

EFFECTS OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING ON MARITAL SUCCESS AMONG
COUPLES IN KASARANI DIVISION, NAIROBI

BY

PASCHALLINE V. WANJIKU WAITITU

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

Waititu, Paschalline, V. Wanjiku
MFT/0482/15

Date: -----

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as Supervisor

Dr. Esther Marima
Pan-African Christian University

Date: -----

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DEDICATION

To my children Steve Waititu, Audrey Waititu, Nguri Waititu and Ruth Nguri, my grandchildren, Njuguna Waititu, Wanjiku Waititu, Njuguna Nguri and Wanjiku Nguri. Before you came to my life, life was uninteresting and not very meaningful. I used to wonder what I might accomplish. You have all motivated me tremendously. May God bless and prosper you all.

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ABSTRACT

Marital dissatisfaction affects people of all ages, races and cultural backgrounds and this often leads to divorce. Divorce can have negative implications that can last for years. Therapists, Christian religious clergy and other related professionals providing premarital and marital counseling work to resolve marital discord and improve marital satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to examine the connection between premarital counseling programs, marital success and marital satisfaction for couples. A questionnaire was used to establish whether participating couples attended pre-marital counseling, the topics that were covered during the program and the impact this has had in their marital relationship. Discussions were also held with three church leaders on the same study. The data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative analysis and the outcome of the analysis was presented in tables, figures and narrative description indicating responses by the individuals. The results show that (52%) of the participants responding to the metric on importance of showing excitement when one partner comes home strongly agreed while (40%) agreed. However, (53%) of the respondents disagreed with the second metric that they should listen when their partners are talking as compared to those who agreed at (39%). Regarding conflict resolution and management, (96%) of the participants admitted that it was dangerous for them not to deal with marital conflicts conclusively while (96%) of them agreed that it was wrong for them to criticize their partner. Regarding the effect of pre-marital counseling on marital bliss and satisfaction, bivariate correlation analysis showed that there was significant positive correlation between pre-marital counseling and marital satisfaction [$r=0.568$, $n=56$ $p<0.000$]. This means that participation in pre-marital counseling programs brings satisfaction and bliss to the couples who attend such programs. On the effect of pre-marital counseling on marital conflicts, the results show that there was negative correlation between pre-marital counseling and prevalence of marital conflicts though there was no significant difference in the means [$r = -0.120$, $n=56$ $p=0.205$]. This illustration means that the more couples participated in pre-marital counselling, the fewer marital conflicts exist between them. The study recommends that all persons preparing to get married should be encouraged to participate in premarital counseling. To achieve this vision all the service providers including churches must ensure that there is enough sensitization of young people to this effect.

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ABBREVIATIONS

APA	- American Psychological Association
KNBS	-Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MSI-R	- Marital Satisfaction Inventory Revised
NACOSTI	- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
PREP	- Premarital Preparation Program
PREP	- Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program
SPSS	- Statistical Package for Social Science
SDA	- Seventh Day Adventist

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling is therapy provided by a marriage and family therapist or a member of the clergy to help a couple prepare for marriage. Premarital counseling aims to help the couple examine unresolved issues, communicate effectively, clarify personal values and address relationship expectations to increase their chances of having a successful marriage (Tambling, 2013).

Marital Satisfaction

Baumeister and Vohs (2007) state that marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner.

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

The four horsemen of the Apocalypse is a metaphor depicting the end of times in the New Testament. They depict conquest, war, hunger, and death respectively. Gottman used this metaphor to describe communication styles that can predict the end of a relationship for a couple if not checked (Gottman, 1994).

Marital Conflict

Marital conflicts are disagreements that couples face as they relate with each other. Normally, disagreements concern values, motivations, perceptions, ideas or desires. Interpersonal conflict is associated with increased negative affect and decreased emotional well-being and has been linked to depression and social withdrawal (Sanford, 2010).

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Chapter I contains information on the background of the study and the problem that was studied. Other components in the chapter are objectives of the study, research questions, assumptions of the study and a justification for conducting the study. The researcher will also indicate significance of the study as well as the scope the study covered. Limitations and delimitations of the study have also been indicated.

Background to the Study

The purpose of marriage is unity, complimentary and oneness. However, according to Onyango (2013), in the contemporary society, the rate of marital dissatisfaction due to marital conflicts is at an alarming rate and not even the church has been spared. Premarital counseling is a type of therapy that helps couples prepare for marriage. This therapy can help ensure that marital partners have a strong, healthy relationship - giving them a better chance for a stable and satisfying marriage. It can also help the couple to identify weaknesses that could become problems during marriage. Premarital preparation aims to help the couple examine unresolved issues, communicate effectively, clarify personal values and address relationship expectations to increase their chances of having a successful marriage (Tambling, 2013). Marriage and family therapists and clergy are the main people who provide this service.

The goal of premarital counseling is predominantly to identify and address any potential areas of conflict in a relationship early, before those issues become serious concerns, and teach partners effective strategies for discussing and resolving differences. Partners seeking counseling before marriage may also find that premarital counseling can help them better understand their

expectations about marriage and address any considerable differences in a safe and neutral environment (Ceren, 2008).

Stahmann and Hiebert (1980) state that the need for premarital counseling in the church is testified to, in part, by the church's history of involvement in this particular area of counseling. The three main groups that have provided most of the premarital counseling in the past include the clergy, along with physicians and mental health workers. They continue to say that the motivation for premarital counseling in the church would seem to be both sociological—considering the large number of troubled marriages in our society, and theological—taking into account the high regard afforded the institution of marriage in the Bible. All things considered, the great potential for continued premarital counseling in the church should cause ministers and other church workers to seriously consider their role in the preparation of their engaged couples for marriage.

