An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) Perspectives

of Mutual Submission in Marriage

Montreal D. Ravenel

Department of Community Care and Counseling, Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University

2024

An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) Perspectives

of Mutual Submission in Marriage

Montreal D. Ravenel

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

School of Behavioral Sciences

Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

2024

Approved by:

Tracy N. Baker, Ph.D., Committee Chair

Kristin Page, Ph.D., Committee Member

Abstract

The purpose of this transcendental phenomenological study was to examine the viewpoints of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) on reciprocal submission in marriage. The theories that guided this study were social exchange theory, womanist theory, and equity theory. The central research question for this study was, what is the lived experience of mutual submission in the marriage of divorced professional women? In certain instances, traditional submission behaviors have been perceived as reticence, servitude, inferiority, debasement, and a show of weakness. In addition, biblical submission is recognized as subjective to the reader or practitioner. Because submission has a long history and is profoundly ingrained in our patriarchal culture, there have been few conversations and studies on reciprocal submission. The sample size for this study was 10 divorced Professional Black Women. Data was collected using open-ended semi-structured interview questions and analyzed using Moustakas (1994) transcendental phenomenology. The findings of this study described the common experience of mutual submission experiences in marriage of divorced professional Black women. Four themes emerged from the analysis of the data: (a) disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage, (b) negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility, (c) cultural expectations and family of origin influences, and (d) gender roles and the divergence from marital expectations. The study is significant to marriage and family therapists and counselors, mental health professionals, and spiritual leaders as it informs and educate individuals who seek marriage or married couples on the benefits and advantages of mutual submission in marriage. Also, this study contributes to the gap in the literature on the practices of mutual submission in marriage.

Keywords: mutual submission, submission in marriage, Black women, divorced Black women

Copyright Page

Dedication

This research is dedicated to Black women who have experienced divorce as well as those who seek to remarry. You have the right to love and be loved in the manner of your choosing after a divorce. Your prince charming does exist, and it is just a matter of time before you meet. You are valuable and deserving, and what you offer to the marital table is unparalleled. Do not stop being yourself out of fear of rejection or because you do not fit into the ideal relationship. There is someone for everyone out there, and if you seek love, it will find you. May you be blessed and live your life regretless and without remorse.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to God for being with me throughout the entire process of completing this dissertation. Only Jesus gave me the strength, courage, and resolve to persevere in this race. Many times, I wanted to leave and even attempted to do so, but he encouraged me that I could do anything through him and that nothing would be too difficult for me to achieve. I am aware of God's plans for me, which include completing this dissertation so that I might have an even greater impact on the world. I am eternally appreciative of his love, grace, and favor in my life.

Second, I would like to acknowledge my husband's consistent support during this journey. You encouraged me to finish strongly and allowed me to devote countless hours to this endeavor without making me feel bad or requiring me to pick between you/our marriage and completing my dissertation. Thank you for your continued understanding and unending love towards me. I am grateful to experience life with you.

To my mother, Mildred E. Griffin, as well as my sisters Sharron Griffin, Karron Griffin, and Jillita Bulluck. I am fortunate to have you all in my life. I have the world's best sisters. Thank you, Mom, for your ongoing encouragement, push, and support. You understood how crucial it was for me to take this step, and you assisted me in doing so. Your life and the profound impact you have on the lives of others have been an inspiration to me. Thank you for being such a wonderful example in my life; I adore you. To all my sisters, you are incredible. Every one of you has created an incredible life for yourselves and your families. I am inspired by your courage and tenacity. Thank you for having faith in me and giving me the confidence to undertake any activity or task I wish. You three are the pinnacle of black professional women, and I adore you.

Thank you, Dr. Baker and my dissertation lab colleagues, for your support and encouragement during this process. To my lab peers, I appreciated and needed the Monday night meetups and regular text messages that helped and encouraged me through this process. Dr. Baker, thank you for serving as my chair and swiftly replying to emails, and attending our monthly meetings to inquire about our progress and provide your support.

Thanks to my dissertation writing cohort who held me accountable and provided continued support and encouragement for me and others as we navigated through life while attempting to balance it all. Special thanks to Dr. Neressa Darroux for working with me during the final months of this journey, which was the most challenging. Without your support, this finished product would not have been possible. Thank you for your assistance in ensuring I produced a quality dissertation and for assisting me in overcoming every mental and emotional obstacle and stumbling block I encountered. I appreciate your encouragement and willingness to take me by the hand to walk with me on this journey. You did everything in your ability to guarantee that I finished strongly. Thanks to Dr. Kesslyn Brade Stennis for your support and the community you provided during the beginning stages of me preparing this document. The weekly accountability meetings and one on one support you provided helped me to make it this far.

To my participants, I appreciate your participation in my research. I appreciate you sharing your story with complete candor, even when it was tough to do so. This research would not have been possible without your participation. It was a pleasure to meet and communicate with you; thank you for entrusting me with your story. Your courage, strength, and resiliency inspire me.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support throughout this experience. Your encouragement, prayers, pep talks, and push helped me to persevere. Whether online or in person, your presence made a significant difference. Your continued encouragement and unflinching support were needed and much appreciated. Special thanks to my husband, who literally allowed me to pull away for seven years to finish this degree. Not once did you complain or give me any slack about pursuing my dream. Instead, you pitched in, supported, and cheered me the whole way through. More importantly, you understood and demonstrated empathy even when you could not relate to what I was experiencing. You saw and heard the frustration, discouragement, and hidden tears, and kept pushing me to finish strong. For that, I love you. Mom, thank you for believing in me in knowing that I could do this. There were plenty of days I did not believe I could do this but your strength and unwavering belief in me gave me the encouragement I needed. I am the first in our immediate family to earn a degree of this caliber and I am proud to honor you with this degree. To my son, your mom did it! Your subtle encouragement and the fact that you believed that I could were enough for me to keep going on some of the harder days. To my four sisters and best friends, this one is for us. I love and appreciate you all.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

Historical Womanist Theory - HWT

Professional Black Women - PBW

Strong Black Women - SBW

Violence Against Women - VAW

Chapter One: Introduction

Overview

Among evangelicals, submission in marriage has deep roots that span theological, gender, and sexuality discussions. Despite the biblical significance of the concept, the specific scriptural definition of a woman's submission to her husband is susceptible to interpretation, tradition, and individual opinion (Kroeger & Beck, 2019). Typically, conversations about submitting to one's partner occur within the framework of a larger discourse about marriage. Marriage submission, for some people, requires mutual understanding (Beck, 1978). Yet, research on this subject indicates that submission in marriage is skewed in favor of men (Perry & McElroy, 2020). There are few studies that investigated the experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional Black women. Research showed that in many instances in the marriage relationship submission involved mistreatment, dismissal, or undervaluing of wives (Alsdurf & Alsdurf, 1998).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of mutual submission in marriage among divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) utilizing social exchange theory, womanist theory, and equity theory. This chapter explored the background of submission in marriage, illustrated the rationale for investigating this phenomenon, identified the problem statement, clarified the purpose statement, and explained the significance of the study. Three research questions addressed the underlying problem and purpose statements to characterize the experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced PBW. Lastly, a list of terms was established to clarify this study.

Background

Submission in marriage is a concept that is widely taught in Christian societies and is an internal, intimate, and gift-like manifestation of leadership and followership dynamics (Padgett, 2008). Based on the context and definitions offered by previous scholars, the following is the definition of submission in marriage for the purposes of this study: power and decision-making as shared by both sides in a partnership that demands faith, hope, love, service, care, and maturity to enrich the relationship, and respect the equality of both the husband and wife (Balthrop, 2022; Barron, 2021; Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Olatunde, 2022). The philosophical premise of submitting to one's partner is that submission is a biblical practice that establishes order in the marriage partnership and facilitates decision-making (Ademiluka, 2019; Maisiri, 2015; Meadow, 1980).

While submission in marriage is a widely known concept, apparent abuse of this practice characterized by destructive behaviors has led to the dissolvement of many marriages (Birditt et al., 2010; Gottman et al.,1998). The issue at hand is the lack of understanding and practice of mutual submission being promoted as an option for couples to explore for those who believe in the origin and spiritual principle of submission. The lack of education and information about the concept of mutual submission has robbed couples of being able to experience equality and reciprocity in marriage (Archer & Archer, 2019).

Incorrect and poor biblical teaching was one of the barriers to couples gaining insight, perspective, and balanced information on the concept of mutual submission and how it can be used to strengthen the marriage relationship (Fleming, 2015; Lamber, 2010; Robinson, 2017). Women are often disadvantaged in terms of submission due to the lack of enforcement of mutual submission. There is an underpinning message within communities of religious groups that

practice spiritual disciplines such as submission that women are to submit to their husband no matter the cost (Bassey & Bubu, 2019; Maisiri, 2015; Pietromonaco et al., 2021). The idea of mutual submission is neither supported nor discussed at lengths within church communities as an option, or benefit, for married women.

To obtain a wider understanding of mutual submission in marriage this issue was discussed from the historical, social, and theoretical contexts. This study did not aim to describe or explain submission in marriage. However, extensive research on the topic was necessary to clarify and comprehend the function of mutual submission, as well as to illustrate the distinction between submission in marriage and mutual submission.

Historical Context

The notion of submission in marriage has deep historical roots that surpass theological, sex, and gender issues. Jesus exemplified submission through his obedience to God, culminating in his sacrifice on the cross. Additionally, both Paul and Peter urged Christians to submit to God, governmental authorities, and one another. However, the most explicit directive regarding submission was directed towards wives, urging them to submit to their husbands (Kroeger et al., 2019). Submission in marriage is one of the pillars of Christian beliefs and teachings. In writing on American fundamentalism and gender, Bendroth (1993) asserted that at the beginning of the 20th century fundamentalist Christians began to embrace the theology of dispensationalism, a view which promotes the subordination of women. Reid (2013) noted that the Grace Missionary Church in Sun Valley California led by John MacArthur conducts a weekly bible study for women where the more than one hundred-year-old theology of women submitting to the authority of their husbands is a major theme. Reid (2013) further stated that the book which is used for the bible study is entitled Every Woman's Grace Bible. One section of this bible states:

We've all been created in the image of God. And as we saw last week every believer is

called to mutual submission to one another in reverence to Christ. We have mutual

submission, but we also have functional submission. And as wives we are given the

function to submit to our husbands. Submission becomes our greatest strength. We

submit to our husbands as God desires us to do, because it is a God given gift.

Submission—it is God empowered and therefore it is God honoring.

It's clear that many women, including those in congregations like the Grace Missionary

Church, choose to embrace submission within marriage. This adherence to the principle, framed

as the will of God, sheds light on why Christian women might continue to uphold it, even in the

face of hardships they may encounter. Reid (2013) Concluded that the concept of submission

could have harmful repercussions, as evidenced by instances where women remained in abusive

marriages, fearing that leaving would be contrary to God's will.

Social Context

Due to the prevailing role and perception of submission in marriage, women often view

themselves as holding less authority than their husbands. Consequently, they believe that

adhering to submission in marriage will reduce conflict (Minkler, 2005). In marriages that

subscribe to the idea of submission, there is a lack of partnership, and in many cases, husbands

have abused their positions as heads of their households to get their way (Kumar, 2022;

Pietromonaco et al., 2021). Kumar (2022) studied marital abuse and female submissiveness in

reported cases in India, stressing the need for a multidisciplinary approach and addressing

underreporting to protect women's well-being and safety. The purpose of submission in marriage

is to foster mutual influence, encompassing mutual respect, honor, and love. However, due to

misconceptions perpetuated by previous teachings, women may feel compelled to diminish their

power to influence their spouse. Consequently, they may resort to aggressive behaviors to

reclaim power (Minkler, 2005), or they may yield to their partner's dominance by withdrawing or

disengaging entirely (Pargament & Lomax, 2013). African women theologians such as Ercan and

Uçar (2021), Whitton et al. (2007), and Diener et al. (2003) agree that patriarchy, cultural norms,

misinterpretations of scripture, and unequal gender roles expose women to domestic abuse

within their marriages.

The fulfillment of submission in marriage is denied when a woman abandons her role as

responder and assumes a leadership position between her spouse and God (Cooper, 1974; Olson,

2018). In the context of marriage, the role of submission has been grossly misinterpreted,

causing women to be subjected to violence. According to Botha (2021), Li et al. (2016), and

Sprecher (1992), violence against women (VAW) is a social phenomenon attributed to the

patriarchal structure prevalent in most societies. This structure compels women to maintain

submissiveness through various forms of abuse, including physical, psychological, sexual, and

economic coercion. Additionally, it sanctions coercive practices such as prostitution and forced

sex. Research showed that submission has a negative impact on marriage partnerships (Bentley

et al., 2007; Cameron & Overall, 2017; Velotti et al., 2016).

Sometimes the practice of submission within a marriage led to abuse especially when one

partner is expected to submit or heed the other partner without question or when submission is

enforced through physical or emotional coercion. This leads to women experiencing a low

quality of life, and mental health problems such as anxiety and melancholy (Scott et al., 2013).

One study published in the National Library of Medicine found a correlation between marital

submission and higher rates of psychological aggression, physical assault, and sexual coercion in

marriages (Snead & Babcock, 2019). Another study revealed that women who reported high

levels of submission were more susceptible to depression and anxiety (Choi & Marks, 2008).

Gebrewahd et al. (2020) argued that women who reported higher levels of submission in their

marriages were more likely to experience physical, sexual, and psychological violence from their

spouse. These studies along with the negative effect of marital submission is the subject of a

growing corpus of research. Leopold (2018) stated that couples who reported high levels of

masculine dominance and female submission were more likely to experience poorer relationship

quality and higher divorce rates. Submission in marriage can be a healthy and consensual part of

some marriages. However, it is essential to be aware of the practice's potential risks and negative

outcomes.

Theoretical Context

The theories guiding this study were womanist theory, theory of social exchange and

equity theory. Womanist theory is sometimes referred to as womanism and has some

characteristics of feminism; nonetheless, its objective is to create an opportunity for balanced

healing between humans and their environment and nature with a view to reconciling the

spiritual dimension of human life (Phillips, 2006). Heath (2006) provided a knowledge of Black

women's lived experiences under oppression and, if any, the connection between religion,

mental health, and well-being.

Author and activist Alice Walker popularized the phrase "Black feminism or feminist of

color committed to the survival and completeness of all people, male and female" (Walker, 2004,

p. 11). This theory interprets the experiences Black women have with misogyny, racism, and

classism to empower them to participate in the eradication of these intersecting oppressions

(Banks-Wallace, 2000; Collins, 2002; Townes, 1995). This approach has been very effective in

mental health research because it affects the telling of the tales of Black women, which is based

on the realization that "one's well-being is linked to the well-being of others" (Banks-Wallace, 2000, p. 41; Taylor, 1998). Womanism regards the perspectives of African women as "possessors of knowledge and valid information sources" (Shambley-Ebron & Boyle, 2004, p. 16).

Social exchange theory was inspired by Mills & Clark's 1982 and 1986 claims that communal and exchange relationships have different rules for providing and getting benefits. In contrast to trade or exchange relationships, where participants gain from one another, the basis of benefit in shared relationships is concern for the other person's well-being (Hui, Elliott, Shewchuk, & Rivera, 2007). The motivation to provide an advantage to the other individual distinguishes communal relationships from exchange relationships. In shared relationships, a benefit is given in response to a need or to show general concern for another; in contrast, in trade or exchange relationships, a benefit is given in anticipation of getting a similar benefit in return or in response to a benefit that has already been received (Mills & Clark, 1982; Williamson & Clark, 1992; Williamson et al., 1996). Family, romantic partners, and close acquaintances are the groups most apt to form communal ties. People in communal relationships have satisfying and equally beneficial partnerships because they are attentive to each other's requirements (Hui, Elliott, Shewchuk, & Rivera, 2007).

Hatfield and Sprecher (1983) developed the equity theory which viewed romantic partnerships as an extension of the social trade or exchange theory. If the advantages are approximately equivalent to the expenses, it implies that people are happy in their partnership (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1983; Hatfield, Rapson, & Aumer-Ryan, 2008; Polk, 2022). The core tenet of equity theory is that there should be a correlation between success and effort (Kayabol & Sümer, 2022). The worth of an individual's share of stock may vary (Buunk & Van Yperen,

1991). McKenzie (2023) revealed that unfairness correlates to lower levels of satisfaction in romantic partnerships. An imbalanced network might make one party feel that they are receiving disproportionate benefits. Under-benefit inequality occurs when one partner receives a smaller share of benefits compared to their contributions. Conversely, over-benefitted imbalance arises when one spouse enjoys disproportionately more benefits relative to their efforts (Pandit & Nakagawa, 2021). Those in happy marriages are consistent with equity theory, whereas those in unhappy ones are expected to feel increasing anguish proportional to how unfair their situation is (Kayabol & Sümer, 2022).

Situation to Self

This study was significant to me as I am a remarried Professional Black Woman (PBW). I was raised in a Christian household and currently identify as a Christian. I was never educated about mutual submission in marriage, rather, I was instructed on biblical and spiritual ideas of submission in marriage. Most of the teaching I received on marriage and submission during my spiritual journey always favored males. I was educated and conditioned to believe that submitting is the role of the woman and that the woman must always submit to her husband. I found that friends, colleagues, family members, and church community members lack awareness of the lived experiences of divorced Protestant Black women (PBW) and the concept of reciprocal submission in marriage. Many challenge the church's perspective on reasons for divorce and downplay the significance of mutual submission in marriage. Based on my personal observations, the church has often taught women that even in toxic or abusive marriages, the wife is obligated to submit to her husband, pray for his transformation, and seek solace and inspiration from the Bible. I found myself at the age of 19 in an abusive marriage to a man who misunderstood and later abused submission practices. Thus, the catalyst for my divorce. The

divorce negatively affected my life, my son's life, and to a degree influenced my decision to remarry. I eventually remarried in my early thirties, and it was then that I began to understand and practice mutual submission with my new husband.

The conduct of qualitative research is governed by four philosophical assumptions which are comprises ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological premises (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Ontological assumptions influenced the analysis of this research. Considering ontological assumptions, God or a divine being we call God is the beginning and end of all things. God created everything, including marriage, and marriage is one of God's relational principles and ideas that is intended to display His love in human form on earth between a man and a woman. God values marriage. Since the beginning of the book of Genesis, God cherished marriage and longed for those who sought it to enjoy this rich and productive union. The Bible is replete with references to couples achieving God's purpose through marriage. The Bible also provides guidance for married couples. However, for some, communities of color, the Bible is interpreted through the lens of oppression and terror, which has been transmitted as generational trauma.

Constructivism was utilized in this study to explore submission in marriage in the lives of others and reflect upon those experiences. Thus, aiding in the development of representations and the incorporation of added information into pre-existing knowledge of submission in marriage. The construction of reality and knowledge regarding submission in marriage contrasts with positivism's assumption that there is only one objective reality to be discovered. This approach enables the examination of the interplay of forces shaping reality and knowledge. Constructivism encompasses diverse philosophical assumptions in research and is sometimes used interchangeably with constructionism and social constructionism (Gergen, 2011).

Constructivism ontology is used as a relativist which means that there are several realities that are specific to and co-created in the context to which they belong (Moon & Blackman, 2014). The study focuses on the assertion that their reality would differ from others' realities when it comes to submission in marriage because each constructed their realities in collaboration with their communities, societies, and other forces. Reality is built not solely on their institutions, cultures, and conventions but also on their interactions between people and groups along with the physical world around. Thus, while it's acknowledged that there's a world beyond human perception, the external world does play a role in shaping the forces that construct reality.

Problem Statement

The problem under consideration is the lack of information and comprehension of mutual submission and its function in marriage. Specifically, there is a shortage of research on the opinions of divorced Professional Black Women and whether the absence of reciprocal submission affected their decision to divorce. This qualitative phenomenological study examined the perspectives of divorced PBW on reciprocal submission in marriage. This study was crucial for comprehending the conditions of Black families, contextualizing the economics of this population, and fostering the holistic health of professional divorced PBW. This research filled the informational void in the literature surrounding mutual submission in marriage. The study addressed the following gap in the literature: divorced professional Black women's first-person narratives of mutual submission or the lack thereof on the well-being and functioning of their previous marriage.

There is a population of women who have experienced horrific divorces but still desire to remarry. There are individuals who blame religious organizations or spiritual leaders' flawed guidance for their divorce (Shannon-Lewy & Dull, 2005); this is the target population of women

on which this study is focused. Submission in marriage is an example of the dynamics of leadership and followership since it is internal, personal, and of the nature of a gift or grace (Olson, 2018; Padgett, 2008). Based on the background and definitions provided by other scholars, the definition of submission in marriage utilized in this study is as follows: the mutual acquiescence of power and decision-making as shared by both parties in the relationship that requires faith, hope, love, service, care, and maturity for the purposes of enriching the relationship and honoring the equality of both partners (Balthrop, 2022; Barron, 2021; Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Olatunde, 2022). This phenomenological study was conducted to examine the lived experiences of mutual submission in marriage of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW). The aim was to determine the role that submission in marriage or lack thereof played in their decision to divorce.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) regarding mutual submission in marriage. At this stage in the research, mutual submission was generally defined as an integrated relationship where two people work together collectively and as a result provides a place for cooperation to occur (Balthrop, 2022; Olatunde, 2022). Barron (2021) stated that the mutual submission is a healthy habit in marriages where the husband and the wife are filled with the Holy Spirit of God according to Ephesians 5:18-20 and Galatians 5:22- 23. Further research was conducted on the mutual submission and submission in marriage behaviors among Christians inside the church by Balthrop (2022), as well as how the lack of these two practices damaged the church's health. The theories that guided this study were social exchange theory, equity theory, and womanist theory.

Significance of the Study

Most studies on submission in marriage emphasized submission as a male-dominant stance, as opposed to reciprocal submission, in which both the husband and wife have a part. Submission is of paramount importance in Christian relationships (Bartkowski & Read, 2003). Researchers have examined both the relationship between submission and domestic violence and how religious leaders have counseled wives to submit to violent husbands (Maisiri, 2015). Submission in a marriage is indicative of strength and not a weakness. Research must be conducted on mutual submission and its crucial role in marital fulfillment to regulate the effectiveness of submission in marriages. Research conducted by Kroeger et al., (2019) revealed that those who interpret biblical submission as a partnership or compromise as opposed to avoidance or accommodation report a greater level of overall marital happiness.

Townsend and Townsend (2021) concur that submission is a mutual practice in marriage and that wives must learn how to set boundaries for couples to be successful at mutual submission. Setting limits does not imply that submission is rejected or ignored. Since submission is a process that involves both parties, husbands must learn to be Christ-like rather than domineering and controlling so that both the husband and wife can practice mutual submission (Townsend & Townsend, 2021). Wives can support their husbands by encouraging Christlike behavior as opposed to controlling behavior, and by refusing to facilitate immature behavior which is evident in husbands who misinterpret and misapply submission in marriage (Townsend & Townsend, 2021). Husbands and wives, not just wives, are expected to practice submission (Townsend & Townsend, 2021). "Submit yourselves to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Ephesians 5:21). Submission is always the result of a party's free will. Both wives and husbands voluntarily acquiesce to their respective partners. The relationship between Christ

and the church is a model for the relationship between a husband and wife: "Now as the church submits to Christ, so also spouses should submit to their husbands in everything. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her in order to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without spot or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless" (see Ephesians 5:24-27). Given the evolution of marriage since biblical times, further research is needed to explore the impact of mutual submission in modern marriages.

This research was significant because it sheds light on the distinctive experiences of mutual submission in the marriages of Professional Black Women (PBW) who have gone through a divorce. In addition, this research dispelled misperceptions of submission in marriage while highlighting benefits of mutuality in marriage. This study was important to marriage and family therapists and counselors, mental health professionals, and spiritual leaders because it informed and educated people who work with individuals and couples who seek marriage or married couples on the benefits and advantages of mutual submission in marriage.

Research Questions

This study investigated the lived experiences of divorced Professional Black Women and mutual submission in marriage. There is a lack of understanding and practice of mutual submission which could provide couples who believe in the origin and spiritual principle of submission with an alternative option to explore. The absence of education and information about mutual submission has prevented couples from experiencing equality and reciprocity in their marriages (Archer & Archer, 2019). Poor biblical teaching has also contributed to the lack of insight, perspective, and consideration of mutual submission to strengthen marriages (Fleming, 2015; Lamber, 2010; Robinson, 2017).

Central Research Question

The central research question for this research was: what is the lived experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional women? This core question was designed to elicit participants' candid reflections of their lived experiences. Both marriage and divorce are public and private issues, and the success or failure of a marriage has consequences that reach beyond the lives of the people involved. When individuals at the crossroads of divorce can mend their relationships and build a stable, secure marriage, they benefit not just themselves and their families, but also their communities, cities, and country (Yimam, 2013, 2014).

Sub Research Question 1

The first sub-question was what impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage? This sub-question aimed to assess whether spirituality or culture influenced the decision to divorce. Research revealed that submissive habits are more prevalent in religious households than in others (Maisiri, 2015). It has also been demonstrated through research that submission in marriage is a biblical discipline derived from Christianity which is practiced within the framework of marriage, as such the church is obligated to teach men how to be spiritual leaders in their homes (Dangal & Joshi, 2020; Gergen, 2011).

Sub Research Question 2

The second sub-question was what is the role of gender in practicing submission in marriage? This sub-question investigated the effect of gender on submission practices. Padgett (2008) research mentioned that men are preferred to hold a patriarchal role and women are expected to be submissive in marriage. In the traditional view of marriage, males earn money and support the household, while women are responsible for motherhood and housekeeping (Ercan & Uçar, 2021).

Definitions

The following terms were integral to this study and are defined below:

1. *African American Women*: includes African American women and Black Women of Caribbean descent in the United States (Ford et al., 2019; Taylor & Richards, 2019).

2. *Black woman* – self-identifies as being of African descent and was born with female genitalia and chromosomes (Bryc et al., 2015).

3. *Feminism* – a flexible, contentious, critical, and evolving theory with the goal of dismantling patriarchy, colonization, and other oppressive systems in the name of equitable social change (Allen, 2022).

4. *Marital satisfaction* – shared attitude toward the individual's marriage relationship (Cui & Fincham, 2010).

5. *Mutual submission* – defined as mutual harmony in which being mutually harmonized contributes to effective spiritual leadership (Barron, 2021).

6. *Patriarchy* - The gradual institutionalization of sex-based political relations created, maintained, and reinforced by various institutions linked closely together to achieve consensus on the lesser value of women and their roles (Facio, 2013).

7. *Professional Black Women*: Black women with a secondary education who typically work in white-collar jobs. Professional Black Women are typically thought to have a higher socioeconomic status (Bacchus, 2008; Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010).

8. *Religion* - any set of beliefs, attitudes, and actions that have to do with spiritual power, such as forces, gods, spirits, ghosts, or devils (Ember et al., 2019).

9. *Spirituality* - connection to a form god, nature, other people, and the external environment, associated with the character and significance of life (Aten et al., 2019).

10. Submission in marriage – humble recognition of God's divine ordering within a

marital relationship (Maisiri, 2015).

Summary

Most individuals are familiar with conventional submission and its function in marriage.

In some situations, conventional submission behaviors have been seen as reluctance, servitude,

inferiority, debasement, and a display of weakness. In this chapter, the background to the issue of

mutual submission in marriage was explored. Research questions were outlined, and the purpose

of the study was outlined. The purpose of the study was to investigate the lived experiences of

mutual submission in marriage among divorced Professional Black Women (PBW). Most of the

research on submission highlights submission as a male-dominant position, as opposed to

reciprocal submission, in which both the husband and wife have a role.

This chapter provided historical, social, and cultural context regarding the genesis of

submission. In addition, this chapter addressed the researcher's motivation for conducting the

study, a problem statement supported by existing literature, a succinct purpose statement, a

description of the empirical and theoretical significance of this study, and the definitions of

pertinent key concepts and terms. Chapter Two discussed the existing literature and theoretical

frameworks that guided this study while Chapter Three described the research procedures. This

research sought to fill in gaps in the literature by focusing on a specific population of Black

professional women whose divorces were influenced by submission. The findings addressed the

gaps in the existing literature by elaborating on the diverse experiences of each participant are to

be found in Chapter Four. Chapter Five concluded with suggestions for future research. There

have been few debates and research on reciprocal submission because submission has a long

history and is deeply ingrained in our patriarchal culture.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Overview

Submission in marriage holds foundational significance for many evangelicals and often features prominently in discussions on theology, gender, and sexuality. Despite its biblical importance, the definition of a woman's submission or subordination to her husband remains subject to interpretation, tradition, and personal preference (Kroeger et al., 2019). While discussions about submission typically occur within the broader context of marriage, some argue that marital submission necessitates mutual understanding (Beck, 1978). However, research suggests that submission in marriage is often perceived as unbalanced, favoring males (Perry & McElroy, 2020). Exploration of mutual submissive experiences among divorced Professional Black Women reveals instances of mistreatment, dismissal, or undervaluing of spouses within the practice of submission in marriage (Alsdurf & Alsdurf, 1998).

The present study analyzed the lived experiences of mutual submission in marriage among divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) using the social exchange theory, womanist theory, and equity theory. The study aimed to address a knowledge gap in the literature by collecting first-person stories of mutual submission and its influence on the well-being and functioning of divorced professional Black women's marriages. Barron (2021) suggests that effective spiritual leadership may be fostered through mutual harmony, thus defining mutual submission as a harmonious agreement between two parties. The study filled a gap in the literature by investigating divorced professional Black women's first-person narratives of mutual submission or lack thereof on the well-being and functioning of their prior marriage. This chapter explored the history of submission, relevant literature, and impediments to resolution. This study used primary and secondary sources to define the study's thesis.

This chapter discussed the three theoretical frameworks that served as the basis for the research: social exchange theory, womanist theory, and equity theory. Also discussed were the opinions of divorced Professional Black Women on reciprocal submission in marriage, the influence of spirituality and culture on submission practices, and the role of gender in submission practices. The review of literature synthesized relevant and current sources while older sources provided historical relevance. This study was important to marriage and family therapists and counselors, mental health professionals, and spiritual leaders as it informed and educated those who work with individuals and couples who seek marriage, or married couples, on the benefits and advantages of mutual submission in marriage.

Theoretical Framework

Womanist or Feminist Theory

The history of Western feminist theory is often traced back to the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), regarded as one of the earliest feminist authors within the liberal tradition. However, it's important to note that writings embodying feminist perspectives and women's experiences have emerged throughout history (Rousseau, 2013).

Black women have made significant strides, establishing a notable presence in various aspects of society such as the workplace and entrepreneurship (Boykin, 2022). Womanism, a form of feminism, emphasizes the experiences of Black women and women of color, aiming to unite the movement across intersections of race, gender, and class and provide Black women with their own term (Taylor, 1998). Feminist theory offers a framework encompassing epistemology (knowledge), methodology (knowledge production), ontology (subjective existence), and praxis (action for social change), enabling engagement with theoretical concepts and the pursuit of social transformation (Allen, 2022).

To de-emphasize patriarchy, capitalism, colonialism, racism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, and other systems of oppression and inequality for the goal of social transformation, feminist philosophy is intertwined with a confrontational and critical practice (Collins, 2019; Ferguson, 2017; Few-Demo & Allen, 2020; Oswald et al., 2009). The notion that "I am because we are" is fundamental to feminism, a critical intersectional ideology, which makes it a relational, collectivist, and integrative enterprise (Lewis, 2009, p. 309). With its roots in the lived experience of oppression and inequality, feminist theory in the field of family science is intrinsically tied to the call for change at the personal, interpersonal, and social levels (Allen, 2022; Few-Demo & Allen, 2020). The larger goal of feminism is to shed light on the ways in which power is used and abused, and to advocate for measures that will lead to a more just and equal society (Ahmad, 2019; Alexander & Mohanty, 2013; Srinivasan, 2022). Critical feminists hold an intersectional perspective that recognizes that there is no such thing as a single, unified experience of gender, race, class, or sexual orientation (Collins, 2019; Few-Demo & Allen, 2020).

Historical womanist theory (HWT) is a spin-off of womanist theory that provides a crucial theoretical framework for comprehending the distinctive social, political, and economic circumstances of Black women in the United States (Connell, 2013). While several key feminist theories have addressed the concerns pertinent to Black women's lives, no one theory has been able to address the complex, simultaneous, and interwoven oppression that characterizes the experiences of Black women in the United States (Rousseau, 2013). A matrix of dominance elucidates the systemic foundations of oppression that affect the lives of Black women. HWT is greatly influenced by Karl Marx and Fredrich Engels' dialectical and historical materialism (Rousseau, 2013). HWT also draws from several other perspectives rooted in race, class, and

gender analysis, including womanist theory, material feminism, Black feminism, and critical race theory (Rousseau, 2013).

