person's ability to handle stressful situations without necessarily apportion blames on others.

This correlates with the findings of Kumar (2014) that mature consideration in spousal selection among the youngsters does not mean the person has grown up, because some individuals look grown up and behave as rational by contemporary standards but emotionally such individuals behave like children. The respondents reported that such mature individuals are very supportive in building a peaceful and comfortable home. They added that the ability of persons not to make unreasonable demands indicate the person's level of maturity. Some of the respondents interviewed highly consider maturity, because, according to them an immature person could disgrace a person in the presence of noble persons such as 'parents-in laws' or visitors and that could truncate the relationship if the behaviour continues. This is in relation to a statement by a religious student leader (Apostolic Prayer Secretary) who alluded that:

*"Our church members highly consider maturity for spousal selection because mature spouses are able to communicate politely with the elderly. This glorified God and the individual, especially in the presence of respected persons. Also, a mature person decides wisely and understands when to react. Such individuals are caring and give special attention to very important issues"* (interview with the Apostolic Prayer Secretary, June, 2020).

In addition, the religious student leader (Imam) also confirmed this statement by citing example that:

*"My girlfriend broke up with me because of my inability to meet her illogical demands. I was hospitalized for three weeks and my girlfriend continually asked me to buy her a Brazilian hair worth Two Hundred Ghana Cedis (GHC200) whenever she visited me. Meanwhile, at that time I had no money on me and I was finding it difficult to pay my hospital bill. I explained the situation at hand to her, but she ignored my plea. When I was discharged from the hospital, she ended the relationship with me through WhatsApp message and blocked my line from calling her. Although, the break up was painful, I have realized that indeed she was not marriageable person"* (interview with the Imam, June, 2020).

The above narrations indicated that the respondents do not consider individuals who do not exhibit signs of maturity. Again, this finding of the study is in consonance with a study by Kumar (2014) that maturation process among persons considers situations where the individuals demand special attentions, care and needs and this aspect is very helpful to spousal selection. On the other hand, the writer continues that emotional immaturity in the context of relationship can be seen in five different ways. These include emotional instability, emotional regression, personal disintegration, lack of independence and social maladjustment. According to the author, most youth in present circumstances, face difficulties in life during spousal selection. These difficulties give rise to a myriad number of psycho-somatic problems such as tensions, frustrations, anxieties and emotional upsets in day to day life. Even though, the writer argument is coherent, he concentrated only on family-adolescent relationship without taking into account youngster's decision on making a choice for life partner.

Also, it was revealed in table 2 that majority (95%) of the respondents of the total sampled indicated that they preferred getting marrying to individuals whom they fellowship in the same religion than marrying someone from different religion while insignificant number of 4% of the respondents intimated that they did not consider religion before choosing their spouses. According to the minority of the respondents, whether Muslim, Christian or even the African Traditional Religion (ATR) they believed they all worship

God. The majority of the respondents also expressed diverse views regarding the need to get married to individuals with the same religion. Some of the respondents expressed the view that marrying someone from same religion helps to prevent conflict among couples. They explained that the binding force and the doctrines of each religion are different and hence, a person from the one religion might try to enforce his or her religious doctrines on the other and this might lead to conflict. An interview with an Imam expressed the view that:

*“Although, Islam religion allows individuals to get married to individuals of their choices, it forbids true Muslims (dedicated) to get married to traditional worshipers. Also, the Holy Quran permits worshipers to get married to Christians, but in recent times, we have noticed that the couples face problems of which doctrines to be used to train the children. This leads to a great conflict among marriage couples thereby resulting in divorce. In this respect, it is always advisable for Muslims to get married to their fellow Muslims in order to prevent future unsolvable issues”* (an interview with an Imam, May, 2020).

The Patron of the Non-Denomination All Souls Gatherings (ASG) also added that Christians from diverse denomination prefer marrying themselves than to get married from the other religion. The Patron indicated that:

*“Per the doctrine of Christianity, a person cannot get married to a traditional worshiper, because the Holy Bible exhorts us not to be yoked with unbelievers and by getting married to an idol worshiper. A person can get married to such an unbeliever unless the fellow had intended to convert. Additionally, Christians are permitted to get married to Muslims with a condition that the Muslim fellow would join the church to prevent conflicting doctrines which might lead to divorce. This is because, there are instances where a Christian got married to a Muslim fellow and the person joined her husband by converting to Christianity and the fellow was rejected by the family members. In order to prevent such occurrences, it is very imperative for a Christian to get married to the fellow Christian”* (interview with a Patron, May, 2020).