According to Young (2010), the importance of premarital counseling has only grown in the last several years, as people have become more aware of the complexities of marriage. He continues to say that marriage is a much more complicated venture than it was a generation or two ago as many more issues are being discussed and decided on by today's couples. Young (2010) continues to say that for previous generations, marriage was not as much a choice as it was an expectation. Previously, it was assumed that people would get married after school. If people got pregnant it was inevitable that they got married and cohabitation was known as living in sin. Marriage is now a choice people make and it is important that those making that choice are fully prepared for the responsibility that comes with it.

The problems that people who are preparing for marriage face today are much more complex than those faced by couples several years back and it is for that reason that such people

are effectively prepared for marriage so that they can be equipped with enough skills to be able to maneuver their way through any storms that they may come across.

Marriage is the oldest tradition that has ever existed on earth. God's idea for marriage was intended to be a lifetime union between man and woman for companionship. Spouses who share common faith and who are willing, ready and are committed to keep their marriage healthy benefit from mutual love, honor, respect and God's protection (Norman, 1995; SDA Church Manual, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

For the past few years, there have been rampant cases of couples divorcing and others separating. Table 1 in chapter two of this report gives figures on marriage, separation and divorce in Kenya to confirm this situation. Children suffer psychologically while husbands and wives suffer stress, depression and anxiety. It is notable that conflicts have trickled down to Christian churches in various parts of Kenya. Based on the existing literature, premarital counseling may be just what people who are preparing for marriage require to have a successful marriage and a sound relationship throughout their marital lives.

Unfortunately, there is scanty information regarding evaluation of pre-marital education and its effects on marital relationships. There are also not many studies indicating that health care providers are using the principles of Gottman during premarital counseling to encourage the couples to build sound, healthy friendships that would result in successful marriages. This may be just what pre-marital couples require to enable them to have solid and sound relationships which would result to successful marriages. This study sought to establish whether using premarital counseling involving the principles of Gottman's Sound Relationship House would help to achieve marital success at a level much higher than is currently being achieved with use

of other premarital counseling programs and this was, therefore, the research gap this study sought to fill. Gottman has done many studies involving married couples and what it takes to build sound relationships and successful marriages. Based on this background, this study sought to find out the effects current premarital counseling programs have on marriage. The results of the research will encourage churches and society at large to ensure that couples go through effective premarital counseling programs before marriage to reduce the number of divorces in society and equip couples with efficient marital conflict management and friendship nurturing skills.

Objectives of the Study

Broad Objective

The primary objective of the study was to assess the effects of pre-marital education on the health and success of the marriage.

Specific Objectives

1. To establish whether couples who have received pre-marital counseling are able to experience marital bliss more than those who did not attend pre-marital counseling.
2. To find out the role played by Premarital Counseling in success of the marriage
3. To ascertain how well married couples who attended premarital counseling are able to work out marital conflicts.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the three research questions shown below:

1. What effects does going through premarital counseling have on a couple's ability to experience marital bliss?
2. What is the role of premarital counseling in the success of the marital relationship?

3. What impact does premarital counseling have on a couple's ability to work out marital conflicts?

Assumptions of the Study

The researcher assumes that couples who have gone through a pre-marital counseling program are able to experience marital bliss and that premarital counseling plays a major role in the success of the marital relationship. It is also assumed that couples who attend premarital counseling are able to work out marital conflicts that they come across during their marital life.

Justification of the Study

According to Parker (2002), the institution of marriage has continued to face numerous marital conflicts, divorce being top in the list. Others include separation, murder, infertility, homosexuality, lesbianism and hatred. The ultimate outcome of premarital counseling is to bring about happiness, satisfaction and success within a marriage by helping prospective husbands and wives evaluate their relationship and individual backgrounds through communication. Stanley, Markman & Whitton (2002) state that proper premarital counseling and preparation enables premarital couples to learn that their marriage is very important and that the decision to get married should be carefully and thoughtfully considered since marriage has long term consequences. Research has shown that couples, who go through premarital counseling sessions, begin their marriage with tools for success. Marriage education communicates that not only does a person's marriage hold significance to them and their family, but also to the larger community around them (Stanley, et al., 2002). A premarital counseling program using Gottman principles would be an added advantage because the emphasis is on the couple building their friendship. Most partners aspire to be close to their partners.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because its results will provide researchers, scholars, health providers and young people aspiring to get married with valuable information and findings regarding the effectiveness of using appropriate pre-marital counseling programs. The results of the study will be useful to the Kenyan Society, professional service care providers, the Church and families in Nairobi and the country at large. These stake holders will be able to know what kind of impact current premarital counseling programs have on marital relationships and whether there is need to come up with more effective programs that will benefit people preparing for marriage. The study findings will also form part of the already existing Premarital Counseling literature. The research findings will also by extension be of benefit to the society at large. With proper premarital counseling programs in place, young married employees in organizations will have fewer conflicts at home which in turn will make them much more efficient in their work places. Cases of marriages being dissolved will reduce drastically.

Scope of Study

The study was conducted in Kasarani Division of Nairobi County in Kenya and it targeted couples who have been married for over two years. Kasarani area has diverse church denominations and the researcher considered this while determining the area to research on.

Limitation and Delimitation

Limitations

The participants of the study were limited to three congregations of married couples who completed the questionnaires individually. The church set up was considered for purposes of ensuring efficiency in distribution of questionnaires and collection of the same. By limiting the study to three congregations, this enabled the researcher to ensure almost 90% collection of the

questionnaires. Another limitation was that the study only focused on couples who have been married for over two (2) years. The researcher assumed that for couples married for only one year it would be too soon for them to understand what impact a premarital program would have had on their relationship. They may not be sure what could be causing them problems.

The researcher also assumed that the participants would answer the questions on the questionnaire accurately and honestly. Since the study involved completion of a questionnaire, the researcher was not able to obtain information from couples who are illiterate in terms of being unable to read and write. This study was limited to Kasarani Division of Nairobi County.