The HWT offers a one-of-a-kind perspective on the historical experiences of Black women as laborers (Rousseau, 2013). This theory expressed three objectives regarding Black women; (1) Individuals of African heritage residing in a nation with a long-standing and fundamentally divided economy based on race; (2) women in a system that is profoundly patriarchal; and (3) workers—productive, reproductive, and biological—in a capitalist system (Rousseau, 2013). Herstory culture, racism, class, gender, and other types of oppression are all considered from the perspective of Black feminist and womanist views (Allen, 2022; Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Feminism, or "womanism," is a philosophy that offers novel opportunities for research and advocacy on behalf of couples and families (Allen, 2022).

Social Exchange Theory

Mills and Clark's (1982, 1986) claims that communal and exchange relationships have distinct norms for giving and receiving advantages inspired the theory of communal (and exchange) relationships. Unlike trade or exchange relationships, where members benefit each other to accumulate or repay debt, shared relationships are founded on concern for the other's well-being (Hurt et al., 2014). The desire to benefit the other person separates communal relationships from exchange relationships. A benefit is provided in response to a need or to demonstrate general concern for another in shared relationships. However, in trade or exchange relationships, a benefit is given in anticipation of receiving a comparable benefit in return or in response to a benefit that has already been received (Clark & Mills, 2012; Williamson et al., 1996). The groups most likely to establish communal connections are family, romantic partners,

and intimate friends. Because they are aware of each other's needs, people in communal

relationships have fulfilling and mutually advantageous interactions (Hurt et al., 2014).

The concept of communal (and exchange) relationships revolves around partners'

perception of each other's happiness and success, along with the desire to identify and address

their partner's needs without expecting equivalent benefits in return (Mills et al., 2004). Higher

levels of communality in relationships have been associated with increased commitment and a

greater likelihood of experiencing positive emotions in sacrificial situations (Whitton et al.,

2007). Daily expressions of gratitude between partners have been found to contribute to

relationship maintenance and predict future levels of communality and commitment (Gordon et

al., 2012). Even within identical relationship types, individuals exhibit diverse degrees of

communal attitudes toward their different relational partners. Communal orientations are defined

as a strong motivation towards communal behavior (Clark, 1997), partner-specific motivation

(Mills et al., 2004), or unmitigated motivation (Ferguson, 2017), characterized by a lack of self-

oriented concern. In line with this perspective, Buunk and Van Yperen (1991) found that

communal attitudes influenced the relationship between inequality and romantic partner

happiness.

Equity Theory

Studies on relationship maintenance often rely on equity theory as a foundation (Stafford,

2020). The equity theory presupposes an exchange orientation which means that individuals

consider the benefits and costs of their connections. Nevertheless, both equity theory and

exchange orientations have faced scrutiny, especially in the context of intimate relationships like

marriage (Mills & Clark, 2001; Stafford, 2020). A community approach to relationship

maintenance is an alternate option (Alexander & Mohanty, 2013).

Ragsdale and Brandau-Brown (2004) argued, in a critique of Canary and Stafford's study, that equity theory is an inappropriate theoretical framework for predicting maintenance behaviors. Mills and Clark (1982) argued that marriages are not transactional relationships but rather communal ones. Canary and Stafford (2007) responded to Ragsdale and Brown by stating, "Although people in communal relationships may be less likely to maintain marriage than others, as equity theory predicts, this must be empirically tested before it can be accepted as fact" (p. 62).

Equity theory focuses on the link between rewards and contributions (Dainton, 2019). Equity may not hold the same value for everyone (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Rudrum et al. (2022) demonstrates a correlation between unfairness and poorer levels of pleasure in intimate relationships. When connections lack mutuality, individuals may perceive themselves as either over- or under-benefitted. Under-benefit inequality occurs when one individual receives fewer benefits relative to their contributions compared to their spouse, while over-benefited imbalance arises when one spouse receives greater advantages relative to their contributions compared to the other (Gergen, 2011). Equity theory suggests that individuals in mutually submissive marriages are likely to experience greater contentment, while those in inequitable marriages may experience distress, with the level of distress increasing in proportion to the degree of injustice (Dainton, 2019).

Many social exchange techniques are taken mostly from the works of sociologists Braun and Clarke (2021). A fundamental assumption shared by all social exchange theories is that our decisions to act are influenced by the anticipated benefits and costs associated with those activities. Individuals are not necessarily driven to maximize their gains. Instead, equity is founded on a perception of justice (Powell, 2005). Equity theory says that couples are more

motivated to maintain mutually beneficial relationships than inequitable ones because they are

more fulfilled in mutual partnerships than unbalanced ones. Stafford and Canary (2006) state,

> A major premise of our research is that individuals make subjective evaluation of
>
> equality within their relationships; individuals compare their own ratio of results to inputs
>
> to their evaluations of their partners' outcomes and inputs. Equitable partnerships arise
>
> when the ratio of benefits to expenses is comparable for both parties. If the ratio of
>
> benefits to expenses is greater for one partner, then that spouse is said to be over
>
> benefited. In contrast, if one spouse's ratio of expenses to rewards is larger, that partner is
>
> under benefit (p. 229).

Most individuals like to establish and keep mutual relationships (Canary & Stafford,

2007, p. 62). Individuals' preference for equity and the notion that unfairness causes suffering

has been well supported (Hatfield et al., 2008). Yet, findings involving under benefits are more

regularly and robustly seen than ones about over benefits. Nonetheless, the equity theory has

been questioned, particularly regarding close partnerships such as marriage. A community

approach to relationship maintenance is an alternate option. In a critique of Canary and

Stafford's (2007) study, Ragsdale, and Brandau-Brown (2004) Argued that the equity theory is

an inappropriate theoretical framework for predicting maintenance behaviors. They supported

their claim that marriages are community connections rather than transactional ones by citing

Mills and Clark (1982). When responding to Ragsdale and Brown, Canary, and Stafford (2007)

wrote, "While persons in communal partnerships may be less likely to continue marriage than

others, as equity theory predicts, this must be experimentally validated before it can be accepted

as truth" (p. 62). In addition to a person's community orientation, (Canary & Stafford, 2007;

Stafford & Canary, 2006) suggested that a person's exchange orientation may also play a role in

forecasting maintenance behaviors. Canary and Stafford (2007) recognized that the concept of

fairness may not always fully account for maintenance behavior. Equity is just one factor that

can help explain it. Stafford and Canary (2006) argued, "differences in findings may be

attributable to people's varying expectations for fair trade" (p. 251).

Both communal and trade orientations influence expectations for equal exchange.

Ledbetter et al. (2013) explored communal orientations in the prediction of relationship

maintenance, expanding on the ideas of Canary & Stafford, (2007). Ledbetter et al. (2013)

further investigated inclusion of self in others (IOS) and equity as predictors of five maintenance

methods, using IOS as an indicator of community orientation. While not asserting that social

exchange theory and self-expansion are the same. Ledbetter et al., (2013) discovered that the IOS

predicted maintenance behaviors more accurately than equity in relationships. In addition, they

discovered that equity was exclusively predictive for women, but IOS predictive maintenance

behaviors for both men and women. Buunk and Van Yperen (1991) examined how trade

orientation and equity can predict relational satisfaction. They found that despite those in

equitable relationships reported higher levels of happiness, persons "poor in exchange orientation

saw themselves to be treated fairly more frequently" (p. 714). Sprecher (1992) discovered a

correlation between exchange orientation and expectations of equality and reactions to injustice.

In marriage and other intimate partnerships, partners are fundamentally interdependent,

with individual and relational outcomes influenced by each other (Buunk & Van Yperen, 1991).

Individuals in interdependent relationships have varying expectations of providing and receiving

rewards. Stafford and Kuiper (2021) thought that exchange-based relationships are based on the

idea of reciprocity or mutuality, which means that both parties get something out of the

relationship. Clark (1997) similarly suggested that with fairness in mind, decisions are made

based on anticipated costs and benefits obligations or obligations accrue when relationships are exchange oriented., Stafford and Kuiper (2021) concluded,

> When people are more communal, as opposed to exchange oriented in their relationships, this suggests that they are no longer thinking solely about their own benefits but are also motivated to benefit their partners and maintain the quality of the relationship, an orientation that should benefit both relationship partner (p. 3).

Related Literature

Professional Black Women

Marriage patterns in the United States show striking racial and cultural diversity. Black women marry later, are less likely marry, and have greater rates of marital instability than white and Hispanic women (Raley et al., 2015). Due in part to widespread changes in views about family structures that have made marriage optional, the racial discrepancy in marriage among Black women and other ethnic groups began to emerge in the 1960s and has expanded since then (Mouzon Dawne, 2013). The Strong Black Women (SBW) Schema describes the independence and resilience of Black women who were expected to conform to the harsh realities of cultural norms of oppression by society (Harris-Lacewell, 2001).

Professional Black Women (PBW) are often associated with attributes and qualities such as determination and their ability to manage relationships (Carter & Rossi, 2019; Gupta & Srivastava, 2020). In addition, PBW and SBW schema are often linked together given similar characteristics and qualities (Liao et al., 2020). The perception that these women hold high levels of resilience and independence can imply that they require less assistance and support from society and male counterparts compared to women of other ethnic groups and backgrounds (Jones et al., 2021; Platt & Fanning, 2023). Furthermore, the stereotype of the SBW portray

black women as tough able to handle any challenge or obstacle without showing signs of

weakness or vulnerability (Abrams et al., 2014; Davis & Jones, 2021). This stereotype has both

positive and negative effects on Professional Black Women (Jones, Harris, Reynolds, 2021).

Professional women are more likely to be married and have children than other women and have

higher levels of education and income (Qian, 2017). While professional women typically have a

high level of education and income, they also experience significant work-family conflict (Gupta

& Srivastava, 2020; Haynes, 2019).

Many Black women have perfected the ability of projecting strength while hiding pain

because of repeatedly summoning perseverance in reaction to physical and psychological

adversity—a balancing act frequently held in high regard among Black women. When Black

women feel controlled by the improper application of submission practices in marriage,

concealing trauma or its aftermath affect their ability or desire to remain in patriarchal or

dominating romantic relationships (Waller et al., 2022).

What is Submission in Marriage

In the literature review for this study, proponents of a marriage model that incorporates

submission were predominantly religious individuals, particularly Christians, resulting in a heavy

reliance on biblical perspectives in cited research. Additionally, the existing literature on

submission in marriage is largely outdated, with much of it exceeding ten years in age. Some

argue that submission is a patriarchal practice, with both Jewish and Muslim marriages often

exhibiting patriarchal rather than hierarchical structures, thus reinforcing traditional submission

practices (Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Leavitt et al., 2021; Whitnah, 2022). Radtke (2021)

supported this view of submission by integrating Hindu Law and a fifteenth-century Confucian

marriage manual that mandates the practice of wifely submission. Others have suggested that

both men and women bear a duty and responsibility to submit to one another, challenging the

conventional practice that places the burden of submission solely on women (Barron, 2021;

Townsend, 2021). Townsend (2021) stance on submission was that it entails living in harmony

with one's spouse, and that submission and support do not imply that the wife is inferior to her

husband. Rather, her position with God simply places her in a subordinate position to her

husband, as God decreed the husband to be the head of the home. Hamner et al. (2018) explained

that submission practices in marriage cannot be dictated or coerced by a supposed authority, but

can only be initiated from within, by the Spirit of love for the other.

Eddy (2012) argued that biblical submission to God is a concrete act of obedience

validating the husband's position to be in charge. Rakovec-Felser (2014) disagreed with

Townsend (2021) that submission was reciprocal or mutual but believes that women should

submit to their spouses regardless of the circumstances, as doing otherwise is a form of

disobedience and contempt. There is substantial literature on marriage, especially within

Christian fundamentalism, which asserted that husbands have virtually unrestricted authority

over their wives. In these settings, wives are obligated to submit to their husbands without

qualification. Bradbury and Cornwall (2016) contended that submission between women and

men forms the basis for the correct understanding of marriage throughout much of Christian

history, and that much of today's discussion of headship is based on the Bible. In this paradigm,

the differences between men and women were highlighted while equality is at best

deemphasized. Women are deemed unsuitable to lead in the marriage due to their emotionality,

fragility, and susceptibility to deception (Handford, 1995). Consequently, it is a grievous offense

for a woman to challenge her husband's leadership as the head of the home, "as doing so

severely distorts the ontologically grounded order of human relationships" (Sharma, 2011, p. 82).

In a book that has sold over two million copies, Helen Andelin contended that "God has ordained the husband to be the paramount authority" (Andelin, 1974, p. 512). Clark (1997) asserted that modern secular society challenges the limits of marital submission only to the extent that there are essentially no limits on submission and authority. Therefore, the woman's entire existence (including all her actions) must be subordinate or submissive to her husband. Other evangelical authors concede that there may be a few instances in which submission must be qualified but argue that this is so uncommon that it does not need to be elaborated upon or even considered (Tracy & Seminary, 2008).

Doyle (2001) and Salem (2020) argued that a wise wife would never appear more knowledgeable than her husband, accept her husband's neglect of his family, tolerate and submit to his misconduct, and exhibit true femininity by being dependent, feeble, and fearful. Similarly, scholars such as Ademiluka (2021), Handford (1995), and Nir (2022) posited that the Bible imposed no restrictions on a wife's submission to her husband, as submitting to him was seen as submitting to God. Other fundamentalist authors took a less extreme stance on female submission, but still advocated for a paradigm where the husband's power and authority were nearly absolute. For instance, Evans and Kelley (2004) asserted that a wife should never seek ways to avoid submitting to her husband, refrain from reprimanding him (even in private), and have no authority to make independent financial decisions.

Jones (2000) believed that the husband is the chief of the household, the wife must accommodate more than he does. In addition, because of her husband's great authority, she should never attempt to alter him; even if he is a tyrant or legitimately neglects his family, she should yield and surrender to God (Jones, 2000). Elizabeth George's popular book, A Woman after God's Own Heart, argues that submission is the biblical mandate for wives to be made

lower under their husband's authority by yielding the final decision-making power to him in all areas of life, with one exception: if he asks you to violate some teaching from the Bible (George, 2019). With this one exception, however, the husband's authority is all-encompassing. Burke (2003) also argued that submission is not inferiority but voluntarily placing oneself under the authority of another.

Lack of Mutual Submission Being Practiced in Marriages

While there are several studies on submission in marriages, research on reciprocal or mutual submission is scarce. Given that mutual submission derives from submission, it was useful to review and outline what others view as the purpose and function of submission in marriage. Research on submission has derived from a biblical perspective, with a focus on the patriarchal position of men (Archer & Archer, 2019; Bassey & Bubu, 2019; Dean-Hill, 2019). Clifton (2018) and Chisale (2018) argued that the issue with the traditional idea of submission is that women are expected and encouraged to submit to their husbands even if they are s violent toward them. There are several scholars who supported this theory in claiming that the biblical passage Ephesians 5 supported mistreatment and abuse in marriage (Kapuma 2015; Mazibuko & Umejesi 2015; Chisale, 2018). Conversely, Piper and Grudem (2006) describe marriage as a co-partnership or mutuality of equality where neither the wife nor husband has sole power over the other. This definition embodies an egalitarian perspective on marriage. An egalitarian perspective on marriage is characterized by equal interactions where roles are not forced and there is a strong sense of intimacy. In contrast, a hierarchical perspective on marriage has clearly defined roles, with the husband holding a position of authority over the wife. (Eckenroad, 2023; Preato, 2004; SmiWhile a hierth, 1980),

Successful couples tend to cultivate egalitarian relationships, according to sociologists and demographers (Booth, 1991; Booth & Amato, 1994). Over a 20-year span, from 1980 to 2000, Booth and Amato interviewed and followed the lives of 2,000 men, women, and some of their offspring. The research examined two distinct kinds of changes: how individual marriages change over time and how the population of married couples changed between 1980 and 2000. Upon conclusion of the research, Dr. Amato concluded:

> Equality is good for marriage. It's good for both husbands and wives. If the wife goes from a patriarchal marriage to an egalitarian one, she'll be much happier, much less likely to look for a way out. And in the long run, the husbands are happier too.

Lack of Mutual Submission and Divorce

Marriage and divorce are both societal and private matters. The success or failure of marriage has repercussions that extend beyond the couples' own life (Damota, 2019; Falculan et al., 2019). Repairing relationships on the brink of divorce to cultivate a strong, secure marriage is a significant achievement, as divorce continually jeopardizes the family unit and has profound impacts on emotional and mental well-being (Abebe, 2015; Yimam, 2014). Along with mental and emotional health issues, divorced families in the US are approximately 50% more likely to become impoverished impacting both the parents and children and creating unnecessary levels of stress on the children's overall health (Anderson, 2014; D'Onofrio & Emery, 2019). Clarke-Stewart and Brentano (2006) and Orbuch et al. (2002) agree that divorce will not only lead to financial instability but also to mental and emotional distress.

Throughout the 1970s, Black women experienced a greater increase in the divorce rate than Hispanic and non-Hispanic White women (Martin & Bumpass, 1989). During the 1980s, the

disparity in divorce rates between whites and blacks remained high but a big influx of

immigrants reduced the divorce rate of Hispanic women; immigrant communities tend to have

lower divorce rates than native-born individuals (Bansak & Pearlman, 2022; Bean et al., 1996;

Raley & Sweeney, 2020). A recent study paralleling the research on higher divorce rates among

Black women indicated that racial and ethnic disparities in divorce rates remain substantial

(Cohen, 2019; Copen et al., 2012). This study also showed that Asian and foreign-born Hispanic

woman had the lowest rates of divorce while Black, U.S.-born Hispanic, and Native American

women had the highest divorce rates (Cohen, 2019; Copen et al., 2012). The causes for these

disparities are still poorly understood but they presumably include complex and dynamic

connections between individual, family, and community-level traits, such as attitudes, norms,

and structural factors such as economic opportunity (Butrica & Smith, 2012).

It is crucial to address the lack of mutual submission in marriages among Professional

Black Women (PBW) as implementing such a practice could serve as a divorce reduction

mechanism. The breakdown of a couple's partnership has an impact on a lot of people when they

get divorced (Kapelle & Baxter, 2021; Scott et al., 2013). Research has shown that children of

divorced parents experience lower levels of well-being, regardless of their academic

performance, behavior, psychological development, self-esteem, social skills, and relationships

with other children (Thadathil & Sriram, 2020).

By a substantial margin, the United States leads the industrialized world in divorce rates

and the percentage of children affected by divorce (Raley & Sweeney, 2020; Weinraub &

Kaufman, 2019). Divorce rates began to climb shortly after the Civil War and have continued to

rise steadily for more than a century in the United States (Furstenberg Jr., 1994). Preston and

McDonald (1979) assessed the likelihood of divorce for each marriage cohort beginning in 1867

and ending in the mid-1960s over two decades ago. Their findings revealed an ongoing trend of

marriage breakup throughout consecutive marriage cohorts. Several academics hypothesized that

most marriages formed in the 1970s subsequently would dissolve, especially when informal

separations and official divorces were considered (Furstenberg Jr, 1994; Martin & Bumpass,

1989). Some academics obtained more conservative figures, but still predicted that more than

half of all marriages would end in divorce by the mid-1970s (Cherlin, 1992). Divorce rates began

to stabilize in the late 1970s and fell by 10% during the 1980s (Gordon et al., 2012). Many

studies have demonstrated that the economic expenses of divorce are borne disproportionately by

women. Women endure a greater decrease in household income and a larger likelihood of living

in poverty after divorce (Brinig & Allen, 2000; Manning et al., 2019; Manning et al., 2019).

Mutual Submission as a Solution to Divorce

Control mutuality refers to a shared understanding of how choices are made, who has the

authority to exert influence or bilateral control, and the sense that one's thoughts and opinions

are considered by the other (Ogolsky & Bowers, 2013). It has been hypothesized that control

mutuality is "crucial to interdependence and stability" in a marriage relationship (Stafford &

Canary, 1991, p. 224) and that it correlates with relational pleasure (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989).

A relationship's communal strength implies the sense of "agreement on what each other's actual

needs are" (Mills & Clark, 2001, p. 22). Control mutuality is based on the sense of agreement on

how decisions are made and the idea that one partner takes the other's thoughts and feelings into

consideration (or is sensitive to them), it is predicted that control mutuality and communal

strength are positively correlated (Mills & Clark, 2001).

Grudem (1996) believes that the entire notion of "mutual submission" as an interpretation

of Ephesians 5:21 "be subject to one another" can only be supported by disregarding the specific

meanings of the Greek terms for "be subject to" and "one another." Additionally, the Bible

neither endorses nor justifies the practice of reciprocal or mutual submission in marriage

(Grudem, 1996). The dominance-submission structure indicated that the Ephesian code that

speaks to one way submission between husband and wife still exists but there has been a

dramatic shift from a treatise on masculine supremacy to an exhortation to reciprocal

relationships in Christ (Osiek, 2002). The apostle Paul connects the domestic rules with

reciprocal submission in Ephesians 5:21 and 6:9 (Keener, 2021). Aristotle created household

laws that outlined how the male leader of the home should manage or control his wife, kids, and

slaves and later philosophers frequently followed the same order and used the same schema

(Vrey & Nortjé-Meyer, 2016).

There are certain ancient writers who were more "progressive" and engaged in mutuality

than others, such Xenophon of Athens and Musonius Rufus, a Stoic philosopher who lived in the

first century AD. It is stated that no other ancient home laws construct their debate with mutual

submission (Keener, 2021). Webb (2001) argued that males do not have a unique leadership role

in marriage but do deserve a certain level of respect.

Webb (2001) stated that the only differences in roles are due to biological differences

between men and women, and complementary egalitarianism is complete interdependence and

mutual submission within the marriage. In contrast to Grudem's (1996) argument,

Wojciechowski (2010) agrees with the mutual submission mechanism and argues that Matthew

19:6 signifies this with its admonition: Therefore, what God has united, man shall not separate.

This is accurate, as the Greek word means to be yoked as equals without the prospect of divorce.

Finally, (Hugenberger, 2014) makes the case that the book of Malachi likewise affirms

reciprocal or mutual submission.

Barriers to Solving the Lack of Mutual Submission

Aman et al. (2019) revealed that submission has been interpreted incorrectly in a variety of societies and cultures. Religion, spiritual practices and beliefs, ambiguous gender roles or makers of masculine versus feminine energy, and family of origin are some of the factors that prevent the absence of reciprocity within relationships, (Collins, 2002; Gervasi et al., 2022; Maisiri, 2015). These factors were discussed in detail below.

Religion

Religion is any set of beliefs, attitudes, and actions that have to do with spiritual power, such as forces, gods, spirits, ghosts, or devils (Ember et al., 2019). As with mental health, the womanist theory is equally applicable to the study of practicing religious beliefs which offers Black women a sense of purpose and existence (Heath, 2006). A womanist theologian named Emile Townes argued that womanist religion derives from an apocalyptic vision of hope inhumanity, "a vision in which dominant norms are challenged and a new reality for humanness emerges" (Townes, 1995, p. 139). Women are the ones that submit to their husbands because submission in marriage is anchored in religion, and cultural values (Ngwoke, 2020).

Religion provided hope for personal and community relationships enabled Black women to transcend and transform their experience (Gervasi et al., 2022; Maisiri, 2015). Religion serves as a resistance mechanism, according to Abrams et al. (2014), Alinia (2015), and Shorter-Gooden (2004), who argue that Black women are less likely to submit to oppressive systems when they have a sense of dignity rooted in their culture, history, and belief in being children of God. In times of crisis and conflict, Black women often draw strength from their religious beliefs. However, they resist when faith is used to oppress them, even within romantic relationships such as marriage (Carney & Kelekay, 2022; Comas-Diaz, 1991; Heath, 2006).

Various perspectives on submission in marriage exist, including religious and spiritual interpretations (Levitt & Ware, 2006; Pevey et al., 1996; Zaloudek, 2014). Different religious and cultural traditions, as well as individuals within those traditions, may hold differing notions of submission (Sorokowski et al., 2019). For instance, in some Christian circles, the concept of wifely submission derives from Biblical teachings, as seen in Ephesians 5:22–24 (Hall & Schemm, 2010; Lovše, 2009). Similarly, in Islam, the principle of qiwamah dictates that husbands are responsible for protecting and supporting the family, while wives are expected to be obedient (Badawi, 1995; Mir-Hosseini et al., 2014; Siraj, 2010). Given these diverse cultural, religious, and personal perspectives, notions of submission in marriage vary widely among individuals.

Spirituality

Spirituality is defined as a connection to a form god, nature, other people, and the external environment, associated with the character and significance of life (Aten et al., 2019). It is a complex theoretical construct with several dimensions. Fundamentally, it encompasses transcendence which is seen as surpassing or surpassing "the real self" (Bozek et al., 2020). Within the given framework, spirituality is delineated as the process of attaining a state of transcendence through the cultivation of inner tranquility, coherence, or a sense of interconnectedness with fellow individuals (Boswell et al., 2006). Transcendence may occur in two distinct realms: internally, through self-realization, self-improvement, and personal development, and externally, beyond the confines of the individual. The concept of "external" transcendence might be oriented towards a superior entity or energy, towards another individual who is deemed to possess significant worth, where their well-being takes precedence over one's own, or towards the cosmos (Heszen-Niejodek & Gruszyńska, 2004).

Spirituality or religion may be associated with submission practices in marriage. Spirituality and religion may be distinguished based on their respective characteristics. Religion often involves ceremonies, institutional ties, and social connections, while spirituality centers around personal encounters with the unseen and acknowledgment of forces beyond human existence (Tovar-Murray, 2011). Religion is typically viewed in its societal context, whereas spirituality is often explored individually and within specific contexts (Roth-Roemer et al., 1998). Although spirituality and religiosity share comparable origins connected to transcendence, it is important to note that they should not be used interchangeably. These domains are distinct; however, they share overlapping meanings (Krok, 2009a).

In the context of this study, the term submission is defined as follows: The dynamics of power and decision-making are mutually shared by both parties involved in a partnership, necessitating the presence of qualities such as faith, hope, love, service, care, and maturity to foster a deeper connection and uphold the principle of equality between the partners (Balthrop, 2022; Barron, 2021; Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Olatunde, 2022). Submission has been essentially linked to Christian discipline for maintaining healthy relationships that glorify God (Miles, 2006). In Ephesians 6:1, Paul advises children to obey their parents, while in verse 5 of the same chapter, he commands slaves to obey their masters (Miles, 2006). In Ephesians 5:21-22, however, the term "obey" is replaced with "submit yourselves. Smith (2022). Keener does not touch on corporate leadership but argues that submission was not intended only for wives or women, but for the entire body of Christ; both husband and wife are to submit to one another (Keener, 2021, p. 551). Genesis 3:16b mentions that the concept of husbands ruling their wives was a result of sin entering the earth. Jesus, however, dealt with every sin and its consequences, and Christians are no longer subject to the law but to grace (Moskala, 2016). Although Ephesians

5:22 is a true biblical concept that is adhered to by many Bible believers, the misinterpretation of this Scripture is also a fundamental problem about the duties in marriages (Barron, 2021; Bartkowski, 1996).

Culture

In Nigeria, patriarchy is a source of marital discord (Ademiluka, 2021), a reverse of the notion of submission. Research demonstrates a correlation between patriarchy and marital disputes (Ali et al., 2022; Mshweshwe, 2020). Becker and Edgell (1999) and Manaswi, (2021) assert that women's sexism plays an undeniably substantial part in patriarchy. Male-identified, male-controlled, and male-centered social institutions inevitably accord masculinity and masculine characteristics a higher emphasis than femininity and feminine characteristics (Becker & Edgell, 1999). Based on studies examining the dynamics of submission in marriage, it's found that when submission is practiced effectively, couples attribute as much importance to their marriage as they do to the act of submission itself (Meadow, 1980). Eddy (2012) contends that assigning greater worth or significance to one gender over the other solely based on gender is unwarranted when considering sentiments related to marriage.

Maisiri (2015) examined scriptural and cultural ideas of headship and obedience among African Christians of Shona culture in Zimbabwe to discover some of the underlying issues between the two. The objective of Maisiri's research was to develop a pastoral care model that was not affected by patriarchal theology and catered to the needs of both men and women. Cultural attitudes and variances have resulted in widespread misconceptions of what gender implies (Maisiri, 2015) which in certain cases have deprived males of their power and granted it to their female counterparts (Harawa-Katumbi, 2012, p. 106). There are some that believe that it

is the church's responsibility to educate husbands how to lead spiritually inside the home (Meyer, 2018; Sanders, 2017).

According to Western scholars like Blankenhorn et al. (2004), certain Christians and non-Christian's advocate for women occupying a subservient role to men. This may suggest a link between traditional Christian ideas towards male leadership and female submission and African cultural beliefs. Both elements affect how African Christian couples perceived and applied the notions of male dominance and female submission in marriage (Blankenhorn et al., 2004). Partners must understand the underlying cultural and religious concepts of male headship and female subjugation prior to marriage (Blankenhorn et al., 2004). Stansbury et al. (2012) said pastors must have this understanding to fulfill their pastoral counseling responsibilities. Stansbury et al. (2012) argued further that churches (pastors) have a responsibility and duty to interpret cultural and religious issues, and that certain cultural and religious perspectives have been presumed.

Ademiluka (2021) examined the topic of marital discord among Nigerian Christians because of a misunderstanding of Ephesians 5:22-33 and indicated that when the new concept of marital connection is comprehended and effectively utilized in Christian marriages, there would be more peace or reciprocity between the couple. Previous research uncovered common themes of marital violence and misuse of submissiveness (Ademiluka, 2019; Agbonkhese & Onuoha, 2017; Babajide-Alabi, 2017; Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013). By illustrating the gap between the sexes, these studies appear to show that males are more valuable and respected than women (Becker & Edgell, 1999).

Gender Roles

The concept of mutual submission in marriage emphasizes mutual respect, affection, and submission between partners. Instead of one partner dominating the other, both partners submit to one another in love and respect (Keener, 2021). The biblical foundation of mutual submission can be found in Ephesians 5:21, whereas the husband and wife equally submit to each other rather than the that being a requirement only for the wife. Traditional gender roles place a demand on men and women to conform to a certain behavior placing a level of responsibility on how the individuals in that relationships conduct themselves (Eisend, 2019). Assigning specific roles and responsibilities based on gender is the norm across various cultures (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020; Eisend, 2019). Across these cultural norms, women are expected to fulfill the role as a stay-at-home wife and mother while their husbands goes to work and responsible for meeting the financial obligations for the family (Breda, et al., 2020; Jurczyk et al., 2019). When traditional gender roles are performed with these expectations, the dynamics of the relationship may be negatively impacted (D'Acunto et al., 2021).

Communication and conflict issues may be more prevalent among couples who follow traditional gender roles practices which leads to dissatisfaction and discontentment within the relationship compared to couples who practice unconventional gender roles (Pourshahbaz et al., 2020; Reidy et l., 2014). Traditional gender roles create opportunities for power disparities to arise within the relationship where one partner has more control than the other, typically this benefits the male partner in the relationship (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020; Conroy, 2014; Pietromonaco et al., 2021; Reidy et al., 2014).

Alghafli et al. (2014) perspective on marriage and family fulfillment highlighted significant challenges in defining gender roles, relationship dynamics among family, and the

basic rights of women. The biological differences in men and women have been overweighed by

society's perception of how these roles are typically defined (Cislaghi & Heise, 2020; Waite &

Gallagher, 2001; Weber et al., 2019). Buss, (1995) and Ylmaz et al., (2009) pointed out that

there is a discrepancy among men and women in how gender is reflected occupationally,

socially, and educationally. The male partner being the head of the household in providing

financially and female partner being a stay at home wife and mother is the reflection of

traditional marriages (Jurczykn et al., 2019; Sánchez-Mira, 2021).

Equality in relationships is a desire for women while men desires are to be the sole

provider and leader of their household (Del Boca et al., 2020). Age, level of education, and

socioeconomic status also influence expectations regarding marriage (Karney, 2021). Couples

can adopt more egalitarian gender roles in which individuals support one another as education

and income levels rise (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). In the traditional view of marriage, men earn

money and support the household and women assume the responsibilities of motherhood and

housekeeping (Ercan & Uçar, 2021). However, evidence-based research indicates that women

prefer partners who can assist them financially (Li et al., 2016; Walter, 2020).