As suggested above, the worshipers of all the religions preferred to get married to persons of the same religion in order to prevent future conflict. Similarly, among the Christians, it was revealed that some Christians do not want to get married to other Christians from different denominations, thus, a member of the Church of Pentecost does not want to get married to a member of the Jehovah Witness. This is an indication that religion plays a critical role in spousal selection. This agrees with the findings of the Levi-Strauss (2006) cited in Farooq and Arshad (2017) that youngsters, particularly tertiary students prefer to marry people with the same and religious background or to marry individuals within the same religious groups. It further affirms the assertion by Maliki (2009) who argued that most students in tertiary institutions prefer to marry within their religious groups, because the religion serves as a binding force for those with the same religion to get married. It was observed that among the religious groups, some of them considered the degree of spirituality before deciding on choosing a spouse. The respondents viewed spirituality as a person who had an appreciation for religious values or a person who have a concern to religious activities. It can be concluded that aside being religious, individuals, especially the tertiary students have considered a person's spirituality before deciding on whom to get married to. It was in this lens that Maliki (2011) supported that religion is an important internal factor for the selection of mates, because it is powerfully connected to persons' beliefs and values.

Additionally, 77% of the respondents responded that age similarity is one of the important internal factors that would influence their decisions when selecting a spouse for marriage while 8% of them were uncertain and 17% disagreed. It is worth to state that 75% of male respondents interviewed revealed not to get married to a person older than them. The respondents preferred to get married to an individual whom they are older than. The age range for spousal selection of respondents was between one to six years old. The male respondents alluded that they want to be older than their future wives in order to have absolute dominion over them since men are born to rule their homes. The respondents feared of marrying a person older than them with the notion that such individual might not respect them. On the other hand, the female respondents preferred to get married to individuals whom they are younger than. The age range for spousal selection was between two to eight years. They explained that an older spouse might be able to reason with them in a mature manner and handled them with care than those they are neither older than or they are of the same age. According to the respondents, getting married to a person of the same age breeds immaturity. It was observed that some individuals, especially the male respondents consider age similarities for the fear of pregnancy complications and safe delivery. They indicated that a person more than five years might face some delivery complications and hence marrying female partner under this age is important. This implies that there a link between maternal age and spousal selection. This agrees with the studies conducted by

Joshi *et al.* (2016) that pregnant women who are 35 years old and above had greater odds for preterm delivery. This is an indication that there is a relationship between age similarity and spousal selection, especially among tertiary students. Age also factors, with males preferring younger relationships more than women. Women are much more inclined to reply to personal ads put by older males, whereas men react to ads made by younger women. Men including all ages (and children) are drawn to women in their twenties. Younger individuals (especially younger women) seem to be more fertile than older people, and research has found that men may be evolutionarily programmed to prefer them for this reason (Buunk *et al.*, 2001; Dunn *et al.*, 2010; Kenrick & Li, 2000).

This is contrary to a study conducted by Schwarz and Hassebrauck (2012) that most persons prefer sex during mate selections than the age of the person. The study conducted by Schwarz and Hassebrauck shows a very strong indications for sex differences in spouse selection preferences to age. Although, the age of a person is an indicator, males mostly prefer females who are younger than them whereas females prefer males who are older than them. The authors further reveal that age of individual enhances emotional satisfaction of couples maintaining understanding, intelligence and kindness. The findings of the authors' further reveal that majority of the people interviewed prefer marrying the opposite sex than marring the same sex.

