EFFECTIVENESS OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING PROGRAMS ON MARITAL STABILITY AMONG SELECTED COUPLES IN NAIROBI COUNTY

BY

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STUDENT’S DECLARATION

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

Signed: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Monicah Watiri Kariuki (648561)

This thesis has been presented for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

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Signed: ______________________ Date: ______________________

Prof. Ruthie Rono, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & Student Affairs)
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of premarital counseling on marital stability among couples in Nairobi County. The study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design. The sample consisted of 105 married persons from Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), Milimani South Presbytery. The participants were married for ten years and below. The study utilized the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) to determine the level of marital distress as a measure of marital stability. The results were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation and ANOVA for the research questions. Results indicated that there was a significant difference in marital satisfaction between the couples who received different counts of premarital counseling sessions. It showed that premarital counseling had a significant effect on marital satisfaction. Based on the findings, the implications for premarital counseling include initiating a program that will ensure premarital counseling is done six months before the wedding and the sessions done are between eighteen and twenty. Premarital counseling should focus more on communication, finance management and personality development in order to improve overall marital stability.

Key Words: Premarital counseling, marital stability, marital satisfaction.
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God who enabled me to do the research project. I also dedicate it to my late sister, Joyce Nyagichuhi Njenga, who was not only a sister but a friend. You encouraged me to go for what my heart desired and celebrate success in the best way I know how! I will forever miss you.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Marriage is beneficial for couples, children and the community as a whole (Kiuna & Kiuna 2012). Those who are married are on the average healthier than those who are not married (Finchnan, 2003). Unhealthy marriages may put couples mentally, financially, emotionally and physically at risk (Lundbald & Hansson, 2005). The benefits of premarital counseling become apparent when one considers the likelihood of experiencing significant challenges early in a marriage, the consequences of marital distress and high rate of divorce (Halford & Simons, 2005). Premarital programs aim to prepare couples for marriage to increase the likelihood of satisfactory, healthy marriages and to decrease marital distress.

1.1 Background of the Study

Marriage is the backbone of a healthy society. It is the basic unit on which society leans for proper functioning. According to Ng’ang’a and Wasanga (2010) marriage is the closest union that can occur between two people, but very few people really prepare for the demands of living together in such a way that needs are met, harmony is attained and dreams are fulfilled. The result of this is marital instability being so common even among Christian couples. This contradicts God’s intention of initiating the marriage institution, which according to Christian teachings is a lifelong covenant between a man and woman (Genesis 2:18-26). As noted by Kepler (2015), God ordained marriage for three purposes, companionship, pleasure and procreation but marital dissatisfaction seem to affect people of all ages, races and cultural backgrounds and often leads to divorce (Baker, 2015).
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On the other hand, premarital and marital counseling work to ameliorate marital discord and improve marital satisfaction. Bruun (2010) offers a definition of premarital education as “knowledge and skills-based training that provides couples with information on ways to sustain and improve their relationship once they are married”. However, there are dozens of specific premarital education programs that are largely psycho-educational and skills-based and that follow a standardized curriculum (Bruun, 2010). Pre-marital counseling is fundamentally different from skills-based premarital education, involving more intensive work between couples and therapists and focusing on more specific personal problems (Duncan et al., 2010). Premarital counselors operate from a variety of theoretical orientations: behavioral couple therapy, emotionally-focused couple therapy, insight-oriented marital therapy, Bowen family systems theory, and solution-focused brief therapy (Bruun, 2010).

Premarital preparation is typically designed to help couples maintain relatively high levels of functioning (Kepler, 2015). Because premarital programs are provided to couples seeking to strengthen their relationships, premarital preparation can be described as preventative (Stahmann, 2000). Prevention efforts may be particularly important given the argument that once dysfunctional interaction patterns develop within a marriage, they become more difficult to change. Indeed, similar to prevention efforts regarding public health issues (e.g., influenza, chicken pox, measles), and how these activities have improved individuals’ physical health and life circumstances across the globe, premarital preparation programs may confer similar relationship “immunity” for engaged couples.

Premarital preparation is offered with the goal of creating more stable and satisfying marriages and consequently preventing divorce (Stahmann, 2000). These goals are particularly relevant in light of an argument presented by Ambert (2009) who researched on divorce and remarriage in Canada for over 30 years and found that although some
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divorces are certainly necessary, approximately one third of divorces dissolve “average to good marriages” that are “actually quite salvageable”. Consequences of these arguably unnecessary dissolutions include an increased risk of poverty (particularly for women and children) and behavioral and emotional problems for children (Ambert, 2009). Similarly, troubling is research on individuals who remain in unsatisfying or conflicted relationships and who remain at risk for compromised physical and mental well-being (Stanley, 2001). The serious effects of divorce point to a need for prevention strategies such as premarital preparation to improve marital quality and reduce the current rates of marital distress and divorce. As such, the need to investigate the role of programs that deal with issues affecting marriage cannot be overemphasized.

Over the years, research shows that the effects of broken marriages such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, intimacy problems, finances and stress are far reaching and extend beyond the family to the society; however, the institution of marriage faces many challenges. It is therefore important that issues affecting the marriage are addressed before couple gets into marriage. One of the forums where these issues can be addressed is in premarital counseling, hence, there is need to evaluate the effectiveness of existing premarital counseling programs.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Premarital counseling is important for couples contemplating marriage, it provides couples with necessary information to establish and develop a strong marital foundation (Ng’ang’a & Wasanga, 2010). Premarital programs offer the necessary guidance and groundwork to assist couples in evaluating their readiness to enter into a permanent life of commitment. In any endeavours, dreams or goals not backed by concrete plans and preparations can result into failure and marriage is no exception. However, if properly done, premarital counseling can play a vital role in building strong marriages (Kepler, 2015).
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Marriage is a major avenue whereby every society is populated, hence, where there is marital instability, there is a problem in the raising and nurturing of the children, which often leads to an increase juvenile delinquency in the society. When the home front is faulty, parents are not able to cater for and correct their children who are the future of any nation.

The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) has been proactive in keeping marriages stable through premarital counseling conducted by the parish ministers; however, the effectiveness of the premarital counseling programs it uses, has not been evaluated since its initiation. According to the recent past moderator of PCEA Milimani South Presbytery, Dr. Reverend Patrick Mungiriria, the church had tried to harmonize the different approaches it uses however, it did not succeed and up to today, Parish ministers’ uses different premarital counseling programs approaches. The church has experienced marital issues among those who have gone through the premarital program. The problems that previously affected marriages outside church have spread into the Christian congregations. Divorce epidemic that was synonymous with the West is felt in Africa and more so in our churches (Kiuna & Kiuna, 2012) hence there was need to investigate the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among couples in Milimani South Presbytery, Nairobi County.
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1.4 Objectives of Study

This study sought to:

1.4.1 To examine how premarital counseling programs affect communication among couples in Nairobi county

1.4.2 To examine how premarital counseling programs affect satisfaction among couples in Nairobi county

1.4.3 To examine how premarital counseling programs affect financial management among couples in Nairobi county

1.4.4 To examine how premarital counseling programs affect personality development among couples in Nairobi county

1.4.5 To examine how premarital counseling programs affect overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi county

1.5 Research Questions

The research was to be guided by the following questions:

1.5.1 How do premarital counseling programs affect communication among couples in Nairobi County?

1.5.2 How do premarital counseling programs affect satisfaction among couples in Nairobi County?

1.5.3 How do premarital counseling programs affect financial management among couples in Nairobi County?

1.5.4 How do premarital counseling programs affect personality development among couples in Nairobi County?
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1.5.5 How do premarital counseling programs affect overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi County?

1.6 Significance of the study

One of the roles of the church is to prepare couples for lifelong marriages hence; the study would equip clergy with skills to prepare couples better. Additionally, the study could benefit the couple’s and their families in improving their marital stability. So, through these findings the church may likely improve their premarital counseling approaches.

1.7 Scope

The study is conducted in Milimani South Presbytery, Nairobi County. The presbytery is situated in a semi-urban area of Nairobi County where middle-income people live. This translates to their high number of young couples in the churches. This research also developed a program to address premarital challenges that can be used in churches.

1.8 Definitions of terms

Clergy/parish minister – People ordained for religious duties in Christian churches. In PCEA Churches, Parish minister represents several churches known as a parish

Consensus – This is a measure of the level of communication among married couples

Counseling – Professional guidance of the individual by utilizing psychological methods especially in collecting case history data, using various techniques of the personal interview, and testing interests and aptitudes

Counselor – A trained individual who is able to use different range of counseling approaches with their client

Family – A basic social unit consisting of parents and their children
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Marriage – Marriage is a union of man and woman who come together from different families

Parish – A number of churches under a clergy

Premarital counseling – It is a specialized type of therapy believed to offer to all couples who are considering marriage

Presbytery – Consists of number of parishes

Satisfaction – This is a measure of the level of conflict among married couples

Stability – This is a measure of the level of distress or non-distress among married couples

1.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter begins with the introduction of the topic of study which is the effectiveness of premarital counseling on marital stability. The background of the study highlights the importance of marriage and its preparation. The need to investigate the effectiveness of premarital counseling is the problem in the study. The study had five specific objectives which include, to examine how premarital counseling affect communication, satisfaction, financial management, personality development and overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi county. The significance of the study is to equip clergy with skills to prepare couples better. The scope of the study was the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Milimani South presbytery, Nairobi county. Finally, the terms used in the study are also defined in this chapter.

Chapter two will highlight the literature review of previous studies done on effectiveness of premarital counseling.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related including theoretical framework and conceptual framework. The section is divided into different sections including: theoretical framework, the concept of marriage, premarital counseling, premarital counseling history in Africa, the concept of marital stability, premarital counseling and marital stability, improvement of communication among couples, competent ways of handling in-laws interference, better ways of handling marital mistrust, provides conflict management skills, enhance intimacy, better ways of handling family of origin and personality issues, skills for finance management and decreases divorce, summary and conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework involves the review of theories underlying the topic of study (Gabriel, 2008). The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of premarital counseling in marital stability. The theoretical framework of this research was grounded in Gottman’s (1994) cascade theory regarding marital displeasure and dissolution which integrate both behavioural theory and social exchange theory (Kepler, 2015).