Delimitations of the study

It was also assumed that the lack of honesty by participants while completing the questionnaires may influence the results of the research negatively. The fact that the research involved completing a questionnaire means that there were subjects that were left out from the research due to their inability to read and write. The study did not involve persons who have been married and have either separated or divorced. This may require a separate study.

Summary

So far, it is evident both from literature review and the recent study by the researcher that health care providers have always seen the need for those wishing to get married to prepare themselves before getting together in marriage. The emphasis for future may need to be on what to include in premarital counseling programs to increase their efficiency and effectiveness in terms of helping couples to have sound marital relationships. There is also great need to ensure that the service providers insist on ensuring that no couples are formally married in church before they go through a structured premarital counseling program. Recommendations for future research have been given in Chapter five of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the theoretical and empirical literature that is relevant to this study. Literature reviewed sought to find out what other researchers have written on the impact of premarital counseling on the marital relationship, divorce and separation, marital bliss in marital relationship and the aspect of conflict management within the marital setup. The researcher sought to establish what other researchers and authors have written on the impact of premarital counseling using Gottman's Sound Relationship principles. Unfortunately, there is not much literature on this topic.

Importance of Premarital Counseling

Professional and religious counselors present a list of skills and knowledge areas, essential to endurance of marriage. Communication skills, compatibility, long term goals, conflict resolution, expectations, friendship development, intimacy, sexuality and personalities are also covered by premarital counselors. Statistics show that two-thirds of couples planning to be married do not take any sort of premarital inventory which is very detrimental to future relationships (McManus and McManus, 2003). There are also couples who do not attend premarital counseling simply because they believe it is dangerous for them to share their issues with a stranger.

Further, McManus and McManus (2003) allege that partners may not disclose their past relationship history for fear of what such revelation may do to their relationship. Additionally, couples also fear that exploring some issues in counseling may lead to decrease in their stability in marriage, which may ultimately lead the couple to end their union. Health care service

providers have a responsibility to sensitize young people of the need for premarital counseling by informing them that the process is confidential from beginning to the end so that their fears of being exposed and hurt are allayed. Even though young couples experience the fears outlined above, participating in premarital counseling sends positive messages to the couple. This makes premarital counseling an important aspect in their journey to the institution of marriage. Marriage was established and sanctified by God for the welfare and happiness of families. He took it seriously and service providers and young people need to also consider marriage a very important institution which must be protected from disintegrating and, therefore, causing problems to partners and children (Wright, 1982).

Premarital counseling has very clear benefits. Firstly, premarital counseling encourages couples to slow down and deliberate about their impending marriage. In addition to that, premarital counseling helps the young couples to have in depth insight that the institution of marriage matters and that this is not a decision to be made hastily. It also offers couples the options available for help later in their lives should they ever need to seek counseling for marriage problems. Premarital preparation also gives the couple the opportunity to correct faulty information concerning the marriage relationships by discussing key areas that are likely to give them a problem later in their marriages. Finally, premarital counseling has shown that couples who partake in the counseling sessions are at low risk for marital conflicts and divorce (Wright, 1982).

Premarital counseling programs for couples provide one preventative approach for addressing many of the risk factors typically associated with couple distress and divorce. Several prominent researchers in the field of family therapy have suggested that engagement in premarital couple counseling is one way to decrease the likelihood of marital instability. It also

has the potential to bring positive outcomes for couples (Stahmann & Hiebert, 1997; Stanley, 2001; Stanley et al., 2006).

Young (2010) states that engaging in a program of premarital preparation helps because the more people are prepared for marriage, the more ready they are to handle life cycle crises they may face in their lives together. Also premarital preparation encourages commitment to the institution of marriage. Marriage is a great life transition and people getting ready to live together need to be sensitized to this fact.

Divorce and Separation

Lerner (2016) in the Journal of Clinical and Medical Genomics reports that divorce rate rose steadily in recent years, becoming a significant social problem. Although many studies showed that divorce has negative impact on children, there are many different interpretations of the consequences of this situation on children's lives. There is, however, no doubt that children are being affected by the sudden change in their familial environment as well as by additional influences that accompany the divorce process. Divorce rates in the United States are very high, approximated at close to 50% according to Amato (2010). The situation in Kenya is also quite alarming. Table 1 below gives the details of marital, divorce and separation statistics in Kenya as reported in May 2014 by Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.

Table 1: Marital Status in Kenya – Nationally and for Nairobi County

	Monogamous marriage	Polygamous marriage	Divorce	Separation
KENYA	11,158,890	1,436,865	212,972	355,018
NAIROBI	1,165,628	46,143	21,573	34,272

Source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (Kenya Population and Housing Census)

Tambling (2013) states that premarital educational and counseling programs provide one way of addressing many of the risk factors associated with couple distress and divorce. Unfortunately, few couples who are offered premarital programs engage in them. The importance of preparing for marriage is apparent when one considers the consequences of marital distress and the high rate of divorce. Pre-marital inventories help couples prepare for marriage by identifying their personal risks as well as other factors that may affect their marriage negatively.

Pihet, Bodenmann, Cina, Widmer, and Shantinath, (2007) report that research demonstrates the benefits of pre-marital programs. Marriage is helpful for couples, children and communities. Further, marital distress and divorce have serious physical, emotional, and financial consequences for families. The importance of preparing for marriage becomes apparent when one considers the likelihood of experiencing significant challenges early in a marriage, the consequences of marital distress, and the high rate of divorce. Pre-marital education aims to prepare couples for marriage, to increase the likelihood of healthy, satisfactory, marriages, and to decrease marital distress.

Onyango (2013) states that one of the greatest problems the church faces today is that of the broken or unhappy families due to marital conflicts. Most marriages today are far from good. Rather they are bearable, tolerable or just endurable. He further observes that unmarried men and women are not receiving adequate information as to what marriage is all about. They get into marriage as ignorant people with no prior knowledge at all.