Family of Origin

In the literature on marriage and family relationships, there has been interest in the

implications of family of origin on practicing submission in marriage (Khojasteh Mehr et al.,

2021). The effect of one's family of origin on marital satisfaction and the function of submission

in marital relationships have both been the subject of several studies. The term "family of origin"

refers to the significant caregivers and siblings with whom a person grows up, or the initial social

group to which a person belongs, which is frequently a person's biological or adoptive family

(Corey & Corey, 2020). Psychiatrist Murray Bowen, one of the pioneers of family therapy,

described a concept termed differentiation (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). Bowen proposed that family dysfunction is caused by a lack of differentiation, triangulation, and fusion, and that changes in the family system are dependent on individual change (Becvar & Becvar, 2009). Furthermore, Bowenian theory describes how families struggle to overcome chronic anxiety because of perceived emotional fusion (too much togetherness) or emotional cutoff (separation) from the family unit. Individuals within the family must obtain insight into emotional functioning and increase individual differences to reduce chronic anxiety (Brown, 1999).

The experiences in one's family of origin can significantly affect marriage mutuality according to research. Those from homes with elevated levels of conflict and low levels of warmth, for instance, reported lower levels of marriage togetherness or mutuality (Amato & Booth, 1991). Conversely, those who have experienced parental divorce may be more prone to have marital division (Amato, 2010). Aman et al., (2019) stated that practicing submission might increase marital satisfaction. This study indicated that couples who practiced submission had greater levels of marital satisfaction. There are differing views however on submission and marital satisfaction. Tasew and Getahun (2021) and Ali et al. (2022) discovered that couples who reported high levels of submission also reported high levels of conflict. Overall, the literature suggests that practicing submission in marriage may have both positive and negative consequences, and family-of-origin experiences can have a substantial impact on marital satisfaction. To completely comprehend the intricate interactions between the family of origin experiences, submission, and marital fulfillment, is outside of the scope of this study.

What are People Doing to Avoid Being in a Submissive Relationships

Divorce

In some marriages where submission is practiced women play a subservient role and are often mistreated, demeaned, and abused (Pietromonaco et al., 2021). Within western heterosexual marriages, post-divorce women have a much lower income than males (Twenge & Kasser, 2013; de Van den Bergh & Brink, 2021), and their likelihood of living in poverty increases. Women frequently have exclusive or main custody of their kids and are less likely to be remarried (Li et al., 2016; Raley & Sweeney, 2020). Because they must balance both paid jobs and most unpaid childcare tasks while having fewer resources than normally accessible to divorced men, many women experience a compound load because of divorce. Despite divorce effects, women are more likely than males to file for divorce (Brinig & Allen, 2000; Parker et al., 2022) and report higher levels of post-divorce life satisfaction once the marriage dissolves. This illustrates the paradox of divorce in modern Western culture.

Many women opt for divorce when they achieve financial independence from men, a trend fueled by the positive impacts of women's employment on individual and societal well-being. Research underscores that women's wages correlate with improved health and overall life satisfaction (Brown & Wright, 2017; Raley & Sweeney, 2020; Varkey et al., 2010). As women gain financial autonomy, they experience reduced reliance on partners, leading to a reassessment of priorities. This shift may render them less inclined to prioritize their partner's well-being over their own, prompting decreased tolerance for marital dissatisfaction (Delton & Robertson, 2016). With greater economic self-sufficiency, women are empowered to address conflicts within the relationship and may be less willing to tolerate unacceptable behavior from their spouses, ultimately influencing the likelihood of separation and divorce.

Singleness

Social scientists believe that Black women's reasons for remaining single are quite diverse (Hurt et al., 2014; Raley et al., 2015). There are several reasons why some women decide against getting married and favor singleness (Apostolou & Esposito, 2020). The concept of submission is taken into consideration by some women who desire to stay single, however, this in itself is not always the determining factor for singleness. Women who conform to traditional gender roles are more likely to experience dissatisfaction in their marriage compared to women who deviate from these practices (Schoenfeld et al. , 2012).

Furthermore, women who were taught by their family of influence or environments to follow traditional gender role norms may experience a sense of unfulfillment and dissatisfaction particularly when their husbands do not fulfill his role as the provider and leader of the household. Disappointment and frustration from these women is the result when this expectation and need for support and provision goes unmet The state of happiness and fulfillment is influenced by these societal norms and expectations and impact how gender roles are expressed within marriage. Women are choosing a peace of mind by if that means maintaining their singleness rather than being in a relationship where they will be devalued and mishandled (Nguyen et al., 2017; Widom et al., 2014). Marriage may become less appealing for these women as they perceive this type of relationship a form of bondage and entrapment rather than freedom and liberation.

Some women decide singleness to avoid the expectation to conform to a man's idea of what a marriage should be and to avoid conforming to traditional gender role norms (Adamczyk, 2017; Apostolou and Esposito, 2020). Other women make the choice to remain single to pursue personal goals and professional development (Ang et al., 2020). Traditional gender roles and

submission practices may be deterrents for some women who choose singleness however, many other factors must be taken into consideration before making this claim.

Polyamory

Unlike monogamy, a polyamory relationship involves being in a relationship with multiple partners who experience emotional and physical intimacy and sex (Kleinplatz & Diamond, 2014). This relationship does not have the same expectations of a traditional relationship or marriage where they have to consider practicing submission (Moors et al., 2021; Vilkin & Sprott, 2021). There is limited research on this topic however, studies suggest reasons why individuals are choosing polyamory relationships over monogamy. Polyamorous relationships experience greater levels of satisfaction and freedom in comparison to individuals in monogamous relationships (Cohen, 2016; Fairbrother et al., 2019).

The motivation and desire for emotional intimacy while diversifying sexual partners and personal evolving is why some choose polyamory (Dominguez et al., 2017; Hnatkovičová & Bianchi, 2022). These relationships are said to have a higher level of communication, trust, and openness than monogamous couples (Moors et al., 2021; Vilkin & Sprott, 2021). While Polyamory is not the remedy for relationship challenges or a way to avoid being in a committed relationship, some may choose this relationship status to avoid the practices, such as submission, which is normally associated with traditional monogamous relationships (Balzarini et al., 2019; Flicker et al., 2021).

Advantages or Benefits of Mutual Submission

There are advantages to equity relationships that lack a patriarchal or hierarchical structure. Couples flourish and marriages endure when they have mutually beneficial relationships or partnerships, but the opposite is true when one partner feels dominated or

controlled (Hanna, 2021; Jackman, 2020). Marriage satisfaction, health satisfaction, and job fulfillment are among the benefits of mutual submission (Khojasteh Mehr et al., 2021; Kiecolt-Glaser & Wilson, 2017; Wilson & Novak, 2022).

Marriage Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is a collective perception shared by both partners in a marriage and isn't solely determined by one individual (Zaheri et al., 2016). Put differently, the level of satisfaction experienced by each person in a marriage is influenced not only by their own feelings but also by those of their spouse and their mutual perception of the relationship. For example, if one partner in a marriage is content while the other is dissatisfied, the overall marital happiness would be diminished (Kamp Dush et al., 2008). Conversely, when both partners generally experience satisfaction within the marriage, the overall level of marital contentment tends to be higher.

When all aspects of a couple's joint existence are considered, each person in the marriage shares specific mental stage components that make up marital contentment (Bilal & Rasool, 2020). David and Stafford (2013) examined other factors that might be predictors of marital satisfaction using relational frameworks based on spirituality to examine the following: affiliation of humans with God, communication between religious partners, and forgiving actions. The result of their research found that when mutual religious communication activities are common, a couple's spiritual or religious connection or relationship with God is a common indirect factor that affects the quality of their marriage. Components of marital fulfillment include relationships with future in-laws, social support, psychological well-being, and overall life satisfaction (Thomas et al., 2017). The enjoyment of sexual activity and the support of one's spouse are additional factors (Bilal & Rasool, 2020; Javanmard & Garegozlo, 2013). Studies

have repeatedly shown a link between psychological well-being and marital satisfaction (Kim &

McKenry, 2002).

Health Satisfaction

Health satisfaction is defined overall satisfaction with one's general health. In addition to

the absence of disease or infirmity, health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social

well-being (Kühne & Zindel, 2020). Conversations around heath satisfaction are normally

studied alongside patient satisfaction in determining the quality of healthcare provided with

respect to the client's or patient's goals and expectations (Janicijevic et al., 2013). Women who

experience more happiness personally and within marriage attribute mental health practices as

the reason (Aman et al., 2019; Lamela et al., 2020). There is some evidence that suggest couples

who practice mutual submission are healthier overall however, this correlation has not been

clearly defined. Lower levels of stress and optimal physical health are potential attributes of

couples who share the role of submission. Physical illnesses and diseases such as cardiovascular

disease, immune deficiencies, and depression have all been reported lower of couples who

practice mutual submission in their marriage (Kiecolt-Glaser and Wilson, 2017).

Reduced levels of anxiety and improved life satisfaction has been linked to mutual

submission practices in comparison to those that did not practice mutual submission in their

marriage (Proulx et al., 2007). Improved emotional connection and support in relationships have

also been linked to mutual submission practices in relationships. Holt-Lunstad et al. (2008)

found that couples with a strong emotional connection experienced lower rates of chronic

illnesses and death when compared to couples who experienced challenges with connecting

emotionally (Kiecolt-Glaser & Newton, 2001). This suggests that mutual submission positively

impacts emotional, mental, and physical health among individuals and couples (Holt-Lunstad et

al., 2010; Perelli-Harris & Styrc, 2018). Gómez-López et al., (2019) and Whisma, (2003) found that the quality of one's marital relationship affects physical health.

Unhealthy marital relationships, however, are linked to poor physical health. Studies which examined biological pathways from marital quality to physiological outcomes found that marital dissatisfaction is linked to cardiovascular stress and cardiovascular disease (Birditt et al., 2019; Donoho et al., 2015). This may be the case due to cardiovascular reactivity to marital conflict (Baer et al., 2006). The endocrine and immune systems are also linked to marital conflict, which is frequently measured by the behaviors of spouses during an interaction task (Kiecolt-Glaser, 2018; South & Krueger, 2013). When spouses support one another cortisol responses can be moderated along with patterns of communication (Papp et al., 2013; Shrout et al., 2020).

A quantitative study published by Park (2022) investigated the effects of health satisfaction and family relationship satisfaction on depression among low-income middle-aged men with perceived economic difficulties. When analyzing the mediating effect of social acquaintance satisfaction on depression, "the results revealed a partial mediating effect on health satisfaction and a fully mediating effect on family relationship satisfaction" (Park, 2022, page number). This confirms that when spousal support is available, it helps to improve overall satisfaction.

Job or Employment Satisfaction

In this study, employment satisfaction and job satisfaction will be used interchangeably. Job satisfaction is rooted in an employee's perception of how well the job meets their fundamental needs (Sutiyatno, 2022). An earlier definition by Hoppock (1935) characterizes job satisfaction as a combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental factors that

prompt an individual to declare, "I am satisfied with my job." According to this perspective, while job satisfaction can be influenced by various external factors, it remains primarily a trait of the employee's internal disposition, representing a collection of factors contributing to a sense of contentment. Another definition by Schneider and Snyder (1975) and Locke (1976) describes job satisfaction as a positive emotional state resulting from the evaluation of one's job or work experiences. The relationship between job satisfaction and productivity, motivation, work performance, and life satisfaction (Hayajneh et al., 2021) extends to the private lives and relationships of employees. Research implies that employment satisfaction is an influencer on marital satisfaction (Lavner & Clark, 2017). A link between marriage satisfaction and employment satisfaction exist when individuals are fulfilled professionally (Perelli-Harris et al., 2019). Professional fulfillment feeds into their marriage relationship creating overall satisfaction among married couples. Some studies suggest that practicing mutual submission influences job satisfaction which may reduce conflict at work and home however, there is not extensive research for this claim (Thomas and Ganster, 1995). This claim however does imply that mutual submission practices may be a contributing factor for reduced conflict and increased job satisfaction.

When employees experienced greater levels of emotional support from their spouses, they also experience greater levels of work life balance and job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2000). This would suggest that when mutual submission practices are a priority among couples with increased levels of emotional support from their spouse they will inevitably experience increased levels of job satisfaction (Carlson et al., 2018). Wulandari et al. , 2019 supported this idea in identifying the connection between work and family conflict, marriage, and job satisfaction. This study revealed that when emotional support is not present or reduced and mutual submission

practices are not a priority, conflict increases and marriage satisfaction decreases. The research

findings reveal the connection between relational and professional relationship satisfaction and

how each relationship determines the outcome of the other. Therefore, when couples understand

their roles and responsibilities at home and work, conflict is reduced and marriage and job

satisfaction improves. Furthermore, this ideology was supported by a studies that revealed a

relationship between mutual submission and overall relationship and job satisfaction (Kalliath &

Kalliath, 2015; Obrenovic et al., 2020).

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

The literature that was explored in this chapter was the perspectives of divorced

professional Black women of mutual submission in marriage. It was essential to provide the

framework that guided the literature in helping to understand this topic, therefore, the

background, culture, and theological basis of submission practices were explored further. The

research assessed the issues in understanding and addressing the lack of awareness and

implementation of mutual submission practices in marriage. It also provided a solid framework

on submission and mutual submission practices within romantic relationships. Information on

avoidance methods that individuals can take to avoid relationships that involve submission

behaviors and practices were shared in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter provided perceived

benefits of mutual submission being linked to results including emotional connection within

relationships, mental, emotional, and physical health, work and family conflict resolution and job

satisfaction. The theoretical frameworks that guided this study were also discussed in this chapter

which are womanist theory, social exchange theory, and equity theory.

This study sought to fill a gap in the literature on the perspectives of divorced

Professional Black Women on reciprocal submission in marriage. Studies about the advantages

of mutual submission are limited. There are also limited studies on mutual submission and its

role in marriage, on the perceptions of divorced Professional Black Women on mutual

submission, and on the effect of mutual submission on couples seeking to avoid divorce. Some

of the previous research focused on submission is biased in favor of men and other studies have

neglected to explore the experiences of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional

Black women. There is a need for further study on this topic to highlight the challenges this

demographic of women faces in divorce prevention.

Chapter Three: Methods

Overview

Participants in this study were tasked with detailing their encounters with mutual submission in marriage, particularly instances where mutual submission was lacking and its impact on their decision to pursue divorce. The aim was to explore factors that could potentially have preserved their marriage and to elucidate the role, if any, of submission practices in their overall marital satisfaction. This study enlightened and educated professionals who work with singles, couples looking for marriage, and married couples about the benefits of mutual submission in marriage. This study focused on the lived experience of divorced Professional Black Women and mutual submission in marriage. Several studies looked at multiple aspects of the experiences of Black professional women who had divorce. However, there is limited research related to mutual submission in marriage. This study informed counselors and clergy who interact with divorced professional Black women. Many women have a misperception of submission in marriage due to how it has been represented in the past (Tracy, 2007). Some have even experienced misrepresentation in their own relationships (Alghafli et al., 2014). Being misunderstood and misrepresented is one of the main issues Black women face (Dowe, 2020). Counselors, clergy, and other professionals who work with these women should be motivated to consider how they can best offer acknowledgment, empathy, and support, considering that the possibility exists that the divorces happened due to a lack of mutual submission in the marriages.

This chapter provided a summary of the study's qualitative phenomenological design that was used along with the research questions to guide the main objectives of this study. This chapter additionally addressed the setting of the study and the step-by-step process used to identify individuals who were qualified to participate. Finally, the aspect of the researcher and

the methods used to collect and analyze data that demonstrated the integrity of the research were

covered.

Design

This study was based on the transcendental phenomenological research method. For

example, Creswell and Poth (2018) and Luciani et al. (2019) claim that the qualitative study

design is often used to assist researchers in understanding complicated data. With divorced

professional Black women, the qualitative study design was the best way to discover their real-

life experiences of mutual submission in marriage (Flood, 2010; Neubauer et al., 2019). This

method made it possible to illustrate in detail how this group of women lived their lives as they

practiced mutual submission in their marriage (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013).

What the participants stated about how mutual submission practices affected their

marriages was unique to each person. They shared their version of the truth based on what they

recalled and how they experienced situations while they were married (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz,

2013). Using qualitative research, the study provided a full picture of how the participants felt

about mutual submission practices (Alase, 2017; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Erlingsson &

Brysiewicz, 2013; Moustakas, 1994; Naderifar et al., 2017).

The rational base set the stage for the interpretive framework (Alase, 2017; Creswell &

Poth, 2018). These are things like "paradigms or views that the researcher contributes to the

research process, or they may be theories or theoretical orientations that govern research

practice" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 22). This study revolved around the social constructivist

method. Using social constructivism as a lens, every participant described and reflected on the

meaning of their own life events in their own way (Knapp, 2019). Finding ways to understand

different interpretations of the same experience an important part of qualitative study (Creswell

& Poth, 2018). Interviews capture recollections of actual events (Ho, 2006; Rudrum et al., 2022).

Transcendental and hermeneutic are two types of phenomenology research that can be

used for qualitative studies (Neubauer et al., 2019). In a transcendental study, also referred to as

a descriptive phenomenology, the researcher remains objective when speaking with participants

as if they are seeing the phenomenon for the first time (Addai-Duah, 2020; Neubauer et al.,

2019). Researchers that choose this phenomenological approach should detach themselves from

all associated emotions, belief systems, thoughts, and conclusions concerning the study to allow

a new perspective to develop (Heppner et al., 2016).

In the capacity of a participatory researcher of a qualitative study, the researcher would

take a universal approach, in collaboration with those affected by this study, for the purpose of

education and acting or effecting mechanism of social change (Minkler, 2005). It is helpful for

the researcher to know who will be impacted by the results of the research, the key stakeholders,

how will this research be used to effect change, how it will help others learn about what is being

studied throughout the process, and the action required to create change. This approach provides

an opportunity for the researcher to work with others in making shared decisions regarding the

proposed research, participating in the research focus, data collection and or analysis,

interpretation of results, and dissemination and or implementation of the results.

The transcendental phenomenology approach was utilized in this study. Neubauer et al.

(2019) stated researchers must adopt an objective position where they refrain from letting their

own subjectivity influence the narratives provided by study participants in transcendental

phenomenology. For the researcher to be able to set aside their prejudices, they must be able to

achieve that status of "transcendental-I" (Davidsen, 2013, p. 321). It is imperative that the

researcher is aware of their unconscious biases regarding the research topic and experiences

shared by participants. To assist with remaining bias and mitigating unconscious biases,

reviewing the data from a renewed perspective and putting aside any knowledge, ideas, or

thoughts of the subject matter and participants' experiences is the best practice as it allow for a

reflective understanding of the topic (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological methodology

was also useful in addressing and filling the gap in research of mutual submission practices in

marriage among divorced PBW. This research is designed to support professionals in the field

create and execute therapeutic and counseling interventions intended to empower PBW in

achieving life and relationship satisfaction who desire romantic relationships as well as provide

tools and resources to couples who are experiencing marital challenges.

Research Questions

The questions used to guide this research are as followed:

Central Research Question

What is the lived experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional women?

Sub Question RQ 1

What impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage?

Sub Question RQ 2

What is the role of gender in practicing submission in marriage?

Setting

The Zoom video platform was used in this study to conduct interviews with participants.

The participants were given instructions to position themselves in an obscure location with a

reliable connection to the internet and secure themselves behind a locked door to prevent any

third-party interruptions or interference during their interview. The interviewer also situated

themselves in a private location to ensure that the confidentiality of participants was preserved.

Participants were asked to review and sign the informed consent form before interviews were

conducted located in Appendix D. Participants were provided with complete confidentiality and

granted the opportunity of withdrawing from the study or decline to respond to any questions

that made them uneasy. The participants were informed that the sessions would be recorded in

the form of audio and transcribed by a professional transcription service after they were

completed. The participants was a given a chance to review their transcripts with the goal to

verify the authenticity of the information they provided. The participants were informed that

pseudonyms would be utilized to guarantee the confidentiality of their identities. The

researcher stored all sensitive written data and recordings in a securely encrypted file and on a

computer that can only be accessed by them using a password. If any changes were necessary,

the researcher agreed to such changes at that time and met again with the participant to clarify

any uncertain or unclear details.

Participants

Qualitative research should consist of at least eight participants (Santos et al., 2020). Yet,

other scholars argue that a sample size ranging from six to 20 is considered suitable for

qualitative research (Bergen, 2020; Ellis, 2016; Mirick & Wladkowski, 2019). The study had a

sample size of 10. The researcher conducted convenience sampling to recruit participants,

utilizing many social media channels including Facebook, Facebook groups, LinkedIn, and the

researcher's professional email distribution list (Goldberg et al., 2019; Kühne & Zindel, 2020).

The search for these groups included various terms such as divorced professional Black women's

view on submission in marriage, divorced professional Black women's view on mutual

submission in marriage, and divorced professional Black women. Convenience sampling

involves selecting persons who are both willing and available to engage in a study, ensuring their accessibility for data collection as needed (Creswell, 2013; Creswell, 2013; Winton & Sabol, 2022). Each participant was required to choose a pseudonym under which their information would be recorded to ensure confidentiality. Participants self-identified to determine if they were divorced PBW. The criteria for selection included:

1. Professional Black Women (PBW).

2. PBW who are heterosexual.

3. PBW who reside in the United States of America

4. PBW who are divorced.

5. The specified age bracket included women aged 35 to 65 years. The researcher obtained an extensive variety of women's experiences at various stages of the life cycle from this particular age group (Creswell, 2013).

6. The women in the sample were Black or African American divorced professional women.

7. PBW with educational backgrounds of at least a four-year degree, career fields including entrepreneurs or holding a leadership position in corporate America.

This allowed the researcher to obtain data utilizing the maximal variation technique which may take the problem's complexity into consideration (Creswell, 2013). People in this stage of life start to reveal more personal information about themselves and are more willing to consider enduring committed partnerships (Newall & Menec, 2019; Widick et al., 1978).

Ages 35 to 64 are regarded as early to late middle adulthood, during this time people leave their mark on the world by fostering or creating things that will outlive them (Medley, 1980; Zinck & Neel, 2020). Individuals in this age range feel a need to build or nurture

something that will endure, frequently mentoring others or bringing about constructive change that will benefit others which is equivalent to having a sense of accomplishment, usefulness, and success in the world (Sarang et al., 2019). Participants were compensated with a $25 Amazon gift card, which was delivered electronically through email upon the conclusion of their interview.

Procedures

After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB), a flyer was generated along with an email outlining the study's objectives and the criteria for participant eligibility (see Appendix F for IRB approval letter). The administration of several Facebook groups for divorced women was contacted, seeking permission to publicize the study. Outgoing documentation provided sufficient information for individuals to make informed choices. This correspondence also included the email address and phone number, providing prospective participants with the means to contact with any study-related queries. After obtaining consent from many Facebook administrators, the flyer was shared in their Facebook groups. Upon receiving interest from prospective participants by Facebook message and email, a demographic survey was later delivered to them through email to determine their eligibility for the study. Several ethical considerations, including the use of pseudonyms to safeguard the identity of participants and the safekeeping of any handwritten, typed, and audio files, were discussed. After participants were selected, they were required to complete an informed consent form prior to scheduling an interview. The survey was emailed from the Liberty University email address directly to the email address participants provided. See Appendix A for recruitment flyer.

The Researcher's Role

In qualitative research, the term "guiding the study" typically refers to the individual(s) conducting the research (Creswell, 2013). They are responsible for designing the study, collecting data, analyzing findings, and drawing conclusions. It is imperative that they gain an epoche and fresh perspective each time (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche is an important part of phenomenology research as it helps eliminate assumptions and biases so that the phenomenon can be understood in its own terms (Neubauer et al., 2019). It is important for participants to let go of any ideas they have about what is being studied (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022). If professional Black women want to be completely honest about what they think regarding mutual submission in marriage, they must identify their own assumptions and beliefs (Creswell, 2013).

The technique of bracketing was used to ensure sure that personal beliefs and biases did not have an effect on the study results. Bracketing includes the researcher putting aside their thoughts, feelings, or views they have about the topic so as not to impose them on the participants. In qualitative research, bracketing aims to lessen the negative effects that opinions and biases might have, which in turn lowers skepticism about the study (Shufutinsky, 2020). Another way to learn more about bias was through reflective journaling. This involved the researcher maintaining a diary to express thoughts and feelings about bias management (Vagle, 2009). When conducting phenomenological research, journaling can help bridge preconceived notions and opinions about the phenomenon of interest. The assumptions were,

1. Participants may not be familiar with the terms of submission or mutual submission in marriage.

2. Participants who are not religious may not understand or connect with submission or its purpose in marriage.

3. Participants sharing their story may be triggered due to failed marriages in instances where submission was abused.

4. Participants may not be able to conceptualize submission in sharing in depth what this should or should not look like in marriage.

5. Christian participants may find it challenging to submit in cases of domestic violence.

6. Due to the shame that can be associated with failed marriages in the church, Christian participants may not be fully transparent.

7. Participants may share from a place of hurt unable to disconnect their biases from the truth regarding submission in marriage.

This study utilized reflexive journaling and bracketing to further mitigate bias. A marriage and family therapist was approached for assistance on how to facilitate healthy ways of coping with the biases that could surface through interviews with participants due to triggers, emotions, and sensations.. When performing phenomenological research, journaling can assist in bridging preexisting notions and opinions about the phenomena of interest (Thomas, 2021).

Data Collection

The collection of data is an integral part of the research procedure. This process was used to accurately represent the participants' first-hand experiences while making sure that the data aligned with the study's goals (Guven, 2018). It took 2.5 weeks to collect the data using interviews as the primary data collection method. The utilization of interviewing was helpful in guiding active participation and involvement from the participants which allowed them to communicate their own experiences and assisted the researcher in identifying patterns and themes throughout the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Interviews are often used in

research to guide the conversation between the researcher and participants in the study Creswell, 2007.

In person and phone interviews in research are a primary method of data collection (Creswell, 2008, 2014). Semi-structured, open-ended interview questions were used for this study, found in Appendix E. The interviewer should use open ended questions when using the phenomenological design (Moustakas, 1994). This approach is beneficial because it enables the participants to freely express their stories without being restricted by the researcher's perspectives (Creswell, 2008).

Qualitative interviewing is a strategy used for qualitative research in which the primary mechanism for data collection is completed through phone or in person interviews (Creswell, 2008, 2014). Participants shared how the practices of mutual submission or the lack thereof influenced their decision to divorce through their stories and perspectives of their experiences. The qualitative method of research is supported when participants are encouraged to share their experiences in their own words through open ended questions (Heppner et al., 2016).

The interviews lasted anywhere from 20 to 56 minutes and participants were asked 26 semi-structured open-ended questions. The participants who participated were encouraged to go into more detail about their experiences when it was suitable to do so. Participants were additionally encouraged to ask any questions or concerns they had about the study during the interview process. Allowing participants to ask clarifying questions allowed them to feel less uncomfortable during the interview process and helps build a relationship between the researcher and the individual being interviewed (Heppner et al., 2016). Before the interview questions were asked, participants were made aware that their identities would be kept confidential. They also had to choose an alias for the study that would be used to record their experiences. Participants

were informed that their conversations would be recorded on an online platform during the

consent period of the process. The participants were additionally informed that the data would be

interpreted by a professional transcription company and that they would have to sign a non-

disclosure agreement protecting the confidentiality of the data. The participants were further

advised that an email copy of their transcripts would be sent to them so that they review to

ensure sure the data was accurate based on the results of the transcription. Participants were

provided with a due date to complete the review and return the transcripts along with any

changes or additions that could have been misunderstood during recording.

Notes recorded throughout the course of the interviews served to increase the clarity of

the data shared by the participants. Transcripts from the transcriptionist service were cross-

referenced with the participants' recordings to confirm the accuracy and completeness of the

transcriptions. The transcripts were reviewed several times to check for accuracy comparing to

what the participant's voiced during the interview. The transcripts were also emailed to the

participants for verification of the document ensuring the transcriber captured their voice and the

accuracy of their experiences. One participant made little modifications to their transcript. The

remaining nine participants stated that their interviews were accurately depicted and hence did

not request any changes to be made.

Due to the potential emotional impact and suffering associated with the subject of

divorce, participants were furnished with mental health resources that included details on support

groups and therapists. Participants were given access to these tools so that they could use them if

they needed to. The data gathered from the interviews were kept safe on a flash drive and in a

locked office. Only the researcher was given exclusive access to it. Additionally, the computer

that the flash drive was used to access was also password protected and only accessible by the researcher.

Interviews

Individuals who are interviewed using semi-structured questions are able to express their desires, while also providing the researcher an opportunity to ask relevant questions to help participants understand the study's goals (Durdella, 2017). Magnusson and Marecek (2015) suggest that semi-structured interviews allow participants to become familiar with the questions and answer them based on the topic of the research. The goal of this qualitative study was to define and describe the phenomenon of mutual submission in marriages among divorced professional Black women. During individual interviews, the participants were afforded the opportunity to share their thoughts about their experiences that led to their divorce.

The interview questions were examined over by three professionals who had worked with individuals as well couples in counseling and coaching settings. In their individual fields, these individuals had more than ten years of experience between them. This process was necessary as these individuals were selected due to their experiences about the interview review process and were able to provide a unique point of view. They were selected based on their background knowledge and skills and recent, hands-on experience on the subject of submission practices in marriage. The reviewers' responsibility was to review the questions for clarity and depth. The reviewers were given the primary research question, two sub-questions, and semi-structured interview questions to review.

They evaluated the research question's effectiveness to determine if it addressed the objectives for the research. The SMEs approached the assessment of the questions from a practical and sensible perspective due to their prior expertise and knowledge of the interview

process. Each reviewer was able to respond to questions following their evaluations of the effectiveness and suitability of the interview questions.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted using the Zoom platform. A typical interview involves asking questions over the phone or in person, and it can be conducted anywhere, such as at the participant's home, a public setting like a restaurant, or over WebEx (Jackson, 2016). In a 2016 article, Jackson said that "unstructured interviews contain data with spontaneous and open-ended questions" (p. 82). Data interpretation was required for the interviews to elicit each participant's experiences. The information was used to create beneficial approaches that were presented to participants. Introductions took place at the start of the interviews.

To safeguard their identity, participants were advised that their true identities would not be used. Consequently, individuals were requested to select a pseudonym that would be used to document their personal details. The participants were advised that the interviews would be recorded, and the transcripts would be sent to them through email so they could check the accuracy of the transcription. The interviews started after the participants were informed of the study's goal and thanked the subjects for agreeing to take part.

The interview questions were designed to be open-ended in order to encourage participants to freely express their personal stories and perceptions of the shared phenomenon. Scholars realize how their background impacts their perceptions and how their "personal, cultural, and historical experiences influence their interpretations" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 24). The initial four questions served as introductory measures to establish rapport with the participants. The interviewer used pleasant, informal language in an effort to help the interviewee feel at ease while asking these questions (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015). Questions

one through four were meant to help soothe the participants and create a

positive environment for everyone (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

The second set of questions were part of the introduction category and were asked to

help participants reflect on their own view of mutual submission (Magnusson & Marecek, 2015).

The next set of questions provided participants an opportunity to reflect on how they felt

regarding faith and submission. The last two groups of questions afforded participants an

opportunity to share more about society and consider how gender roles affected their previous

marriage.

At the end of the interview, the participants were provided one last opportunity to share

any additional details or components of their experiences in their own words. Participants shared

their experiences with mutual submission in their marriages and considered how it affected their

decision to divorce. Heppner et al. (2016) suggested that qualitative researchers should

encourage participants to use their own words when communicating about their experiences.

When you ask open-ended questions, individuals can easily share their thoughts and feelings

without being limited by predetermined responses that might not accurately reflect their own

experience. According to Creswell (2007), interviews precisely capture interviewees' accents and

successfully share their stories through the researcher's conversation with them. During the

conversations, detailed notes were taken to properly record the stories that the participants

presented. A password-protected computer file was used to store the data so that the information

about the participants would stay confidential.

Screening/Demographic Survey

A screening/demographic survey, which you can find in Appendix B, was used to ensure

that participants were eligible to participate in the study. Participants were asked to provide

information on their ethnic background, religious beliefs, age, marital status, level of education,

and socioeconomic position. These factors were essential to include in the survey as they have an

immense impact on an individual's behavior and actions (Thomas et al., 2017).