2.2.1 Cascade Theory

Gottman’s research has formed evidence of a method of change over time in couples’ opinion of their relationship that produces a distance or isolation also known as cascade. When a couple reaches this point, perceptual change happens in which they increase their affection and respect. The cascade theory displays the influence of verbal and non-verbal communication and behaviour (Kepler, 2015).
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2.2.1.1 Behavioural Family Counseling Theory

The proponent of this theory is John B. Watson. According to Watson (1913) the theory identifies the functional family therapy as basically a systematic type of behavioural family therapy. The general assumption of the behavioural therapy includes: All behaviour is learned and that people including married couples act according to how they have been reinforced earlier; behaviour is maintained by its consequences and will continue, unless more rewarding consequences result from new behaviour; maladaptive behaviour and not underlying causes, should be the focus of change by the marriage therapist; the primary concern of the family therapist is based on effecting positive changes on the present behaviour problems; Inappropriate behaviour can be changed or reduced with new forms of acceptable behaviour patterns (Metcalf, 2011). Watson believes that cognitive behavioural therapy treatment procedure for managing family issues has been very effective for working with families. For instance, if prospective candidates of marriage interact with others, they learn new behaviours and also receiving family counseling brings about marital stability in the family system.

2.2.1.2 Social exchange theory

Social exchange theory examines the relationship processes in marital and families’ relationship. Social exchange theory borrows from behavioural psychology, sociology and classical economics. It seeks to explain the development, maintenance and decay of exchange relationships in the balance between rewards that marital partner obtains and the cost that they incur by selecting themselves in the marital relationships. Costs are the factors that inhibits or deter a performance of a sequence of behaviour within a marriage whereas rewards are the pleasures, satisfactions and gratifications that a person enjoys within a marriage (Nakonezny & Denton 2008).
Kepler (2015) posited that social exchange theory portends that couples are motivated by goodness of the outcome they are expected to bring. Marital partners yield goodness of outcome based on reward and costs. However, each partner must value the mutual activity above a comparison level in-order for relational sodality to be sustained. Marital exchange is evaluated on basis in past experience which in turn leads to a partner perception of his/her goodness of her outcome. Gottman’s (1994) highlighted a permanent marriage is one that results in to capacity to resolve disagreements that are bound in every relationship. Marital satisfaction is greater when positive behaviour outweighs the negative behaviour (Kepler, 2015). Since premarital counseling and Couples counseling focuses on communication and other way to promote and maintain a satisfying, healthy marriage, the theoretical framework for this thesis focus on how premarital counseling can lead to greater satisfaction in marriage

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Studies have shown that marital stability is influenced by several factors and the main ones include communication, marital satisfaction, financial management and personality development. If these factors are improved, marital stability also improves. The conceptual framework is illustrated in figure 2.1. Marital stability is the dependent variable and communication, marital satisfaction, financial management and personality development are the independent variables. To examine the effectiveness of premarital counseling in marital stability these independent variables should be assessed. The consequent sections describe each of the independent variables and their effects on premarital counseling.
2.3.1 Premarital Counseling and Marital Stability

Premarital counseling provides a couple with opportunity to dig up any potential pitfalls that could hinder their marriage from lasting a lifetime. It causes people to consider and discuss things that would increase the likelihood of the success of their marriage as noted by Baker (2015). Usually couples enter marriage with predetermined ideas on how conflict should be handled, the way money should be managed, and how religious issues should be addressed, how many children they should have, and what it means to love someone. Pre-marital counseling then offers expert suggestions on how to handle all these issues (Shumm et al., 2010). Premarital counseling is as old as man himself, as all societies around the world offer counseling services of some sort before and during marriage relationship (Futris et al., 2011). They see premarital counseling as a form of advice that benefits couples who are planning to married.
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Premarital counseling is not a form of therapy according to Futris et al. (2011); it is couples’ education on skills that they will need to support them in having a happy, healthy and lasting marriage. It helps couples identify and communicate about their fears, desires, beliefs, values, dreams, needs, and other issues that would be avoided and never be discussed without premarital counseling (Marang’a, 2013). Individuals, who take part in premarital counseling compared to those who do not go through premarital counseling, tend to have a happier marriage. According to Kepler (2015), there is a 40-50% chance of divorce among couples who do not go through premarital counseling. He posited that premarital counseling either secular or faith-based has a goal of supporting marriage to endure life challenges.

A research done by Farnam, Pakgohar and Mir-Mohammadali (2011) among 200 couples in Ireland found premarital counseling education to have a significant effect on marital satisfaction. This argument concurs with Kepler (2015) who argued that premarital counseling education has a significant effect on marital satisfaction. However, he emphasized that in order for such classes to be effective the educators must pay close attention to participants’ needs, demands and problems. Farnam et al. (2011) highlighted aspects of premarital counseling as family planning, personal health, sexuality, and communication and conflict resolution skills.

Results from a research done by Yoo & Bartle (2012) suggest that empowering couples with effective communication skills enhances their emotional stability and increases sexual intimacy which more often than not increase their marital satisfaction. Carol and Doherty (2014) concur with Yoo & Bartle (2012) as she argues that premarital education is effective in enhancing quality communication. It equips couples with conflict management skills which enhances quality relationships.
The goal of premarital counseling flows directly from the purpose of marriage which is fellowship, companionship, mutual respect and good communication as revealed by a research done by Wilmoth and Smyser’s (2010) among 2000 religious churches in Mississippi State University. Their research findings support Adler (1931) findings as quoted by Wilmoth and Smyser (2010) who suggests that marriage is not merely an action taken by two people but also involves a connection of the past with the future. Kepler (2015) also highlighted that the primary goal of premarital counseling includes a shift from singlehood to married life which require development of communication skills, increase to marital stability and satisfaction so as to enhance the companionship and intimacy between the couple. The goal of premarital counseling according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2012) is to establish cooperation relationship not only for the good of the couple but for the wellbeing of all connected to couple’s lives.

The key emphasis in Adlerian theory is empowering couples with problem solving skills to help them prevent problems later in marriage (Kepler, 2015). According to Wilmoth & Smyser (2010), pastors who employ premarital assessment questionnaires (PAQs) are more likely to prepare couples better for marriage compared to those who do not use such assessment tools. According to their study only 29.1% of the 2000 counselors’ use (PAQs). The finding suggests that a large majority of clergy do not use assessment or instruments that are appropriate for premarital education.

Schumm et al. (2010) found out premarital counseling quality was strongest predictor of successful premarital outcome in a religious setting. They continued to say that length of premarital counseling is variable. They highlighted that one session is not enough and they proposed eight to nine sessions. The content covered in most premarital counseling session includes communication, commitments, conflict resolutions, egalitarian roles, sexuality, personality issues and finances. While the discussed literature has
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highlighted a lot benefits of premarital counseling, eleven benefits stood out: improved communication, better handling of marital mistrust, competent ways of handling in-laws, enhancement of marital satisfaction, reduced divorce rate, enhancement of intimacy, conflict management skills, handling of issues related to family of origin issues, personality issues, management skills, finance management and long-term goals setting.

2.3.2 Premarital Counseling and Effective Communication among Couples

Communication in marriage is vital for a happy marriage. Without good communication, all advice in the world is likely to fail to help rebuild a bad marriage relationship. Communication according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2010) is the key to unlock marital problems. Couples must communicate with one another in ways that reveal their deepest feelings and their underlying needs in order to establish fulfilling relationships (Sauerheber & Bitter, 2013). Communication either good or bad affects whatever goes on between humans. It can be through words, verbal or written; non-words-symbols, sounds, or silence, facial expressions-jeers or smiles; touches-nurturing touch or lack of touch, playful touch, or coercive touch; and/or a combination of these elements in recurrent pattern (Yoo & Bartle., 2012).

Positive communication is one of the characteristics of a stable marriage and family according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2010). However, communication does not always equal to agreement among couples and families. Family members have differences and conflicts, but if they speak directly and honestly about them without blaming each other, their relationship is likely to remain intact. Dysfunctional marriages or families on the other hand, are either overly critical or hostile in their communication with each other or deny problems and avoid verbal conflict. Although verbal hostilities are not productive, neither is avoidance of problems. Futris et al. (2011) research reveal that communication in healthy marriages and families has several benefits, for example partners good listening skills and
humour. Humour is a characteristic of positive family communication and a healthy marital relationship. It involves the ability to pay attention to what others are thinking and feeling. Communication is not just talking, but listening to what others have to say (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Honest communication that is open creates an atmosphere of love and admiration for one another that allows family members to express their differences freely. It is through communication that couples can resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in some marriages.

Poor communication is found in unhealthy family relationships just as effective communication is found in healthy families. Poor communication is a common complaint of families who have difficulties in sustaining their marriages as often reported by marriage and family therapist (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Poor communication is usually indirect and unclear that can lead to numerous family problems that include, frequent family conflict, lack of intimacy, weak emotional bonding and ineffective problem-solving strategy. Shumm et al. (2010) argues that premarital counseling can be a good way of helping couples become aware of areas of incompatibility such as values, life goals and ways of dealing with conflicts.

Ineffective communication can also give birth to mistrust in relationships. According to Miller et al. (2014), marital suspicion appears to underlie many social interactions, it accounts for the stability or instability of a wide variety of human relationships therefore it is not surprising that it is present among married couples. Suspicion in marriage is the act of suspecting something, especially something wrong, with one’s spouse on little evidence or without proof. Misunderstandings among couples encourage the seeds of emotional suppression according to Miller, et al (2014). Flirting ‘harmlessly’ with people of the opposite sex, having lunch or drinks after work with members of the opposite sex, discussing your work problems, sharing jokes and gossip with
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colleagues or friends of the opposite sex but not with your partner can lead to marital suspicion which can easily breaks the bond of marriage just as adultery does (Miller et al., 2014). Premarital counseling empowers spouses with suspicion thoughts on how to communicate and discuss it and the two works to out the way forward (Marang’a, 2013)

2.3.3 Premarital Counseling and Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction according to Farnam et al (2011) is the individual happiness with marriage that depends on intra-personal concepts. Often religion serves as a great resource for couples to achieve marital satisfaction (Duba et al., 2012; Ellison et al., 2010; Mahoney, 2010). Wilmoth and Smyser (2010) argue that marriage preparations improves marital satisfaction as it increases one’s commitment to his or her spouse which is associated with lower rate of divorce. Kepler (2015) concurs with this argument as he stated that marital dissatisfaction can lead to divorce and can affect people of all ages, race and culture.