From the analysis as represented by table 2, the majority of the respondents (83%) reported that they preferred to get married to individuals who are ambitious and industrious while 17% of them indicated that they were either not certain or disagreed. This takes into consideration the employment statuses of persons, because ambitions and industriousness are linked with a person's career. The respondents preferred marrying individuals who possess these qualities as these individuals were very innovative and creative in establishing their own jobs. The study revealed that women are more likely to consider individuals with high ambitions and industrious to those who were less ambitious and industrious. This is in relation to the study by Buss *et al.*, (2016) who claimed that women place high value on men who possess a promising career orientation, industriousness and ambition. It further confirms the study by Buss (2016) who postulated that women appear actually more likely to end relationships with men who become jobless, lack professional desire, or exhibit sloth. Todosijević *et al.* (2003) further supported that the female students become more selective in the career choice of their partners before entering into a relationship with them, whereas the males were persuaded that their rising professional standing would compel them to pursue romantic relationships with their female counterparts. The results in table 4.3 suggest that 53% of the sampled respondents preferred to get married to persons who were talented while 12% was uncertain and 8% disagreed. The study revealed that some of the talents preferred were sports, music and arts. Thus, anybody who is in active service of these specified talents are mostly preferred, especially by females. The few male respondents (12%) disclosed to have preferred persons who sing. Again, the analysis in table 2 shows that 94% of the respondents indicated that they want to get married to individuals who are supportive and responsible. On the part of the male respondents, they preferred partners who can assist them to take care of the home by sharing responsibilities. The respondents indicated that they do not want to get married to a person who would be a liability, thus who do not support them in anything. The females also preferred spouses who were responsible and can take care of their children. The study found that respondents were able to detect a person's support and responsibilities during pre-selection.

Consequently, the study assessed dimensional extraversion factors, by the respondents. As indicated in the study, the dimensional extraversion factors encompass agreeableness, intellect-openness and conscientiousness. These are the most effective internal factors that significantly influence person's choices for mate selection. Fig. 1. shows extraversion dimensions consider by the researcher.

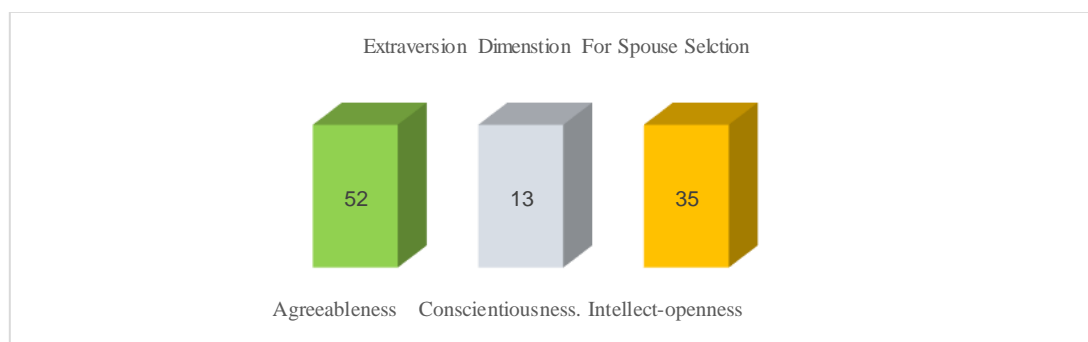


Fig. 1. Dimensional Extraversion Factors (Fieldwork, 2020).

Fig. 1 presents results of dimensional extraversion of respondents. Out of the total sampled population, 52% reported that they preferred to get married to persons who had agreeable manners before deciding on selecting a spouse for marriage while 13% believed in conscientiousness and 35% considered intellect-openness before deciding on whom to get married to. The results of the study revealed that agreeable



individuals are those who are generous, compassionate, friendly, affectionate and sympathetic. Few respondents preferred persons who are methodical when deciding on critical matters. According to the respondents, these individuals are very principled and they want things to be done in a perfect manner. Also, 35% of the respondents were of the view that individuals with intellect-openness are preferable when deciding on selecting a spouse. The respondents explained that individuals with intellect-openness are very imaginative and insightful in a wide variety of interests. These individuals are very innovative and creative in the undertaking business and deciding thoughtfully on critical matters. It can be deduced from the above that agreeableness and intellect-openness are highly considered by the respondents. This is in consonance with the assertion by Razezghi *et al.* (2011) who anticipated that women express preferences for men with high agreeableness, intellect-openness and conscientiousness.