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

</div>

For this study, transcendental phenomenological analysis was the best way to validate the

actual experiences of divorced Black professional women with mutual submission in marriage

(Moustakas, 1994). Rev.com was hired to transcribe the interviews, and the records of the

participants were kept on a computer file that required a password (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Moustakas (1994) described choosing a phenomenon to study and the researcher being able to

set aside personal prejudices essential elements of a research process in collecting the necessary

data for those who have experience with the phenomenon being study.

The four-stage analysis approach by Moustakas consists of the following stages: epoche,

phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis of meanings (Moustakas,

1994). During the initial phase, referred to as epoche, the researcher is required to suspend their

own ideas, convictions, and assumptions regarding the subject being studied (Moustakas, 1994).

Hence, the methodology used for this study involved viewing the topic from a new point of view

and setting aside any subjective prejudices by maintaining a receptive attitude (Moustakas,

1994). The second stage, phenomenological reduction allowed for a careful analysis of the

narratives line by line for an in-depth examination of the participant's transcripts. This process is

repeated multiple times (Moustakas, 1994). Using bracketing, horizontalizing, and grouping of

similar responses and patterns is how you organize a written account of a phenomenon through themes and points of view (Moustakas, 1994).

Horizontalizing is taking notes of any comments, words, or quotes that offered insight into how the participants experienced mutual submission practices in marriage and then attentively analyzing the data by each line on its own (Creswell, 2007). Any language, words, or quotes about mutual submission in marriage was scrutinized to decide if additional analysis and description of the data was needed (Moustakas, 1994). During this stage of the data analysis, the unique experiences of each individual were examined closely, along with a detailed description of what each experience meant to the participants (Neubauer et al., 2019). After the horizontalization process, the data's main themes were identified and categorized into groups depending on how participant's experiences overlapped with each other (Creswell, 2007). An excel spreadsheet was used to categorize the data into possible themes, which were then evaluated, improved, and modified as needed. Individual experiences of each account were detailed in writing following the completion of theme creation.

In the third stage, imaginative variation is implemented (Moustakas, 1994). This involves investigating alternative perspectives and variants of the phenomenon using imagination, promoting creativity and the generation of new ideas to deepen understanding through various lenses (Moustakas, 1994). Subsequently, the researcher utilized the previously emphasized comments to better understand the context or environment in which participants experienced the phenomena (Creswell, 2007). In order to achieve imaginative variation, it is necessary to consider alternative viewpoints, positions, roles, or functions in order to explore various interpretations (Moustakas, 1994).

The main objective of imaginative variation is to explain the fundamental principles of the topic being examined (Moustakas, 1994). While the experiences of each woman with mutual submission in marriage differed, they all embarked on distinct journeys in terms of how mutual submission was introduced or impacted in their marriage, as well as their limited comprehension and application of it. The study utilized the textual description and creative variety to describe the specific circumstances in which each participant experienced mutual submission inside their marriage. Moustakas (1994) defined this process as a structural description which pertains to the methodology of understanding the phenomena.

The last stage was the synthesis of meanings and essences (Moustakas, 1994). Creswell (2007) stated that the researcher will create a comprehensive explanation that captures the fundamental structure of the phenomena, known as the essential invariant structure. This narrative effectively communicates the participants' shared experiences (Creswell, 2007). This synthesis contributes to the formation of a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon that incorporates both individual and collective perspectives (Nowell et al., 2017; Squires, 2023). The narrative effectively communicates the participants' shared experiences (Creswell, 2007). During this phase, integration of the participant's experiences occurred followed by the merging of the textual and structural accounts of all participants to generate an overall description of the phenomenon of mutual submission practices in marriage among these women.

The summary of this study revealed that all participants were cognizant of and made efforts to engage in some sort of submission within their marriages. However, the practice of mutual submission was either inconsistent, inadequately defined, or not practiced at all. Themes were constructed to facilitate the integration of the various aspects of divorced PBW and mutual submission in marriage. There was a shared aspect among the participants with their experience

of the effect of submission, and the absence of mutual submission ,although their

experiences differed. The synthesis provided a comprehensive overview of the participants'

experiences in the research (Creswell, 2007). Moustakas' four-step analysis afforded

phenomenological study a structured way to be accomplished, which led to a deeper

understanding and analysis of human experiences (Moustakas, 1994).

For effective organization and management of the data, it was stored in computer files

with standard file names that protected the participants' privacy and made it easy to find

information during the analysis phase. Each file was kept safe on a computer that required a

password and was used as a record of data. The files were organized in an electronic folder using

a filing system, with subfolders for each participant. The researcher was the only one who could

access the password-protected computer and the data stored.

The data was saved with pseudonyms as the participant's names, along with the date and

type of data that was gathered through conversations. This unified library's use of an

organizational system made it simple to retrieve information (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Heppner et

al., 2016). To keep protected data safe and accurate, it is important that you maintain it in its

original version (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This additionally ensures that researchers follow legal

and safety guidelines when they work with humans.

Trustworthiness

When the data analysis is done cautiously and with a diligence, the results are believable,

and the study is thought to be reliable (Amin et al., 2020; Rose & Johnson, 2020; Shufutinsky,

2020). This method stresses the importance of being truthful in possessing strong morals when

collecting, analyzing, and combining data to determine its results. Finding credibility,

dependability, confirmability, and transferability are some of the significant factors that

determine how trustworthy study is. Trustworthiness was used to demonstrate that the data

gathering, analysis, and synthesis were carried out honestly (Billups, 2019). More about

how trustworthiness is determined will be further explored in the next section.

Credibility

Research credibility is defined as a level of confidence when discovering the truth

(Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Trust was developed by ongoing interactions with the

participants and feedback from other Black professional women who had experienced divorce

(Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Participants were instructed to assess the research findings

collected through the data collection process to guarantee that the originality and accuracy of

their stories were captured (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Data validation phases took place

during this procedure. At the conclusion of the interview, participants requested that they review

their transcripts to ensure sure that their observations, interpretations, and descriptions

were accurately recorded.

The interview concluded with a discussion and analysis of the effects of mutual

submission. Triangulation was made possible by the use of the literature research, interviews,

and demographic survey. By offering an in-depth understanding of the study problem and

strengthening its validity through the use of various data collection methods, triangulation

increased the research's credibility (Billups, 2019; Raskind et al., 2019). The study's credibility

was enhanced by providing a thorough evaluation of the research problem and validity using a

variety of approaches related to the same subject (Billups, 2019; Raskind et al., 2019). The

participant responses revealed the themes' validity and dependability. Finding any possible

missing data was part of the member checking process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As evidenced

by the research findings, this allowed the researcher to identify a deficiency of specific

information (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Dependability and Confirmability

Obtaining information from experts or other professionals in a particular field of study is

regarded as a peer review approach. According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013), this

strategy encourages these groups to approach the research outcomes honestly. In this study, peer

review served as a mechanism for establishing the validity of the research. A professional Black

woman who had recently divorced and was familiar with the idea of mutual submission was

chosen to offer an unbiased assessment of the study's conclusions. The study's conclusions and

their interpretations served as a successful validation of the research.

Transferability

Using theories can help improve qualitative research. Risks including ignoring ethical

concerns or gathering insufficient data could have an impact on the study's transferability

(Joodaki et al., 2020). The Institutional Review Board (IRB) would be notified of any potential

risks identified through the application of risk prevention tactics. Transferability is the degree to

which research findings may be applied and accepted in different situations (Nyirenda et al.,

2020). This study's applicability may be negatively impacted by disregarding ethical concerns or

by faulty data collection and interpretation, which would be reported to the IRB in accordance

with the normal protocol to enhance threat reduction (Chauvette et al., 2019).

Maintaining accuracy in attaining transferability can be achieved by obtaining

descriptions of the participants' experiences and their surrounding circumstances through the

participant verification technique. This was achieved by sending the transcripts of the interviews

and the analysis that followed to every participant for their careful examination. The research

conclusions were communicated simply and clearly. This process provided transferability which

made the study theoretically repeatable in comparable circumstances with divorced professional

Black women who explored the idea of mutual submission in marriage. This methodology

additionally facilitated the extensive application and verification of results in many contexts

and indicated significant areas for research and verification.

Ethical Considerations

Concerns about the ethical treatment of the individuals being studied were taken into

account. Because qualitative research has certain fundamental characteristics, it is imperative

that the rights of human subjects be respected and protected (Farrugia, 2019; Pietilä et al., 2020).

One of the study's most important ethical considerations was interviewing individuals who had

negative or upsetting experiences with submission practices in marriage. The confidentiality and

identity of the participants were protected by not revealing any Personal Identifiable Information

(PII) while the data was being collected, analyzed, and published. Individuals who indicated

interest in taking part in the study were contacted one by one and provided with a detailed

explanation of the purpose of the research along with information on how the data would be

gathered and utilized. Participants were informed that their participation in the study was

voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time without suffering any consequences after

completing the consent form.

Summary

Data collection of the real-life experiences of divorced professional Black women of

mutual submission in marriage and explaining the research methodology used was the priority

for this chapter. Evaluate the logic behind selecting a transcendental phenomenological

qualitative design before moving forward was crucial to identify as the most effective approach for achieving the objectivity of this study. This chapter outlined the interview questions, the setting in which the interviews took place, the participant identification method, demographic / screening questionnaire, the procedures used, the instrumentation, and the researcher's role. Individual semi-structured interviews were employed to obtain the data (Moustakas, 1994).

The procedures used to obtain the data, how they were analyzed, and how they were going to make sure they were reliable were all described in detail. The ethical criteria were upheld by implementing procedures such as requiring participants to read and sign an informed consent form, utilizing pseudonyms to guarantee confidentiality, and securely keeping all data on a password-protected computer file. Chapter Four presented a concise overview of the study findings, participant information, identified themes and sub-themes through coding, and responses to the research questions.

Chapter Four: Findings

Overview

This chapter provided a summary of the findings resulting from the analysis of the data. A comprehensive illustration of the research topic, containing data obtained from the demographic survey, as well as detailed information shared during participant's interviews were included in this chapter. The participant's perspectives on mutual submission in marriage was also explored in this chapter. The findings are a result of the discoveries uncovered from the themes which were identified from the participants' interviews.

Analyzing the experiences of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) to enhance comprehension of the submission challenges encountered during marriage was the aim for this study. It was imperative to conduct an in-depth analysis of this issue in light of the widespread misconceptions and preconceived ideas about marriages involving Black women, to include the belief that women are subjected to oppression by males. This study is highly significant for those working with couples in professions focused on family therapy or counseling, and pastoral positions. This provides an opportunity to understand how occurrences influence individuals and their marriages. Assisting individuals in improving the overall quality of their marriages was the objective for this study. This can be accomplished by those in the field by creating thorough and culturally sensitive interventions and guidance..

Participants

A description of each participant included in the research was shared in this chapter. As mentioned in Chapter Three, pseudonyms were used to ensure the confidentiality of the participant's personal data. The following required conditions were met by each participant; professional Black heterosexual women, residing in the United States of America, currently

divorced, and aged between 35 and 65 years old. Self-identifying as Black or African women with at least a four-year college degree was also required. Furthermore, participants needed to be either entrepreneurs or hold a leadership position in corporate America. The study comprised 10 participants aged between 40 and 55, each with unique circumstances contributing to the dissolution of their marriage. Through interviews, participants conveyed strong emotions evoked by the study's focus, engaging in deep reflection, and candidly sharing their marriage experiences and views on mutual submission's role. Table 1 displays participants' demographic information.

Table 1

Demographic Data of Participants

Participant	Age Range	Educational Level	State	Religious Affiliation	#times married	Length married	Initiate divorce	Desire to remarry
Anita	45-55	Master	MD	Christian	1	<1 yr	Yes	Undecided
Paula	35-45	Master	AR	Christian	1	>1yr	Yes	Yes
Majors	45-55	Bachelor	GA	Christian	1	1-5 yrs	Yes	Yes
Special	50-60	Master	SC	Christian	1	1-5 yrs	Yes	Yes
Kathy	45-55	Master	SC	Christian	2	1-5 yrs	Yes	Yes
Lady	35-45	Master	SC	Christian	1	5-10 yrs	Yes	Yes
Pam	35-55	Master	GA	Christian	1	5-10 yrs	Yes	Yes
Lishonne	30-40	Bachelor	MD	Christian	1	1-5 yrs	Yes	Yes
Monique	40-55	Doctoral	AR	Christian	3	1-5 yrs	Yes	Yes
Miracle	35-55	Bachelor	IL	Christian	2	5-10 yrs	Yes	Yes

Anita

Anita is between the ages of 45-55 years old, a Christian woman who has been married once for less than one year and is undecided whether she wants to remarry. She holds the belief that mutual submission in marriage entails establishing equitable footing for all partners involved. She also believes that submission is when two individuals, however imperfect, come together with mutual respect and a shared purpose and objective. They are dedicated to comprehending one another and collaborating effectively despite any conflicts or challenges that may emerge. Anita feels that her marriage was characterized by the reverse of what she saw modelled in her parents' marriage, and their divergent ideals and ideas led to a disparity and discontentment in the marital relationship.

Paula

Paula is between the ages of 35-45 years old, a Christan woman who has been married once for more than one year and desires to remarry. She expressed the challenge she had in implementing mutual subordination in her marital relationship. She entered marriage during her time in graduate school, despite harboring doubts about the appropriateness of the timing. Soon after being married, she embarked on her profession, and it rapidly gained momentum. She believed that the difficulty in her marriage stemmed from a lack of comprehension of the intricacies of marriage and the concept of mutual surrender. She observed the practice of both parties willingly yielding to each other's needs in her parents' marriage however, but this dynamic did not manifest in the same manner inside her own marriage.

Majors

Majors is between the ages of 45-55 years old, a Christan woman who has been married once for 1-5 years and desires to remarry. Majors believe mutual submission entails a reciprocal

agreement wherein one individual willingly submits to the authority of the other. It is a mutual

agreement that involves making concessions to each other's interests, needs, wants, and

perspectives within the context of the marriage. Due to their shared military background, both

she and her ex-husband were familiar with the concept of submission and knew how to

incorporate it into their marriage. Nevertheless, she feels that the absence of spiritual practices

led to inequity and apathy inside their marriage.

Special

Special is between the ages of 50-60 years old, a Chrisitan woman who was married once

for 1-5 years and desires to remarry. She perceives that mutual submission refers to the act of

both parties willingly subjecting themselves to collaborate on a shared objective and devising a

strategic plan to achieve it collectively. Both partners are mutually devoted to each other and

prioritize their relationship, without being concerned about other influences that may cause

division. Special and her ex-husband practiced mutual submission when it came to parenting but

not in other areas of the marriage. She saw a lack of spiritual alignment between herself and her

husband, leading to a sense of division within their marriage. She perceived that her spouse

donned a facade to create the illusion of spiritual compatibility, although they were not evenly

matched. The couple was unequally yoked in the sense that while they were both reared as

Christians. The husband ceased practicing Christianity after their marriage, causing them to

diverge into different paths.

Kathy

Kathy is between the ages of 45-55 years old, a Christan woman who has been married

twice for 1-5 years and desires to remarry. Kathy believed that mutual submission is defined

differently depending on one's life cycle. She noted that mutual submission requires flexibility in

modifying or adjusting behaviors of both parties. Additionally, individuals involved in the relationship must have a receptive mindset which allows for consideration and attentiveness to occur, rather than possessing a fixed mindset of one's own ideologies and wishes. Mutual submission requires individuals uniting to represent congruence. Kathy shared how she observed her husband's lack of desire to take charge in their marriage and his inability to be the spiritual leader of their home. She indicated that there were occasions where she felt obligated to give in and submit. These encounters had a profound effect on her perception and understanding of her husband's role as a leader and led to cycles of doubt and disagreement in their marriage.

Lady

Lady is between 35 and 45, identified as a Christian, and was married for a duration of 5 to 10 years. Lady believes that mutual submission involves two people who are actively engaged in attentive listening, helping, and consideration for one another. In addition, she holds the belief that both individuals should have the capacity to provide mutual support in different capacities, depending on the specific needs of the marriage. She described mutual submission as the act of fully committing oneself to another person or situation, rather than trying to enforce control and dominance over the other person. This entails actively listening, considering various perspectives, understanding their viewpoint, effectively communicating, and listening to one's spouse or partner. She believes that there was an unequal distribution of power in her marriage, which affected her willingness to comply with her husband's decision, particularly because she earned a higher income than her ex-husband. This posed a significant challenge in her marriage, exacerbating the existing imbalance and inability to reach a financial consensus.

Pam

Pam is between the ages of 35-55 years old, a Christian woman who was married once for 5-10 years and desires to remarry. She holds the belief that mutual submission entails two persons mutually deciding to engage in a partnership. The term might be highly subjective on some occasions. She believes that humility is required in situations where one must set aside their ego, vulnerability, and discomfort; particularly while engaging in difficult talks. She believes that practicing mutual submission required much effort in her marriage. She also believes that she entered a marriage with a spouse who had the belief that "I am the male or the more dominant figure, and I have the ultimate authority." She perceived her partner's need for her to unquestioningly comply with his decisions as a significant factor contributing to the discord in her marriage.

Lishonne

Lishonne is between the ages of 30-40 years old, a Christian woman who was married once for 1-5 years and desires to remarry. She has the belief that mutual submission refers to a situation where both spouses willingly give in to the other's authority. She believes that there are situations where it is advantageous for the husband to take the lead, while in other occasions it is more beneficial for the wife to take the lead. She also acknowledged that mutual submission implies a shared objective, although in some situations, you defer to your spouse's judgment. She believes that both individuals must comprehend the true meaning of submitting, which essentially involves aligning oneself with a certain objective or purpose. She encountered several instances of unfaithfulness and a lack of trust in her marriage, which she feels stemmed from her ex-husband's emotional immaturity. This greatly affected their marriage and played a significant role in the breakdown of their marriage.

Monique

Monique is between the ages of 40-55 years old, a Christian woman who has been married three times for 1-5 years and desires to remarry. She holds the view that submission is not only limited to couples. Rather, it is a reciprocal act where one person takes the lead on a matter while the other person willingly submits and trusts in their leadership. This dynamic operates in both directions. She perceived that her third husband/marriage exhibited a shallow adherence to the teachings of Christ. The primary motivation was mostly driven by business objectives, rather than a genuine personal connection with Christ. It was challenging to continue to support someone who deviated from their adherence to Christ.

Miracle

Miracle is between the ages of 35-55 years old, a Christian woman who has been married twice for 5-10 years and desires to remarry. She holds the belief that mutual submission entails interdependence, wherein individuals rely on and serve one other, with the foundation of this concept being rooted in God. When both individuals have a connection with God, they are capable of mutually surrendering to one another in a manner that goes against their inherent tendencies as males and females yet aligns with the divine power. She and her ex-husband discussed the concept of mutual submission when they first got married, however, it turned out that she was the one who practiced submission during the marriage. She felt that her husband used submission to silence her, depriving her of her basic human rights.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

This section provided an overview of the participants' understanding and personal encounters with mutual submission in marriage. The information was organized based on the development of themes and the participants' responses to the research questions. Themes were

derived by recognizing the common attributes among the participants' experiences. The examination of data to identify recurring patterns or themes that arise from the experiences of the participants is called theme development. The responses presented in this study are derived from the data obtained from interviews conducted with the participants of the study. The following responses provide answers to the three research questions that serve as the guiding principles for this study.

Theme Development

The initial stage of data analysis involved the practice of reflective journaling. Throughout the research process, a notebook was kept to record perspectives and ideas on the concept of mutual submission in marriage. This documentation was necessary to mitigate bias. A journal was utilized to document experiences related to the phenomena of mutual submission in marriage, with the intention of setting aside any preconceived notions and approaching the data analysis with a new and unbiased perspective, hence bracketing was used. The interview transcripts were subsequently analyzed thoroughly, with meticulous examination of the data to identify noteworthy statements, quotations, and sentences. The objective of this process was to document all pertinent facts regarding the practice of reciprocal submission within the context of marriage. To comprehensively analyze the data and minimize the risk of overlooking important information, the transcripts were rigorously reviewed in a systematic manner, with each line examined multiple times. This approach facilitated the emergence of more substantial data compared to the initial exploration.

Words and phrases frequently mentioned in the participants' experiences were identified during the process of generating themes. A highlighter was used to mark and categorize related data. Following a thorough analysis, clusters of significance were categorized into themes. A

state of saturation was met during the theme creation process when no new concepts were

developing (Saunders et al., 2018). Four overarching themes and corresponding sub-themes

encapsulating the experiences of mutual submission in marriage among divorced professional

Black women were revealed. Thematic overlap was observed, highlighting the intricate and

interwoven nature of marriage experiences, contrasting with a linear progression. Table 2

presents a comprehensive summary of the main themes and their corresponding sub-themes.

Table 2

Themes and Sub-Themes

Themes	Sub-Themes
1. Disparity in Embracing the idea of Equality in Marriage	
2. Negative Experiences due to Spiritual Incompatibility	a. Biblical-Influence
3. Cultural Expectations and Family of Origin Influences	b. Communication Style
4. Gender Roles and the Divergence from Marital Expectations	c. Lack of Leadership and Support
	d. Self-sacrifice and Identify Erosion

Theme One: Disparity in Embracing the idea of Equality in Marriage

The theme disparity embracing the idea of equality in marriage explores the attitudes and

experiences surrounding equality and the realties that shaped personal beliefs. Despite the

participants' ability to articulate a conceptual understanding of mutual submission within

marriage, their lived experiences often diverged from this ideal. While they were able to provide

a definition of what mutual submission should entail, they frequently recounted instances where

the application of mutual submission within their own marriages was absent or fell short of their

expectations. It is noteworthy that the participants frequently referenced traditional notions of

submission, particularly in the context of the wife yielding to the husband's leadership as the head of the household.

Anita stated, "Mutual submission is two people, not perfect people, but two imperfect people coming together because there's a coming together because there's a perfect God." Whereas Paula spoke to the difficulty of mutual submission due to getting married at a young age. She notes:

> In my marriage, submission was difficult. I think initially when I got married, my ex-husband asked me for my hand in marriage while I was still in graduate school, and I didn't think that was a good time to get married. And so, we married shortly after I graduated and had started my career. And I think the challenge was not knowing what it would look like to be in a relationship with someone who, I mean, I was just blessed soon as I graduated, just opportunities abound and just having a really successful career and so insecurities seeped in the marriage and I think that hindered submission on both of our parts to where I felt like he didn't want to submit to me because he kind of felt intimidated. And after a while I started growing resentful.

Majors recounts her encounter with mutual submission, contrasting it with her previous experience of submitting during her military service. She noted:

> Mutual submission in a marriage is an agreement of compromise to one another's desires, needs, wants, and views of the marriage. My experience regarding mutual submission in my previous marriage was that both of us were in the military, so there was already a submission because of our military background.

Majors further emphasized the necessity of submission in her marriage and how it was probably easier given her military history to illustrate this point:

>I believe that my ex-husband was not dominant in requiring submission. What I mean by
>
>that is there was not a need to force or overstate the need for submission because I
>
>already understood submission. I would say that this previous understanding made it easy
>
>for him as when there was request, I would submit.

Special shared her experience with the importance of mutual submission when raising their child when she noted:

>I would say the mutual submission would be the commitment we had as far as raising our
>
>daughter, making sure that we didn't do anything that would cause her to have a negative
>
>response or reaction to things that she may encounter in the future.

Kathy while married twice solely focused on her second marriage during the interview. She explained her experience as a leader and emphasizes the necessity to acquire the skill of reducing one's independence, as she articulates "Mutual submission in my marriage would have been just learning to not be so independent and accepting the leadership style of my spouse. And sure, that although I was able to voice myself, but making sure that I respect the position of the head of the household."

Lady's experience paralleled Kathy's in that she possessed leadership qualities and found submission challenging. She noted:

>My ex-husband felt a lot like I wanted to be the man. I don't feel like it's somebody trying
>
>to be the boss of you. I just feel like you are giving your all to that person, to that
>
>situation, to whatever is going to, being able to listen to them, being able to see different
>
>perspectives, see their point of view, being able to communicate things and being able to
>
>listen as well to your spouse or your partner.

Pam characterized her experience with submitting as unilateral when noted:

Submission practices was one-sided. Mutual submission was probably one of those things where needed a lot of work. I felt I was with a partner who believed in the male dominance portion of submission in the fact that I was expected to do what he said. I did not feel that what I had to say was a priority, even during minor conversations. I also felt like I followed blindly, and this created a rift in the marriage.

Lishonne perceived her comprehension and implementation of submission as being balanced. However, she also expressed the presence of additional factors that impeded the marriage. She noted:

We were equal; however, the issue was lack of emotional health and how that impacted the marriage. My husband turned to other women vs turning to me when he needed support. Both people must understand what submission means, which is literally coming under the mission. So, I think both people must agree what the mission is and that they're literally coming under this surrendering to that mission. I would say based on the conversations I've had, I think I had a very easy, I didn't have a resistance. I've heard a lot of people talk about their struggle and the power struggles and I was like, oh wow. That made me aware that I didn't experience that. It was natural for me to just, I guess do what I saw. So, I was used to, okay, you're going to lead, but then there are times where I'll lead too.

Monique was married three times but chose to focus on the experience in her second marriage during the interview. She expressed that her and her husband's limited comprehension of mutual submission had a direct influence on their capacity to put it into practice when she shared "Things would have gone better if we had an understanding and agreement on how to submit one to another." Like Monique, Miracle experienced a situation where submission was

one-sided, as she noted. "There wasn't any mutual submission because none of us were submitted under the authority of God. So, it was very one-sided, neither of us were submitted."

Theme One Summary

This theme examines the attitudes and experiences surrounding equality within marriage and the disparities between participants' conceptual understanding of mutual submission and their lived realities. Despite articulating a clear conceptualization of mutual submission, participants frequently encountered instances where the application of mutual submission within their marriages fell short of their expectations. Conventional ideas of submission, specifically in relation to the wife being placed under their husband's authority, was frequently mentioned throughout the participant's interviews.

Anita explained that mutual submission involved both people, who are not without flaws but they are able to unite and become one under the ordinance of God. Paula shared the difficulties during her marriage when she shared "...I perceived that he didn't want to submit to me because he felt intimated. And after a while, I started growing resentful." Several experiences demonstrated the difficulties associated with mutual submission practices were shared by participants. Challenges with communication and power dynamics within the marriage were some of the issues addressed resulting in feelings of emotional intimidation and resentment in their marriage. While mutual submission was described as an equal relationship that promotes a peaceful partnership by some of the participants, others experienced a lack of balance, and lacked understanding and effective application of mutual submission practices in their marriages. The complex nature of the theme, embracing equality in marriage, was revealed through diverse experiences and viewpoints of participants who navigated submission practices in marriage.

Theme Two: Negative Experiences due to Spiritual Incompatibility

The differences in spiritual rituals and beliefs were addressed by this theme outlining how spiritual incompatibility influenced the overall quality and functioning of the marriage. Each participant acknowledged that there were discrepancies in what they believed compared to their former husband's beliefs.

> Anita expressed her confusion about her ex-husband's belief by stating, "He said he was a believer, but I was not really clear as to how he was a believer" She was referring to the actions and conduct of her former husband which contradicted his professed beliefs as a Christian.

Anita shared how she attended church services throughout the week but her ex-husband not joining. Similarly, to Anita, Kathy said:

Although we both were brought up in Christianity, we were raised different in Christianity. Our differences in spiritual practices impacted the way we viewed marriage and the way we viewed Christ in the marriage. I think that really impacted our compatibility with each other.

Pam had a similar experience to Kathy. She noted:

It was a little bit convoluted because we both were Christian individuals. However, I think my mate at the time though labeled himself as being a Christian. Some of his practices were very un-Christian like.

Kathy was married twice but for the purposes of the interview, she chose to focus on the marriage experience with her second husband.

Paula had a similar experience when said:

I come from a background to where most of my family is spiritual. And he came from a

background and family where spirituality was not at the center of their life. And so, I

think with us coming from different background, just like any relationship, you

compromise to a certain extent. I think with our compromises we became unequally

yoked.

Paula felt that the marriage was unequally yoked because her partner focused on his

relationship with his mother more than the relationship with her as his wife., Special had a

similar experience in her marriage, she stated,

I was always in church, and I think he sort of wore the mask to make it seem as though

we were compatible, whereas the whole time we were not equally yoked because certain

things I knew shouldn't have happened and that was not the same framework that he had.

Special referred to being unequally yoked because once they got married, her ex-husband

stopped going to church and she felt that it contributed to them to walking different paths.

Majors talked about the lack of spirituality between her and her ex-husband when she

shared "My husband did not as well as I did not have a strong spirituality."

 Lady felt that things were made difficult when she said:

I think that me being spiritual and trying to live that way made it difficult when you are

dealing with someone who doesn't have the same belief system or doesn't see it as

important as you do.

Miracle described it as "Navigating in the dark because in all actuality we were in

darkness. Neither one of us had a spiritual relationship or a relationship with God to help us with

that." This theme gave rise to the sub-theme biblical influence.

Biblical Influence

Although the concept and implementation of submission may vary from person to person, participants stated that their belief system and adherence to submission was rooted in biblical principles and/or parental figures. They reported that family members were guided by biblical concepts and customs. Several participants indicated that their belief in the bible influenced their submission practices while married. One common belief for six of the participants was that wives should submit to their husband's leadership because he is the head of household.

Paula shared how she learned how to submit through being a woman of faith and reading the Bible on a regular basis. She shared:

> I thought you be that Proverbs 31 woman; you wake up early, you just do all the things.
> Because you just see so many times in scripture where it says that the husband is the head
> of the wife, just like Christ is the head of the church.

Majors emphasized that her primary experience with submission practices was due to her spiritual journey, stating "The biggest influence of mutual submission in marriage was spiritual." Like Special, Paula also subscribed to the notion of the spouse being the authoritative figure in the family. She expressed:

> Well, if we look at the component of the Bible and it says the man is head of the
> household, which means that not so much the man is the provider, but he's supposed to
> take the lead, and the woman should be submissive allowing the man to be the man."

Kathy took a similar stance to Paula and Special when she said, "the man is the head of the household and that the women should be the ribs, she should be the help mate.

Similarly, Miracle also expressed agreement with the concept of headship when she said, "I submitted in the way that I view, I understood submission at that time as a wife, him

being the head." Monique succinctly stated, "I believed that the husband is the head and

as a wife, I was to submit."

Six of the participants were influenced to conform by the fundamental belief that

marriage required a male patriarchal figure to assume the role of the household leader, and

women are to comply. Biblical influence, their own experiences, and ancestral beliefs

contributed to deeply rooted beliefs that marriage requires the wife to submit to her husband's

authority. Submission was regarded as a fundamental principle and responsibility which

indicated a sense of respect and obedience supporting both their spirituals' beliefs and marital

commitments. This ideological system, based on interpretations of biblical teachings, had a

significant impact on the actual experiences of mutual submission in marriage for these women.

Theme Two Summary

The differences in belief systems between the participant's and their former husbands

were explored in this theme revealing the difficulties and effects these differences had on the

marriage. Each participant shared how faith disparities and other factors or circumstances

contributed to their decision to divorce. Anita's perspective characterized this discrepancy when

she noted, "He said he was a believer, but I was like, I don't, I'm not really clear as to how you

would believe," pointing out inconsistent behavior she witnessed from her ex-husband from what

he said he believed compared to his actions. Kathy and Pam, among other participants,

emphasized how being brought up in a Christian home influenced their submission practices in

marriage. Multiple participants described feeling spiritually misaligned by describing that their

marriage was unequally yoked.

A link between understanding and application of submission practices from the Bible

produced the sub-theme of biblical influence. The participants shared that they were strongly

influenced by the firmly engrained concepts of husbands as leaders of families and wives as submitting to his leadership based on biblical roots. Paula described her action of embodying the Proverbs 31 woman in taking care of the household and working outside of the household, and Majors shared the significant effect of biblical teachings on submission practices in her marriage described in Ephesians 5:22. This important role of faith and biblical teachings in shaping how participants experienced mutual submission in marriage is revealed through this theme.