Premarital counseling decreases marital instability. According to Tambling and Glebova (2013), many states in the United State of America offer counseling programs for couples who wish to be helped however services are not utilized despite their availability. One possible reason of not using the services is that the programs are not trusted by the couples to meet their needs. Marital satisfaction also demands that couples enjoy intimate sexual satisfying relationships.

Sex related subjects addressed during premarital counseling are most helpful topics because intimacy in any marriage is paramount. According to Farnam et al. (2011), sex provides intimacy, closeness and bonding when couples have been too busy to make love for extended periods of time, they can feel a mysterious relational distance. Since the topic of sex is generally taboo in Africa, it is often ignored however; this topic in the context of
marriage has been accepted and it should provide couples with a platform to discuss practical things like sex and birth control. Many new couples are blind-sided when they first enter into a sexual relationship. A sense of trust and being accepted, being pursued and desired are important factors in marriage relationship.

According to Kepler (2015), factors behind marriage failures includes, lack of communication, disagreements on child-rearing styles, infidelity, expectation differences, lack of commitments, employment and finance management issues among others. Ability to effectively communicate is fundamental in any relationship because it guarantees that couples understand one another. Futris et al. (2011) cited that, couples who participate in premarital counseling experience greater level of marital satisfaction and are unlikely to get divorced. They also tend to have fewer negative interactions and experience high level of pleasure in their marriage and less negative interactions.

Another test of conflict resolution skills among married couples is the extent to which they can handle in-laws’ interference. In-laws consist of relatives, especially the parents of one’s husband or wife. In-laws are generally perceived as “enemies” by many couples, because some of them deliberately and most times, unnecessarily interfere with their children families (Kepler, 2015). Except in a few cases, many couples would rather keep their in-laws at a distance. But, as much as many couples would want to, the extended family practice in the African culture may not permit it. However, the Bible in Genesis 2:24 and Mark 10:7-8 say that ‘a man and woman must leave their parents and cleave to one another becoming one’ and thereby create a new family. This new family is not an extension of the parental family. From the biblical point of view, it is a new unit, which often contradicts the traditions of the society. However, in-law relationships often described as ambiguous, and this ambiguity stems from the fact that couples belong to three different families: the new family the couple has started plus both partners’ families of origin. As a
result, in-law relationships often cause hostility and stress between spouses who have emotional and psychological loyalties to their families. Premarital counseling is likely to help the young partners to shift their loyalties from parents to each other.

Usually, if there is an in-law problem and the husband's family is controlling, then it is the husband (with support from his wife) who needs to lay down boundaries for his family. In like manner, if it is the wife's family that is controlling, it is the wife's responsibility (with support from her husband) to lay down boundaries for her family. Regardless of which set of in-laws the interference comes from, it is an assault upon the sanctity of the marriage outlined in the Bible. As such couples, who allow their parents to interfere with their marriage, are not living up to their responsibility to love and protect each other.

In-laws are not the final arbiters of the relationship however; the husband and wife are. A couple therefore has a right to privacy and when that privacy is violated, they have the responsibility to see to it that it is protected. In-laws do not have an inalienable right to suggest on how their children’s marriage should be conducted. Kepler (2015) posited that premarital counseling has proved helpful in managing in-laws’ issues; it equips couples with problem solving skills to enable them handle marriage problems including in-laws.

Additionally, while some couples are able to work through their issues more effectively others find it impossible leading to divorce. Dew and Huston (2012) posited that, disagreements and poor communication style are both contributors of divorce. This is specifically true when couples are disagreeing about finances (Dew & Huston, 2012). In addition to communication, financial issues have been research focus however it is still under studied compared to the influence that everyday finances have on family life. Studies have disclosed that financial issues are significant predictors of divorce (Amato & Rogers,
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1997; Britt & Huston, 2012; Dew & Huston, 2012). When spouses are incapable of resolving contrasting, money demands or has conflicting goals for spending or saving, disagreements tend to arise. Husbands and wives report that their financial arguments are more difficult to solve, they last longer, and are more significant to them than other types of disputes (Britt, and Huston, 2012). There is evidence to suggest that money disputes between spouses are correlated with a reduction in marital gratification (Dew & Huston, 2012). Transition from engagement period to marriage also known as courtship requires premarital counseling. It is very important for the success of marriage and has been found to be effective (Li et al., 2015)

2.3.4 Premarital Counseling and Personality Development

A person’s family of origin is the foundational piece of who they are according to Duba et al (2012). Very often families have rules, expectations, patterns, taboos and protocols that even family members are not aware of. Therefore, by creating a genogram during premarital counseling with a therapist, a method of mapping a client’s family holistically; not simply a genealogy, can shed a great deal of light on how one’s family operates, and provides insight into the couple by preparing them on how to relate with their spouses. Premarital counseling includes conversations about family’s unique upbringing. Even though couples usually try to avoid the negative cycles they have experienced in their own families, the effect is usually felt. Anxiety, depression, anger, fear and recurrent relationship problems are often tied up in unresolved issues from the past. However, premarital counseling help couples with skills to deal with their old wounds and successfully re-adjust their lens on life.

2.3.5 Premarital Counseling and Finance Management Skills

According to Falconier and Epstein (2011), there are clinical guidelines for working with couples about financial issues. In premarital counseling, couples are helped to deal
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with financial quagmire during courtship. Issues addressed include budgeting, investing, saving, banking and lending, financial goals, debt, and setting a joint budget among other topics which commonly result in financial stress and tension. Studies show that most marital disputes are related in some way to finances. Taking control of one’s financial situation can help reduce the anxiety of not knowing whether one has the money or not. It is important to have a sense of control over money, rather than letting money have control over you. Budgeting will help couples build assets thus improves their quality of life (Marang’a, 2013)

2.4 Review of Empirical Literature

2.4.1 The Concept of Marriage

The institution of marriage is a central pillar on which the society is build. Marriage involves the living together of, or a partnership between, two or more persons who are relatively strangers to each other (Karina, 2011). As a powerful legal and social institution, marriage protects and supports intimate family relationships by providing a unique set of rights, privileges and responsibilities. It represents multi-level commitments, one that involves person-to-person, family-to-family, and the couple (Kepler, 2015).

Biblically and in almost all societies, marriage is viewed as a permanent bond, so much so that in some societies, it is virtually irrevocable (Bagarozzi & Sperry, 2012). The stability provided by a life-long promise of remaining together makes marriage the institution most suited to rearing and socializing the next generation of members, a necessary task if the society's norms, values, and goals are to be maintained and if the society itself is to be perpetuated (Vail, 2012).

In some societies, the connection between marriage and reproduction is so strong that if conception does not occur, a divorce is permissible and often automatic. In others, a
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marriage does not take place until after pregnancy occurs (Baker, 2015). Kepler (2012) describes a family as, an ordinary social system having unique properties of its own, including, roles, rules, forms of communication, a power structure and problem-solving skills that allow various tasks to be performed effectively and ways of negotiations. When marriages break down and fail to provide the healthy nurture that is needed, the impact is not only on the lives of the individuals, but also on communities; implying that everybody pays for unhealthy marriages.

A family system is more than the total of all its individual members. This means that one cannot know the family simply by knowing each person as an individual because each individual will behave differently outside the family (Strait et al., 2015). People’s behaviour is deeply influenced by their family background, and people are best understood by understanding their family. When an individual has a problem, not only does the family get affected but also the whole community gets involved in finding a solution. This argument concurs with a popular opinion that: “it takes a couple to bear a child but it takes a whole village to raise the child”.

2.4.2 Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling and/or education are a therapeutic intervention undertaken by couples who plan to marry. It aims at providing couples with information and skills on ways to improve their relationship once they are married (Vail, 2012). It is a brief intervention program averaging about four (4) hours of contact time per month with each couple. It includes counseling and education. The goals of premarital counseling generally include the following: (a) to teach couples information about married life, (b) to enhance couple communication skills, (c) to encourage couples to develop conflict resolution skills and (d) to allow the couple to speak about certain sensitive topics, such as sex and money (Sells & Yarhouse, 2011). More often than not, couples who enter into marriage with such
skills demonstrate an overall positive psychological health and do not have serious relationship issues. The risk of divorce is highest in the early years of marriage and early intervention programs are useful. Clients who enter premarital counseling bring with them a diverse set of needs and preferences for the counseling experience and because of the diversity of clients who enter premarital counseling, it is important for practitioners to consider the unique needs of each couple.

As noted by Vail (2012), marriage preparation programs also known as premarital education has been around for decades, dating back in 1930s. The first program was developed at the Merrill Palmer Institute in 1932. In 1941, the Philadelphia marriage Council developed standardized programs with the main aim of helping couples to better understand companionship in marriage and what it involves, so as to avoid some of the common causes of marital conflicts.

From 1970s, the focus of meeting with couples shifted from educating them for marriage. In 1977, Wright developed a premarital program known as “before you say I do”, whose focus was to equip and educate couples with skills that would benefit their marriages. Duncan and Larson (2010) concur with Vail (2012) stating that premarital preparations in North America can be dated as early as 1930s. The earliest interventions were administered through churches. However, premarital counseling programs have evolved to be taught in various formats including individual counseling, couples counseling, groups therapy, on-line courses, books and internet counseling, to mention just but a few.