Importance of Marital Bliss in Marriage

According to the American Psychological Association (2010), premarital counseling plays a preventive function that boosts the partners skills to handle potential difficulties that may

emerge later in the marriage life. Some of these are communication skills programs, assessment inventory tool to educate engaged couples in the habits and skills that lead to happy enduring marriages. Premarital and marital counseling gives people the benefit of a supportive environment and the skills to deal with the problems a marriage may have during a life time. The couples acquire real expectations, real knowledge of partner and self to face the marital conflicts that can ruin a happy relationship.

American Psychological Association (2010) further states that, marital education programs have served as a prevention strategy to strengthen marriages and cause marital happiness and bliss. One example of marital education prevention strategy is the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program, also known as PREP. PREP focuses on teaching couples how to properly communicate and use problem-solving skills, which have been associated with successful marital functioning. These problem-solving skills typically include guidelines for managing conflict, forgiveness, speaker/listener practices, and how to maintain and develop enjoyment and companionship (Futris, Aholou, & Seponski, 2011).

Research conducted on PREP found that couples that have participated in this prevention strategy experience considerably greater levels of marital satisfaction and are less likely to get divorced. PREP is unique in that it acts as a prevention and intervention model. A longitudinal study on PREP found that couples who participated in the prevention model prior to marriage had fewer negative interaction than those who did not. Further, positive interaction, decreased rates of relationship hostility, separation and divorce. It also presents advanced levels of relationship pleasure up to five years following the completion of PREP (Futris et al., 2011).

There are many approaches that different leaders in premarital counseling take, although despite variances in setting and stated aim, the most consistent patterns in this counseling are

aimed at helping both the male and female build skills and develop the emotional, coping, and communicative tools necessary to have a functioning, healthy marriage. Skill-based programs which teach couples communication and conflict-resolution skills have the strongest empirical support to date for couples (Williams, 2007). These programs enhance a couple's relationship tremendously and the partners experience immense peace and tranquility.

Impact of Marital Conflicts on Spouses

Marital conflict has harmful effects on mental, physical, and family health. Many studies have found evidence that negative marital functioning has significance for physical health and mental well-being (Grych and Fincham, 2001). Studies show that direct physiological changes accompany negative spousal interactions. For example, high levels of negative marital communication behaviors such as hostility and aggressive avoidance have been associated with elevations in cardiovascular reactivity. Marital conflict has been linked to the onset of depressive symptoms, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, sporadic drinking, binge drinking, out-of-home drinking, and male alcoholism.

Ambert (2009) argues that marital conflicts and divorce can result in an increased risk of poverty particularly for women and children. Children are also likely to end up with behavioral and emotional problems. According to a report by Markman, Rhoades, Stanley, Ragan, & Whitton's (2010), negative communication patterns were significantly associated with divorce and lower marital adjustment across the first five years of marriage. Divorce can be very detrimental to the lives of the whole family. 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 suffering and divorce (Ambert, 2009).

In Carroll and Doherty's (2003) meta-analysis, the majority of couples in the experimental groups improved noticeably in communication and problem-solving skills, scoring significantly higher than control couples in these areas.

Impact of Premarital Counseling on Marital Relationship

A research conducted by Green and Miller (2013) indicated that the harmful effects of marital dissolution and dissatisfaction point to a need for interventions, such as premarital preparation, to improve marital quality. They continue to say that although several studies support the potential for premarital preparation to improve couples' marital satisfaction and interpersonal skills, results from other studies are mixed. Couples are also increasingly accessing self-directed forms of premarital preparation, such as books, internet sites, and online courses and inventories which is indicative of the need for health care providers and other stake holders to put effective premarital programs in place (Duncan, Childs, & Larson, 2010).

Globally marriage is a threatened entity. According to Hill, (1990), America experienced only one divorce in twenty marriages in the 90s. The 2004 U.S. Bureau of Census indicates that 52 percent of all first marriages end in divorce. The state of California has even higher divorce rates where 75 percent of all first marriages are reported to end in divorce. Furthermore, statistics show that 43 percent of first marriages end within fifteen years, and 75 percent of all divorced people remarry, mostly within three years. Research indicates that even in the second marriages, 65 percent of them fail. Hill (1990) has the best description of the situation: "It is a non-stop cycle of divorce." He predicts that 60 percent of first marriages of women currently in their thirties will end up in divorce. He further observes that the problems confronted in second marriages also often prompt the partners who may be haunted by the memories of a first marriage to end the second marriage with divorce.

In Kenya the rate of divorce may not be as high as in the United States, but Kenya has its own bleak picture. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report for May 2014 indicates that out of 12.5 million marriages recorded as at that period, 212,972 ended in divorce while 355,018 couples ended up separating. This is a very alarming situation that needs serious consideration by all the stakeholders in the nation of Kenya. According to Vail (2012), couples that participate in premarital counseling normally rate their marital satisfaction higher than those who do not participate in premarital counseling. Premarital counseling programs using Gottman's concepts would equip couples with adequate skills to build a strong and sound relationship house where they would experience bliss and marital success. They would also be able to manage conflicts effectively. Unfortunately, there is no literature indicating that professional health care providers are using Gottman's principles to prepare young people aspiring to get married.

Empirical Literature

Mbunga, (2010) conducted a study which was born out of a desire to find a biblically based, research-proven and culturally applicable premarital counseling practice for so many people in Kenya, especially young people, who envision marriage someday but would like to be adequately prepared for it before they are ready to say "I do." A considerable number of them who have heard about this particular study were eager and looked forward to the findings and recommendations that will come out of it.

Another study by Mobegi, Mokoro & Keari (2016) was conducted on Premarital Counseling and Marital Conflict among Christian couples with the purpose of establishing the relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital conflict among Christian couples in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County, Kenya. The findings showed that premarital counseling and marital conflict among Christian couples were significantly associated.