Theme Three: Cultural Expectations and Family of Origin Influences

Cultural expectations and family of origin theme focused on how one's own understanding, attitudes, and actions about mutual submission is influenced by their family's beliefs and expectations. Participants shared similar experiences on the impact of cultural norms, beliefs, and teachings they experienced by their family of origin and upbringing which shaped their views on the concept of mutual submission in marriage. Communication styles and conflict resolution approaches were noticeably influenced by the participant's cultural history and background which impacted their view on mutual submission as well. In light of this discovery, the sub-theme communication styles emerged.

Anita explored her upbringing in a tightly knit community and the observation of her parents' marital bond, while her ex-husband had a contrasting experience. Both experiences served as influential pillars for their marriage. She noted, "I had both my parents under the same roof watching their marriage. Whereas he didn't have that. It was just him and his mom. And the relationship he had with his father wasn't the best."

Paula did not observe her parents' marriage but spoke of her grandmother who served as a parental figure, and how she urged her to remain in her marriage regardless of the circumstances. She stated:

The expectation was to stay married and fight for your marriage no matter what. My

grandmother told me that anytime you're ready to leave your husband, if you walk out

that front door, you just come back around to the back door because you stay in it unless

he puts his hands on you, stay.

Like Anita, Major's views on submission were inspired by her parents. In addition, to acquiring

knowledge of submission from her time in the military as previously stated. She noted:

Because there was already an understanding of submission and what it looked like,

because both of my parents, my parents were married at the time that I was married, so I

had an example of what it looked like. My mother, there were no problems submitting to

my father, and it wasn't looked at in a negative way.

Special discussed the impact of both her and her ex-husband's backgrounds of growing

up in divorced families. She expressed a desire to overcome the cycle of divorce that had been

passed down through generations, considering the shared experiences they both had. She stated:

I don't know if it was the fact that both of us came from families where both our parents

had already been divorced and they weren't together. We just felt that we could have

broken that generational curse of staying together despite.

Like Paula's experience with observing her grandparent's marriage, Kathy had a similar

experience watching both her maternal and paternal grandparents build long lasting and fulfilling

marriages. She stated:

Both sets of my grandparents had very long lasting and strong marriages, whereas I came

from a family where my parents divorced, so it was easier for me to not submit when I

felt that it was wrong because that's been a product of my environment. So, I feel as

though it may have had a positive influence regarding a positive or negative, depending

on which way we want to spend it. But I think that did influence my ability to not submit wholeheartedly to a situation I felt wasn't beneficial for the family.

Lady's experience mirrored Anita's. By observing her parents' marriage and its impact on her perspectives of marriage, she noted:

My parents are still married, and I watch my mom take guidance from my dad, and in turn, I watched my dad help my mom develop in different areas of her life. And I guess I say it like that because my mom was, even though I guess it doesn't remember, my mom wasn't necessarily as educated, I guess you would say it as my dad, but he always still encouraged her and was there for her. And I think that that was because he created a safe space for her to learn things and to grow and to develop into whatever she wanted to be. I guess I just watched them both back and forth with each other.

Pam discussed how her interactions with older family members influenced her views on marriage and the concept of submission, and how she interacted with her former husband. She stated:

Growing up with elders, you can kind of watch the, I hate to call it the catering, I guess, aspect, like cook for your man, clean for your man, that type of mentality. So, you grow up and you hear those things, and you see those things, and believe it or not, a lot of grandparents back then, especially they would encourage you to do those things, right if you chose to get married. So that played a part in how I behaved or thought I was expected to behave, I should say, in my marriage.

Lishonne saw her parents' marriage and internalized ideas about how she should act as a wife. She believed that her parents' example would have prepared her and her ex-husband for a

successful marriage, however her spouse did not have the same advantage since his parents were divorced. These perspectives greatly influenced her concept of a perfect marriage. She noted:

> We both came from homes where they were very strong mothers. In his case, his parents got divorced early, so his mother became the head of his household. And in my case, my parents are still married, but my mother, my parents are pastors and she's the senior pastor. So, in that regard, she's the boss. So, we both saw strong women and part of our conversations as we were preparing for marriage was that, hey, we want to make sure that that strength sometimes in our culture it can be women-led homes. And we just didn't believe that that was the way we wanted to run the home, was that I would just have the final say. So, I think that's how we looked at it like, no, we really want this to be a little bit much more teamwork.

Monique's experience differed slightly as she was instructed in the art of self-reliance and discouraged from depending on others for her well-being. The instruction had a significant impact on her perception of marriage and her adherence to the practice of submitting. She reported:

> I've always been taught by my dad, don't rely on anybody. That's why you went to school, you have your own money. Maybe, I would've tried a little harder, you know what, I don't have to stay in this situation because I don't have to rely on anybody else's money, and don't have to rely on anybody else to do anything for me. I can leave.

Miracle explained that she adhered to the conventional definition of submission, which entails obeying and deferring to one's husband's leadership. She expressed:

> I just subscribed to the world's way of submission. The submission through the world's lens is always directed at the woman listening to a man. But the culture or the world's

way of submission never says you cannot follow or submit to a man that is not himself

submitted under any authority.

Miracle described it as "the blind leading the blind."

Communication Styles

Regarding the question of how communication styles impacted mutual submission

practices, nine out of the ten participants reported that they had different communication styles

than their ex-husband. The differences in communication varied across these participants,

highlighting the diverse ways in which their individual communication styles influenced their

past marriages. For example, Anita reported that communication across the board was different,

even how her former husband communicated with other members of his family. Paula mentioned

that she is not an argumentative person but found herself arguing in her marriage when she

shared:

I would say that I'm normally not a person that argues, but I would find when we would

have disagreements, conflict was heightened so much that sometimes a person

unknowingly wants conflict to be on a level 10 versus a two and that created an unhealthy

dynamic.

Special shared "I don't like controversy and I don't like to argue. Whereas he wanted to argue, he

wanted to debate." Kathy noted "I was more of a communicator, a talker, whereas my ex-

husband was not. He was more of, if we don't address it, it'll go away."

Lady shared "I came from an open background so I could express myself to my parents. We

talked about things. I wasn't afraid to talk to them per se, but however, that was not his

experience." Pam noted "The communication might as well have been non-existent." Lishonne

shared about the difference of how males and females communicated and noted:

I think about the way girls and boys are socialized and probably not just in black

community and I think for him it was like boys are taught to kind of be hard and not deal

with emotion a certain way. And so, I think when we had conflict, his default was usually

anger and pride and got to flex and you got to be overly masculine and it was hard for

him to just be humble and just say, I'm wrong here.

Monique shared "I was too aggressive in my communication. I wanted to address things now,

now, now, not realizing that everybody is not that way."

Theme Three Summary

Participants' backgrounds significantly influenced their views on mutual submission in

marriage. Anita's reflections contrasted her upbringing with her ex-husband's, highlighting the

impact of witnessing her parents' marital bond. Paula's commitment to marriage was instilled by

her grandmother's advice, while Kathy's experiences were shaped by the stark difference

between her grandparents' lasting unions and her parents' divorce. Lady's observations of mutual

respect in her parents' relationship informed her understanding of marriage, whereas Pam's

upbringing emphasized cultural expectations for women to cater to their husbands. Lishonne

pointed out differences in communication styles rooted in gender socialization, and Monique's

upbringing fostered self-reliance. Despite recognizing flaws in conventional views of

submission, Miracle adhered to them due to societal expectations.

Theme Four: Gender Roles and the Divergence from Marital Expectations

The theme gender roles and the divergence from martial expectations describes the

differences between the participants idealized vision of shared gender roles and the reality of

their marital experiences. Participants related how disheartened they felt dealing with these

issues which also led to feelings of frustration, resentment, and a pervasive sense of inequality

within the marriage. Participants recounted their experiences with the lack of leadership and acts

of selfishness, emphasizing the difficulties of adapting to unexpected responsibilities.

Furthermore, the sub-theme of self-sacrifice and identity erosion became apparent, emphasizing

the transforming impact on human identity in relation to changing gender norms and

expectations.

Seven of the ten participants in the study shared their experience with the expectation of

traditional gender roles and its influence on submission practices in their marriage. Three of the

participants understood the traditional style of gender roles based on their experiences growing

up and felt that adopting this style was a sign of submission toward their husband. Paula stated:

It created a playing ground that was uneven. For him, he just looked at it like I'm married

to a woman who is successful in corporate America, so I really don't have to work if I

don't want to. It was an unbalanced relationship.

Special expressed her disagreement with her husband's expectation for her to prioritize staying at

home to care for the children instead of pursuing a career. She shared:

I couldn't submit to him because I was not going to sit home with a college degree and be

a stay-at-home mother. And knowing that there was so much more for me to do than sit

home and watch a baby.

Anita summed it up when she said:

I had to learn, I had to attempt anyway to change my mindset. However, he didn't turn

out to be a help mate. I still found that our gender roles didn't even really matter because

as the man of the house, he didn't do anything. I was still operating as if I was head of the

household.

Kathy shared "Traditional gender roles contributed to an imbalance because there was no

consistency. Lady referred to it as a struggle when she shared "That was a struggle because he

would always say that I wanted to be the man because I would go and do things that needed to be

done." Like Kathy, Pam also described her experience as a struggle when she stated, "When I

was financially making more, it became to be an even bigger imbalance and struggle." Monique

shared "I felt like roles got reversed very quickly because things that needed to be taken care of,

things that needed to be done, I ended up handling those." Miracle decided to succumb to the

traditional style of gender roles because she felt that was the way to submit to her husband. She

stated "The world's way of submission is a woman just doing what a man says, cooking and

cleaning. So, I thought I was fulfilling that and oddly it still wasn't enough for my partner." Like

Miracle, Lishonne also went along with the traditional concept of gender roles. She stated, "I

would probably be a little traditional with gender roles and cook, clean, and wash clothes."

Majors also shared a similar perspective with Lishonne and Miracle in adopting the traditional

style of gender roles sharing those men and woman had specific roles. She spoke about

observing her mother in the household and shared that taking on household duties came with an

understanding of who did what. She noted:

> Because of the example that I had with my parents, there were certain things that my
>
> mother did. When it came to cooking, there was no problem for me, although sometimes
>
> my husband would cook too, but there wasn't a demand to say, well, because you're the
>
> woman, you must cook. It was just an understanding of, okay, this is what I'm going to
>
> do. There were just certain things that I did automatically because I understood that as a
>
> wife, that's what you do.

Two sub-themes emerged from this theme and will be examined in the following sections: lack of leadership and support, and self-sacrifice and identity erosion.

Lack of Leadership and Support

Participants noted a noticeable lack of leadership and support from their husbands. Instead of the anticipated collaboration, they experienced a deep sense of absence in terms of direction and support from their spouses. Their desires for collaborative decision-making and mutual support were frequently obscured by unfulfilled requirements. Anita did not feel that her husband could lead the family. When asked about an instance where strict adherence to traditional gender roles made her feel unwanted, she stated:

> I was attempting to make every effort because in my mind, he was supposed to have been the leader of the house. I had been running my own household for so long, so trying to submit at that point, and any type of submission of started going out, out of the window. That level of respect started going out the window. But for me, he was, at that point, he was useless.

When Kathy was asked the same questions, she shared that she did not accept her husband's leadership because he failed to lead. She shared leadership and support caused her to view her husband as weak. She noted:

> My perception of my ex-husband was kind of weak. The lack of ability to make decisions, the lack of ability to curate a vision, the lack of ability to regulate emotions and feelings, and pretty much left the family on our own to figure things out. I would say my ex-husband was good financially, he paid the bills, but that was the extent of his covering.

Lady shared a similar experience to Kathy when she spoke to the lack of support by not being covered in the marriage and how that discouraged submission. She also expounded on a similar statement when she shared how her husband expressed to her that she wanted to be the man of the house. She noted:

> I feel like if it was more of a shared situation or shared responsibility, then it would be easier to submit because I would feel supported throughout everything by my partner. I feel like I would feel safer. I would feel heard. I would feel like even though he is the head, my opinion still matters. And what hurts or bothers me still matters. Even though you're the head of the household and you are technically responsible for covering us, covering our family, I still know that my opinion and my wants and needs matter.

Lady further shared how the lack of leadership caused her to step up to get things done. She noted:

> I feel like my ex-husband felt a lot like I wanted to be the man, he said that. So, I know that's how he felt about that. And those statements came because of him not stepping up to the plate necessarily when it comes to being a leader of the household, or it was a scenario to where it was like, well, we know that these things must happen, or these things must be done for a household to run. We have children to take care of, or just that need our guidance and stuff like that. He didn't want to be around to do those things. So then in turn, when I would go ahead and do those things or get those things done, now I'm trying to be the boss, or I'm trying to be the head of the household for trying to maintain a level of normalcy and just basically just handling things that needed to be handled because they weren't being handled.

Like Lady and Kathy Special also felt that she was unable to depend on her husband for support in providing for her. She stated:

> He was not stable as far as I'm concerned. He would do things; he would spend unnecessarily, and I could not depend on him to that aspect. If I had to depend on him for everyday living, for the simple things like going to get my hair fixed, doing special things for the baby, I was not able to do so.

Pam shared about the lack of leadership from her husband being that she managed the household as the breadwinner. She noted:

> Being the breadwinner, you're paying the mortgage and most of the bills, and you add children to that mix as well. Between you're financing the children as well as the home, and then you have a mate who is not even consciously aware of what's left in the account. After all those things have happened, also have made things that, Hey, I should be allowed to go out and have a good time every week with my friends if I want to. But again, there's a financial attachment to that as well. So, it became to be a huge imbalance and even an emotional imbalance. Like, listen, why would I work hard to put basically 80% of my money into our home and our family, and I don't get any joys out of it. I'm just getting all the responsibility, but you want all the joys of it. So, it geared up to be a very toxic cycle of, no, hey, I've worked too hard.

Monique felt that she also could not depend on her husband's leadership because of poor financial decisions. She shared:

> I would say things like financially he would want me to submit to bad business deals which were pretty much fraudulent business deals that he was doing. And I'm like, I'm

not cosigning that. Not agreeing with that. I'm not putting my livelihood at least for what you are doing.

Paula also shared that she lacked leadership and support from her husband. She related a scenario where her husband refused to help with grocery shopping. She stated "It wasn't just not going to the store. I think it was what it represented like you see me over here dealing with all these things and you are choosing not to support me."

Self-sacrifice and Identify Erosion

Seven of the participants disclosed a consistent tendency towards self-sacrifice and self-erosion in their marriage relationships. In their endeavor to maintain the relationship and meet their husband's expectations of submission, hey perceived a necessity to give precedence to the requirements of their husbands at the expense of their own welfare. This pattern of self-sacrifice frequently resulted in discontent and posed a challenge to their capacity for submission. Six of the participants spoke of how they felt undervalued or lacking respect as a partner. When asked the question about how adhering to strict gender roles made them feel undervalued or disrespected, Paula shared how she did not love herself and bent over backwards. She noted:

I would bend over backwards for my ex-husband just to do my best to make sure we were in a good place. I never wanted to be the cause of a stumbling block for someone. And so, I think that put me in a position where I didn't fully love myself and allowed myself to experience psychological and emotional abuse.

Paula also shared another scenario where she was sick and needed her husband's support and he chose not to support her. She noted:

I experienced losing six babies, five pregnancies. One pregnancy was with twins, and I can remember being pregnant with the twins. And one morning I woke up and I was just

so tired and fatigued that I was having problems just getting out of bed and getting up. It

was just like, I don't know, I felt like a person who was in a facility rolling around in a

wheelchair. And so, I had asked my ex-husband, I literally need help to walk. And so

instead him helping me to walk and get dressed and everything, he didn't. And he just

took his time and made sure he was ready to go. And I just had to figure it out on my

own. And eventually I did figure it out and after that day, the end of the day over, I come

home and still prepare a meal, make sure everything's tight around the house, and he

knew that I wasn't feeling well.

 Like Paula, Monique shared about a time when she was sick and incapable of taking care

of herself and how her husband responded. She noted:

I think strict adherence to gender roles in my second marriage was problematic. One of

these situations would be that we had a set of twins who were sickly when they were

born. They were very premature, and I had postpartum depression very badly. My ex-

husband took on additional roles at a business that his parents owned in addition to his

regular job. So, there was never any help around the house, and so it was, I'm expected to

just be okay with that, submit to it, and I did because my ex-in-laws owned the house we

lived in, and we weren't having to pay rent. So, because that's a decision that he made, I

just accepted it, submitted to it, and went on with it till I couldn't anymore.

Miracle felt unheard. She stated: "In that dynamic I felt unheard and unseen again. It wasn't

because of an imbalance of power, it was just the way that it was implemented, it was off."

Kathy felt she experienced manipulation versus support from her husband when she was ready to

expand professionally. She noted:

I felt undervalued and lacking respect as a partner when it's time for me to expand in my

business professionally and open up a new location, and I think that the attempted use of

head of household and power in the marriage overcame the desire for me to expand to

where my business would be greater than his business. So, I felt as though he used that

power to try to minimize the goals that were at hand. And I think that that's where the

lack of respect came. I don't know the words I want to use, but the play of power and

submission was used to manipulate a goal and desire of minds.

Special felt undervalued when her decision to return to work was not respected or valued.

She noted:

I would have to say when it was time for me to go back to work and it was like, no, you

need to stay home. And I'm like, no, I don't need to stay home and take care of the baby.

That's why you got three kids. And it was like, no, you need to stay home. I felt degraded

and unworthy. I wanted to work and I was made to feel like I was being a selfish mother

because of that choice.

Majors felt undervalued when expected to cook every night after working long hours. She

noted:

His desire was for a fresh meal cooked daily, so no such thing as having leftovers. And I

remember one time, again, as I stated before, both of us were in the military, so there

were times when he would have to work later than I would. And because of that, of

course, I'm picking up children, getting things ready, cooking dinner. But there was one

day where I was extremely tired and decided not to cook because there were leftovers in

the refrigerator and that didn't go over too well. And of course, there was a discussion on

that later that night. But it was put to me in a way that it made me feel bad because by the

time he finished explaining why he demanded fresh meals every day, I think now I don't

really have a desire to cook. I used to simply because it kind of put a negative thought in

my head about cooking every day. So, I would say that that was one incident where it

didn't go over too well. It affects me today, which it's probably not good, but that is the

result of it.

Anita expressed that she felt undervalued when her husband did not take care of things,

she felt he should. She shared a time when she became frustrated at her husband's slow response

to repair her car tire while on a trip together. She noted:

My husband finally agreed to go to counseling with me and the counselor suggested that

we, we try to relive a moment that we were happy, like mutually happy. We decided to

go away for the weekend. We took my car. I'm not sure if he wasn't paying attention. I

don't know what was going on. But that one of my brand-new spanking tires got busted

because he backed up into a pole. And I was furious. And I started crying. I immediately

called my dad. The whole time he sat there and didn't say anything. I got over being mad

about the fact that I had just bought a brand-new tire and it's, it's messed up now. We

finally got the donut put on the car and he tried to talk to me and I'm like, but you're not

making any sense to me right now because I can't hear you because this is something that

should have never happened. First, I had to spend my money to but tires. You said you

was going to buy me tires and didn't. I started going off.

Theme Four Summary

The discrepancies between the participant's idealized perceptions of shared gender roles

and the actualities in their marriage was the main focus of this theme. Participants shared how

they experienced emotional exasperation, animosity, and one-sided submission within their

marriage. Feelings of frustration and isolation were stressed by the participants due the lack of leadership and support received in their marriage. Participants anticipated cooperation and shared decision-making in their spouse which was contrary to their actual experiences. Some examples shared by participants of the failed leadership and lack of support that were present included their husbands' not being financially responsible, him being unwilling to contribute to household chores, and not placing them or the family (children) as a priority in the marriage. Expressions of underappreciation and devaluation was a result of the absence of support and reduced the willingness to practice submission in their marriage.

Participant responses revealed a consistent tendency to prioritize their spouses' needs and desires above their own, resulting in self-sacrifice and a loss of personal identity. Paula expressed that throughout the course of her marriage, she constantly made efforts to accommodate her ex-husband in prioritizing the marriage needs over her own needs. She stated, "I never wanted to be the cause of a stumbling block for someone. And so, I think that put me in a position where I didn't fully love myself and allowed myself to experience psychological and emotional abuse because I thought you want to do everything you can to submit to this person.". In addition, Lady explained that her husband's lack of support discouraged her from submitting in her marriage. She expressed that submission would have been easier if responsibilities were shared, as this would have made her feel supported by spouse. She said, "I believe that I would experience a greater sense of security if I felt acknowledged".

The challenges to submit in marriage were revealed by the participant's remarks and depiction of traditional and outdated ideologies of gender roles and unequal partnerships. The need to reconsider and redefine these roles to promote relationships that represent equality and mutual respect was also revealed through this theme.

Research Question Responses

This section presented the findings of the study by addressing the research questions. The findings are based on the themes and sub-themes were identified through the analysis of the data. The three research questions are: (a) what is the lived experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional women? (b) what impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage? and (c) what is the role of gender in practicing submission in marriage? Table 3 provides an overview of the corresponding themes and sub-themes that address the research questions.

Table 3

Research Question Responses

Research Questions	Themes/Subthemes
1) What is the lived experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional women?	A. Disparity in Embracing the idea of Equality in Marriage
2) What impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage?	B. Negative Experiences due to Spiritual Incompatibility I. Biblical influence C. Cultural Expectations and Family of Origin Influences I. Communication Styles
3) What is the role of gender in practicing submission in marriage?	D. Gender Roles and the Divergence from Marital Expectations I. Lack of Leadership and Support II. Self-sacrifice and Identify Erosion

Research Question One

The first research question was what is the lived experience of mutual submission in marriage? The theme of disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage answers this

question. This theme provided a profound insight into the lived experiences of divorced,

professional, black women regarding mutual submission in marriage. Despite the participants'

initial understanding and ability to articulate a conceptual definition of mutual submission, there

was a notable disparity between this ideal and the realities they encountered within their

marriages. Through in-depth conversations, it became evident that the participants often used

"submission" and mutual submission interchangeably. Also, the envisioned definition of mutual

submission did not seamlessly translate into their lived experiences or actual implementation

within their marital relationships. This disconnect led to a realization that mutual submission was

often missing, prompting the participants to identify problems and issues within their marriages.

Some of the problems included communication barriers which made it difficult to understand

each other's viewpoints, role confusion or uncertainty. Thus, the differing spiritual perspectives

that led to communication challenges, identity challenges, infidelity, and wives feeling devalued.

The difficulties surrounded equality and mutual submission were revealed by this question. The

study revealed a need for women to feel understood in order for submission in marriage to work.

Useful insights into the complicated issues marriages face were shared, along with the benefits of

practicing mutual submission in marriage.

Research Question Two

What impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage was

the second research question. Two themes emerged from this question; negative experiences due

to spiritual incompatibility and navigating intercultural family of origin dynamics in

marriage. The profound influence of spirituality and culture of participants' experiences of

mutual submission in marriage was uncovered and highlighted negative effects caused by

spiritual incompatibility. One subtheme, biblical influence, emerged from this them. The

complex ways in which spirituality and cultural heritage influenced the participants' desire to submit was further explored. The combination of spirituality and cultural elements was shared by many of the participants, which resulted in negative experiences. These factors highlighted the challenges the participants experienced in their marriages. The participants experiences and expectations of mutual submission in their marriage differed from those of their parents and grandparents. External pressure imposed by extended family members and friends was another obstacle faced by participants. This opposition led them to staying in the marriage in hopes of persevering through the difficulties. Divergent spiritual beliefs led to conflict and uncertainty, ultimately contributing to its failure was the experience for seven of the participants. Understanding and comprehending the interconnection between spirituality and culture is significant in marriage.

The second theme of cultural expectations and family of origin influences illuminates the profound influence of inherited cultural perspectives on the belief systems, teachings, and upbringing of the participants. Several participants reported how their ideas about submission and mutual submission were influenced by messages they had received from parents and grandparents whether verbally or by observation. This theme consisted of one subtheme, communication styles, which delved into the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences that shaped the participants' views on submission approaches in marriage. Some of the issues highlighted the differences in communication styles were, conflict resolution, and interpersonal connections. Exploring the dynamics of intercultural family backgrounds in marriage offers valuable insights into how the views and perspectives of one's family can impact individuals inside their marital relationships.

Research Question Three

The third research question was what is the role of gender in practicing submission in marriage? The theme gender roles and the divergence from marital expectations answers this question. This theme consisted of two sub-themes, lack of leadership and support and self-sacrifice and identify erosion. This theme exposed the significant contrast between the participants' idea of gender roles they hoped to share and the harsh actuality of their real-life marital encounters. Many of the participants shared that they did have a desire to apply shared gender roles in their marriage however, they were unable to achieve this goal. The opposition they experienced from their husbands who believed in traditional gender roles made this goal unachievable. The husband usually takes on the primary duty for financial provision and decision-making when traditional gender roles are practiced and the wife is expected to prioritize domestic activities to include managing the household and children.

This theme focused on the outcomes of gender role differences and revealed how participants experienced feelings of annoyance, bitterness, and a sense of unfairness in their marriage. These unforeseen challenges and unrealized expectations linked to the lack of leadership and support were revealed in this study showing a correlation between gender roles, expectations, and the actual experiences of the participants. Upon analysis of the data, it became evident that challenges and mental stress are the result of the disparity between societal expectations of gender roles and the actual experiences in marriages. The impact of unmet gender role expectations of the participants' real-life experiences were highlighted and required a deeper understanding of how gender roles can influence marriage.

Summary

The exploration of the experiences of mutual submission in marriage among divorced, professional, black women were presented in this chapter. Specifically, the influence of spirituality, culture, and gender norms were highlighted. In summary, the findings participants faced in reaching equal partnership in marriage were uncovered. The significance of considering the influence of spirituality, culture, and gender dynamics in attaining relational equality were also emphasized. By conducting thematic analysis on 10 participants, four distinct themes and sub-themes emerged. These findings provided insight into the misunderstood and diverse nature of mutual submission in marriage. The theme analysis focused on one central research question and two sub-questions.

The discrepancy between the ideals and actualities in the marriages of the participants were initially shared in the study. This brought attention to problems such as difficulties in communication and misaligned martial roles and expectations, which were relevant to addressing the Central Research Question. Furthermore, the study revealed how spiritual and cultural influences and perspectives impacted the participants' marriages and highlighted the importance of spiritual peace in marriage, addressing Sub-Question One. Finally, the research uncovered a discrepancy between preferred gender roles and actual marital experiences and its impact on submission practices. Expressions of bitterness and unfairness were a result of this discrepancy resulted aligning with Sub-Question Two.

A thorough analysis of the study's findings were revealed in Chapter Five examining their significance within the wider framework of marital health and relationship counseling. Practical implications of support in helping women navigate the concept of mutual submission within their marriages were also explored. In addition, Chapter Five provided recommendations for future

research initiatives, focusing on areas to bring awareness and understanding of mutual

submission and its influence on marital satisfaction and equality in marriage.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Overview

This study aimed to examine the lived experiences of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) of mutual submission in marriage. Future insights for couples, clergy, marital counselors were revealed in this study in an effort to support their efforts in improving the quality of marriages. The overview of the study's findings were also shared in this chapter. The current literature and theoretical framework of mutual submission was identified based on the findings. The final sections of this chapter outlined the implications, limitations, and delimitations of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

The focus of this study was to describe the lived experience of divorced professional black women and mutual submission in marriage. As discussed in chapter four, four themes and four sub-themes emerged from the data analysis that was conducted using Moustaka's (1994) transcendental methodology. These themes and sub themes suggested that the participants had a shared experience of mutual submission in marriage (Breda et al., 2020; Harawa-Katumbi, 2012). The four themes are disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage, negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility, cultural expectations and family of origin influences, and gender roles and the divergence from martial expectations. One sub-theme, biblical influenced was emerged from the theme, negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility. Communication style sub-theme emerged from the themes, cultural expectations and family of origin influences. Lack of leadership and support, and self-sacrifice and identity erosion were the two sub-themes that emerged from gender roles and the divergence from martial expectation. Three research questions were used to guide this study (a) what was the

lived experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional women?, b) what impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage? and (c) what was the role of gender in practicing submission in marriage? The themes and sub-themes were generated from the data analysis based on how the research questions were answered.

The first research question for this study, what was the lived experience of mutual submission in marriage of divorced professional women was answered by the theme, disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage. The theme emotional impact of this disparity experienced by the participants were highlighted in this theme. Participants expressed feelings of feelings of frustration and resentment due to the inequality they experienced within their marriages.

The second research question was what impact does spirituality and culture have on practicing submission in marriage? This question was answered by the themes, negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility and cultural expectations and family of origin influences. The study focused on negative experiences brought on by spiritual incompatibility and acknowledged the influence of spirituality and culture on the participants' day-to-day experiences (Birditt et al., 2019; Borges et al., 2021; Krok, 2009; Victor & Treschuk, 2020). This topic revealed how participants' actions were shaped by cultural and spiritual beliefs, which increased emotional discomfort and discord in marriages. Cultural expectancies and family of origin influences were related to the effects of inherited cultural attitudes on the participants' belief systems, familial teachings, and upbringing (Brown, 1999; Park, 2022).

The third research question addressed the role that gender plays a role in submission being practiced in marriage. This theme also revealed the complex difficulties and psychological strain that exist between idealized gender ideals and the real dynamics. Relationship challenges

are linked to preset gender norms and expectations in marriage, according to research by Jones et al. (2021), Jurczyk et al. (2019), and Lovše (2009). D'Acunto (2021) research concluded that when established gender roles clash, it gives rise to emotional and relational tensions. This offered diverse perspectives on the factors and challenges that impact mutual submission practices in marriage among divorced professional Black women.

Discussion

The study's findings are presented in this chapter, drawing upon empirical and theoretical literature discussed in Chapter Two. The findings were consistent and build upon previous research, especially in the context of misunderstanding of the difficult and frequently misunderstood dynamics of marital submission. Furthermore, the study supplemented the existing body of research by uncovering the widespread practice of using submission and mutual submission interchangeably revealing the limited knowledge of mutual submission and its purpose within the framework of marriage. Additionally, the results highlighted that when mutual submission is not practiced in marriage, it can influence the decision to divorce.

One reveal that was interesting is that each participant self-identified as a Christian even though the study did explicitly cater to Christian women. This revealing provided valuable insight for study findings and researcher. It was evident in how participants responded to many of the questions that they believed in and practiced spiritual principles. Personal biases as a result of this revealing can impact the study as participants stories were influenced by their spiritual experiences as well as their experiences with marriage. The participants were familiar with the term submission given their exposure to biblical principles and church upbringing. This contributed to the limitations and implications of the study and further research can benefit from including participants from other religious groups or those who do not identify with religion.

Empirical Literature

This study identified several themes on the different elements of women and their practices of submission in marriage which were consistent with the existing literature. The existing body of research delved into the historical roots of submission in Christian societies. Additionally, the literature examined the impact of submission in marriage on marital satisfaction and the psychological well-being of women. Researchers agreed that negative submission practices in marriage, stemming from misinterpreted biblical teachings, can significantly impact women and lead to negative spiritual experiences (Bentley et al., 2007; Cameron & Overall, 2017; Velotti et al., 2016). The misapplication of certain biblical principles related to submission has been found to contribute to adverse dynamics within the marriage relationships (Barron, 2021; Bartkowski, 1996). The theme negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility with a sub-theme of biblical influence shed light on the ways spiritual differences and conflicting interpretations of biblical principles can contribute to adverse experiences for women.

Biblical Influence

The misinterpretation or misapplication of biblical teachings related to submission can lead to the perpetuation of harmful dynamics within marriage. When women are committed to their spiritual beliefs, the discrepancy between the intended message of these teaching and their misuse within the marital relationship can create discord, leading to negative experiences and spiritual turmoil (Bentley et al., 2007; Cameron & Overall, 2017; Velotti et al., 2016). Several participants shared how their spiritual incompatibility with their husbands impacted biblical submission being practiced.

For instance, Paula shared how her and her husband were incompatible because they came from two separate background and this impacted her desire to submit. She recalls that spirituality was not at the center of her and her husband's life and they came from different backgrounds. Just like in any relationship, you compromise to a certain extent. We became unequally yoked because we weren't compatible." Similarly, Kathy and her husband also shared different spiritual beliefs which influenced her ability to submit. She stated, "the absence of compatibility spiritually greatly influenced the dynamics of submission practices in my marriage. Although we both were brought up in Christianity, we were raised different in Christianity." Lady had a similar experience as Paula and Kathy as she also recalls her husband and her on different spiritual paths and how that made it difficult to submit. Lady noted "me being spiritual and trying to live that way made it difficult when you are dealing with someone who doesn't have the same belief system. It made it difficult to practice submission."