Additionally, Razezghi *et al.* (2011) support the argument is very paramount in selecting a spouse and these factors are neuroticism and extraversion. It was explained that the neuroticism is a long-term tendency of negative emotional state of the five-factor model of personal trait whilst extraversion talks about the high propensity of positive emotional state which indicates how sociable a person is. The writers argue that extraversion is highly considered by most youngsters, before deciding on whom to marry. They assert that extraversion can easily be seen in three dimensions. These are; agreeableness, intellect-openness and conscientiousness. These are the most effective internal factors significant for both the newlywed couples, dating and mate selection. The writers were of the view that people who did not consider the individuals with high degree of neuroticism, because such persons often experience emotional instability and negative motions which may include being moody or tense. The study of the authors reveals that both males and females expressed preferences for individuals who are of similar traits. For example, persons with strong conscientiousness are likely to marry than those that are not. In subsequence, persons with high intellect-openness are likely to date than those that are not.

Razezghi *et al.*, (2011) maintain the argument that most people prefer individuals with conscientiousness, agreeableness and intellect-openness to neuroticism. This is because people with intellect-openness are those who are very imaginative and insightful in wide variety of interest and those that are agreeable are those that are generous, compassionate, friendly, affectionate and sympathetic. With the conscientiousness, the individual is methodic and thorough when deciding on critical matters and these people are very reliable. They stress that individuals who are unable to possess these qualities may result to sexual unhappiness and other marital challenges when they marry. An evolutionary hypothesis tested by the authors argue that women would express preferences for men with high surgency, intellect-openness and conscientiousness. The writers conclude that a woman having a man with high agreeableness and emotional stability is likely to have marital satisfaction than those that are not. It is important to state that although the personal traits factors for selecting spouses are very effective, not all persons succeed in getting what they prefer when making the choice.

Chen *et al.*, (2015) argue that a good sense of humor is considered by most people when deciding on choosing a mate. They allude that a sense of humor is considered by most people, because it reveals creativity good genes and intelligence. This implies that intelligence predicts humor production ability and this determines the success of mate selection. The authors maintain that humor ability of a person sustain relationships.

A sense of humor evolves at least partly through sexual selection as an indicator of intelligence. This is in conformity with the findings of Weisfeld (2017) that humor is preferable across cultures, because it enables people to enjoy laughing, smiling and mirth among people. The young value people who produce these features and prefer to stay with them. This is in relation with the study conducted by Bressler *et al.*, (2006) cited in Eisend *et al.* (2014) on the appreciation and production of humor as sexually selected traits when they argue that spousal selection gives possible explanation for humor functions, origins and social attractiveness. It was argued by the authors that humor ability is very important in the sense that it serves as honest indicator of intelligence, because a sense of humor correlates with verbal creativity.

Additionally, humor potentials or features were simply summarized by Miller (2011) as intelligence foretells humor ability and humor ability guesses the success of mating. Comparatively, he was emphatic that males show higher average of humor ability in the selection process than women. According to Miller, humor ability strongly mediates positive effects of intelligence on mating success. The author concludes that intelligence is mainly preferred during mate selection, because it manifests through verbal humor and it is the most important traits for persons seeking spouses. He adds that men are funnier on the average than women, and women are choosier in selecting mates.

DiDonato *et al.*, (2013) support the argument that most youngsters prefer to choose a person who is witty, funny and humorous. This complement the work of Wilbur and Campbell (2011) by evaluating whether women examine humorous offerings of male suitors or not and they conclude that women's evaluation of potential mates' humor predict their romantic interest. In subsequence, the writers' findings show that individual's preferences and perceptions of humor are associated with warmth and intelligence. They continue that the reason for which individuals prefer individuals with humorous potential is that those

individuals can portray mate qualities. Humor serves as fitness indicator for marriage. It is important to state that the study of the scholars demonstrated a systematic association between humor traits desired by partners. The observation made by the authors reveal that humor initiation at the initial stage of mate selection bolsters relationship.

Schwarz and Hassebrauck (2012) were of the view that mate selection preferences among young people consider certain criteria before identifying their spouses. These criteria include people with good manners, polite and neat. These criteria can be grouped under a factor they call cultivated partner. The writers maintain that young people when deciding on whom to marry prefer people who are venturesome, spontaneous and outgoing. The findings of the authors further disclose that some people consider individuals who are loaded with important factor such as being creative and good at music. The writers add that young people particularly males consider people with domestic skills and these include individuals who are good at cooking and able to do other domestic activities like washing. They add that people prefer to get married to individuals who are reliable, honest and faithful. The findings of the authors further reveal that individuals prefer to marry persons with similar interests, opinions and ideas of a relationship.