2.4.3 Premarital counseling history in Africa

In the traditional African societies, young adults were taught how to be goodwives and husbands in preparation for getting married by their aunties and uncles. The young
people were instructed on the expectations and roles in marriage. However, due to migration from rural to urban in search better lifestyles, industrialization, globalization and change of life, young people have no access to that kind of counseling. As, a result, there is need for professional counselors to enhance and where necessary to replace traditional practices (Ng’ang’a & Wasanga, 2010).

Africans are community-oriented people who tend to think and act on the basis of how their decisions will impact the community. As such, marriage and family takes a central part in the consciousness and the daily occupation of the African people. Each family in the community endeavours to instruct its young ones on the weighty matters of good marriage and family and how such matters influence directly or indirectly the well-being of both the immediate family and the larger community (Ng’ang’a and Wasanga, 2010). Traditionally, premarital education was given through three major avenues namely: apprenticeship, simply watching others do something and then doing the same thing. Girls for example, learned how to cook, care for the babies, care for the home, and work in the farm by watching their mothers. Much of the girls’ training for the responsibilities of marriage came through daily associations with their mothers while boys learned how to watch over their father’s beehives on high trees, harvest honey, care for the domestic animals, hunt, and fish as they accompanied their fathers doing all these activities (Mbunga, 2010).

The second avenue of preparation for marriage was actual teaching whereby grandmothers and aunties taught young girls in this regard. During meal times, girls ate food at their grandmothers’ houses as they listened to teachings on life in general but more often than not, the lessons covered issues such marriage, fertility, sexuality, women’s menses, families with whom they are related and should never marry, romance, choosing
the right man for a husband, procedures for marriage such as how to care for their husbands and children, and how to maintain a marriage (Mbunga, 2010).

The third avenue for marriage preparation was during the initiation ceremonies. The initiation ceremony was the time when a girl became a woman and a boy became a man (Kunhiyop, 2008). The ceremonies gave young men and women the right to marry because they provided the final training required to enable persons to marry. The ceremony combined several procedures for both boys and girls, including the physical operation of circumcision, various tests of physical endurance, teachings on how an adult man should care for his wife and family, and the performance of various rites and ceremonies. The girls, on their part, learned how to handle their husbands and home and what to do when they encountered misunderstandings and conflicts with their husbands and the new relatives. Parents, uncles, aunts, and grandparents functioned as counselors, keepers of family boundaries and peace keepers. Africans emphasize on good relationship—they believe it is needed not only between the two-young people who are intending to marry but between their families as well.

Hence, marriage in the African family system is not only between the two-young people who intend to marry, but between the families from which the individuals come from (Mbunga, 2010). The words of counsel to the young couple did not mean that the parents should dominate the new family, but that they should respect it and assist them where necessary so that their marriage would succeed (Karina, 2011). The counseling to the new couple by their parents showed first that a new family has been established, yet the new family remains part of the larger family, the community.

This counsel clearly defined the responsibilities of husband and wife to one another as a subsystem within the extended family and also defined the boundaries of the families of origin and the larger community (extended family) and lists the responsibilities of the
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parents to continue caring for the new family. The boundary of mutual respect and friendship between the two families of origin was mandated. All three parties—husband, wife, and parents were told to pursue the happiness and success of the new family. African traditional family counselors believed that prevention is better than cure and they began counseling instruction before marriage took place. Such instructions remained as lifelong guidance for the new family (Nga’ng’a & Wasanga, 2010).

In Kenya, the rate of divorce may not be as high as in some other western countries but has its own dreary picture. The institution of marriage is facing many challenges (Marang’a, 2013) and one the major challenges is marital instability. As such, premarital counseling is a good avenue that can equip couples on how to deal with issues such as faith, tribe and racial differences (Mbunga, 2010). Basically, premarital counseling practices fall under three major models: the African traditional model, secular counseling model, which draws almost entirely from psychology and other humanistic disciplines, and the religious models, which include Christian, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. However, this research focuses on only Christian premarital models, specifically the model used in PCEA churches.

The church has diverse premarital counseling programs with programs differing on a number of important dimensions. According to Mbunga (2010), the differences ranges from the number of sessions taken, the qualifications of those who conduct the sessions, content given and the type of programs employed. In Christians premarital programs, Christian’s principles and ideals taught are based on the Word of God. The main problem with the Christian model used in PCEA churches is lack of a standardized curriculum that would ensure all the practitioners (Parish Ministers) are teaching similar ideas agreed upon and tested against the word of God and scientifically tested. This leaves every parish minister to use whatever material available in the name of Christian premarital counseling.
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For example, all the clergy in Milimani presbytery uses different premarital manuals for pre-marital counseling. They then conduct the premarital counseling according to couple’s needs. Some clergy builds their counseling on one question: Why do you want to get married to him or her, as their foundation hence the need to evaluate the effective of such uncoordinated practice and materials used in the Milimani South Presbytery churches.

2.4.4 The Concept of Marital Stability

Stability basically suggests the capacity to return to equilibrium or to the original position after having been displaced (Kepler 2015). This statement suggests an important notion of resilience which maintains and strengthens marriage, for the maximum self-support and personal independence. Farnam et al. (2011) cite parental mental health, stable relationships among couple and positive parenting as marks of marital stability. Characteristics of the home environment, such as warmth, emotional availability, family cohesion and harmonious day-to-day activities, have also been implicated as signs of marital stability.

Theory of marital success versus failure reflects a causal process model that specifies satisfied versus not satisfied married partners. According to Gottman’s (1994) as quoted by Navarra (2011), marital partners' negative nonverbal message causes a shift in perceptions of each other that may lead to unfavourable beliefs about the other partner. In particular, negative nonverbal message such as sarcasm and accusations predicts relational instability. Conversely, a high ratio of positive-to-negative messages indicates stability. Stable couples have a 5:1 positive-to-negative messages ratio while unstable marriages enact a 1:1 positive-to-negative nonverbal message ratio. As such unstable marriages exhibit an equal number of positive to negative non-negative messages. According to Gottmann (1994), negative behaviours lead to negative emotional reactions. Differences between stable and unstable marriages also are evident in the response a partner extends
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regarding his or her partners' negative behaviour. For example, stable partners rely on positive or benign attributions to respond to a negative behaviour. Once hostile attributions are attained, partners begin to distance themselves from one another, re-cast the history of the marriage, and, finally, separate. The primary strategies for maintaining stability would be to use cooperative strategies that avoid negative reciprocity, and attempt to explain the partner's negative behaviour using benign attributions. When one cannot alter defensive beliefs about his or her partner, then marital counseling with a spiritual leader would be of good help as noted by Navarra (2011).

Marital stability is interpreted as the ability for a couple to remain together instead of separating or divorcing during a difficult time (Marang’a, 2010). On the contrast, marital satisfaction refers to how marital partners evaluate the quality of their marriage. It is a subjective description of whether a marital relationship is good, happy, or satisfying. Various names are used to identify satisfaction in marriage: the most frequently used one’s marital happiness. There is therefore a need to investigate the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on both marital satisfaction and stability (Navarra, 2011).

2.5 Chapter summary

From the literature review, it was found that different scholars have conducted studies on the issues of effectiveness of premarital counseling on marriage. Different factors have been determined as determinants of successful marriage if addressed during premarital counseling. This study is unique from previous researchers on the effectiveness of premarital counseling because studies on the same appear scanty in the Kenya and yet it is the focus of the study. The next chapter is the research methodology for the study.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This research sought to understand the influence of pre-marital counseling on marital stability among couples in Milimani South Presbytery Nairobi, County. This part of the research discusses the research methodology and design, entry procedure, population of research, samples and sampling procedure, research instrument, validation of the research instrument, ethical issues, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure.

3.2 Research Design

According to Creswell (2014), descriptive survey involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collected. It often uses illustration such as graphs and charts to aid the reader in understanding the population of interest. The researcher employed quantitative descriptive research studies which aim at discovering inferences or causal relationships (Creswell, 2014). Gravetter (2009) noted that, quantitative type of research examines variables that vary in magnitude, size, amount and duration. A report was made indicating summary data such as measures of central tendency including the mean, standard deviation and percentage between variables.

3.3 Population of Research

A research population is the total aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population in this study was young couples who have been married for ten (10)
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3.4 Sample and sampling

A sample is a smaller unit from a population used to determine truths about that population according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). Sampling is a selection of research participants from a population (Creswell, 2014). This research used Two – stage cluster sampling. Gravetter et al., (2009) highlighted that, cluster sampling is a sampling technique used when a population is naturally divided into heterogeneous groups. Two – stage cluster sampling will involve obtaining a sample of clusters (in this case churches) and then selecting a sample of couples in each of the selected churches. Two – stage cluster sampling was ideal for this research since a complete list of all the population units (sampling frame) was not available.

In the first stage of the Two – stage cluster sampling, a sample of 10 churches was selected using simple random sampling. The researcher opted to pick the 10 churches based on the following criteria:

\[
\frac{n}{x} \geq \frac{100}{16} = 6.25
\]

Where \(n\) is the sample size and \(x\) is the number of churches in the population.

In the second stage of the Two – stage cluster sampling, a simple random sample of 105 persons married for 10 years and below was selected from the 10 churches. According to Weiss (2012), size of the sample used to estimate a population mean, \(n\), is determined using a confidence level of 95%, an estimated standard deviation of 0.5 and a margin of error of 9.8% as shown below.
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\[ n \geq \frac{z^2 \times s^2}{d^2} \]

\[ = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.098^2} \]

\[ = 100 \]

In the above formula to determine the sample size for estimating the mean of a population, \( d \) is the desired margin of error, \( z \) is the \( z \)-score. For a 95% confidence interval, the \( z \)-score is 1.96 and \( s \) is the estimated standard deviation.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher and her research assistant administered the questionnaire (Appendix D) to the respondents. They gathered the couples from each church in a specific hall and gave each of them the questionnaire to fill in. The researcher clarified questions that were not clear to the respondents. After each participant filled his or her questionnaire, the researcher collected all of them and checked through for completion before releasing the participants.