Submission in marriage is hindered when a woman relinquishes her function as a responder and takes on a position of leadership between her spouse and God (Cooper, 1974; Olson, 2018). An increasing body of research is focused on examining the submission in marriages when it is not mutually practiced in marriage. Leopold (2018) stated that couples - who displayed high degrees of masculine dominance and feminine submission were more prone to having lower relationship quality and greater rates of divorce. Scott et al. 2013 suggested that adhering to submission practices in marriage might result in abuse, particularly when one spouse is obligated to unquestioningly submit to the other partner or when submission is imposed by physical or emotional pressure. A study published in the National Library of Medicine found that when submission is practiced in marriage, there are also higher rates of psychological violence, physical assault, and sexual coercion occurring (Snead & Babcock, 2019). Subsequent research

suggested that women who indicated higher levels of submission practices were more susceptible to feelings of anxiety and hopelessness (Choi & Marks, 2008).

Theoretical Literature

The study was guided by three theoretical frameworks: social exchange theory, womanist theory, and equity theory. These theories provided the framework to understand the experiences and perspectives of divorced professional Black women and their experience with mutual submission in marriage. Prior research on the nature of submission and mutual submission in marriage was validated through personal testimonies and lived experiences of these women. The impact of spirituality and culture on the act of submission, gender roles within marriage, the effects of mutual submission on marriage satisfaction, and the dynamics of relationships were also analyzed.

Prior research findings supported the theoretical literature and also expanded on current research by offering insights into several aspects related to the acceptance of equality in marriage and the negative effects of spiritual incompatibility. The themes disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage, negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility, and gender roles and divergence from martial expectations also support the concepts and principles outlined in the theoretical frameworks that guided this study.

Womanist Theory

Womanism centers on the experiences and struggles of Black women, emphasizing their unique intersectional identities and addressing issues of power, oppression, and liberation (Heath, 2006). Applying womanist theory to this study's findings can provide insight into the experiences of the participants, particularly in relation to their sense of empowerment, and the dynamics of power within their marriages (Phillips, 2006). Because of the impact of historical

oppression and gender inequality, Paula had emotional turmoil in her marriage. She recalled the difficulties she faced juggling the expectations placed on her by society as a Black woman to be submissive in her marriage with navigating her professional role in corporate America. Kathy reflected on how difficult it was for her to choose between upholding gender norms and traditional standards of submission or pursuing her career goals. The experiences of the participants are consistent with the core ideas of womanist theory discussed in Chapter Two. Womanist views highlight the prejudice that women face and promotes equality and justice for these groups. Numerous participants shared feelings of undervaluation, identity crisis, and stress from being the household provider, which revealed their husbands' lack of support and guidance.

Their husband's inability to lead them contributed to feelings of disappointment. An essential element of womanism is its focus on the significance of community and relationality, as evidenced by the participants' experiences of seeking assistance and empathy (Heath, 2006). Furthermore, this theory recognized the importance of economic empowerment and the difficulties that Black women encountered in managing their professional responsibilities while also meeting social standards for marriage and family.

Anita narrated her story by sharing that due to the difficulties she experienced in marriage, she was in counseling only two months after her marriage. She expressed disappointment in not being able to enjoy the newlywed phase of marriage but instead feeling unhappy in her new marriage. Paula felt unappreciated when she expected her husband's support and did not receive it when she became sick. She expressed, "I asked my ex-husband to help, I literally needed help to walk. And instead of him helping me to walk, he didn't." Miracle experienced a lack of independence in her marriage, stating that her husband's way of expressing his wants and desires muted her, denying her of basic human rights. She was conveying that how

her ex-husband communicated his needs and desires silenced her from being able to express her needs and desires. Anita, Paula, and Miracle's personal experiences revealed their unique struggles in their marriage and aligns with womanist theory, future emphasizing the need for self-identification and empowerment. Anita having to seek counseling services only two months into her marriage illustrated the disparity between societal norms for newlywed couples and her own dissatisfaction. This illustration acknowledged and addressed womanist beliefs which promotes the need to confront individual experiences.

Paula experience of feeling undervalued and unsupported during a crucial time in her marriage corresponds with the womanist approach to recognizing and addressing the systemic dismissal and devaluation of women. The feelings of rejection she experienced by her ex-husband highlighted the absence of power that womanist theory seeks to address, further bringing attention to the importance of independence and support in marriage. Miracle expressed feeling constrained and lacking self-determination while married which also corresponds with womanist theory, which enables women to exercise autonomy and control over their own lives.

The recognition of Miracle being silenced by her husband's communication style demonstrated the emphasis of womanist theory on fostering individual self-expression and eliminating oppressive dynamics in interpersonal relationships. These stories prioritize self-identification, empowerment, and acknowledged women's experiences within the dynamics of marriage and individual connections which aligns with the fundamental principles of womanist theory (Banks-Wallace, 2000; Collins, 2002; Townes, 1995).

Social Exchange Theory

The social exchange theory argues that connections are formed when individuals assess the advantages and disadvantages associated with those connections (Hui et al., 2007).

Individuals are more likely to terminate the relationship when they believe that the disadvantages are greater than the advantages in that relationship. The participants in this study considered the difference between their expected outcomes and the actual benefits of their marriages as a crucial factor that influenced their decision to start the divorce process. The principles of social exchange theory was indicated by the research findings through the lived experiences of the participants. Ninety percent of the participants who also wanted to be married again indicated discontent because their expectations for a marriage which included things like fulfillment, respect for one another, and support were not met. Three individuals who had been married more than once offered their perspectives, emphasizing how they continued to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of marriage.

Through the lens of social exchange theory, participants' decisions to end or remarry can be understood as continual assessments of the benefits and drawbacks of the marriages they have experienced. According to the participants, the marriage no longer met their wants or offered benefits, which is consistent with the central tenet of social exchange theory. This suggested that when relationships are necessary, people work to maximize their advantages and minimize their disadvantages. Individuals are more likely to end a relationship when they believe there would be more costs than benefits, as demonstrated by unfulfilled expectations and a lack of support (Mills & Clark, 1982; Williamson & Clark, 1992; Williamson et al., 1996).

Kathy and Pam both discussed the importance of considering their own peace and the well-being of their families when determining whether to remain in their marriages, especially when evaluating whether the marriage was still valuable or beneficial, Kathy noted, "I would have to evaluate at what cost for my own peace or happiness." Kathy, Special, and Paula expressed feelings of disappointment in not having their husband's support as it pertained to their

careers and professional lives. Special spoke of her husband not supporting her decision to go

back to work after having a child, she shared "I would have to say when it was time for me to go

back to work and it was like, no, you need to stay home." Paula shared "I was being recognized

as woman of the year and my husband did not show up. He did not care enough to show up."

Anita shared how she was unhappy and dissatisfied in the marriage. Lady expressed how the

marriage and the environment became hostile, even for the children. She noted, "It created

almost hostile environment because it set the precedent. When I say a hostile environment, our

children would scatter, they would immediately leave the room when we had conversations. It

just became so uncomfortable."

Equity Theory

Equity theory suggested that individuals strive to maintain a fair and equitable balance in

their relationships, seeking fairness in the distribution of rewards and costs (Dainton, 2019).

According to Dainton (2019), when perceived inequity arises, individuals may experience

distress and seek to restore balance. The experiences of the participants within the context of

their cultural expectations and family of origin influences align with the principles of the equity

theory. The common expectation from family was for them to stay in the marriage, despite the

lack of support they experienced, this reflects the participants' adherence to cultural expectations

and family of origin influence. Several of the participants felt a sense of obligation to uphold the

perceived equity within their cultural context, even at the cost of their own well-being.

Paula recalls being encouraged by her grandmother to stay in her marriage despite the issues she

was experiencing. She shared:

> I can remember shortly after I got married, I remember my grandmother telling me that
>
> anytime you're ready to leave your husband, if you walk out that front door, you just

come back around to the back door because you stay in it unless he puts his hands on

you.

Kathy shared how culture instilled the belief that males are the leaders of the home, while

women are expected to be supportive and assist them. Therefore, this shaped her expectations

regarding her marriage and the role she anticipated her husband to fulfill. She shared how there

is a prevailing belief that the husband holds the position of authority in the household and that

those expectations are often influenced by the teachings of the church. She noted:

Society have taught us that the man is the head of the household and that the women

should be the ribs, she should be the help mate. That belief influenced my expectations in

my marriage and what I expected from him as a husband.

The influence of the participants' parents or grandparents in encouraging them to stay and

fight for the marriage speaks to the intergenerational transmission of expectations and values,

which can be understood within the framework of the equity theory. Pam felt she was expected

to remain and persevere in her marriage regardless of the circumstances. She was influenced by

the cultural expectation that wives should demonstrate submission to their husbands and stay in

their marriages to avoid disappointing or disgracing the family. She expressed:

I honestly probably stayed there longer than I should have because I was trying to be

submissive and loyal, and of course the old term we always hear fight for your family. No

one wants their family or friends to feel like they are failing at something that's supposed

to be so precious and so important. The influence and expectation from family played a

part in me constantly thinking that, I'm going to fight for this.

Equity theory suggests that couples are motivated to maintain relationships that are

mutually beneficial rather than ones that are characterized by inequality, since they receive

greater happiness from unions that are equitable and impartial. According to Stafford and Canary (2006), the cornerstone of this concept is based on the idea that individuals evaluate the extent of equality in their relationships from their own perspective. This assessment entailed the comparison of one's own ratio of results to inputs with their evaluations of their partners' outcomes and inputs.

In equitable relationships, all individuals involved experience a balanced ratio of advantages and benefits. However, the participants did not experience this situation. During their marriages, they felt that their husbands had a greater ratio of advantages to expenses. According to equity theory, this means that the other person is over-benefited. Conversely, if one spouse has a greater proportion of expenses compared to incentives, that partner is in a less favorable position (Stafford and Canary, 2006). This was the situation reported by the participants, reflecting their experiences in their marriages. The participants' observations of marriage and submission practices modeled by their family members shaped their perceptions of fairness and equity within their own marriages, contributing to their decisions to stay in marriages that were no longer fulfilling. Additionally, the cultural norm of practicing spirituality and the felt obligation to stay and submit in an unsupported marriage also tie into equity theory, as the participants did seek to maintain perceived equity in their spiritual and social relationships, even when they faced personal dissatisfaction.

Implications

The results of this study have implications for several demographic groupings. This study was beneficial to marital and family therapists, counselors, mental health practitioners, spiritual leaders, and researchers. The implications are analyzed from several perspectives, including theoretical, empirical, and practical.

Theoretical Implications

   The participants' responses and experiences in Chapter four offer theoretical implications for comprehending mutual submission within the framework of marriage. The issue of disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage highlighted the contrast between the participants' understanding of mutual submission and their actual lived experiences. There was also emphasis on the need to reexamine traditional gender norms and expectations inside marriage. The participant's experiences revealed the difficult and complicated aspects of conforming to traditional gender standards, as well as how these norms affect marriage (D'Acunto et al., 2021; Heath, 2006). The study's themes and conclusions supported the relevance of the theoretical frameworks used for this research by aligning with their ideas and beliefs. This study can have an impact on the current discussion on marriage submission standards.The social exchange theory lends support to the assessment of benefits and drawbacks through personal interaction (Mills & Clark, 1982; Williamson & Clark, 1992; Williamson et al., 1996).

   When participants did not receive anticipated benefits, the social exchange theory's principles also made sense. Expectations from both parties and tangible benefits from their marriage may have been significant factor in their choice to file for divorce. The participants' real-world experiences supported the social exchange theory's basic concept of maximizing benefits and minimizing downsides in marriage (Stafford & Canary, 2006).

   The study's conclusions emphasized the value of equality and justice in relationships with others, which reinforces the core ideas of equity theory (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1983; Hatfield et al., 2008; Polk, 2022). The pressure and difficulties to conform to conventional gender norms were highlighted through participants' experiences emphasizing the necessity to reassess these roles in marriages (Kayabol & Sümer, 2022).

Perceived unfairness in relationships can result in relationship dissatisfaction and possible breakdown of the relationship (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1983; Hatfield et al., 2008; Polk, 2022). The fairness and equality perspectives of equity theory reinforce a need to reconsider societal norms and gender roles related to individuals in married relationships (Pietromonaco et al., 2021; Reidy et al., 2014). Therefore, it is essential that quality in relationships is further studied and prioritized.

The three theories, social exchange theory, equity theory, and womanist theory were integrated in this study in sharing the lived experiences of divorced black women and their experiences of mutual submission in marriage. By incorporating these ideologies, it gives Black women a sense of direction and affirms their existence (Heath, 2006; Rousseau, 2013). Emile Townes, a theologian who self-identifies as a womanist, believes that religion promoted through visionary ambition for the future of humanity disrupts established norms and enables the formation of a novel reality for human existence (Townes, 1995). Townes belief aligned with the participants experience in choosing whether or not to practice submission in their marriage due to spiritual beliefs and cultural expectations (Ngwoke, 2020).

The link between spiritual beliefs, societal standards, and marital submission was uncovered through the study's findings. The study emphasized the theory's significance in understanding the actual experiences of Black women, namely in the areas of marriage and spirituality by placing these experiences inside the framework of womanist theory. Further research regarding womanist theory and its practical consequences for placing the experiences of Black women in various social and cultural settings should be developed (Allen, 2022; Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). This study added to the current research by demonstrating the relationship between the lack of mutual submission and the breakdown of a marriage.

Empirical Implications

This study highlighted how divorced professional Black women were able to navigate their roles within the institution of marriage while uncovering the various factors that influenced their perspectives on submission. Through their outcomes described, the participants' feedback provided insightful information about their real-world experiences. The importance of spirituality in influencing the dynamics of marriage was revealed by the sub-theme of biblical influence and the theme of negative outcomes resulting from spiritual incompatibility. According to Amato and Booth (1991), the lack of mutual submission practices in marriage resulted in discontentment, unfairness, and the dissolution of their marriage.

The participants indicated that submission practices and expectations were misunderstood, as they were expected to do so despite difficulties in their marriage because of their beliefs about the bible. Many of the participants were influenced by their family's beliefs and pressures to stay in their marriages in the hopes of positive changes, even though they contemplated leaving sooner. Their view of mutual submission in marriage was shaped by spirituality and cultural standards, which also led to misunderstandings about gender roles and the effect of their family of origin (Collins, 2002; Gervasi et al., 2022; Maisiri, 2015). These results suggested that additional study is necessary to better understand the direct relationship between faith, culture, and marital dynamics in various ethnic and cultural contexts (Boswell et al., 2006). These results provide insight into the challenges that restrict the practice of submission in marriage and provide a deeper understanding of its complexity (Aman et al., 2019).

Practical Implications

The study's conclusions have significant real-world ramifications for researching divorced Black professional women's mutual submission practices in marriage. This study was supported by earlier research that addressed issues related to gender roles, power dynamics, and the influence of spiritual and cultural beliefs on marriages (Bartkowski & Read, 2003; Connell, 2013; Pietromonaco et al., 2021; Whitnah, 2022). By identifying these issues, solutions can be applied to support healthier and more balanced marriage relationships. There were substantial issues with one-sided submission approaches that led to mistreatment, power abuse, decreased autonomy, and psychological or emotional trauma. This study also addressed the impact of cultural expectations and rigidly imposed gender on the dynamics of marriage

To further confront these practical challenges, a comprehensive solution that involves individuals who work with this demographic is essential. In particularly therapists, counselors and spiritual advisors (Lamela et al., 2020; Roth-Roemer, 1998). It is critical that these specialists assist individuals and couples in efficiently addressing and navigating through marital challenges related to culture and unbalanced gender roles. Professionals in the field can carefully observe signs of mental or physical abuse in their patients and provide appropriate guidance and support (Janicijevic, 2013).

Clergy and spiritual leaders could contribute to the promotion of a more sophisticated and fair understanding of submission practices in marriage (Balthrop, 2022). Stansbury et al. (2012) argued that pastors need to possess this comprehension to effectively carry out their pastoral counseling duties. Stansbury et al. (2012) stated that churches, particularly pastors, have the responsibility and duty to interpret cultural and religious issues. They also observed that certain cultural and religious perspectives have been accepted without scrutiny. The issue of assuming

certain cultural and religious viewpoints without question can be addressed by promoting open communication to assist couples. It is important to encourage open conversation as a means of supporting couples to tackle the problem of automatically adopting specific cultural and religious perspectives in marriages (Ademiluka, 2019; Agbonkhese & Onuoha, 2017; Babajide-Alabi, 2017; Igbelina-Igbokwe, 2013).

Working together can improve public awareness of healthy relationships through community organizations and advocacy groups and can help individuals who are facing challenges related to wrongful submission practices in marriage (Minkler, 2005; Varkey, 2010). It is vital to encourage understanding through information, education, and awareness of these marital dynamics and simultaneously promote equality within these unions (Qian, 2017). The particular challenges faced by individuals in marriage is partly due to traditional and misunderstood gender roles. There is a need for professionals in the field to develop therapeutic interventions focused on leadership, support, and the preservation of personal identity among couples. Couples that adhere to traditional gender norms report lower levels of communication and increased levels of relationship conflict compared to couples who adopt more flexible gender roles (Pourshahbaz et al., 2020; Reidy et al., 2014).

Unequal power balances due to one-sided submission practices was expressed by several of the participants. Others expressed power differences due to taking on the role of the primary financial provider in the household, while also challenged with the expectation to practice submission. Many of the participants shared how their marriages made them feel defeated and unsuccessful. The power dynamics in marriage, unfulfilled desires and expectations, and personal values that exist in married relationships can all be addressed through specialized counseling and support programs. Counselors, therapists, and spiritual leaders may address these

problems that Black women encounter in relationships head-on and encourage a fair division of roles and responsibilities in relationships. Future studies need to emphasize open communication and mutual respect between spouses in addition to discussing the importance of equal collaboration and respect in marriage.

Delimitations and Limitations

Because the study only examined the lived experiences of professional Black women who had divorced and their experiences of mutual submission in marriage, the study was limited. Other individual's viewpoints, including those of the participant's relatives or ex-spouses, were not considered. This narrow focus made use of the opportunity to draw attention to the unique perspectives of Black women in the workforce and provided information about their experiences while excluding other points of view. The use of qualitative research methodologies, namely transcendental phenomenology, also limited the study. Although this method offered insightful information on the participants' actual experiences, it limited the applicability of the findings to a larger population when applied in a quantitative approach. The researcher had no control over the study's limitations. The results' limited generalizability was caused by the small sample size of 10 participants. The validity of the findings may be impacted by biases or restrictions in the interpretation of responses provided by participants if open-ended, semi-structured interview questions were used for data collection.

Participants' actual experiences were limited to a certain time frame, consequently they might not accurately reflect any prospective shifts in participants' viewpoints throughout time. The research's validity may be limited because it focused on a specific set of individuals who belonged to a certain cultural and sociological group; as a result, its conclusions might not apply to other populations . Furthermore, bias may be increased by self-reported experiences and

opinions, which could jeopardize the accuracy and reliability of the data. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the research provided insightful information about mutual submission in marriage that divorced professional Black women experienced. The practical uses of mutual submission practices in marriage and future studies involving this topic may be affected by these findings.

Recommended for Future Research

The study concentrated on the lived experiences of Professional Black Women (PBW) who had divorced and their experiences of mutual submission in marriage. Because of the focus on this population and their marriage experiences and viewpoints, the study was limited. Other people's perspectives, such as those of the participant's ex-husbands, were not considered for this study. This confined scope made use of the chance to focus on the unique perspectives of the Black professional women and provide information about their experiences. The study was additionally restricted by the application of transcendental phenomenology. While this approach provided valuable insights into the lived experiences of the participants, it restricted the ability to apply the results to a broader population using a quantitative method. The limitations of the study were outside the researcher's control. There were limited due to the small sample size of 10 participants restricting the universality of the results. The use of open-ended semi-structured interview questions for data collection could potentially introduce biases or limitations in the interpretation of participants' responses, thereby impacting the finding's validity.

The lived experiences of participants were restrained to specific period and may not fully contain any potential changes in participant's perspectives over time. Because the study was done on selected group of people, belonging to a particular cultural and societal group, validity of the research may be hindered as the findings may not be applicable to different groups

studied. Furthermore, self-reported experiences and viewpoints may encourage bias which could potentially compromise the quality and dependability of data collected. Despite the limitations, the studied offered useful insights into the experiences of divorced professional Black women regarding mutual submission in marriage. These findings have implications for future research and practical applications of mutual submission practices in marriage.

Firsthand accounts of divorced professional Black women and their experience with mutual submission in marriage was the focus of this study. The study contributed important insights to the existing literature on submission practices in marriage. Additional research is required to further promote necessity and benefits of mutual submission practices in marriage. Research with participants from different geographic regions would enhance understanding of how mutual submission is experienced and practiced among varied cultural and societal groups.

Monitoring the experiences and results of mutual submission in marriage over a prolonged period can share how mutual submission practices can influence marriages. One way to do this is with longitudinal research. Comparative study analyses between various religious and cultural groups can be used to explain why there are variations in belief systems and how these variations affect the satisfaction of marriage. This method may provide insightful information about the blending of marriage, culture, and religion.

The use of quantitative research approaches can facilitate the successful investigation of nonreligious women's perspectives regarding mutual submission practices in marriage. Statistical analysis can be used to obtain data-driven knowledge that can be used to evaluate attitudes, deeds, and outcomes related to mutual submission in marriage. helpful insights into how this strategy might be used to address nonspiritual viewpoints, cultural influences, and personal

values while also influencing women's understanding and use of mutual submission, independent of their religious affiliations.

To determine how these intersections may affect individual experiences, an intersectional method that examines the connections between mutual submission in marriage and education, race, and socioeconomic status might be applied. An examination of gender roles and mutual submission can be used to look at how traditional gender roles, expectations, and power dynamics affect the mutual submission in marriage. Additional research may improve comprehension of mutual submitting customs in marriage and their impact on marital contentment and individual fulfillment inside various female demographics.

Summary

This study utilized a transcendental phenomenological method to examine the viewpoints on mutual submission within marriage and the experiences of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW). The study was guided by three theoretical frameworks: equity theory, womanist theory, and social exchange theory. Open-ended semi-structured interview questions were also used. The data analysis revealed four themes: disparity in embracing the idea of equality in marriage, negative experiences due to spiritual incompatibility, cultural expectations and family of origin influences, and gender roles and the divergence from marital expectations. The study's representation of the participants' difficult and intricate circumstances revealed differences between the conceptualization and actual application of mutual submission.

The study made apparent that in order to resolve some of the issues that the participants' marriages were experiencing, there is a need for more knowledge of and comprehension of mutual submission. The results of the study also revealed the importance of addressing historical, social, and cultural elements and how they affected these women's experiences of mutual

submission. The study further demonstrated the necessity of reassessing the effects of spiritual influences, cultural standards, and traditional gender roles on marriages.

To fully comprehend the lived realities of divorced PBW and their viewpoints on mutual submission in marriage, this study was crucial. Mental health professionals, spiritual leaders, counselors, and marital and family therapists can all benefit from the insightful information provided. The results of this study can also be helpful to those who aspire to be married, as it raises awareness of the customs of mutual submission in marriage and offers valuable insight and direction on the topic. Through discussion of the advantages of mutual submission techniques, this study aimed to increase the overall satisfaction and support individuals in marriage receive. The study's goal was to encourage an upward shift in marital relationships so that women would feel confident pursuing happy, long-lasting marriages.

References

Abebe, Y. M. (2015). Lived experiences of divorced women in rural Ethiopia: A special focus in

    hulet ejju enessie woreda: Addis zemen kebele. *International Journal of Political Science*

    and Development, *3*(6), 268–281.

Abrams, J. A., Maxwell, M., Pope, M., & Belgrave, F. Z. (2014). Carrying the world with the

    grace of a lady and the grit of a warrior: Deepening our understanding of the "strong

    black woman" schema. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *38*(4), 503–518.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684314541418

Addai-Duah, C. R. (2020). *Nonprofit church leaders' perceptions and lived experiences*

    involving innovation competency and change management: A phenomenological study

    [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Walden University.

Ademiluka, S. O. (2019). Reading 1 Corinthians 7:10–11 in the context of intimate partner

    violence in Nigeria. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, *40*(1), a1926.

    https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v40i1.1926

Ademiluka, S. O. (2021). 'For the husband is the head of the wife': A contextual re-reading of

    Ephesians 5:22–33 among Nigerian Yoruba Christians. *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi*,

    55(1), a2613. https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v55i1.2613

Agbonkhese, J., & Onuoha, C. (2017). *Does Nigerian culture permit domestic violence?*

    Vanguard.

Ahmad, S. (2017). *Living a feminist life*. Duke University Press.

Alase, A. (2017). The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): A guide to a good

    qualitative research approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*,

    5(2), 9–19. https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.5n.2p.9

Alexander, M. J., & Mohanty, C. T. (2013). *Feminist genealogies, colonial legacies, democratic futures*. Routledge.

Alghafli, Z., Hatch, T., & Marks, L. (2014). Religion and relationships in Muslim families: A qualitative examination of devout married Muslim couples. *Religions*, *5*(3), 814–833. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel5030814

Alhazmi, A. A., & Kaufmann, A. (2022). Phenomenological qualitative methods applied to the analysis of cross-cultural experience in novel educational social contexts. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 785134. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.785134

Ali, P. A., McGarry, J., & Maqsood, A. (2022). Spousal role expectations and marital conflict: Perspectives of men and women. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *37*(9–10), NP7082–NP7108. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520966667

Alinia, M. (2015). On *Black Feminist Thought*: Thinking oppression and resistance through intersectional paradigm. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *38*(13), 2334–2340. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2015.1058492

Allen, K. R. (2022). Feminist theory, method, and praxis: Toward a critical consciousness for family and close relationship scholars. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *40*(3), 899–936. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211065779

Allen, S. M., Ciambrone, D., & Welch, L. C. (2000). Stage of life course and social support as a mediator of mood state among persons with disability. *Journal of Aging and Health*, *12*(3), 318–341. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/089826430001200303

Alsdurf, J., & Alsdurf, P. (1998). *Battered into submission: The tragedy of wife abuse in the Christian home*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Aman, J., Abbas, J., Nurunnabi, M., & Bano, S. (2019). The relationship of religiosity and

    marital satisfaction: The role of religious commitment and practices on marital

    satisfaction among Pakistani respondents. *Behavioral Sciences*, *9*(3), 30.

    https://doi.org/10.3390/bs9030030

Amato, P. R. (2010). Research on divorce: Continuing trends and new developments. *Journal of*

    Marriage and Family, *72*(3), 650–666. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40732501

Amato, P. R., & Booth, A. (1991). Consequences of parental divorce and marital unhappiness for

    adult well-being. *Social Forces*, *69*(3), 895–914. https://doi.org/10.2307/2579480

Amin, M. E. K., Nørgaard, L. S., Cavaco, A. M., Witry, M. J., Hillman, L., Cernasev, A., &

    Desselle, S. P. (2020). Establishing trustworthiness and authenticity in qualitative

    pharmacy research. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, *16*(10), 1472–

    1482. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sapharm.2020.02.005

Andelin, H. B. (1974). *Fascinating womanhood*. Bantam Books.

Anderson, C. (2010). Presenting and evaluating qualitative research. *American Journal of*

    Pharmaceutical Education, *74*(8), 141. https://doi.org/10.5688/aj7408141

Anderson, J. (2014). The impact of family structure on the health of children: Effects of divorce.

    The Linacre Quarterly, *81*(4), 378–387.

    https://doi.org/10.1179/0024363914Z.00000000087

Ang, C. S., Lee, K. F., & Lie, X. (2020). Understanding singleness: A phenomenological study

    of single women in Beijing and Singapore. *The Qualitative Report*, *25*(8), 3080–3100.

    https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4269

Apostolou, M., O, J., & Esposito, G. (2020). Singles' reasons for being single: Empirical

    evidence from an evolutionary perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *11*, 746.

    https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00746

Archer, M., & Archer, K. J. (2019). Complementarianism and egalitarianism—Whose side are

    you leaning on? A Pentecostal reading of Ephesians 5:21–33. *Pneuma*, *41*(1), 66–90.

    https://doi.org/10.1163/15700747-04101034

Aten, J. D., Smith, W. R., Davis, E. B., Van Tongeren, D. R., Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E.,

    Shannonhouse, L., DeBlaere, C., Ranter, J., O'Grady, K., & Hill, P. C. (2019). The

    psychological study of religion and spirituality in a disaster context: A systematic review.

    Psychological Trauma, *11*(6), 597–613. https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000431

Babajide-Alabi, M. (2017). *Let's talk about rape.* Vanguard.

Bacchus, D. N. A. (2008). Coping with work-related stress: A study of the use of coping

    resources among professional Black women. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in

    Social Work*, *17*(1), 60–81. https://doi.org/10.1080/15313200801906443

Badawi, J. A. (1995). *Gender equity in Islam* (Vol. 2, pp. 427-428). by IDM Publications.

Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report

    assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment*, *13*(1), 27–45.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191105283504

Balthrop, C. E. (2022). *A collaborative process for equipping pastors and church leaders in the

    153aptistetro baptist network to revitalize churches by developing strategic partnerships

    with one another* (Order No. 28970200) [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Midwestern

    Baptist Theological Seminary.

Balzarini, R. N., Dharma, C., Kohut, T., Campbell, L., Lehmiller, J. J., Harman, J. J., & Holmes,

B. M. (2019). Comparing relationship quality across different types of romantic partners

in polyamorous and monogamous relationships. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *48*(6),

1749–1767. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-019-1416-7

Banks-Wallace, J. (2000). Womanist ways of knowing: Theoretical considerations for research

with African American women. *Advances in Nursing Science*, *22*(3), 33–45.

https://doi.org/10.1097/00012272-200003000-00004

Bansak, C., & Pearlman, S. (2022). Marriage and immigration enforcement: The impact of

secure communities on immigrant women. *Economic Inquiry*, *60*(1), 351–372.

https://doi.org/10.1111/ecin.13028

Barron, J. R. (2021). Mutual submission, mutual respect: Reciprocal *enkanyit* in Ephesians 5 in

the Maasai context. *Stellenbosch Theological Journal*, *7*(1).

http://dx.doi.org/10.17570/stj.2021.v7n1.a33

Bartkowski, J. (1996). Beyond biblical literalism and inerrancy: Conservative Protestants and the

hermeneutic interpretation of scripture. *Sociology of Religion*, *57*(3), 259–272.

https://doi.org/10.2307/3712156

Bartkowski, J. P., & Read, J. N. G. (2003). Veiled submission: Gender, power, and identity

among evangelical and Muslim women in the United States. *Qualitative Sociology*, *26*,

71–92. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021456004419

Bassey, S. A., & Bubu, N. G. (2019). Gender inequality in Africa: A re-examination of cultural

values. *Cogito: Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, *11*(3), 21–36.

Bean, F. D., Berg, R. R., & Van Hook, J. V. W. (1996). Socioeconomic and cultural

  incorporation and marital disruption among Mexican Americans. *Social Forces*, *75*(2),

  593–617. https://doi.org/10.2307/2580415

Beck, J. R. (1978). Mutuality in marriage. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *6*(2), 141–148.

  https://doi.org/10.1177/009164717800600207

Becker, P. E., & Edgell, P. (1999). *Congregations in conflict: Cultural models of local religious*

  life. Cambridge University Press.

Becvar, D., & Becvar, R. (2009). *Family therapy: A systemic integration* (7th ed.). Pearson

  Education.

Bendroth, M. L. (1993). *Fundamentalism and gender, 1875 to the present*. Yale University

  Press.

Bentley, C. G., Galliher, R. V., & Ferguson, T. J. (2007). Associations among aspects of

  interpersonal power and relationship functioning in adolescent romantic couples. *Sex*

  Roles, *57*, 483–495. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-007-9280-7

Bilal, A., & Rasool, S. (2020). Marital satisfaction and satisfaction with life: Mediating role of

  sexual satisfaction in married women. *Journal of Psychosexual Health*, *2*(1), 77–86.

  https://doi.org/10.1177/2631831820912873

Billups, F. D. (2019). *Qualitative data collection tools: Design, development, and applications*

  (Vol. 55). Sage.