## V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study ascertained the internal factors that influence spousal selection among tertiary students in the Wa Municipality of Ghana. The study showed that mutual attraction, dependable attitude, being supportive were the main elements of internal factors that influenced spouse selection. Agreeableness which is one of the extraversion dimensions and talks about how friendly and compassionate a person was identified as the most effective element considered in mate selection. Therefore, the study concludes that the internal factors preference in spouse selection outweighs any other preferences in spouse selection, because the internal factors in spouse selection proceeded to marriage.

- The counsellors of the tertiary institutions should endeavour to organise marriage seminars for students to educate them on the need to be cautious of the major factors that proceed to marriage. This would help them to look out for the potential daters that have certain moral standards.
- Students should not invest so much into the relationship until they are rest assured that the relationship stands the greater chance of proceeding to marriage.
- The counsel unit of the tertiary institutions should educate students to effectively combine academic works with relationships. This would help to improve students' academic works on the various campuses.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

## REFERENCES

- Arslan, R. C., Penke, L., Johnson, W., Iacono, W. G., & McGue, M. (2014). The effect of paternal age on offspring intelligence and personality when controlling for parental trait levels. *Plos one*, 9(2), e90097.
- Asante, K. O., & Andoh-Arthur, J. (2015). Prevalence and determinants of depressive symptoms among university students in Ghana. *Journal of affective disorders*, 171, 161-166.
- Barelds, D. P., & Dijkstra, P. (2009). Positive illusions about a partner's physical attractiveness and relationship quality. *Personal Relationships*, 16(2), 263-283.
- Braby, M. C. (2018). Modern marriage and how to bear it. B&R Samizdat Express. *Consequences, Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11(8), e12337.
- Buss, D. M. (2016). *The evolution of desire: Strategies of human mating*. Basic books.
- Chen, R., Austin, J. P., Miller, J. K., & Piercy, F. P. (2015). Chinese and American individuals' mate selection criteria: updates, modifications, and extensions. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 46(1), 101-118.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Sage publications.
- Crooks, R. L., & Baur, K. (2013). *Our sexuality*. Cengage learning.
- DiDonato, T. E., Bedminster, M. C., & Machel, J. J. (2013). My funny valentine: How humor styles affect romantic interest. *Personal relationships*, 20(2), 374-390.
- Eisend, M., Plagemann, J., & Sollwedel, J. (2014). Gender roles and humor in advertising: The occurrence of stereotyping in humorous and nonhumorous advertising and its consequences for advertising effectiveness. *Journal of advertising*, 43(3), 256-273.
- Farooq, S., & Arshad, H. F. (2017). *Perceptions regarding mate selection among university students: A case study of university of the Punjab*. Academic Research International, Vol. 8(3) September 2017.
- Fox, J. (2015). Models of Relationship Development. *The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication*, 1-9.
- Gibbs, J. T. (2013). Identity and marginality: Issues in the treatment of biracial adolescents. In *Adolescent identities* (pp. 111-130). Routledge.
- George, D., Luo, S., Webb, J., Pugh, J., Martinez, A., & Foulston, J. (2015). Couple similarity on stimulus characteristics and marital satisfaction. *Personality and Individual differences*, 86, 126-131.
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2014). *2010 Population and housing census report*. Ghana Statistical Service.
- Haviland, William A.; Prins, Harald E. L.; McBride, Bunny; Walrath, Dana (2011). "Cultural Anthropology": *The Human Challenge*. (13th ed.). Belmont, CA : Wadsworth/Cengage Learning, [2011] ©2011.
- Hitsch, G. J., Hortaçsu, A., & Arieli, D. (2010). What makes you click? Mate preferences in online dating. *Quantitative marketing and Economics*, 8(4), 393-427.
- Jamshed, S. (2014). Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation. *Journal of basic and clinical pharmacy*, 5(4), 87.