3.5.1 Site Entry

Site entry refers to the method used to access the research area and research participants (Creswell, 2014). This researcher obtained an introduction letter (Appendix A), from USIU introducing her to the Moderator in charge of the Milimani South Presbytery and the church leadership. The researcher also obtained verbal permission from the moderator authorizing her to gather information from couples in the seven Parishes in Milimani South, Presbytery.

3.5.2 Research Instrument

The research questionnaire had three parts, section one has the four (4) demographic questions, section two has two (2) questions capturing premarital counseling and section three is the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) consisting of fourteen (14) items. For each composite index, several statements are designed, each related to a particular
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research question: Items 1 – 6 were used to collect data in response to research question one: How do premarital counseling programs affect communication among couples in Nairobi County? Item 7 – 10 were used to collect data in response to research question two: How do premarital counseling programs affect satisfaction among couples in Nairobi County? Items 12 and 14 were used to gather data in response to research question three: How do premarital counseling programs affect financial management among couples in Nairobi County? Items 11 and 13 were used to gather data in response to research question four: How do premarital counseling programs affect personality development among couples in Nairobi County? The total score was used to gather data in response to research question five: How do premarital counseling programs affect overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi County?

The RDAS was developed using the thirty-two (32) items of the original dyadic adjustment scale (DAS) form invented by Spanier in (1976). He defined adjustment as a process whose consequences can be identified with the rate of couples’ problematic conflicts, interpersonal tensions, individual anxiety, marital satisfaction, coherence integrity and collaboration about marital important problems (Sharply & Cross 1982, Busby et al., 1995). A study by Busby et al (1995) improved the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) because there were problems with some of the subscale and individual items, so that existing subscale items would measure the components of marital adjustment as defined by Spanier (1976) in a more reliable and valid way.

The RDAS has a Cronbach’s alpha (reliability) of .90. The original DAS reliability was .96, correlation with marital validity scale was .86 among married respondent and .88 among divorced respondents (Ward, 2009). Since the researcher aim was to find out how premarital counseling helps in marital stability, the scale helped to find out whether those who went through marital counseling have stable marriages.
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The RDAS was tested on an Iranian population by Isanezhad et al. (2012) and was found to be reliable. Iranian community is a collectivist population just as a Kenyan population. The scale is straightforward and can be completed easily and in a short amount of time. It can successfully differentiate between distressed and non-distressed relationships. Scoring for the RDAS is a simple process of calculating a sum of the scores for the 14 items. It gives a quick picture of different dynamics within a given relationship as well as an overall assessment of the stability of the relationship. Since marital adjustment is an interpersonal issue and items of the RDAS are focused on special and concreteness behaviours, it supposes that there is positive correlation between spouse’s marital adjustments which is assumed to be an indicator for its scale validity. The researcher employed RDAS in her study to investigate the effectiveness of marital counseling programs on marital stability among couples in Milimani South Presbytery Nairobi, County.

3.6 Ethical consideration

According to American Psychological Association (APA), ethics refers to the correct rules of conduct necessary when carrying out research. The researcher has a moral responsibility to protect research participants from harm and a duty to respect the rights and dignity of research participants. This means that they must abide by certain moral principles and rules of conduct. Ethical considerations were observed by seeking and obtaining informed consent from the participants. The researcher informed the participants that the research will be voluntary and they have a right to refuse to divulge certain information about them. They were also assured that the information they disclose would be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of the research.
3.6.1 Informed consent

The Researcher obtained the consent from participants. The participants ought to have known what research entails, its necessities, the researcher to explain what is involved in advance and obtain the informed consent of participants. Researcher abided to this by providing information on her research and the participants gave their consent. Respondent filled consent forms and an information sheet for them to participate by setting out information about the proposed study along with details about the investigator and how she can be contacted.

Participants were also given information relating to statement that participation is voluntary and that refusal to participate will not result in any consequences. The informed consent included any discomforts to the participants, Procedures involved in the research, benefits of the research, length of time they are expected to participate, right to confidentiality and the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

3.6.2 Debrief

Debriefing took place thereafter. According to Harris (1998) the main purpose of debriefing is to eliminate any misconceptions and anxiety the participants may have about the research hence leave them with a sense of respect, dignity and knowledge. The aim of the debriefing is not just to provide information, but to help the participants leave the experimental situation in a similar frame of mind as when they entered it (Aronson, 1988). Therefore, the researcher discussed the procedure with the participants in order to give them a general idea of what the research was investigating about and why.
3.6.3 Protection of Participants

The researcher ensured that participants will not be distressed during the research by explaining the research process to them. Researcher ensured that the participants are not offended, frightened or embarrassed. Participants were not exposed to risks and were free to contact the researcher in case of any distress when the research was being done. The researcher sought approval of current study from USIU institution review board (IRB) Appendix B. The IRB reviewed the research because it involved human participant in order to protect and respects the rights and welfare of human subject’s. The researcher was then given an introduction letter to take to the churches that she was to do the research (Appendix C).

3.6.4 Deception

Deception is providing inaccurate information or not completely informing the participants the true nature of the research. The researcher explained the objectives and the purpose of the research before issuing the questionnaire. Any question that arose from the participants was answered accordingly.

3.6.5 Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a key ethical issue that every researcher must address. This researcher provided safeguards to the rights and interests of the respondents. (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The participants did not write their names in the questionnaire and their responses and discussions regarding the questions remained confidential and anonymous. Data from this research was reported only as a collective combined total, never individually. Each participant filled his or her own questionnaire including couples who
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were together during the survey. Information obtained from participants was treated with confidentiality and only for academic purposes.

3.6.6 Withdrawal rights

Participants were told at the start of the study that they have the right to withdraw and are entitled to leave at any time if they felt uncomfortable. They were also allowed to withdraw their consent and were not coerced into giving any information. Even at the end of the study, the participant had a final opportunity to withdraw consent as to data provided for the research.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Analysis of data is a process of transforming data into useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision making (Creswell, 2014). This study gathered quantitative data which only makes sense numerically; hence, this study used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program to analyze the data.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section was the demographic section. The first questions asked the gender of the respondent’s, options were either male or female. The second question asked the age of the respondent, the range was 18-24 years, second range 25-35 years, third range 36-45 years, fourth range 46-60 years and last range was above 60 years. Third question asked the number of years the respondent has been registered as member of the church. The first range was 0 years, which indicated they are not members, second range was 1-5, third was 6-10, fourth 11-16 and fifth was 16 years and above. The research involved only those who are member of Milimani presbytery. Question four asked the respondent the number of years they have been married. The first range was 1-5, second range 6-10, third range was 11-15 and last range 16 years and above. The research involved only those who are married for ten years and
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below. The fifth question asked the respondent the number of pre-marital sessions they went through, it ranged from 0 session, second range 1-5 sessions, third range 6-10 sessions, fourth range 11-16 and fifth was above 16 sessions. Question six asked the number of weeks before the wedding premarital sessions was done. The first range was 1-week; second range 2 weeks, third range 3 weeks, fourth range 1 month and the fifth range over 1 month.

Section three was Reversed Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) grouped in subscale and had fourteen questions refer appendix A.

Dependent variable marital stability was answered by the total score. In this study, several statistical methods were used to analyze the data collected. These include descriptive statistics, means, standard deviations and analysis of variance. The researcher used the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale.

3.8 Chapter Summary

The research design was a quantitative descriptive survey. The target population in this study was young couples who have been married for ten (10) years and below and are members of the sixteen (16) churches in Milimani South Presbytery in Nairobi County. A sample of 105 respondents was picked from ten churches in Milimani South Presbytery. Data was collected using questionnaires and the research instrument was the Reversed Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS). The researcher considered ethical issues required for study according to American Psychological Association (APA). The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Chapter four will highlight the results and findings.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory study on the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on stability of marriages among married persons in ten churches in Milimani South Presbytery, Nairobi County. The respondents were young couples who have been married for ten (10) years and below and are members of Milimani South Presbytery. The churches included were PCEA Satellite, Tumaini, Mutuini, Karinde, Ugooci, Mugumoini, Langata, Nairobi West, Karen and Githima with a view of improving premarital counseling practices in Kenya. This aim was accomplished by conducting a survey at 10 churches in the month of April, May and June 2017.

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected. The data was analysed, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A report indicating summary data such as mean, standard deviation and percentage between variables is given in this chapter. To establish the relationships between variables, frequencies, correlations and measurement of analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were utilised.

The objectives of the study were to examine how premarital counseling programs affect communication among couples in Nairobi county, to examine how premarital counseling programs affect satisfaction among couples in Nairobi county, to examine how premarital counseling programs affect financial management among couples in Nairobi county, to examine how premarital counseling programs affect personality development among couples in Nairobi county and to examine how premarital counseling programs affect overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi county.
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

The researcher collected data from the respondents using a structured questionnaire, which had three sections: Demographic data, premarital counseling sessions’ data and the Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) consisting of fourteen (14) items.

4.2 General Information

The demographic data collected included gender, age, number of years in marriage and number of years of membership in the church which may influence the marital stability.

4.2.1 Respondents’ gender

From the data collected, 43% ($n = 46$) of the respondents were males and 57% ($n = 59$) were female. The results are as illustrated in the figure 4.1 below.

![Figure 4.1: Gender of participants](image-url)
4.2.2 Respondents’ age

The age of participants ranged from 18 to 45 years. Participants were 5 men and 9 women aged 18 to 24 years, 31 men and 46 women aged 25 to 35 years and 10 men and 4 women aged 36 to 45 years. Thus, the majority (73.33%) of the respondents were of age 25-35 years as shown in the figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2: Comparison of age between male and female respondents
4.2.3 Respondents’ marriage duration

Respondent’s duration of marriage was between 1 and 10 years. Participants married 1 to 5 years included 25 men and 29 women while those married 6 to 10 years included 21 men and 30 women as shown in figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Comparison of years married between male and female respondents
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4.2.4 Respondents’ church membership

Majority (91.42%) of the participants had been registered members of their churches these include 40 men and 56 women. Those not registered were 6 men and 3 women as shown in the figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4: Comparison of years of church registration between male and female respondents

4.2.5 Respondents’ premarital counseling

The participants attended premarital counseling programs ranging from 1 to 4 weeks before their wedding. 6 respondents attended the program 1 week before the wedding, 59 respondents attended the program 2 weeks before the wedding, 18 respondents attended the program 3 weeks before the wedding and 5 respondents attended the program 4 weeks before the wedding. However, 17 respondents did not attend premarital counseling.
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Majority of the respondents attended between 1 and 5 premarital counseling sessions and two weeks before the wedding as illustrated in figure 4.5 below.