Components of premarital counseling such as communication, financial counseling, sexuality and biblical counseling are significant contributing factors that control marital conflicts in the study area. The dimensions of in-laws, and parenting were not significant contributing factors to marital conflicts in the study area. The implication of the findings is that there is need to step up and encourage young people aspiring to get married to undergo premarital counseling so as to mitigate marital conflicts (Mobegi, et al., 2016).

A study by Tambling, (2013) indicates that premarital educational and counseling programs provide one way of addressing many of the risk factors associated with couple suffering and divorce. Unfortunately, few couples who are offered premarital programs engage in the programs offered. This study examined preferences for premarital programs in a sample of individuals in committed relationships who intended to marry the current partner. Results suggested that premarital counseling conducted by a therapist and of short duration, following engagement, was most preferred. The most preferred topics/contents were related to communication and conflict resolution.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study was guided by Gottman's theory of marital relationship. Gottman's (1993) development theory regarding marital displeasure and dissolution integrates both behavioral theory and social exchange theory. In comparison to theories and information presented by counselors who have produced their materials constructed on their work with the couples they happen to see in their practice, Gottman's theory is grounded on scientific research studies with the help of hundreds of couples over several years (Gottman, 1993).

Based on Gottman's research (1994), a permanent marriage is one that results from a couple's capacity to resolve disagreements that are almost certain to be experienced in any relationship. The chief factor lies in the balance between positive and negative behaviors. Marital stability is greater when the positive behaviors outweigh the negative behaviors. However, not all negative behaviors lead straight to marital dissolution, but four behaviors specifically are said to move towards closure and frustration. Criticism cultivates towards Contempt, which then causes Defensiveness and conclusively Stonewalling or withdrawal. Gottman, (1994) used a metaphor for these four behaviors which he called the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

Gottman's research has formed evidence of a method of change over time in spouses' opinions of their relationship that produces a "distance and isolation" flow. Eventually, their spouse's pessimism becomes overpowering, unanticipated, and extreme to the point that the spouse grasps a level of hopelessness such that he or she will do whatever they can to eliminate the behavior. When a couple reaches this point, a perceptual change happens in which the feelings of affection, respect, and security are replaced by feelings of pain, sorrow, being threatened, anxious and irritable. Once this perceptual change has transpired, it can be extremely difficult to see the marriage in an optimistic light (Gottman, (1994).

Gottman's cascade theory and the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" visibly display the influence of verbal and nonverbal communication and behavior, mainly in conflict circumstances, to form the experience of marriage. Since the nature of premarital counseling and couples counseling focuses on communication and other ways to promote and maintain a healthy, satisfying marriage, the conceptual framework for this study is focused on how premarital counseling can lead to a greater satisfaction and success in marriage and possibly impact a couple's likelihood of receiving counseling in the future. Gottman also emphasizes on

efforts by the couple to build solid friendship between them. Silliman and Schumm (2000) assert in a literature review of marriage preparation programs that improvements in the assessment of couple's attitudes and interaction patterns have led to an enhancement of marital interventions.

According to Gottman (1993), there are two “staples” of marriages that work: overall level of positive affect and an ability to reduce negative affect during conflict resolution. These two qualities are expanded in Gottman's theory of the Sound Relationship Marital House (1999). The Sound Relationship Marital House, comprised of seven floors, rests on the foundation of marital friendship (the first three floors). See Figure 1 below. The next level is positive sentiment override, followed by regulation of conflict through problem solving, then supporting one another's dreams. The top level consists of creating shared meaning. Using the Sound Marital House, strengths and areas for improvement in couple's relationships can be identified.



Figure 1: Sound Relationship House

Source: Gottman and Silver (1999)

Conceptual Framework (Using Three of Gottman's foundational Concepts)

The conceptual framework below shows what the researcher believes would be a great premarital program for professionals to use with people who are preparing to get married. The independent variable is premarital counseling. The intervening variables of Building Love Maps, Fondness and Admiration and Turning Towards each other instead of away from each other, were what informed the questions raised in the questionnaire that the researcher used for the study. The aim was to try and establish how couples who participated in the study relate with their partner in natural settings. The dependent variable for the study was marital success. The researcher's assumption was that the first three principles of Gottman's Sound Relationship house would be instrumental in bringing marital success and a Sound Relationship House like the one shown in Figure 1 above.