Birditt, K. S., Brown, E., Orbuch, T. L., & McIlvane, J. M. (2010). Marital conflict behaviors

  and implications for divorce over 16 years. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *72*(5),

  1188–1204. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2010.00758.x

Birditt, K. S., Newton, N. J., Cranford, J. A., & Webster, N. J. (2019). Chronic stress and negative marital quality among older couples: Associations with waist circumference. *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, *74*(2), 318–328. https://doi.org/10.1093/geronb/gbw112

Blankenhorn, D., Browning, D. S., & Van Leeuwen, M. S. (Eds.). (2004). *Does Christianity teach male headship? The equal-regard marriage and its critics*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Booth, A., & Amato, P. R. (1994). Parental gender role nontraditionalism and offspring outcomes. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *56*(4), 865–877. https://doi.org/10.2307/353599

Borges, C. C., Dos Santos, P. R., Alves, P. M., Borges, R. C. M., Lucchetti, G., Barbosa, M. A., Porto, C. C., & Fernandes, M. R. (2021). Association between spirituality/religiousness and quality of life among healthy adults: a systematic review. *Health and quality of life outcomes*, *19*(1), 246. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12955-021-01878-7

Botha, M. (2021). Critical realism, community psychology, and the curious case of autism: A philosophy and practice of science with social justice in mind. *Journal of Community Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22764

Boykin, C. C. (2022). *An examination of the underrepresentation of Black women in senior leadership roles at predominately White institutions (PWIs): Exploring the narratives of mid-level managers* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of New Orleans.

Bradbury, J., & Cornwall, S. (Eds.). (2016). *Thinking again about marriage: Key theological questions*. SCM Press.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(3), 328–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238

Breda, T., Jouini, E., Napp, C., & Thebault, G. (2020). Gender stereotypes can explain the gender-equality paradox. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *117*(49), 31063–31069. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2008704117

Brinig, M. F., & Allen, D. W. (2000). 'These boots are made for walking': Why most divorce filers are women. *American Law and Economics Review*, *2*(1), 126–169. https://www.jstor.org/stable/42705364

Brown, J. (1999). Bowen family systems theory and practice: Illustration and critique. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, *20*(2), 94–103. https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1467-8438.1999.tb00363.x

Brown, S. L., & Wright, M. R. (2017). Marriage, cohabitation, and divorce in later life. *Innovation in Aging*, *1*(2), igx015. https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igx015

Bryant, A. N. (2011). The impact of campus context, college encounters, and religious/spiritual struggle on ecumenical worldview development. *Research in Higher Education*, *52*, 441–459. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-010-9205-0

Bryc, K., Durand, E. Y., Macpherson, J. M., Reich, D., & Mountain, J. L. (2015). The genetic ancestry of African Americans, Latinos, and European Americans across the United States. *American Journal of Human Genetics*, *96*(1), 37–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajhg.2014.11.010

Burke, H. D. (2003). *Different by design: God's master plan for harmony between men and women in marriage*. Moody Publishers.

Butrica, B. A., & Smith, K. E. (2012). Racial and ethnic differences in the retirement prospects of divorced women in the Baby Boom and Generation X cohorts. *Social Security Bulletin*, *72*(1), 23–36.

Buunk, B. P., & Van Yperen, N. W. (1991). Referential comparisons, relational comparisons, and exchange orientation: Their relation to marital satisfaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *17*(6), 709–717. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167291176015

Cameron, L. D., & Overall, N. C. (2017). Suppression and expression as distinct emotion-regulation processes in daily interactions: Longitudinal and meta-analyses. *Emotion*, *18*(4), 465–480. https://doi.org/10.1037/emo0000334

Canary, D. J., & Spitzberg, B. H. (1989). A model of the perceived competence of conflict strategies. *Human Communication Research*, *15*(4), 630–649. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1989.tb00202.x

Canary, D. J., & Stafford, L. (2007). People want—and maintain—fair marriages: Reply to Ragsdale and Brandau-Brown. *Journal of Family Communication*, *7*(1), 61–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/15267430709336669

Carlson, D. S., Thompson, M. J., Crawford, W. S., Boswell, W. R., & Whitten, D. (2018). Your job is messing with mine! The impact of mobile device use for work during family time on the spouse's work life. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *23*(4), 471–482. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000103

Carney, N., & Kelekay, J. (2022). Framing the Black Lives Matter movement: An analysis of shifting news coverage in 2014 and 2020. *Social Currents*, *9*(6), 558–572. https://doi.org/10.1177/23294965221092731

Carter, L., & Rossi, A. (2019). Embodying strength: The origin, representations, and

    socialization of the strong Black woman ideal and its effect on Black women's mental

    health. *Women & Therapy*, *42*(3–4), 289–300.

    https://doi.org/10.1080/02703149.2019.1622911

Chauvette, A., Schick-Makaroff, K., & Molzahn, A. E. (2019). Open data in qualitative research.

    International Journal of Qualitative Methods, *18*.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918823863

Cherlin, A. J. (1992). *Marriage, divorce, remarriage*. Harvard University Press.

Choi, H., & Marks, N. F. (2008). Marital conflict, depressive symptoms, and functional

    impairment. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *70*(2), 377–390.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2008.00488.x

Cislaghi, B., & Heise, L. (2020). Gender norms and social norms: Differences, similarities and

    why they matter in prevention science. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *42*(2), 407–422.

    https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9566.13008

Clark, A. E. (1997). Job satisfaction and gender: Why are women so happy at work? *Labour

    Economics*, *4*(4), 341–372. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0927-5371(97)00010-9

Clark, M. S., Mills, J., & Powell, M. C. (1986). Keeping track of needs in communal and

    exchange relationships. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *51*(2), 333.

Clark, M. S., & Mills, J. R. (2012). A theory of communal (and exchange) relationships. In P. A.

    M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social

    psychology* (pp. 232–250). Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n38

Cohen, M. T. (2016). An exploratory study of individuals in non-traditional, alternative relationships: How "open" are we? *Sexuality & Culture*, *20*, 295–315. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-015-9324-z

Cohen, P. N. (2019). The coming divorce decline. *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World*, *5*, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023119873497

Collins, P. H. (2002). *Black feminist thought*: *Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge.

Collins, P. H. (2019). *Intersectionality as critical social theory*. Duke University Press.

Comas-Díaz, L. (1991). Feminism and diversity in psychology: The case of women of color. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *15*(4), 597–609. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1471-6402.1991.tb00433.x

Connell, R. (2013). *Gender and power: Society, the person, and sexual politics*. John Wiley & Sons.

Conroy, A. A. (2014). Gender, power, and intimate partner violence: A study on couples from rural Malawi. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *29*(5), 866–888. https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260513505907

Cooper, D. B. (1974). *You can be the wife of a happy husband*. Victor Books.

Copen, C. E., Daniels, K., Vespa, J., & Mosher, W. D. (2012). *First marriages in the United States: Data from the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth* (National Health Statistics Reports No. 49). National Center for Health Statistics. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED575480

Corey, M. S., & Corey, G. (2020). *Becoming a helper*. Cengage Learning.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. SAGE Publications

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Cui, M., & Fincham, F. D. (2010). The differential effects of parental divorce and marital conflict on young adult romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *17*, 331–343. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2010.01279.x

D'Acunto, F., Malmendier, U., & Weber, M. (2021). Gender roles produce divergent economic expectations. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *118*(21), e2008534118. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2008534118

Dainton, M. (2019). Equity and relationship maintenance in first marriages and remarriages. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *60*(8), 583–599. https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2019.1586420

Damota, M. D. (2019). The effect of divorce on families' life. *Journal of Culture, Society and Development*, *46*. https://doi.org/10.7176/JCSD/46-02

Dangal, M., & Joshi, R. (2020). Hermeneutic phenomenology: Essence in educational research. *Open Journal for Studies in Philosophy*, *4*(1), 25–42. https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojsp.0401.03025d

David, P., & Stafford, L. (2013). A relational approach to religion and spirituality in marriage. *Journal of Family Issues*, *36*(2), 232–249. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x13485922

Davidsen, A. S. (2013). Phenomenological approaches in psychology and health sciences. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *10*(3), 318–339. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2011.608466

Davis, S. M., & Jones, M. K. (2021). Black women at war: A comprehensive framework for research on the strong Black woman. *Women's Studies in Communication*, *44*(3), 301–322. https://doi.org/10.1080/07491409.2020.1838020

Davis, S. N., & Greenstein, T. N. (2009). Gender ideology: Components, predictors, and consequences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *35*, 87–105. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115920

Dean-Hill, J. J. (2019). *The melody of mutuality: Integrating theological and psychological principles for egalitarian churches to better support marriages* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Portland Seminary.

Del Boca, D., Oggero, N., Profeta, P., & Rossi, M. (2020). Women's and men's work, housework, and childcare, before and during COVID-19. *Review of Economics of the Household*, *18*, 1001–1017. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11150-020-09502-1

Delton, A. W., & Robertson, T. E. (2016). How the mind makes welfare tradeoffs: Evolution, computation, and emotion. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *7*, 12–16. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.06.006

Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2003). Personality, culture, and subjective well-being: Emotional and cognitive evaluations of life. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *54*(1), 403–425. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.54.101601.145056

Dominguez, G. E., Pujol, J., Motzkau, J. F., & Popper, M. (2017). Suspended transitions and affective orderings: From troubled monogamy to liminal polyamory. *Theory and Psychology*, *27*(2), 183–197. https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354317700289

D'Onofrio, B., & Emery, R. (2019). Parental divorce or separation and children's mental health. *World Psychiatry*, *18*(1), 100–101. https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20590

Donoho, C. J., Seeman, T. E., Sloan, R. P., & Crimmins, E. M. (2015). Marital status, marital quality, and heart rate variability in the MIDUS cohort. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *29*(2), 290–295. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000068

Dowe, P. K. F. (2020). Resisting marginalization: Black women's political ambition and agency. *Political Science & Politics*, *53*(4), 697–702.

Doyle, L. (2001). *The surrendered wife: A practical guide for finding intimacy, passion, and peace with a man*. Simon and Schuster.

Durdella, N. (2017). *Qualitative dissertation methodology: A guide for research design and methods*. Sage.

Eagly, A. H., Nater, C., Miller, D. I., Kaufmann, M., & Sczesny, S. (2020). Gender stereotypes have changed: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of US public opinion polls from 1946 to 2018. *American Psychologist*, *75*(3), 301–315. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000494

Eckenroad, E. M. (2023). *The effects of traditional gender roles on marital satisfaction* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Regent University.

Eddy, P. R. (2012). Book review: As Christ submits to the church: A biblical understanding of leadership and mutual submission. *Theological Studies*, *73*(3), 693–695. https://doi.org/10.1177/004056391207300310

Eisend, M. (2019). Gender roles. *Journal of Advertising*, *48*(1), 72–80.

　　　https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2019.1566103

Ember, Carol R., Melvin Ember, and Peter N. Peregrine. 2019. *Anthropology*. 15th ed. New

　　　York: Pearson.

Ercan, E. U., & Uçar, S. (2021). Gender roles, personality traits and expectations of women and

　　　men towards marriage. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, *16*(1), 7–20.

　　　https://doi.org/10.29329/epasr.2020.334.1

Erlingsson, C., & Brysiewicz, P. (2013). Orientation among multiple truths: An introduction to

　　　qualitative research. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, *3*(2), 92–99.

　　　https://doi.org/10.1016/j.afjem.2012.04.005

Evans, M. D. R., & Kelley, J. (2004). Effect of family structure on life satisfaction: Australian

　　　evidence. *Social Indicators Research*, *69*, 303–349. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-004-

　　　5578-9

Facio, A. (2013). What is patriarchy. *Translated from the Spanish by Michael Solis*, 1-5.

Fairbrother, N., Hart, T. A., & Fairbrother, M. (2019). Open relationship prevalence,

　　　characteristics, and correlates in a nationally representative sample of Canadian adults.

　　　The Journal of Sex Research, *56*(6), 695–704.

　　　https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1580667

Falculan, R. M., Paula, P. A., Ocdamia, J. J. J., & Samiley, S. G. G. (2019, December). Lived

　　　experiences of young adults from broken families on marital relationships. *Abstract*

　　　Proceedings International Scholars Conference, *7*(1), 512–529.

　　　https://doi.org/10.35974/isc.v7i1.1129

Farrugia, L. (2019). WASP (write a scientific paper): The ongoing process of ethical decision-making in qualitative research: Ethical principles and their application to the research process. *Early Human Development*, *133*, 48–51. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.earlhumdev.2019.03.011

Ferguson, K. E. (2017). Feminist theory today. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *20*, 269–286. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052715-111648

Few-Demo, A. L., & Allen, K. R. (2020). Gender, feminist, and intersectional perspectives on families: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 326–345. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12638

Fleming, K. L. (2015). *Accommodation, avoidance and submission: How the interpretation of biblical submission as the low-self conflict modes affects the Christian marriage relationship* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Nova Southeastern University.

Flicker, S. M., Sancier-Barbosa, F., Moors, A. C., & Browne, L. (2021). A closer look at relationship structures: Relationship satisfaction and attachment among people who practice hierarchical and non-hierarchical polyamory. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *50*(4), 1401–1417. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-020-01875-9

Flood, A. (2010). Understanding phenomenology. *Nurse Researcher*, *17*(2), 7–15. https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2010.01.17.2.7.c7457

Ford, C. L., Griffith, D. M., Bruce, M. A., & Gilbert, K. L. (2019). 1. Introduction. In C. L. Ford, D. M. Griffith, M. A. Bruce, & K. L. Gilbert (Eds.), *Racism: Science and tools for the public health professional.* American Public Health Association. https://doi.org/10.2105/9780875533049ch01

Furstenberg, Jr., F. F. (1994). History and current status of divorce in the United States. *The Future of Children*, *4*(1), 29–43. https://doi.org/10.2307/1602476

Gebrewahd, G. T., Gebremeskel, G. G., & Tadesse, D. B. (2020). Intimate partner violence against reproductive age women during COVID-19 pandemic in northern Ethiopia 2020: A community-based cross-sectional study. *Reproductive Health*, *17*(1), 152. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12978-020-01002-w

George, E. (2019). *A woman after God's own heart*. Harvest House Publishers.

Gergen, K. J. (2011). The self as social construction. *Psychological Studies*, *56*(1), 108–116. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-011-0066-1

Gervasi, D., Faldetta, G., Pellegrini, M. M., & Maley, J. (2022). Reciprocity in organizational behavior studies: A systematic literature review of contents, types, and directions. *European Management*, *40*(3), 441–457. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emj.2021.07.008

Goldberg, M. H., van der Linden, S., Ballew, M. T., Rosenthal, S. A., & Leiserowitz, A. (2019). *Convenient but biased? The reliability of convenience samples in research about attitudes toward climate change.* OSF Preprints. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/2h7as

Gordon, A. M., Impett, E. A., Kogan, A., Oveis, C., & Keltner, D. (2012). To have and to hold: Gratitude promotes relationship maintenance in intimate bonds. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*(2), 257–274. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028723

Gottman, J. M., Coan, J., Carrere, S., & Swanson, C. (1998). Predicting marital happiness and stability from newlywed interactions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *60*(1), 5–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/353438

Grudem, W. (1996). The myth of mutual submission. *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, *01*(4). https://www.galaxie.com/article/jbmw01-4-01

Gupta, P., & Srivastava, S. (2020). Work–life conflict and burnout among working women: A

    mediated moderated model of support and resilience. *International Journal of*

    Organizational Analysis, *29*(3), 629–655. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-12-2019-1993

Guven, G. C. (2018). *The lived experiences of secondary school parents in raising responsible*

    digital citizens in a one-to-one learning environment [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].

    Liberty University.

Hall, J., & Schemm Jr, P. R. (2010). Marriage as It Was Meant to Be Seen: Headship,

    Submission, and the Gospel. *Journal for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, *15*, 13-14.

Hamner, C., Trent, J., Byrd, R. J., Johnson, E. L., & Thoennes, E. (Eds.). (2018). *Marriage: Its*

    foundation, theology, and mission in a changing world. Moody Publishers.

Handford, E. R. (1995). *Me? Obey him? The obedient wife and God's way of happiness and*

    blessing in the home. Sword of the Lord Publishers.

Hanna, J. (2021). *A premarital marriage preparation program based on the integration of PREP*

    and the Gottman method [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. The Chicago School of

    Professional Psychology.

Harawa-Katumbi, C. (2012). The Bible, gender equality and teaching theology in Malawi. In H.

    J. Hendriks, E. Mouton, L. Hansen, & E. Le Roux (Eds.), *Men in the pulpit, women in the*

    pew? Addressing gender inequality in Africa (pp. 104–114). Institute for Theological &

    Interdisciplinary Research.

Harris-Lacewell, M. (2001). No place to rest: African American political attitudes and the myth

    of Black women's strength. *Women & Politics*, *23*(3), 1–33.

    https://doi.org/10.1300/J014v23n03_01

Hatfield, E., & Sprecher, S. (1983). Equity theory and recipient reactions to aid. *New Directions in Helping*, *1*, 113–141. Academic Press.

Hatfield, E., Rapson, R. L., & Aumer-Ryan, K. (2008). Social justice in love relationships: Recent developments. *Social Justice Research*, *21*, 413–431. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11211-008-0080-1

Hayajneh, N., Suifan, T., Obeidat, B., Abuhashesh, M., Alshurideh, M., & Masa'deh, R. E. (2021). The relationship between organizational changes and job satisfaction through the mediating role of job stress in the Jordanian telecommunication sector. *Management Science Letters*, *11*(1), 315–326. https://doi.org/10.5267/j.msl.2020.8.001

Heath, C. D. (2006). A womanist approach to understanding and assessing the relationship between spirituality and mental health. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, *9*(2), 155–170. https://doi.org/10.1080/13694670500116938

Heppner, P., Wampold, B. E., Owen, J., Wang, K. T., & Thompson, M. N. (2016). *Research design in counseling* (4th ed.). Cengage Learning.

Hnatkovičová, D., & Bianchi, G. (2022). Model of motivations for engaging in polyamorous relationships. *Sexologies*, *31*(3), 184–194. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sexol.2022.03.003

Ho, D. G. E. (2006). The focus group interview: Rising to the challenge in qualitative research methodology. *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *29*(1), 5.1–5.19. https://doi.org/10.2104/aral0605

Holt-Lunstad, J., Birmingham, W., & Jones, B. Q. (2008). Is there something unique about marriage? The relative impact of marital status, relationship quality, and network social support on ambulatory blood pressure and mental health. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *35*(2), 239–244. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-008-9018-y

Holt-Lunstad, J., Smith, T. B., & Layton, J. B. (2010). Social relationships and mortality risk: A meta-analytic review. *PLoS Medicine*, *7*(7), e1000316. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1000316

Hugenberger, G. P. (2014). *Marriage as a covenant: A study of biblical law and ethics governing marriage developed from the perspective of Malachi*. Brill.

Hui, S. K., Elliott, T. R., Shewchuk, R., & Rivera, P. (2007). Communal behaviors and psychological adjustment of family caregivers and persons with spinal cord injury. *Rehabilitation Psychology*, *52*(1), 113–119. https://doi.org/10.1037/0090-5550.52.1.113

Hurt, T. R., McElroy, S. E., Sheats, K. J., Landor, A. M., & Bryant, C. M. (2014). Married Black men's opinions as to why Black women are disproportionately single: A qualitative study. *Personal Relationships*, *21*(1), 88–109. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12019

Igbelina-Igbokwe, N. (2013). Contextualizing gender-based violence within patriarchy in Nigeria. *Pambzuka News: Voices for Freedom and Justice*, *12*.

Jackman, M.-L. (2020). Equal partnership through mutual attunement and mutual decision-making. *Family Perspectives*, *2*(2), 2. https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/familyperspectives/vol2/iss2/2

Jackson, S. L. (2016). *Research methods and statistics: A critical thinking approach*. Cengage Learning.

Jacques, D. N. (2021). Using MAXQDA in ethnographic research: An example with coding, analyzing, and writing. In M. C. Gizzi & S. Rädiker (Eds.), *The practice of qualitative data analysis: Research examples using MAXQDA* (pp. 17–33). MAXQDA Press.

Janicijevic, I., Seke, K., Djokovic, A., & Filipovic, T. (2013). Healthcare workers satisfaction and patient satisfaction – where is the linkage? *Hippokratia*, *17*(2), 157–162.

Javanmard, G. H., & Garegozlo, R. M. (2013). The study of relationship between marital satisfaction and personality characteristics in Iranian families. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *84*, 396–399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.06.573

Jones, M. K., Harris, K. J., & Reynolds, A. A. (2021). In their own words: The meaning of the strong Black woman schema among Black US college women. *Sex Roles*, *84*, 347–359. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-020-01170-w

Jones, M. K., Hill-Jarrett, T. G., Latimer, K., Reynolds, A., Garrett, N., Harris, I., Joseph, S., & Jones, A. (2021). The role of coping in the relationship between endorsement of the strong Black woman schema and depressive symptoms among Black women. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *47*(7), 578–592. https://doi.org/10.1177/00957984211021229

Jones, P. (2000). *Ribbing him the right way* (2nd ed.). BJU Press.

Joodaki, K., Nedjat, S., Dastjerdi, M. V., & Larijani, B. (2020). Ethical considerations and challenges of sex education for adolescents in Iran: A qualitative study. *Journal of Medical Ethics and History of Medicine*, *13*, 2. https://doi.org/10.18502/jmehm.v13i2.2664

Jurczyk, K., Jentsch, B., Sailer, J., & Schier, M. (2019). Female-breadwinner families in Germany: New gender roles? *Journal of Family Issues*, *40*(13), 1731–1754. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X19843149

Kalliath, P., & Kalliath, T. (2015). Work-family conflict and its impact on job satisfaction of social workers. *The British Journal of Social Work*, *45*(1), 241–259. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bct125

Kamp Dush, C. M., Taylor, M. G., & Kroeger, R. A. (2008). Marital happiness and

psychological well-being across the life course. *Family Relations*, *57*(2), 211–226.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3729.2008.00495.x

Kapelle, N., & Baxter, J. (2021). Marital dissolution and personal wealth: Examining gendered

trends across the dissolution process. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *83*(1), 243–259.

https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12707

Karney, B. R. (2021). Socioeconomic status and intimate relationships. *Annual Review of

Psychology*, *72*, 391–414. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-051920-013658

Kayabol, N. B. A., & Sümer, Z. H. (2022). How to maintain a marriage: Maintenance behaviors,

equity, and appreciation in understanding marital satisfaction. *Current Psychology*, *41*(9),

5781–5794. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00905-y

Keener, C. S. (2021). Mutual submission frames the household codes. *Priscilla Papers*, *35*(3),

10–14.

Khojasteh Mehr, R., Daniali, Z., & Shirali Nia, K. (2021). Married students' experiences

regarding marriage readiness. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *2*(2), 39–50.

Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. (2018). Marriage, divorce, and the immune system. *The American

Psychologist*, *73*(9), 1098–1108. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000388

Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., & Newton, T. L. (2001). Marriage and health: His and hers. *Psychological

Bulletin*, *127*(4), 472–503. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.127.4.472

Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K., & Wilson, S. J. (2017). Lovesick: How couples' relationships influence

health. *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, *13*, 421–443.

https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-clinpsy-032816-045111

Kim, H. K., & McKenry, P. C. (2002). The relationship between marriage and psychological well-being: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Family Issues*, *23*(8), 885–911. https://doi.org/10.1177/019251302237296

Kleinplatz, P. J., & Diamond, L. M. (2014). Sexual diversity. In D. L. Tolman, L. M. Diamond, J. A. Bauermeister, W. H. George, J. G. Pfaus, & L. M. Ward (Eds.), *APA handbook of sexuality and psychology, Vol. 1. Person-based approaches* (pp. 245–267). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/14193-009

Knapp, N. F. (2019). The shape activity: Social constructivism in the psychology classroom. *Teaching of Psychology*, *46*(1), 87–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/0098628318816181

Kroeger, C. C., & Beck, J. R. (Eds.). (2019). *Women, abuse, and the Bible: How scripture can be used to hurt or heal*. Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Krok, D. (2009). Religiousness and spirituality–differences and similarities from the perspective of psychology of religion. In *Pol. Forum Psychol* (Vol. 14, pp. 126-141).

Kühn, S., & Rieger, U. M. (2017). Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely absence of disease or infirmity. *Surgery for Obesity and Related Diseases*, *13*(5), 887. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soard.2017.01.046

Kühne, S., & Zindel, Z. (2020). Using Facebook and Instagram to recruit web survey participants: A step-by-step guide and application. *Survey Methods: Insights from the Field*. https://doi.org/10.13094/SMIF-2020-00017

Kumar, L. M., Stephen, J., George, R. J., & Babu, L. (2022). He hit me; but it's okay! Female submissiveness in marital abuse: A review in Indian context. *Journal of family medicine and primary care*, *11*(2), 447–452. https://doi.org/10.4103/jfmpc.jfmpc_1870_21

Kurdek, L. A. (1990). Divorce history and self-reported psychological distress in husbands and wives. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *52*(3), 701–708. https://doi.org/10.2307/352935

Lambert, H. (2010). Breaking the marital impasse: How authority and submission work when spouses disagree. *Journal for Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, *15*(2), 22–27

Lamela, D., Figueiredo, B., Morais, A., Matos, P., & Jongenelen, I. (2020). Are measures of marital satisfaction valid for women with depressive symptoms? The examination of factor structure and measurement invariance of the couple satisfaction index-4 across depression levels in Portuguese women. *Clinical Psychology & Psychotherapy*, *27*(2), 214–219. https://doi.org/10.1002/cpp.2420

Lavner, J. A., & Clark, M. A. (2017). Workload and marital satisfaction over time: Testing lagged spillover and crossover effects during the newlywed years. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *101*, 67–76. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.05.002

Levitt, H. M., & Ware, K. (2006). "Anything With Two Heads Is a Monster" Religious Leaders' Perspectives on Marital Equality and Domestic Violence. *Violence Against Women*, *12*(12), 1169-1190.

Leavitt, C. E., Allsop, D. B., Price, A. A., Marks, L. D., & Dollahite, D. C. (2021). Exploring gender roles in highly religious families. *Review of Religious Research*, *63*, 511–533. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-021-00476-9

Ledbetter, A. M., Stassen-Ferrara, H. M., & Dowd, M. M. (2013). Comparing equity and self-expansion theory approaches to relational maintenance. *Personal Relationships*, *20*(1), 38–51. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2012.01395.x

Leopold, T. (2018). Gender differences in the consequences of divorce: A study of multiple

    outcomes. *Demography*, *55*(3), 769–797. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-018-0667-6

Lewis, E. A. (2009). Group- versus individual-based intersectionality and praxis in feminist and

    womanist research foundations. In S. A. Lloyd & A. L. Few (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist*

    family studies (pp. 304–315). Sage Knowledge. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412982801

Li, J., Galley, M., Brockett, C., Spithourakis, G. P., Gao, J., & Dolan, B. (2016). *A persona-*

    based neural conversation model. arXiv. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.1603.06155

Liao, K. Y.-H., Wei, M., & Yin, M. (2020). The misunderstood schema of the strong Black

    woman: Exploring its mental health consequences and coping responses among African

    American women. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *44*(1), 84–104.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0361684319883198

Lindsay-Dennis, L. (2015). Black feminist-womanist research paradigm: Toward a culturally

    relevant research model focused on African American girls. *Journal of Black Studies*,

    46(5), 506–520. https://doi.org/10.1177/002193471558366

Lobe, B., Morgan, D., & Hoffman, K. A. (2020). Qualitative data collection in an era of social

    distancing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *19*, 1609406920937875.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406920937875

Lovše, N. (2009). Roles of husbands and wives in the Christian marriage relationship (Ephesians

    5). *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology*, *3*(2), 113-134.

Luciani, M., Campbell, K., Tschirhart, H., Ausili, D., & Jack, S. M. (2019). How to design a

    qualitative health research study. Part 1: Design and purposeful sampling considerations.

    Professioni infermieristiche, *72*(2), 152–161.

Magnusson, E., & Marecek, J. (2015). *Doing interview-based qualitative research*. Cambridge

    University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107449893

Maisiri, O. (2015). *Male headship and female submission in marriage among African*

    Christians: A pastoral perspective [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of

    Pretoria. https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/53064

Manning, W. D., Smock, P. J., & Fettro, M. N. (2019). Cohabitation and marital expectations

    among single millennials in the U.S. *Population Research and Policy Review*, *38*(3),

    327–346. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11113-018-09509-8

Martin, T. C., & Bumpass, L. L. (1989). Recent trends in marital disruption. *Demography*, *26*(1),

    37–51. https://doi.org/10.2307/2061492

McKenzie, T. T. (2023). *The association between psychotic symptoms and romantic relationship*

    quality among young adult ethnic minorities [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].

    University of San Francisco.

Meadow, M. J. (1980). Wifely submission: Psychological/spiritual growth perspectives. *Journal*

    of Religion and Health, *19*(2), 103–120. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf01006423

Medley, M. L. (1980). Life satisfaction across four stages of adult life. *The International Journal*

    of Aging and Human Development, *11*(3), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.2190/D4LG-

    ALJQ-8850-GYDV

Meyer, J. (2018). Restructuring the Christian fatherhood model: A practical theological

    investigation into the 'male problematic' of father absence. *HTS: Theological Studies*,

    74(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i1.4870

Miles, C. A. (2006). Patriarchy or gender equality? The letter to the Ephesians on submission, headship, and slavery. *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, *39*(2), 70–95. https://doi.org/10.2307/45227240

Mills, J., & Clark, M. S. (1982). Exchange and communal relationships. In L. Wheeler (Ed.), *Review of personality and social psychology* (pp. 121–144). Sage.

Mills, J., & Clark, M. S. (2001). Viewing close romantic relationships as communal relationships: Implications for maintenance and enhancement. In J. Harvey & A. Wenzel (Eds.), *Close romantic relationships: Maintenance and enhancement* (pp. 13–25). Erlbaum.

Mills, J., Clark, M. S., Ford, T. E., & Johnson, M. (2004). Measurement of communal strength. *Personal Relationships*, *11*(2), 213–230. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2004.00079.x

Minkler, M. (2005). Community-based research partnerships: Challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, *82*(Suppl. 2), ii3–ii12. https://doi.org/10.1093/jurban/jti034

Mir-Hosseini, Z., Al-Sharmani, M., & Rumminger, J. (2014). *Men in charge?: rethinking authority in Muslim legal tradition*. Simon and Schuster.

Moon, K., & Blackman, D. (2014). A guide to understanding social science research for natural scientists. *Conservation Biology*, *28*(5), 1167–1177. https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.12326

Moors, A. C., Gesselman, A. N., & Garcia, J. R. (2021). Desire, familiarity, and engagement in polyamory: Results from a national sample of single adults in the United States. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*, 619640. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.619640

Moskala, J. (2016). *Meeting with God on the mountains: Essays in honor of Richard M. Davidson*. Old Testament Department, Seventh-Day Adventist Theological Seminary, Andrews University. https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/books/23

Moustakas, C. E. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.

Mouzon Dawne, M. (2013). *Why has marriage declined among Black Americans?* Scholars Strategy Network. https://scholars.org/brief/why-has-marriage-declined-among-black-americans

Mshweshwe, L. (2020). Understanding domestic violence: Masculinity, culture, traditions. *Heliyon*, *6*(10), e05334. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e05334

Naderifar, M., Goli, H., & Ghalijaie, F. (2017). Snowball sampling: A purposeful method of sampling in qualitative research. *Strides in Development of Medical Education*, *14*(3), 1–4. https://doi.org/10.5812/sdme.67670

Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, *8*(2), 90–97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2

Newall, N. E., & Menec, V. H. (2019). Loneliness and social isolation of older adults: Why it is important to examine these social aspects together. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *36*(3), 925–939. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407517749045

Nguyen, T. P., Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (2017). Childhood abuse and later marital outcomes: Do partner characteristics moderate the association? *Journal of Family Psychology*, *31*(1), 82–92. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000208

Ngwoke, P. (2020). Religious manipulation and domestic violence within Christian homes in

    Nigeria. *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, *11*(1), 121–

    136. https://doi.org/10.18848/2154-8633/CGP/v11i01/121-136

Nichols, M. P., & Schwartz, R. C. (2001). *Family therapy: Concepts and methods* (5th ed.).

    Allyn and Bacon.