![Comparison of weeks before wedding and number of premarital counseling sessions](image)

Figure 4.5: Comparison of weeks before wedding and number of premarital counseling sessions

**4.2.6 Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) Scores**

The participants filled the 14 item RDAS questionnaire with scores ranging from 0 to 5 per item and a maximum total score of 69. Scoring of the RDAS involves calculating a sum of the scores for the 14 items.

Table 4.1 indicates the participants’ means and standard deviations of the RDAS and its subscales and also the cut off scores per subscale.
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The participants’ RDAS scores ranged from 22 to 67. To distinguish between distress and non-distress in couples, a cut off score of 48 out of 69 was used. Majority of the couples (57.14%) were non-distressed.

Table 4.1

*Summary scores and standard deviations for the Revised Dyadic Adjustment scale and its subscales, by Level of Distress*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of distress</th>
<th>Cut off scores</th>
<th>Non-distressed</th>
<th>Distressed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus subscale score</td>
<td>22/30</td>
<td>25.27</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>19.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction subscale score</td>
<td>14/20</td>
<td>15.93</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>11.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Finance management)</td>
<td>6/10</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Personality development)</td>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>4.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDAS Total</td>
<td>48/69</td>
<td>55.58</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ N \quad 60 \quad 45 \quad 105 \]

\[ % \quad 57.14 \quad 42.86 \quad 100 \]

A comparison was made between RDAS scores and the number of premarital sessions attended. The summary of the results is given in table 4.2.
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

Table 4.2

*Summary scores and standard deviations for the Revised Dyadic Adjustment scale and its subscales, by number of premarital counseling sessions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of premarital counseling sessions</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1 – 5</th>
<th>6 – 10</th>
<th>11+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Communication)</td>
<td>21.53</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction subscale</td>
<td>11.88</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Finance management)</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDAS TOTAL</td>
<td>46.24</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td>48.63</td>
<td>9.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>16.19</td>
<td>43.81</td>
<td>35.24</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison was made between RDAS scores and the timing, before the wedding, of premarital sessions. The sample size for this comparison was 88 since the participants who did not attend premarital counseling sessions were not included. The summary of the results is given in table 4.3.
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

Table 4.3

Summary scores and standard deviations for the Revised Dyadic Adjustment scale and its subscales, by weeks before wedding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of weeks before wedding</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus subscale</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>5.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Communication)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction subscale</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>14.32</td>
<td>3.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>6.69</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Finance management)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Personality development)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDAS Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>48.78</td>
<td>10.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>59</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>67.05</td>
<td>20.45</td>
<td>5.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3 Effect of premarital counseling programs on communication

Items 1 – 6, referred to as the Dyadic Consensus subscale, provided information about the couples’ communication level.

In this study, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether RDAS scores among couples in Nairobi county were influenced by premarital counseling. There was a statistically significant difference at p < 0.1 significance level in Dyadic Consensus
subscale scores between the four groups (p = 0.0643) based on the number of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4

One-Way Analysis of Variance of RDAS Scores by Number of premarital counseling sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RDAS Scores</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Communication)</td>
<td>177.83</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>59.28</td>
<td>2.493</td>
<td>0.0643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction subscale</td>
<td>122.42</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40.81</td>
<td>2.874</td>
<td>0.0399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Finance management)</td>
<td>21.77</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.25</td>
<td>0.855</td>
<td>0.4674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Personality development)</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.125</td>
<td>0.945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDAS Total</td>
<td>481.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>160.4</td>
<td>1.765</td>
<td>0.1587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Post hoc comparisons are done using Least Significant Difference (LSD) test which is more preferable than other methods like Tukey and Bonferroni tests since it prevents the likelihood of making a Type 1 error, which is the incorrect rejection of a true null hypothesis (Kim, 2015). The outcome of the LSD test shown in table 4.5 indicated that the Dyadic Consensus (Communication) subscale mean score for respondents who did not attend premarital counseling sessions (M= 21.53, SD= 5.01) was significantly different from the respondents who attended 6 to 10 sessions (M= 24.27, SD= 4.46) and more than ten sessions (M= 29.14, SD= 6.23). Also, the Dyadic Consensus (Communication) subscale mean score for respondents who attended 6 to 10 sessions (M= 24.27, SD= 4.46) was significantly different from the respondents who attended more than ten sessions (M=
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29.14, SD= 6.23). However, there was no significant difference between the Dyadic Consensus (Communication) subscale mean score for respondents who did not attend premarital counseling sessions (M= 21.53, SD= 5.01) and respondents who attended 1 to 5 sessions (M= 22.26, SD= 5).

Table 4.5

Post Hoc Analysis of Number of premarital counseling on Dyadic Communication subscale score

Multiple Comparisons using LSD (Least significant Difference) Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Number of sessions</th>
<th>(J)Number of sessions</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>90% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>-0.731</td>
<td>1.384</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-3.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>-2.741*</td>
<td>1.429</td>
<td><strong>0.058</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-5.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>-14.490*</td>
<td>2.481</td>
<td><strong>0.003</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.731</td>
<td>1.384</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>-2.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>-2.009*</td>
<td>1.077</td>
<td><strong>0.065</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-4.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>-6.880*</td>
<td>2.296</td>
<td><strong>0.021</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-1.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.741*</td>
<td>1.429</td>
<td><strong>0.058</strong></td>
<td>-0.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>2.009*</td>
<td>1.077</td>
<td><strong>0.065</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>-4.870*</td>
<td>2.323</td>
<td><strong>0.039</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-9.479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11+</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.490*</td>
<td>2.481</td>
<td><strong>0.003</strong></td>
<td>-7.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>6.880*</td>
<td>2.296</td>
<td><strong>0.021</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-7.416</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>4.870*</td>
<td>2.323</td>
<td><strong>0.039</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-9.479</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.1 level.
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Additionally, there was no statistically significant difference in Dyadic Consensus subscale scores between the four groups (p= 0.2826) based on the number of weeks before the wedding of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6

One-Way Analysis of Variance of RDAS Scores by Number of weeks before the wedding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RDAS Scores</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Consensus subscale</td>
<td>94.75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.58</td>
<td>1.292</td>
<td>0.2826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Satisfaction subscale</td>
<td>34.78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>0.933</td>
<td>0.4284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td>56.04</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18.68</td>
<td>2.266</td>
<td>0.0868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Finance management)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyadic Cohesion subscale</td>
<td>20.47</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>2.326</td>
<td>0.0805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Personality development)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDAS Total</td>
<td>632.46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>210.82</td>
<td>2.436</td>
<td>0.0704</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Effect of premarital counseling programs on marital satisfaction

Items 7 – 10, referred to as the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale, provided information about the couples’ level of satisfaction.

Analysis of variance showed a statistically significant difference at the p < 0.05 level in Dyadic Satisfaction subscale scores between the four groups: F (3, 101) = 2.874, p= 0.0399 based on the number of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.4.

Post hoc comparisons are done using Least Significant Difference (LSD) test which is more preferable than other methods like Tukey and Bonferroni tests since it prevents the likelihood of making a Type 1 error, which is the incorrect rejection of a true null hypothesis (Kim, 2015). The outcome of the LSD test shown in Table 4.8 indicated that the Dyadic Satisfaction subscale mean score for respondents who attended 1 to 5 sessions (M=
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14.7, SD= 3.34) and 6 to 10 sessions (M= 14.78, SD= 3.87) were significantly different from those who did not attend premarital counseling sessions (M= 11.88, SD= 4.81). We can be 95% confident that the true differences between these means are CI = [0.69, 4.93] and CI = [0.71, 5.09] respectively.

Table 4.7

*Post Hoc Analysis of Number of premarital counseling on Dyadic Satisfaction subscale score*

Multiple Comparisons using LSD (Least significant Difference) Method

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: Dyadic Satisfaction subscale score</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) Number of sessions</td>
<td>(J) Number of sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>-2.813*</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td>0.0099</td>
<td>-4.93</td>
<td>-0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>-2.901*</td>
<td>1.104</td>
<td>0.0099</td>
<td>-5.09</td>
<td>-0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11+</td>
<td>-1.118</td>
<td>1.917</td>
<td>0.5611</td>
<td>-4.92</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>-2.813*</td>
<td>1.069</td>
<td><strong>0.0099</strong></td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>4.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>-0.088</td>
<td>0.832</td>
<td>0.9159</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11+</td>
<td>1.696</td>
<td>1.774</td>
<td>0.3415</td>
<td>-1.82</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1-5</strong></td>
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<td>0.832</td>
<td>0.9159</td>
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<td>1.784</td>
<td>1.795</td>
<td>0.3228</td>
<td>-1.78</td>
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<td>1.917</td>
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<td>1.795</td>
<td>0.3228</td>
<td>-5.35</td>
<td>1.78</td>
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</table>

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

An additional analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in Dyadic Satisfaction subscale scores between the four groups (p = 0.0643) based on the timing of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.6.

4.5 Effect of premarital counseling programs on finance management

Item 12 which asked the respondent whether they have a stimulating exchange of ideas and item 14 which asked the respondent whether they calmly discuss things together provided information about the couples’ finance management.

Analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Finance management) scores between the four groups (p = 0.4674) based on the number of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.4.

Analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Finance management) scores between the four groups (p = 0.0868) based on the timing of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.6. The p value tends towards significance since the sample of respondents who attended premarital counseling from 4 weeks was small compared to the other groups as shown in figure 4.5.