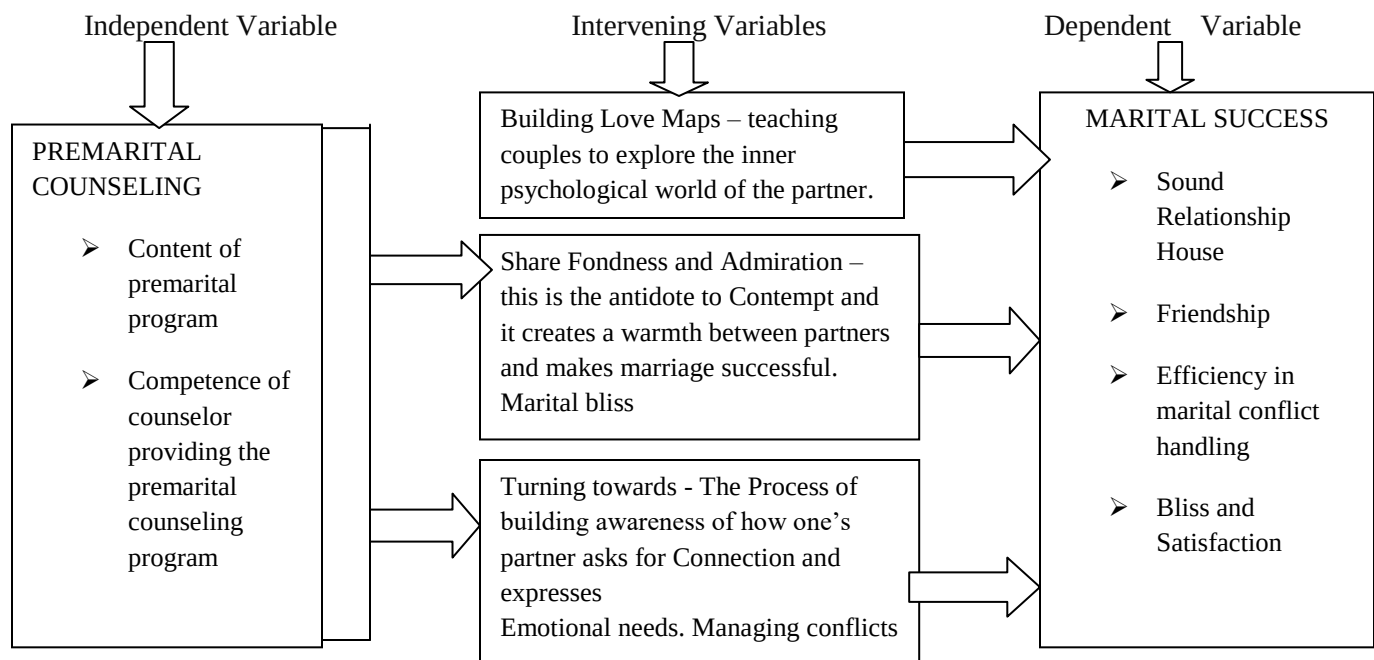


Figure 2: premarital counseling using Three of Gottman's foundational Concepts

Summary

The literature reviewed indicates that there is need to sensitize premarital couples on the importance of attending an effective premarital counseling program before they get together in marriage. There is evidence that some young people fail to attend premarital counseling due to the fact that they do not trust the process. Health care providers need to show people seeking this service the benefits of a good premarital program and the impact it can have on the relationship even for future. It is important for all stake holders to determine to end the havoc ignorance has caused marriage as an institution.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section includes the design adopted for the study, population that was studied, sample for the study including the sampling method. Also included, is the type of data and data collection method that was used. The instrument the researcher used and data analysis details also appear in this section. There is also a section indicating how ethical issues were handled to protect participants in the study. The primary objective of this study was to investigate the effects of Premarital Counseling on Marital Success among married couples in Kasarani Division of Nairobi County. The research also hoped to establish the premarital programs the relevant couples have used in the past and how effective these have been on their relationship.

To achieve the aim of the study, a survey was conducted in July 2017 using 60 married men and women from three different congregations within the scope area. The survey had one questionnaire with a brief introductory paragraph introducing the researcher and appealing to participants to complete the questionnaire with an assurance that the information they would share with the researcher would be treated with utmost confidentiality and also informing them that the results of the survey would contribute to the effectiveness of the counseling interventions when dealing with families and children.

The questionnaire contained five sets of questions. The first set was to capture information on whether the individuals attended premarital counseling, the topics covered and the impact this exercise had on their relationship. The individuals were also asked to name the topics they felt really impacted their marital relationship positively. The other three sections contained questions to examine couple relationship issues in an attempt to find out how the

relevant participants relate with their marital partners. In sections two and three, the participants were required to indicate their answers with either True or False while in the third section, they were given a Likert scale ranging from 1-4 from which they were requested to pick one response. The responses were - 1 for =strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree. There was also a section where participants were requested to indicate how they rated their marital relationship with ratings 1=Very unsatisfactory: 2= Unsatisfactory: 3= Satisfactory: 4= Very Satisfactory.

Research Design

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative research designs. A questionnaire, interviews and observations were used for this study, in order to obtain participants' experiences in their marital relationships and to establish the effects premarital counseling has had on marital success.

Population Studied

The target population of Christian couples in the three congregations the researcher used was approximately 300 couples from which an appropriate sample size of 30 couples (60 individuals) was selected using Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) views that suggested that for Simple Random sampling, a sample of between 20-50 participants is adequate. The participating churches were St. Joseph Catholic Church in Kahawa, Queen of Apostles Catholic Church Kasarani, St. Elizabeth Anglican Church in Kasarani and Deliverance Church in Kahawa. The researcher used convenient sampling in terms of identifying the churches to sample from.

The researcher sought assistance from the chair persons of couple fellowships in the targeted churches for purposes of identifying couples who have been married for over two years.

The questionnaires were randomly distributed to the couples who have been married for over two years with the request to feel free to participate in the research.

Sample Size and Sampling Method

The sample of 30 couples is approximately 10% of the couples in the three churches. The churches are located in Nairobi County in Kenya. By using the above churches, the researcher was endeavoring to have a very representative sample that can be generalized to the rest of the married couples in the country. The choice of the churches was for purposes of maximizing efficiency in terms of distributing and collecting the questionnaires.

The target population of married Christian couples at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Kahawa, Queen of Apostles Catholic Church Kasarani, St. Elizabeth Anglican Church in Kasarani and Deliverance Church in Kahawa is approximately 300 couples upon which an appropriate sample size of 30 couples (60 individuals) who have been married for over two years was selected. 30 Christian married couples were randomly chosen from the target population with the assistance of the chair persons of couple fellowships in the targeted churches to get the required sample. A sampling frame is given below as Table 2. The sampling frame was made up of men and women who have been in marriage for a period of over two years.

In addition to collection of data from participants using a questionnaire which was the main instrument used for the study, the researcher also held discussions with the priest in charge of St. Joseph's Catholic church and two pastors from the Anglican and Deliverance churches since they provide premarital counseling to persons preparing for marriage and they handle couples with marital conflicts in the respective churches. They deal with the couples all the time so they are aware of what may be happening with families.

The researcher visited the churches before the actual study commenced. The visits were to enable the researcher to explain to the couples and the church leadership the wish to conduct the intended research on premarital counseling whose results would enable churches to improve their premarital programs in the county. The couples were made to understand that completion of the questionnaires was voluntary and confidential and that the research is meant to benefit the church in Kenya and society as a whole.