Nir, B. (2022). The genealogy of obedience in the biblical sources of Jewish culture. *Genealogy*,

    6(4), 84. https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy6040084

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to

    meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *16*(1), 1–

    13. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917733847

Nyirenda, L., Kumar, M. B., Theobald, S., Sarker, M., Simwinga, M., Kumwenda, M., Johnson,

    C., Hatzold, K., Corbett, E. L., Sibanda, E., & Taegtmeyer, M. (2020). Using research

    networks to generate trustworthy qualitative public health research findings from multiple

    contexts. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *20*(1), 13.

    https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-019-0895-5

Obrenovic, B., Jianguo, D., Khudaykulov, A., & Khan, M. A. S. (2020). Work-family conflict

    impact on psychological safety and psychological well-being: A job performance model.

    Frontiers in Psychology, *11*, 475. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00475

Ogolsky, B. G., & Bowers, J. R. (2013). A meta-analytic review of relationship maintenance and

    its correlates. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *30*(3), 343–367.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407512463338

Olatunde, O. J. (2022). Biblical understanding of male headship and female 'helpship' in

    marriage. *Humanus Discourse*, *2*(3).

Olson, E. (2018). *The ins and outs of marriage: A review of "mutual by design."* In All Things.

Osiek, C. (2002). The bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22–33): A problematic wedding. *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, *32*(1), 29–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/014610790203200106

Oswald, R. F., Kuvalanka, K. A., Blume, L. B., & Berkowitz, D. (2009). Queering "the family." In S. A. Lloyd & A. L. Few (Eds.), *Handbook of feminist family studies* (pp. 43–55). https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412982801

Padgett, A. G. (2008). The Bible and gender troubles: American evangelicals debate scripture and submission. *Dialog*, *47*(1), 21–26. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6385.2008.00364.x

Pandit, A., & Nakagawa, Y. (2021). How does reciprocal exchange of social support alleviate individuals' depression in an earthquake-damaged community? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *18*(4), 1585. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18041585

Papp, L. M., Pendry, P., Simon, C. D., & Adam, E. K. (2013). Spouses' cortisol associations and moderators: Testing physiological synchrony and connectedness in everyday life. *Family Process*, *52*(2), 284–298. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1545-5300.2012.01413.x

Pargament, K. I., & Lomax, J. W. (2013). Understanding and addressing religion among people with mental illness. *World Psychiatry*, *12*(1), 26–32. https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20005

Park, S. S. (2022). Effects of health satisfaction and family relationship satisfaction on the depression of low-income middle-aged men - focusing on the mediating effects of social acquaintance satisfaction. *Journal of Convergence for Information Technology*, *12*(2), 72–80. https://doi.org/10.22156/CS4SMB.2022.12.02.072

Parker, G., Durante, K. M., Hill, S. E., & Haselton, M. G. (2022). Why women choose divorce:

     An evolutionary perspective. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *43*, 300–306.

     https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2021.07.020

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Sage.

Paul Victor, C. G., & Treschuk, J. V. (2020). Critical literature review on the definition clarity of

     the concept of faith, religion, and spirituality. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*, *38*(1), 107–

     113. https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010119895368

Perelli-Harris, B., & Styrc, M. (2018). Mental well-being differences in cohabitation and

     marriage: The role of childhood selection. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *80*(1),

     239–255. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12431

Perelli-Harris, B., Hoherz, S., Lappegård, T., & Evans, A. (2019). Mind the "happiness" gap:

     The relationship between cohabitation, marriage, and subjective well-being in the United

     Kingdom, Australia, Germany, and Norway. *Demography*, *56*(4), 1219–1246.

     https://doi.org/10.1007/s13524-019-00792-4

Perry, S. L., & McElroy, E. E. (2020). Does the Bible tell me so? Weighing the influence of

     content versus bias on Bible interpretation using survey experiments. *Journal for the*

     Scientific Study of Religion, *59*(4), 569–585. https://doi.org/10.1111/jssr.12679

Pevey, C., Williams, C. L., & Ellison, C. G. (1996). Male God imagery and female submission:

     Lessons from a Southern Baptist ladies' Bible class. *Qualitative Sociology*, *19*(2), 173-

     193.

Phillips, L. (2006). *The womanist reader: The first quarter century of womanist thought*.

     Routledge.

Pietilä, A.-M., Nurmi, S.-M., Halkoaho, A., & Kyngäs, H. (2020). Qualitative research: Ethical considerations. In H. Kyngäs, K. Mikkonen, & M. Kääriäinen (Eds.), *The application of content analysis in nursing science research* (pp. 49–69). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-30199-6_6

Pietromonaco, P. R., Overall, N. C., Beck, L. A., & Powers, S. I. (2021). Is low power associated with submission during marital conflict? Moderating roles of gender and traditional gender role beliefs. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *12*(2), 165–175. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550620904609

Piper, J., & Grudem, W. (Eds.). (2006). *Recovering biblical manhood and womanhood: A response to evangelical feminism*. Crossway.

Platt, L. F., & Fanning, S. C. (2023). The strong Black woman concept: Associated demographic characteristics and perceived stress among Black women. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *49*(1), 58–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/00957984221096211

Polk, D. M. (2022). 9 Equity theory: Evaluating fairness. In D. Chadee (Ed.), *Theories in social psychology* (2nd ed., p. 217). O'Reilly.

Pourshahbaz, A., Eftekhar Ardebili, M., Dolatshahi, B., Ranjbar, H., & Taban, M. (2020). Gender role conflict: Is it a predictor of marital dissatisfaction? A cross sectional study in Tehran. *Medical Journal of the Islamic Republic of Iran*, *34*, 84. https://doi.org/10.34171/mjiri.34.84

Powell, L. A. (2005). Justice judgments as complex psychocultural constructions: An equity-based heuristic for mapping two- and three-dimensional fairness representations in perceptual space. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *36*(1), 48–73. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022104271426

Preato, D. J. (2004). *Egalitarian marriages prove happier than hierarchical marriages*.

Preston, S. H., & McDonald, J. (1979). The incidence of divorce within cohorts of American marriages contracted since the Civil War. *Demography*, *16*(1), 1–25. https://doi.org/10.2307/2061075

Proulx, C. M., Helms, H. M., & Buehler, C. (2007). Marital quality and personal well-being: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *69*(3), 576–593. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2007.00393.x

Qian, Y. (2017). Gender asymmetry in educational and income assortative marriage. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *79*(2), 318–336. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12372

Radtke, M. (2021). Review: All we're meant to be: Biblical feminism for today. *Christian Scholar's Review*, *51*(1), 85–88.

Ragsdale, J. D., & Brandau-Brown, F. E. (2004). Measuring relational maintenance in marriage: Theoretical and methodological issues. *Southern Communication Journal*, *69*(2), 121–135. https://doi.org/10.1080/10417940409373284

Rakovec-Felser, Z. (2014). Domestic violence and abuse in intimate relationship from public health perspective. *Health Psychology Research*, *2*(3), 62–67. https://doi.org/10.4081/hpr.2014.1821

Raley, R. K., & Sweeney, M. M. (2020). Divorce, repartnering, and stepfamilies: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *82*(1), 81–99. https://doi.org/10.1111/jomf.12651

Raley, R. K., Sweeney, M. M., & Wondra, D. (2015). The growing racial and ethnic divide in U.S. marriage patterns. *Future of Children*, *25*(2), 89–109. https://doi.org/10.1353/foc.2015.0014

Raskind, I. G., Shelton, R. C., Comeau, D. L., Cooper, H. L., Griffith, D. M., & Kegler, M. C. (2019). A review of qualitative data analysis practices in health education and health behavior research. *Health Education & Behavior*, *46*(1), 32–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198118795019

Regnerus, M. (2020). *The future of Christian marriage*. Oxford University Press.

Reid, M. (2013). Unjust signifying practices: Submission and subordination among Christian fundamentalists. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *29*(2), 154–161. https://doi.org/10.2979/jfemistudreli.29.2.154

Reidy, D. E., Berke, D. S., Gentile, B., & Zeichner, A. (2014). Man enough? Masculine discrepancy stress and intimate partner violence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *68*, 160–164. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2014.04.021

Robinson, C. D. B. (2017). *Differences in marital satisfaction and marital commitment based on theological adherence to and practice of biblically based principles according to Ephesians 5:21–33* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Alliant International University.

Rose, J., & Johnson, C. W. (2020). Contextualizing reliability and validity in qualitative research: Toward more rigorous and trustworthy qualitative social science in leisure research. *Journal of Leisure Research*, *51*(4), 432–451. https://doi.org/10.1080/00222216.2020.1722042

Roth-Roemer, S. E., Kurpius, S. R. E., & Carmin, C. E. (1998). *The emerging role of counseling psychology in health care*. WW Norton & Co.

Rousseau, N. (2013). Historical womanist theory: Re-visioning Black feminist thought. *Race, Gender & Class*, *20*(3–4), 191–204. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43496941

Rudrum, S., Casey, R., Frank, L., Brickner, R. K., MacKenzie, S., Carlson, J., & Rondinelli, E. (2022). Qualitative research studies online: Using prompted weekly journal entries during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *21*, 16094069221093138. https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221093138

Salem, N. (2020). Islam and the status of women in Tunisia. In F. Hussain (Ed.), *Muslim women* (pp. 141–168). Routledge.

Sánchez-Mira, N. (2021). (Un)doing gender in female breadwinner households: Gender relations and structural change. *Gender, Work & Organization*. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12775

Sanders, J. O. (2017). *Spiritual leadership: Principles of excellence for every believer*. Moody Publishers.

Santos, K. D. S., Ribeiro, M. C., Queiroga, D. E. U. D., Silva, I. A. P. D., & Ferreira, S. M. S. (2020). The use of multiple triangulations as a validation strategy in a qualitative study. *Ciencia & Saude Coletiva*, *25*(2), 655–664. https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-81232020252.12302018

Santos, N., Monteiro, V., & Mata, L. (2021). Using MAXQDA in qualitative content analysis: An example comparing single-person and focus group interviews. *The Practice of Qualitative Data Analysis: Research Examples Using MAXQDA*, *35*. https://doi.org/10.36192/978-3-948768058

Sarang, S. D., Karnam, A. G., & Shitole, R. B. (2019). To investigate the relationship between psychological factors and stress in two different developmental stages in adults: A cross sectional study. *The Indian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *51*(3), 102. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i14/7366

Schneider, B., & Snyder, R. A. (1975). Some relationships between job satisfaction and

organization climate. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *60*(3), 318.

Schoenfeld, E. A., Bredow, C. A., & Huston, T. L. (2012). Do men and women show love

differently in marriage? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *38*(11), 1396–1409.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167212450739

Scott, S. B., Rhoades, G. K., Stanley, S. M., Allen, E. S., & Markman, H. J. (2013). Reasons for

divorce and recollections of premarital intervention: Implications for improving

relationship education. *Couple & Family Psychology*, *2*(2), 131–145.

https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032025

Shambley-Ebron, D. Z., & Boyle, J. S. (2004). New paradigms for transcultural nursing:

Frameworks for studying African American women. *Journal of Transcultural Nursing*,

15(1), 11–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1043659603260033

Shannon-Lewy, C., & Dull, V. T. (2005). The response of Christian clergy to domestic violence:

Help or hindrance? *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *10*(6), 647–659.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2005.02.004

Sharma, B. (2011). Mental and emotional impact of divorce on women. *Journal of the Indian

Academy of Applied Psychology*, *37*(1), 125–131.

Shelby, T., Hennein, R., Schenck, C., Clark, K., Meyer, A., Goodwin, J., Weeks, B., Bond, M.,

Niccolai, L. E., Davis, J., & Grau, L. (2021). Implementation of a volunteer contact

tracing program for COVID-19 in the United States: A qualitative focus group study.

PLoS One, *16*(5), e0251033. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0251033

Shorter-Gooden, K. (2004). Multiple resistance strategies: How African American women cope

with racism and sexism. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *30*(3), 406–425.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798404266050

Shrout, M. R., Renna, M. E., Madison, A. A., Jaremka, L. M., Fagundes, C. P., Malarkey, W. B.,

& Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. (2020). Cortisol slopes and conflict: A spouse's perceived stress

matters. *Psychoneuroendocrinology*, *121*, 104839.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2020.104839

Shufutinsky, A. (2020). Employing use of self for transparency, rigor, trustworthiness, and

credibility in qualitative organizational research methods. *OD Practitioner*, *52*(1), 50–58.

Siraj, A. (2010). "Because I'm the man! I'm the head": British married Muslims and the

patriarchal family structure. *Contemporary Islam*, *4*, 195-214.

Smith, A. D. (1980). Egalitarian marriage: Implications for practice and policy. *Social Casework*,

61(5), 288–295. https://doi.org/10.1177/104438948006100504

Smith, W. D. (2022). Understanding Paul's approach to slavery in Ephesians 6:5–9.

Snead, A. L., & Babcock, J. C. (2019). Differential predictors of intimate partner sexual coercion

versus physical assault perpetration. *Journal of Sexual Aggression*, *25*(2), 146–160.

https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2019.1581282

Sorokowski, P., Kowal, M., & Sorokowska, A. (2019). Religious Affiliation and Marital

Satisfaction: Commonalities Among Christians, Muslims, and Atheists. *Frontiers in

psychology*, *10*, 2798. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02798

South, S. C., & Krueger, R. F. (2013). Marital satisfaction and physical health: Evidence for an

orchid effect. *Psychological Science*, *24*(3), 373–378.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612453116

Sprecher, S. (1992). How men and women expect to feel and behave in response to inequity in

    close relationships. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *55*, 57–69.

    https://doi.org/10.2307/2786686

Squires, V. (2023). Thematic analysis. In J. M. Okoko, S. Tunison, & K. D. Walker (Eds.),

    Varieties of qualitative research methods: Selected contextual perspectives (pp. 463–

    468). Springer International Publishing.

Srinivasan, A. (2022). *The right to sex*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Stafford, L. (2020). Communal strength, exchange orientation, equity, and relational

    maintenance. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *37*(8–9), 2345–2365.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407520923741

Stafford, L., & Canary, D. J. (1991). Maintenance strategies and romantic relationship type,

    gender, and relational characteristics. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *8*,

    217–242. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407591082004

Stafford, L., & Canary, D. J. (2006). Equity and interdependence as predictors of relational

    maintenance strategies. *Journal of Family Communication*, *6*, 227–254.

    https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327698jfc0604_1

Stafford, L., & Kuiper, K. (2021). Social exchange theories: Calculating the rewards and costs of

    personal relationships. In D. O. Braithwaute & P. Schrodt (Eds.), *Engaging theories in

    interpersonal communication* (3rd ed., pp. 379–390). Routledge.

Stansbury, K. L., Harley, D. A., King, L., Nelson, N., & Speight, G. (2012). African American

    clergy: What are their perceptions of pastoral care and pastoral counseling? *Journal of

    Religion and Health*, *51*, 961–969. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-010-9413-0

Saunders, B., Sim, J., Kingstone, T., Baker, S., Waterfield, J., Bartlam, B., Burroughs, H., &
Jinks, C. (2018). Saturation in qualitative research: exploring its conceptualization and
operationalization. *Quality & quantity*, *52*(4), 1893–1907.
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11135-017-0574-8

Sutiyatno, S. (2022). The effect of leadership's communication ability on quality of work-life
and employees job satisfaction. *International Journal of Human Capital in Urban
Management*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.22034/IJHCUM.2022.01.05

Tasew, A. S., & Getahun, K. K. (2021). Marital conflict among couples: The case of Durbete
town, Amhara Region, Ethiopia. *Cogent Psychology*, *8*(1), 1903127.
https://doi.org/10.1080/23311908.2021.1903127

Taylor, D., & Richards, D. (2019). Triple jeopardy: Complexities of racism, sexism, and ageism
on the experiences of mental health stigma among young Canadian Black women of
Caribbean descent. *Frontiers in Sociology*, *4*, 43. https://doi.org/10.3389/fsoc.2019.00043

Taylor, J. Y. (1998). Womanism: A methodologic framework for African American women.
Advances in Nursing Science, *21*(1), 53–64. https://doi.org/10.1097/00012272-
199809000-00006

Thadathil, A., & Sriram, S. (2020). Divorce, families and adolescents in India: A review of
research. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage*, *61*(1), 1–21.
https://doi.org/10.1080/10502556.2019.1586226

Thomas, L. T., & Ganster, D. C. (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-
family conflict and strain: A control perspective. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *80*(1),
6–15. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.80.1.6

Thomas, P. A., Liu, H., & Umberson, D. (2017). Family relationships and well-being. *Innovation in Aging*, *1*(3), igx025. https://doi.org/10.1093/geroni/igx025

Thomas, S. P. (2021). Resolving tensions in phenomenological research interviewing. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *77*(1), 484–491. https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14597

Tovar-Murray, D. (2011). The multiple determinants of religious behaviors and spiritual beliefs on well-being. *Journal of spirituality in mental health*, *13*(3), 182-192.

Townes, E. M. (1995). *In a blaze of glory: Womanist spirituality as social witness*. Abingdon Press.

Townsend, H. L., & Townsend, S. M. (2021). *A 2020 vision in a Christian marriage: A past, present, and future perspective*. WestBow Press.

Tracy, S. R. (2007). Patriarchy and domestic violence: Challenging common misconceptions. *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *50*(3), 573–594.

Tracy, S. R., & Seminary, P. (2008). What does 'submit in everything' really mean? The nature and scope of marital submission. *Trinity Journal*, *29*(2), 285–312.

Twenge, J. M., & Kasser, T. (2013). Generational changes in materialism and work centrality, 1976–2007: Associations with temporal changes in societal insecurity and materialistic role modeling. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *39*(7), 883–897. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213484586

Van den Bergh, D., & Brink, A. (2021). A commitment and call to strengthen and expand qualitative research efforts to improve the impact of antimicrobial stewardship. *JAC - Antimicrobial Resistance*, *3*(4), dlab151. https://doi.org/10.1093/jacamr/dlab151

Varkey, P., Kureshi, S., & Lesnick, T. (2010). Empowerment of women and its association with

    the health of the community. *Journal of Women's Health*, *19*(1), 71–76.

    https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.2009.1444

Velotti, P., Balzarotti, S., Tagliabue, S., English, T., Zavattini, G. C., & Gross, J. J. (2016).

    Emotional suppression in early marriage: Actor, partner, and similarity effects on marital

    quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *33*(3), 277–302.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407515574466

Vilkin, E., & Sprott, R. (2021). Consensual non-monogamy among kink-identified adults:

    Characteristics, relationship experiences, and unique motivations for polyamory and open

    relationships. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *50*(4), 1521–1536.

    https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-02004-w

Vrey, A., & Nortjé-Meyer, L. (2016). Artemis as matrix for a new interpretation of the

    household codes in Ephesians 5:22–6:9. *Neotestamentica*, *50*(1), 53–69.

    https://doi.org/10.1353/neo.2016.0035

Waite, L., & Gallagher, M. (2001). *The case for marriage: Why married people are happier,

    healthier, and better off financially*. Crown.

Walker, A. (2004). *In search of our mothers' gardens: Womanist prose*. Houghton Mifflin

    Harcourt.

Waller, B. Y., Harris, J., & Quinn, C. R. (2022). Caught in the crossroad: An intersectional

    examination of African American women intimate partner violence survivors' help

    seeking. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *23*(4), 1235–1248.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838021991303

Walter, C. (2020). Financial black swans: Unpredictable threat or descriptive illusion? In D. Jodelet, J. Vala, & E. Drozda-Senkowska (Eds.), *Societies under threat: A pluri-disciplinary approach* (pp. 173–186). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-39315-1_14

Webb, W. J. (2001). *Slaves, women & homosexuals: Exploring the hermeneutics of cultural analysis*. InterVarsity Press.

Weinraub, M., & Kaufman, R. (2019). Single parenthood. In *Handbook of parenting* (pp. 271-310). Routledge.

Whitnah, M. (2022). Evangelical organizations' responses to domestic violence: How the cultural production of religious beliefs challenges or enshrines patriarchy. *Review of Religious Research*, *64*(3), 427–450. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13644-022-00493-2

Whitton, S. W., Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (2007). If I help my partner, will it hurt me? Perceptions of sacrifice in romantic relationships. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, *26*(1), 64–91. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.2007.26.1.64

Widick, C., Parker, C. A., & Knefelkamp, L. (1978). Erik Erikson and psychosocial development. *New Directions for Student Services*, *1978*(4), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.37119780403

Widom, C. S., Czaja, S., & Dutton, M. A. (2014). Child abuse and neglect and intimate partner violence victimization and perpetration: A prospective investigation. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *38*(4), 650–663. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2013.11.004

Williams, K. (2012). *A phenomenological study: African American males in the educational profession* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Liberty University.

Williamson, G. M., & Clark, M. S. (1992). Impact of desired relationship type on affective reactions to choosing and being required to help. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *18*(1), 10–18. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167292181002

Williamson, G. M., Clark, M. S., Pegalis, L. J., & Behan, A. (1996). Affective consequences of refusing to help in communal and exchange relationships. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *22*(1), 34–47. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167296221004

Wilson, S. J., & Novak, J. R. (2022). The implications of being "in it together": Relationship satisfaction and joint health behaviors predict better health and stronger concordance between partners. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, *56*(10), 1014–1025. https://doi.org/10.1093/abm/kaab099

Winton, B. G., & Sabol, M. A. (2022). A multi-group analysis of convenience samples: Free, cheap, friendly, and fancy sources. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *25*(6), 861–876. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2021.1961187

Wojciechowski, M. (2010). Marriage as a (mutual) ownership: An overlooked background of biblical sayings on marriage and divorce. *Folia Orientalia*, *47*, 207–214.

Wulandari, D. A., binti Hamzah, H., & binti Abbas, N. A. H. (2019, April). Correlation between work-family conflict, marital satisfaction, and job satisfaction. *Proceedings of the 8th UPI-UPSI International Conference 2018 (UPI-UPSI 2018)*, 52–55. https://doi.org/10.2991/upiupsi-18.2019.9

Yimam, T. M. (2014). *Female headed households and their livelihood in Bati Wäräda, South Wollo: Practices and resistance* [Unpublished doctoral thesis]. University of Tromso.

Zaheri, F., Dolatian, M., Shariati, M., Simbar, M., Ebadi, A., & Azghadi, S. B. (2016). Effective

factors in marital satisfaction in perspective of Iranian women and men: A systematic

review. *Electronic Physician*, *8*(12), 3369–3377. https://doi.org/10.19082/3369

Zaloudek, J. A. (2014). Evangelicals' Sanctification of Marriage through the Metaphor of Jesus

as a Husband. *Religions*, *5*(3), 623-647.

Zinck, K., & Neel, J. (2020). A study of generative partnership. *Adultspan Journal*, *19*(1), 22–38.

https://doi.org/10.1002/adsp.12085

Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) Perspectives of Mutual

Submission in Marriage

- Are you a Black woman between the ages of 35-65 years old?
- Do you reside in the United States?
- Are you currently divorced?
- Do you have a four-year college degree, an entrepreneur, or hold a leadership position in corporate America?

If you answered **yes** to either of these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a study on

the experiences of divorced professional black women.

The purpose of this study is to further understand and create awareness of the lived experiences

of divorced professional black women on mutual submission in marriage. Participants will be

asked to describe their experience of mutual submission in an online/virtual interview and review

their interview transcripts. Interviews will be audio recorded. Participants will also receive a

$25 Amazon gift card on completion of the interviews.

The study will be conducted via Zoom

A consent document will be emailed to you.

The study is being conducted by Montreal Ravenel, a doctoral candidate in the Community Care

and Counseling Department/School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University.

For more information, please contact Montreal Ravenel at ████████████

████████████████

Appendix B: Screening / Demographic Survey

Instructions: This questionnaire is designed to collect personal information to determine your

eligibility to participate in a study focusing on An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black

Woman Perspectives of Mutual Submission in Marriage. The purpose of this study was to

explore the experiences of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) regarding mutual

submission in marriage. This questionnaire is the first part of the process, once the necessary

criteria is met you will be invited to participate in an interview. Please note this information may

be discussed in the interview to provide clarity to the researchers. All information will be kept

confidential.

1. Name: _____

2. Preferred method of contact:

a. Email_____

b. Phone_____

3. Age:

Under 30	
30-40	
40-50	
50-60	
Over 60	

4. Country of Residence _____

5. State of Residence_____

6. Race/Ethnicity:

Black American	
African American, Black	
Black Caribbean	
Two or more	

Other_____

7. Marital Status:

Married	
Single	
Separated	
Divorced	

8. Employment:

Full-time	

Part-time	
Self-employed	
Unemployed	
Retired	

9. Spiritual identification:

Christianity	
Hebrew Israelite	
Seven Day Adventist	
Muslim	
Hinduism	

Other_____

10: Education:

High School Diploma	
Some College	
Bachelor's degree	
Master's degree	
Doctoral degree	

Other_____

11.Household income:

Less than $40,000	
$41,000-$60,000	
$61,000-$85,000	

$86,000-$100,000	
Over $100,000	

12. Are you currently divorced?

Yes	
No	

13. How many times have you been married and divorced?

Once	
Twice	
Three times	
More than three times	

14. How long were you married?

Less than 1 year	
1-5 years	
5-10 years	
10-20 years	
20-30 years	
30 years or more	

15. Were you divorced for more than 1 year?

Yes	
No	

16. Did you initiate the divorce?

Yes	
No	

17. Do you desire to remarry?

Yes	
No	
Undecided	

Appendix C: Request to post Flyer on Website

Dear_____

I hope this email finds you well. I am a graduate student in the Community Care and Counseling Department / School of Behavioral Sciences at Liberty University. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The current title of my qualitative research project is *An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) Perspectives of Mutual Submission* in *Marriage.* The purpose of my research is to explore the perspectives of divorced professional Black women and their experiences with mutual submission in marriage. This will help further understand and create awareness of the influence of submission practices in marriage and its impact on divorce.

I am in the process of recruiting participants for my study, so I am writing to ask if you would post the attached flyer on your website.

Participants will be asked to complete an interview and review their interview transcripts.

Participants will be presented with informed consent information prior to participating. Taking

part in this study is completely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue

participation at any time.

Thank you for considering this request. If you choose to advertise my study on your website,

please respond by email to ██████████████

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Montreal Ravenel
Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D: Consent Form

Title of the Project: An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women (PBW)

Perspectives of Mutual Submission in Marriage

Principal Investigator: Montreal D. Ravenel, Doctoral Candidate, School of Community Care

and Counseling, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a heterosexual

Black professional woman between the ages of 35-65, must reside in the US, and are currently

divorced. This study is confidential, your name or any other identifying information will not be

used. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take

part in this research. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore the perspectives of divorced professional Black women and their experiences with mutual submission in marriage.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following:

1. Participate in one 45–60-minute interview through Zoom. A transcription service will transcribe the interview after it has been audio-recorded.

2. Review the interview transcript to ensure that the recorded information accurately reflects the discussed experience. This should take at least 10 to 15 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not anticipate receiving a direct benefit for their participation.

Benefits to society include raising awareness of the detrimental effects that can result from a misunderstanding of the meaning and application of mutual submission in marriage among those working in the fields of counseling, spiritual enrichment, and mental health. This study will close a gap in the counseling literature and contribute to the expanding body of knowledge on marital submission styles, which is another societal benefit.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

The risks associated with this research include the possibility of experiencing emotional distress because of being emotionally provoked. If you become emotionally provoked and experience emotional distress, you have the option to refuse to answer the question that triggered you, reschedule the interview, or withdraw from the study. You may withdraw from this study at any time. You are not required to respond to any query with which you are uncomfortable. The researcher will provide participants with a list of mental health resources that they can use, should they feel the need to do so.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Participants will be asked to choose their pseudonyms at the beginning of the interview. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a computer protected by a password, a flash drive, and a closed filing cabinet. After three years, all electronic files and records will be deleted and shredded, respectively.

- A professional transcription service will record and transcribe all the interviews. The

  recordings will be stored for three years on a password-protected computer and flash

  drive before being deleted.

- The researcher and the transcriptionist will be the only individuals with access to these

  recordings. Prior to transcribing the data, the transcriptionist will sign a non-disclosure

  agreement.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will be compensated for participating in this study. At the conclusion of the

interview, participants will receive a $25 Amazon gift card. The gift card will be emailed at the

completion of the interview.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your

current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free to

not answer any question or withdraw at any time.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address

and/or phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data

collected from you will be immediately destroyed and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Montreal Ravenel. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact her at ███████████ and/or ████████████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Tracy Baker, at ████████████████ .

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. The physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; their phone number is 434-592-5530, and email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

Before agreeing to be part of the research, please be sure that you understand what the study is about. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. If you have any questions about the study later, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

Appendix E: Interview Questions

Standardized Open-Ended Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this study, An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women's Perspectives of Mutual Submission in Marriage. The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) regarding mutual submission in marriage. The following questions will assist in guiding our discussion as you describe your experience. Please be advised that this interview will be recorded and subsequently transcribed; you will have the opportunity to examine the transcription to ensure that it accurately reflects your responses to the questions. You are free to terminate this interview at any time, as well as decline to answer any queries that make you uncomfortable. Please rest assured that I hold your privacy in the highest regard. This will be used to record your experience. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions you may have. Thank you.

Introductory

1. Please tell me about yourself

2. What do you like to do when you are not working?

3. What is your favorite destination location?

4. What is one accomplishment you have achieved that makes you proud?

Mutual Submission

1. How do you define mutual submission?

2. What is your understanding of the role of mutual submission being practiced within marriage?

3. What or who influenced your definition and understanding of mutual submission in marriage

4. What are your experiences regarding mutual submission being practiced in your marriage?

Submission and spiritual or religious beliefs

1. What effect does spiritual or religious belief have on the notion of submission in marriage?

2. How do various spiritual or religious beliefs perceive submission in marriage?

3. How does the compatibility of a couple's spiritual beliefs affect their capacity to exercise submission in marriage?

4. What effect do religious or spiritual differences have on divorce rates among couples who struggle with submission?

Culture

1. What effect do cultural beliefs have on marriage submission practices?

2. How do cultural differences in communication styles and conflict resolution affect the dynamics of submission in marriage?

3. What difficulties do couples from various cultural contexts face when navigating submission practices in marriage?

4. What effect do family and community expectations have on submission practices in various cultural contexts?

Gender roles

1. How do you interpret gender roles and their influence on marriage?

2. What do submission practices in marriage have to do with gender roles?

3. Do you believe that traditional gender roles, in which the husband is viewed as the head of the household and the wife is expected to submit to authority, can contribute to an imbalance of power in marriage? What effect might this have on submission?

4. Have you encountered instances where rigid gender roles led to one partner feeling undervalued or disrespected, resulting in marital discord? How did this dispute manifest itself?

5. How do societal expectations regarding gender roles influence the attitudes of individuals toward submission in marriage?

6. How might couples whose gender roles are more egalitarian approach mutual submission differently than those whose gender roles are more traditional?

7. Can you give examples of how gender roles have affected submission in the marriages you have observed including yours?

8. What steps, in your opinion, can couples take to resolve potential power imbalances and encourage submission in their marriage, regardless of their beliefs regarding gender roles?

9. What spiritual or religious factors may influence the perception and practice of gender roles in marriage?

Other

1. Is there something else you would like to add that you haven't shared?

Appendix F: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

November 22, 2023

Montreal Ravenel
Tracy Baker

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY23-24-451 An Exploration of Divorced Professional Black Women (PBW) Perspectives of Mutual Submission in Marriage

Dear Montreal Ravenel, Tracy Baker,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: November 22, 2023. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects. 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) and (b)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

For a PDF of your approval letter, click on your study number in the My Studies card on your Cayuse dashboard. Next, click the Submissions bar beside the Study Details bar on the Study Details page. Finally, click Initial under Submission Type and choose the Letters tab toward the bottom of the Submission Details page. Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found on the same page under the Attachments tab. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

Appendix H: Mental Health Referral List

1. Better help Counseling Services: https://www.betterhelp.com/.

2. Choosing Therapy: www.choosingtherapy.com

3. Faith-based Counseling: www.faithfulcounseling.com

4. Lifeline Therapy: https://988lifeline.org/help-yourself/black-mental-health/

5. Holding Space or Change Therapy: https://www.holdingspaceforchange.com/therapy.

6. In-person & Online Counseling Therapy | Thriveworks: https://thriveworks.com/

7. Psychology Today: www.psychologytoday.com

8. Therapist Finder: https://therapistfinder.com

9. The Women Center: https://thewomenscenter.org/black-mental-health-resources/

10. Therapy for Black girls: https://therapyforblackgirls.com/