4.6 Effect of premarital counseling programs on personality development

Items 11 which asked the respondent whether they engage as a couple in outside interest together and item 13 which asked the respondent whether they work together on a project provided information about the couples’ personality development.

Analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Personality development) scores between the four groups (p = 0.945) based on the number of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.4.

Analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in Dyadic Cohesion subscale (Personality development) scores between the four groups (p = 0.0805) based on the timing of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.6. The p
value tends towards significance since the sample of respondents who attended premarital counseling from 4 weeks was small compared to the other groups as shown in figure 4.5.

4.7 Effect of premarital counseling programs on overall marital stability

The sum of all the 14 items, referred to as the RDAS total scores, provided information about the couples’ overall marital stability.

Analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in RDAS total scores between the four groups (p = 0.1587) based on the number of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.4.

Analysis of variance showed there was no statistically significant difference in RDAS total scores between the four groups (p = 0.0704) based on the timing of premarital counseling sessions as shown in table 4.6. The p value tends towards significance since the sample of respondents who attended premarital counseling from 4 weeks was small compared to the other groups as shown in figure 4.5.

4.8 Chapter summary

The analysis and interpretation done using various statistical tools in SPSS are discussed in detail in this chapter. The broad objective of the present research is to find out whether premarital counseling programs are effective in improving marital stability or not. The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between the number of premarital counseling sessions and the couples’ level of communication and satisfaction. However, the analysis of variance revealed no significant differences in finance management and personality development between the samples of respondents who went through premarital counseling and those who did not go through premarital counseling. An additional analysis of variance revealed no significant differences between the samples of respondents who went through premarital counseling at different times before their wedding. However, the p value showed a trend towards significance since the sample of respondents who attended
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

premarital counseling from 4 weeks was small compared to the other groups. The next chapter presents the summaries, discussions of findings, conclusions and recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a critical review and comparison of the results of the study with the literature review is done. An explanation of similarity or differences with empirical studies is expected. The broad conclusions based on the research objectives, analysis done and the results obtained are also mentioned in this chapter. Finally, recommendations for improvement and further research are also presented.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The objectives of the study were to examine how premarital counseling programs affect communication among couples in Nairobi county, to examine how premarital counseling programs affect satisfaction among couples in Nairobi county, to examine how premarital counseling programs affect financial management among couples in Nairobi county, to examine how premarital counseling programs affect personality development among couples in Nairobi county and to examine how premarital counseling programs affect overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi county.

The researcher collected data from the respondents using a structured questionnaire, which sought Demographic data, premarital counseling sessions’ data and the scores from Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) consisting of fourteen (14) items. The participants’ RDAS scores ranged from 22 to 67. To distinguish between distress and non-distress in couples, a cut off score of 48 out of 69 was used. Majority of the couples (57.14%) were non-distressed.
The data was analysed, using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). A report indicating summary data such as mean, standard deviation and percentage between variables is given in this chapter. To establish the relationships between variables, frequencies and measurement of analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were utilised.

From the analysis, there is a significant relationship between the number of premarital counseling sessions and the couples’ level of communication. Post hoc comparisons using LSD indicated that the communication level for respondents who attended at least 6 premarital counseling sessions was higher than those who did not attend premarital counseling sessions. This implies that the respondents who attended 1 to 5 premarital counseling sessions did not have significantly higher levels of communication compared to the respondents who did not attend premarital counseling sessions.

The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between the number of premarital counseling sessions and the couples’ level of satisfaction. Post hoc comparisons using LSD indicated that the level of satisfaction for respondents who attended 1 to 5 sessions was higher than those who did not attend premarital counseling sessions. Also, the level of satisfaction for respondents who attended 6 to 10 sessions was significantly higher than those who did not attend premarital counseling sessions.

The analysis of variance revealed no significant differences in finance management and personality development between the samples of respondents who went through premarital counseling and those who did not go through premarital counseling.

An additional analysis of variance revealed no significant difference between the sample of respondents who went through premarital counseling from one week before the wedding and the sample of respondents who went through premarital counseling from
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

one month before the wedding. This implies that the couples from each sample has the same RDAS scores.

5.3 Discussion of Results

5.3.1 Premarital counseling and communication

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that there is a significant difference in communication level between the sample respondents who went through at least 6 premarital counseling sessions and the sample of respondents who did not go through premarital counseling sessions. However, the sample of respondents who went through fewer, 1 to 5, premarital counseling sessions was not significantly different from the sample of respondents who did not go through premarital counseling sessions in terms of communication. The sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one month before the wedding was not significantly different from the sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one week before the wedding in terms of communication. Blanchard et al., (2009) differs with our study by highlighting that relationships are improved after five to six sessions of a communication-based skills program.

5.3.2 Premarital counseling and marital satisfaction

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the sample of respondents who went through premarital counseling was significantly more satisfied than the sample of respondents who did not go through premarital counseling. There is a significant relationship between premarital counseling and marriage satisfaction. One trend was found suggesting that participants who did receive premarital counseling were more likely to rate their satisfaction with their marriage more highly than those who did not receive premarital counseling. Increasing the number of premarital counseling sessions
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

among the participants was effective in improving marital satisfaction because more issues were addressed.

The timing of the premarital counseling for the sample did not influence marital satisfaction. In other words, the sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one month before the wedding did not have different levels of satisfaction compared to the sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one week before the wedding. Futris et al. (2011) cited that, couples who participate in premarital counseling experience greater level of marital satisfaction and are unlikely to get divorced.

5.3.3 Premarital counseling and personality development

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the sample of respondents who went through fewer premarital counseling sessions was not significantly different from the sample of respondents who went through more premarital counseling sessions in terms of personality development. The sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one month before the wedding was not significantly different from the sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one week before the wedding in terms of personality development. Awareness of personality type done in premarital counseling helps one understand themselves and how they react to issues. It also helps a couple become aware of the dynamics of their weaknesses and strengths (Karina, 2011). A person’s family of origin is the foundational piece of who they are according to Duba et al (2012). Very often families have rules, expectations, patterns, taboos and protocols that even family members are not aware of. Premarital counseling includes conversations about family’s unique upbringing. Even though couples usually try to avoid the negative cycles they have experienced in their own families, the effect is usually felt. Anxiety, depression, anger, fear and recurrent relationship problems are often tied up in unresolved issues from the past. However, premarital counseling help couples with skills
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County
to deal with their old wounds and successfully re-adjust their lens on life. Thus, more
premarital counseling sessions enable couples to improve their self-awareness.

5.3.4 Premarital counseling and finance management

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the sample of respondents who went through fewer premarital counseling sessions was not significantly different from the sample of respondents who went through more premarital counseling sessions in terms of finance management. The sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one month before the wedding was not significantly different from the sample of respondents that received premarital counseling from one week before the wedding in terms of finance management. Karina (2011) highlights that most couples find it harder to talk about money than intimacy. Hence, there is a significant relationship between finance and happily married couples thus the importance of talking about it during premarital counseling. According to Falconier and Epstein (2011), there are clinical guidelines for working with couples about financial issues. In premarital counseling, couples are helped to deal with financial quagmire during courtship. Issues addressed include budgeting, investing, saving, banking and lending, financial goals, debt, and setting a joint budget among other topics which commonly result in financial stress and tension. Studies show that most marital disputes are related in some way to finances. Taking control of one’s financial situation can help reduce the anxiety of not knowing whether one has the money or not. It is important to have a sense of control over money, rather than letting money have control over you. Budgeting will help couples build assets thus improves their quality of life (Marang’a, 2013). Thus, more premarital counseling sessions will enable couples to cover more topics in finance management.

5.3.5 Premarital counseling and overall marital stability
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

This implies that, based on the sample, an increase in the number of premarital sessions succeeds in improving the level of marital satisfaction but fails to address communication, finance management and personality development and hence it fails to address overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi County.

Therefore, the timing of premarital counseling, based on the sample, did not influence the satisfaction, communication, finance management, personality development and hence it did not influence overall marital stability among couples in Nairobi County. The summaries indicate that respondents who did not go through premarital counseling had overall marital distress.

The current study’s findings are consistent with the findings of Kirk (2002) and Hanza & Segrin (2008) whose findings suggested that premarital counseling is associated with marital stability. Pre-marital counseling significantly influences marital stability to couples who go through it, there is positive relationship between premarital counseling and marital stability. Lavner et al. (2012) found that many couples with high satisfaction maintained stable marriages over the years, but less-satisfied couples during their first six months tended to decline quickly after the early part of marriage.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 Premarital counseling and communication

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the number and timing of premarital counseling sessions among the participants was not effective in improving communication. Relationships are improved after five to six sessions of a communication-based skills program. Healthy communication is one of the characteristics of a stable marriage and family. Couples have differences and conflicts, but if they speak
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

directly and honestly about them without blaming each other, their relationship is likely to remain intact.

5.4.2 Premarital counseling and marital satisfaction

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that increasing the number of premarital counseling sessions among the participants was effective in improving marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction is the individual happiness with marriage that depends on intra-personal concepts. Often religion serves as a great resource for couples to achieve marital satisfaction. Premarital counseling improves marital satisfaction as it increases one’s commitment to his or her spouse which is associated with lower rate of divorce.

5.4.3 Premarital counseling and personality development

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the number and timing of premarital counseling sessions among the participants was not effective in improving personality development. Awareness of personality type done in premarital counseling helps one understand themselves and how they react to issues. It also helps a couple become aware of the dynamics of their weaknesses and strengths.

5.4.4 Premarital counseling and finance management

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the number and timing of premarital counseling sessions among the participants was not effective in improving finance management. Marital disputes are related in some way to finances. Taking control of one’s financial situation can help reduce the anxiety of not knowing whether one has the money or not. It is important to have a sense of control over money, rather than letting money have control over you. Budgeting will help couples build assets thus improves their quality of life.