Table 2: Sampling Frame indicating Sample Size Distribution

Congregation	Target Population	Sampling Unit
St. Joseph's Catholic Church – Kasarani	150	10
Queen of Apostles Catholic Church - Kahawa	60	10
St. Elizabeth Anglican Church – Kasarani	52	20
Deliverance Church – Kahawa	38	20
Total	300	60

Type of Data

The researcher collected primary data from the targeted participants in the churches selected for the study.

Data Collection Method and procedure

Before the research was conducted, approval to proceed with the research was obtained from Pan Africa Christian University and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher then approached the churches that would provide participants for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from married individuals. The questionnaire contained both open and closed ended questions. The respondents' opinions on the items on the questionnaire were enlisted on a four point Likert scale

of: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree. There were also questions where participants were asked to indicate their answers by ticking either true or false.

A copy of the questionnaire was used as an interview guide for holding discussions with the father in charge of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, the Vicar at St. Elizabeth Anglican church and one pastor from Deliverance Church. The interview with the church leaders sought to know how impactful they believed the premarital programs they were currently giving were. The questionnaire for participants of the study was anonymous to ensure ease of obtaining information from the participants and for their protection. It was distributed by the researcher. The questions were based on the first three principles of Gottman's Sound Relationship house as shown in the Conceptual Framework which appears as figure 2 above.

Instrument pre-testing

Six individuals formed the pilot study to enable the researcher to establish efficiency of the instrument. The six persons who participated in the instrument testing were randomly selected by the researcher and they were informed that results of their questionnaires would not form part of the main results for the research. Results from the six (6) people in the pilot study did not form part of the results presented in the report.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a pilot study with a sample of a tenth of the total sample is appropriate for the pilot study. Pilot testing is an important step in research process because it reveals unclear questions and vague instructions in the instruments. It also captures vital comments and suggestions from the respondents that enable the researcher to improve on the efficiency of the research instrument. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher to match the research objectives and questions. The respondents were required to respond to issues to do with the way couples relate with each other naturally while at home. All

the questions were designed to capture the content of the three research questions and also the objectives of the study.

Data Analysis

On receipt of the completed questionnaires, the collected data was checked for errors related to omissions. The researcher used mainly qualitative analysis but also converted the data to quantitative data for purposes of reinforcing the qualitative data and to strengthen the results of the study. The researcher then summarized the data using summary tables to describe the data. The responses given in the interviews were categorized into their particular types. The questionnaires were marked appropriately for purposes of tracking. The data was then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS V20) data analysis program for purposes of obtaining the effects if any premarital counseling has on marital bliss and reduction of marital conflicts. SPSS is very ideal for purposes of obtaining correlations between variables.

Ethical Consideration

Research in Counseling and Psychology is governed by various ethics. According to APA (2010), studies involving human beings may expose them to stressful or unpleasant experiences. This may affect the subjects to risks or negatively affect the lives of the research participants. To deal with this problem, the researcher explained to the respondents about the research and that the study was for academic purposes only. The participants were also assured that the results of the study would be treated with utmost confidentiality. The researcher assured the participants that completion of the questionnaires was completely voluntary and that the contents would not be shared with anyone.

Reliability and Validity

The validity of an instrument is the extent to which it does measure what it is supposed to measure. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of conclusions, which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results that were obtained from the analysis of the data would actually represent the variables of the study. The results of the study indicated to the researcher that the instrument captured all the areas that were being tested.

Analysis of the data and the results therein showed that the tool enabled the researcher to achieve the objective of the study which was to establish the effects of premarital preparation on marital success. The instrument was able to capture all the details the researcher needed to test effects of premarital counseling on ability to resolve conflicts, bliss for the partners and satisfaction. The pilot study enabled the researcher to amend the tool for purposes of making it much more effective than it was initially.

Summary

This chapter contains the research design adopted for the study, population studied, sampling method used, the sample used for the study, the type of data collected and the data analysis method. Issues to do with the instrument used, validity and reliability of the instrument have also been featured in this chapter. The researcher also dealt with issues to do with confidentiality of the data collected.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of the results and their interpretation. The chapter starts by outlining the demographic characteristics of respondents, then descriptive statistics and later an inferential analysis of the research questions. The purpose of the study was to assess the effects of pre-marital counseling on marital success among married couples in Kasarani Division, Nairobi County, Kenya. The aim was to inform the counseling profession and the church in Kenya whether couples who attend premarital counseling have healthier marriages than those who do not attend premarital counseling. The purpose of this chapter is to present a detailed report of the research findings in an orderly and understandable way. Out of the 60 questionnaires that the researcher distributed, 56 were completed. This gives a return rate of 93%.

Demographic Details of respondents

Some of the demographic information of the respondents collected include their gender, age, duration of marriage and number of sessions for the couples who attended the pre-marital counseling. Regarding the gender of respondents, the results indicate that there were (58%) male participants as compared to (42%) female participants. Majority of the respondents who participated were of age 40 years and above which is (56%). Regarding the duration in marriage, majority of the respondents reported having been married for 21 years and above. The results indicated that (90%) of the respondents who attended pre-marital counseling had counseling programs of between 1 and 10 sessions while 12% participants covered over ten sessions. The demographic details are given below in table 3.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Variable category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	32	58
	Female	23	42
Age	20-30	4	7
	31-40	20	36
	41 and Over	31	56
Years in marriage	2-10	17	32
	10-20	10	19
	21 And Above	25	46
No of sessions	1-10	27	90
	10 And Above	3	10

Descriptive Results

From the results of participation in pre-marital counseling, (55%) participants indicated having gone through a premarital counseling program while (45%) respondents indicated they did not go through any program at all. Figure (3) below illustrates these details. The researcher noted that 58% of the participants were male while 42% were female. Although it was difficult to establish why this was the position since the questionnaires were distributed in equal numbers, the researcher thought this was worth noting. The results above also indicate that 90% of the participants had between 1-10 counseling sessions while 10% participants had above ten sessions. This is worth noting considering that the study was to establish effects of premarital counseling on marital success. This result indicates there are health care providers offering premarital programs that are not adequate for those preparing for marriage.