- Joshi, D., Baral, S. C., Giri, S., & Kumar, A. M. V. (2016). Universal institutional delivery among mothers in a remote mountain district of Nepal: what are the challenges? *Public health action*, 6(4), 267-272.
- Kumar, S. (2014). Emotional maturity of adolescent students in relation to their family Little, A. C., & Roberts, S. C. (2012). Evolution, appearance, and occupational success. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 10(5), 147470491201000503.
- Levi-Strauss, C. (2006). Historical trends and variations in educational homogamy. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 333, 83 – 95.
- Luo, S. (2017). Assortative mating and couple similarity: Patterns, mechanisms, and consequences. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11(8), e12337.
- Maliki, A. E. (2011). Socio-economic status and preferences in marriage partner selection among university undergraduates in south-south of Nigeria. *Edo Journal of Counselling*, 4(1-2), 39-49.
- Maisiri, O. (2016). *Male headship and female submission in marriage among African christians: a pastoral perspective* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria).
- Mensah, R. O. (2018). Assessment of training practices in the Ghana Police Service. *JL Pol'y & Globalization*, 79, 265.
- Miller, G. (2011). *The Mating Mind*. How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature.
- Morse, J. M. (2016). Mixed method design: *Principles and procedures* (Vol. 4). Routledge.
- Muennich, K. B. (2017). *Facial attractiveness and mate selection running head*. Facial attractiveness and mate selection.
- Murstein, B. I. (1970). Stimulus. Value. Role: A theory of marital choice. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 465-481.
- Nadel, S. F. (2013). Malinowski on magic and religion. In *Man and Culture* (pp. 199-218). Routledge.
- O'Keeffe, J., Buytaert, W., Mijic, A., Brozovic, N., & Sinha, R. (2016). The use of semi-structured interviews for the characterization of farmer irrigation practices. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences*, 20(5), pp.1911-1924.
- Razeghi, N., Nikiju, M., Mujembari, A. K., & Masihi, A. Z. (2011). Relationship between big five personality factors and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Iranian Psychologists*, 7(27), 269-278.
- Reiss, F. (2015). *America's Child Marriage Problem*. The New York Times, 13.
- Sandhya, S. J., & Somashekarappa, C. A. (2019). Mate Selection Preferences among college students in rural and urban areas in Karnataka. A study in Sociology of Marriage and Family. *Age*, 1565(1059), 59-64.
- Schwarz, S., & Hassebrauck, M. (2012). Sex and age differences in mate-selection preferences. *Human Nature*, 23(4), 447-466.
- Souza, A. L., Conroy-Beam, D., & Buss, D. M. (2016). Mate preferences in Brazil: Evolved desires and cultural evolution over three decades. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 95, 45-49.
- Singh, S. (2013). Women want love, men want wives: The discourse of romantic love in young adults' future marriage goals. *Agenda*, 27(2), 22-29.
- Sugiyama, L. S. (2015). *Physical attractiveness: An adaptationist perspective*. The handbook of evolutionary psychology, 1-68.
- Surra, C. A., & Boelter, J. M. (2013). Dating and mate selection. In *Handbook of Marriage and the Family* (pp. 211-232). Springer, Boston, MA.
- Taylor, S. L., Fiore, A. T., Mendelsohn, G. A., & Cheshire, C. (2011). "Out of my league": A real-world test of the matching hypothesis. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(7), 942-954.
- Toelle, S. C., & Harris, V. W. (2015). *Are you marrying someone from a different culture or religion?* Ditemu kembali dari <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy1337>.
- Todosijević, B., Ljubinković, S. and Arančić, A., 2003. Mate selection criteria: a trait desirability assessment study of sex differences in Serbia. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 1(1), p.147470490300100.
- Weisfeld, G. E. (2017). Humor in Marriage. *The Psychology of Marriage: An Evolutionary and Cross-Cultural View*, 237.
- Wilbur, C. J., & Campbell, L. (2011). Humor in romantic contexts: Do men participate and women evaluate? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 37(7), 918-929.
- Wu, R., Liu, Z., Guo, Q., Cai, M., & Zhou, J. (2019). Couple Similarity on Personality, Moral Identity and Spirituality Predict Life Satisfaction of Spouses and Their Offspring. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 1-22.



**Gideon Kwabena Amuasi** has acquired much knowledge, skills and experience in Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and holds an MPhil in Social Administration (2021), a first degree in BA. Integrated Development Studies (Social and Development Administration, 2017) where he obtained First Class Honors and a Diploma in Integrated Community Development (2014) at the University for Development Studies, Ghana. He embarked on his national service as a Teaching Assistant at the University for Development Studies. He currently works at the Department of Gender, Wa Upper West Region of Ghana as a Project Officer. He also worked with Nyaho Medical Center, West African Examinations Council (Waec), Electoral Commission of Ghana and Ghana Statistical Service.