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5.4.5 Premarital counseling and overall marital stability

In the current study, a one-way analysis of variance showed that the number and timing of premarital counseling sessions among the participants was not effective in improving marital stability despite the fact that there was evidence that participants were satisfied. Premarital counseling is associated with marital stability. Pre-marital counseling significantly influences marital stability to couples who go through it, there is positive relationship between premarital counseling and marital stability. Many couples with high satisfaction maintained stable marriages over the years, but less-satisfied couples during their first six months tended to decline quickly after the early part of marriage.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Suggestions for Improvements

5.5.1.1 Improvements in communication

The content in premarital counseling could include communication interventions that effectively strengthen emotional bonds by helping couples forgive and reconcile offenses (Fincham et al., 2005). At least five to six sessions of communication-based skills training should be provided during premarital counseling in order to improve communication in relationships (Blanchard et al., 2009).

5.5.1.2 Improvements in marital satisfaction

Premarital counseling is an effective way to increase marital satisfaction. Awareness should be created among couples about the impact premarital counseling has on marital satisfaction in order to increase participation.

5.5.1.3 Improvements in personality development

Personality issues play a major role in behaviour. However, many people suppress them during the courtship period and they resurface after marriage. Spouses may wonder
what happened to the person they fell in love with after they become the person they hate as the passion of love turns to passion of hate (Karina, 2011). They should be addressed during premarital counseling.

5.5.1.4 Improvements in finance management

Topics on money issues can be addressed during premarital counseling. Money is one of the most significant areas of potential conflict in marriage and is consistently reasons for divorce.

5.5.1.5 Improvements in overall marital stability

Premarital counseling should begin at childhood before one enters a committed relationship. The goal would be to enable the participants understand spouse selections and how to go through courtship. Further counseling should be done six months before the wedding to enable the couple to have ample time to organise for their wedding. The premarital sessions should be at least twenty in order to cover all the content required in communication, satisfaction, personality issues and finances in order to make marriages stable. Since premarital counseling is done by pastors, there is need to recruit and train them or involve professional counselors. There is also a need to sensitize the congregations on what premarital counseling is all about.

5.5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Several specific issues emerged as the study progressed that require further investigation. The first one is to establish the content covered in premarital counseling with regards to communication.

Secondly, this study was taken at one point in time. Fluctuations occur in marriage relationships and the level of marriage satisfaction might fluctuate to some degree as marriages often experience ups and downs as stress and changes occur in life. Longitudinal
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studies may be conducted on couples at several time points between the premarital period and ten years after marriage.

Thirdly, there is need to investigate whether ones’ personality changes after marriage or remains constant.

Fourthly, research should be done to establish whether there is a significant relationship between finance and happiness among couples.

Lastly, the impact of attending premarital counseling before courtship should be investigated.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study highlighting the research methodology and the findings based on the research questions. It also provides a critical review and comparison of the results with the literature review. Finally, conclusions and recommendations for improvement and further research have been highlighted.
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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

I am Monicah Watiri Kariuki, a counseling psychology student in the United States of America University (USIU). I am requesting for your participation in writing this Thesis on the: Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi county. The questionnaire has 19 items. Carefully read every item in every section and choose only one option out of the five-point Likert scale (strongly agrees; agree; not sure; disagree and strongly disagree).

Appropriately mark (√) the choice that best describes your opinion. I assure you full confidentiality. All responses will only be used for academic purposes.

Section One: Respondents’ demographic information:

1. Your gender
   - male
   - female

2. Your age (years):
   - 18-24
   - 25-35
   - 36-45
   - 46-60
   - over 60

3. The number of years you have been a registered member of a church
   - 0
   - 1-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 16 and above

4. The number of years you have been married
   - 1-5
   - 6-10
   - 11-15
   - 16 and above
Section Two: Premarital counseling

1. The number of premarital sessions you went through
   0  □  1-5 □  6-10 □  10-15 □  16 and above □

2. The number of weeks before the wedding, premarital sessions was done. 1 week
   2 weeks □  3 weeks □  1 month □  over 1 month □

3. The number of years you have been married
   1-5 □  6-10 □  11-15 □  16 and above □
Section Three

Section three is the Reversed Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS).

Most people have disagreements in their relationships. Please appropriately (mark ✓) the extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always agree (5)</th>
<th>Almost always agree (4)</th>
<th>Occasionally Agree (3)</th>
<th>Frequently disagree (2)</th>
<th>Almost always disagree (1)</th>
<th>Always disagree (0)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>2. Demonstrations of affection</td>
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<td>3. Making major decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Sex relations</td>
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<td>5. Conventionality (Correct or Proper-behaviour)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>6. Career decisions</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>All the Time</th>
<th>Most of the time</th>
<th>More often than not</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. How often do you discuss or have you considered divorce, separation, or terminating your Relationship?</td>
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<td>8. How often do you and your partner quarrel?</td>
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<td>9. Do you ever regret that you married (or lived together)?</td>
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<td>10. How often do you and your mate &quot;get on each other's nerves&quot;?</td>
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Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Every day</th>
<th>Almost every day</th>
<th>Occasionally</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>(0)</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(3)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>(1)</th>
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<tr>
<td>11. Do you and your mate engage in outside interest together</td>
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</table>

** Appropriately (mark ✓) How often would you say the following events occur between you and your spouse?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never (0)</th>
<th>Less than once in a month (1)</th>
<th>Once or twice a month (2)</th>
<th>Once or twice a week (3)</th>
<th>Once a day (4)</th>
<th>More often (5)</th>
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<tr>
<td>12. Have a stimulating exchange of ideas</td>
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<td>13. Work together on a project</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Calmly discuss something</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX B

RESEARCH APPROVAL

6th June 2017,
Monicah Watiri Kariuki,
A Graduate student at USIU-Africa

Dear Monicah,

IRB-RESEARCH APPROVAL

The USIU-Africa IRB has reviewed and granted ethical approval for the research proposal titled “Effectiveness of Premarital Counseling Programs on Marital Stability among Selected Couples in Nairobi County”. The approval is for six months from the date of IRB. Please submit a completed copy of the study to the IRB office, soft copy is acceptable.

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

Should you or study participants have any queries regarding IRB’s consideration of this project, please contact irb@usiu.ac.ke.

Sincerely,

Prof. Damary Sikalieh,
Chair | IRB | USIU-Africa,
dsikalieh@usiu.ac.ke
Office 0730116112.

CC: Research Office
Effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County

APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTION LETTER

2nd May 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH INTRODUCTION LETTER – MONICAH WATIRI KARIUKI

This is to confirm that Monicah Watiri Kariuki Student ID No. 648561 is a Student at United States International University (USIU) – Africa, pursuing a Graduate Degree program in counselling Psychology.

Ms Watiri is currently conducting a Research Thesis titled: ‘Effectiveness of Premarital Counselling Programs on Marital Stability among Selected Couples in Nairobi County’ which is in partial fulfilment of the requirement to qualify for graduation.

Kindly, accord her the desired assistance and please, note that any information provided will be treated with confidentiality and at no instance will it be used for any other purpose, other than for this Research Thesis.

For further information, please contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

Francis W. Wambalaba, Ph.D., AICP
Associate Deputy Vice Chancellor Academics-Research
United States International University
P.O. Box 14634, Nairobi, Kenya. 00800
fwambalaba@usiu.ac.ke
PH. +254 20 3606442
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR YOUNG COUPLES IN MILIMANI SOUTH PRESBYTERY

Dear Participant,

My name is Monica Watiri Kariuki. I am a final year student at United State of America University (USIU). I am currently conducting a research on the effectiveness of premarital Counseling Programs on Marital Stability among Couples in Milimani South Presbytery, Nairobi County

You are invited to be in a research study as possible participant because you got married between 2007 and 2017 and your wedding was officiated in a church and you participated in a premarital education program. We ask that you read the form and ask any question you may have before you agree to be in the study.

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of marital fulfilment, commitment, opinion regarding the benefit of premarital program and whether there is correlation in formal premarital education program and the effectiveness of marital stability.

The study has minimal risk for participating however should anyone view your answer as you provide your response, they would have knowledge of your view regarding marital
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satisfaction of which is personal. Should you be experiencing distress in your marriage by completing the brief survey and should it cause anxiety, feel free to contact me.

There is no direct benefit to you for participating other than helping to provide data for my research that will enable me complete my thesis. There is always a chance that your participation may benefit those yet to be married by illuminating the benefit of formal premarital counseling.

You will not receive any compensation for any kind of your participation

We ask that you read the form and ask any question you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, or do not participate in any question. The present research is endorsed by USIU Institutional Review Board. There are no known risks to participation beyond those encountered in everyday life.

Your responses and discussions regarding the questions will remain confidential and anonymous. Data from this research will be reported only as a collective combined total, never individually.

If you agree to participate in this research, please respond as accurately and as honest as possible and answer the nineteen (19) questions. The activity should take approximately fifteen (15) minutes.
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If you have any questions about this project, feel free to contact me on:

Monicah Watiri Kariuki

P.O Box 0505-21257


elimmarriagemissions@gmail.com

0722-658580

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavour.
APPENDIX E

DEBRIEF FORM

Dear Participant:

Thank you for participating in the following research.

Your participation will help the researcher gain more insight into the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability among couples in Milimani South Presbytery, Nairobi County.

In the event you have any concern regarding the questions presented to you in this study, you may want to seek clarification for support or discussion with me or my research assistance. You may contact me on phone or email noted below.

Once again, thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Monicah Watiri Kariuki (Masters counseling psychology)

elimmarriagemissions@gmail.com

0722-658480
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APPENDIX F

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Monicah Watiri Kariuki is a wife, mother and a grandmother to one doting granddaughter. She is the founder of Elim ministry that equips marriage and families on income generating activities and organising seminars to empower them. She is a practising Counseling Psychologist dealing with marriage and family. Her mission is to teach and equip family and marriages both in church and community so that believers can live a victorious life. Her passion is to see marriages working and to see families staying together in harmony.

She is a born again Christian, a member of PCEA church Riruta parish where she is a deacon and gives motivational talk on family and marriage

She is also a director at Motor Rank Enterprises Limited, a family business

She holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Counseling Psychology from African International University(AIU) and currently pursuing a Master in Counseling Psychology (MA) from United State of America University-Africa