Analysis Of Participation Of Respondents In Pre-Marital Counseling

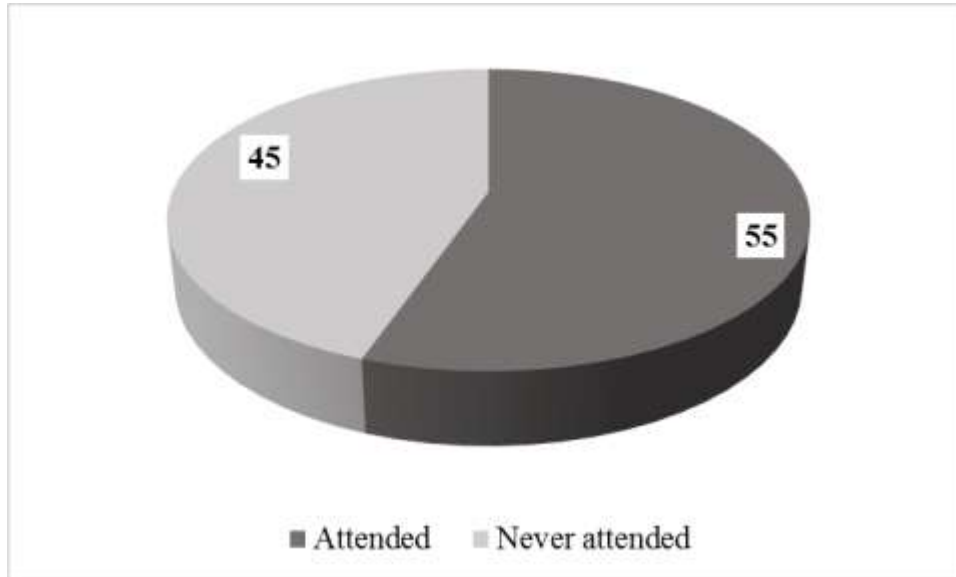


Figure 3: Participation in Pre-Marital Counseling

The figure above indicates that 55% of the participants attended premarital counseling before getting married while 45% never attended. Considering how important marriage is, it is worrying to note that such a big percentage of people got married without any preparation.

Contribution Of Pre-Marital Counseling To Family Stability/Satisfaction

The contribution of premarital counseling on marital success was assessed on 4-point Likert scale. From the results in Figure 4 below, (52%) of the respondents reported the program was instrumental in helping them achieve their marital success while (40%) indicated they were very satisfied with their relationship. A small proportion of the respondents (6%) indicated they were not satisfied with their relationship while (2%) participants indicated they were very unsatisfied with their relationship. Analysis of the responses indicated that the participants who were very unsatisfied with their relationships had either no premarital counseling or had very few lessons. The assumption of the researcher in this area was that premarital counseling plays a major role in the success of the marital relationship. These results are shown in Fig 4 below.

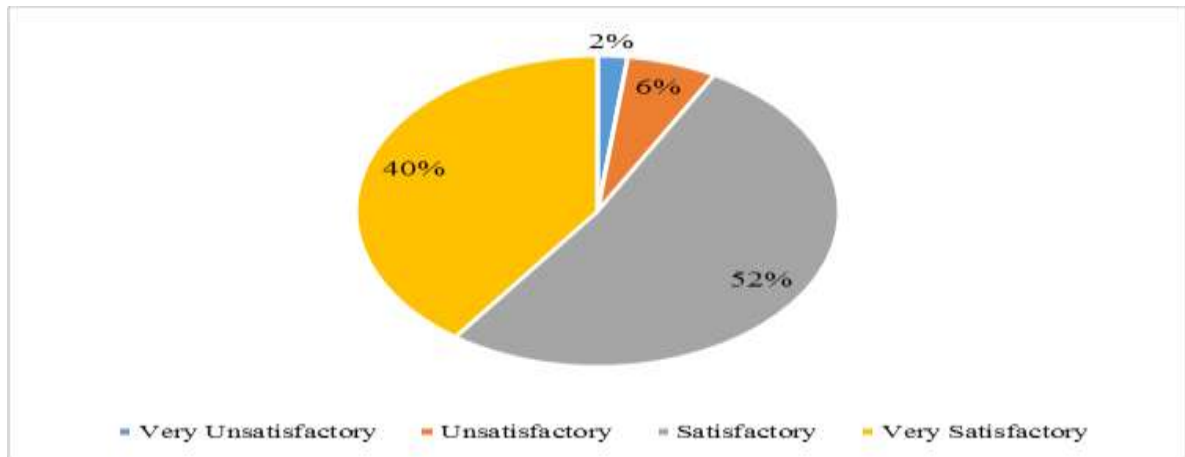


Figure 4: Contribution of Pre-Marital Counseling to Family Stability/Satisfaction

The analysis of the data from participants confirms that people who have either no proper preparation or have inadequate preparation stand the risk of having unsatisfactory relationships. Gottman (1999) says that couples who begin to use skills which support the friendship, trust, affection and caring which they yearn for, the resentment, bitterness and hostility dissolve. This brings stability and satisfaction.

Premarital Counseling and Marital Bliss and Satisfaction

Table 3 below gives results of the participants' responses on emotional expressions that bring bliss and satisfaction to their marital relationship if practiced by couples. These expressions were assessed on an eight point metric assessment as shown in the table below. All respondents irrespective of whether they participated in pre-marital counseling or not, were asked to respond to the questions meant to indicate how partners respond to each other's bids for connection. Gottman and Silver (1999) refer to this mode of relating as turning towards not against each other or "building an emotional bank account." This would later be linked to whether or not participants attended premarital counseling using the details from their responses in the research instruments.

For the metric trying to establish whether partners show excitement when one partner comes home, (53%) of them strongly agreed it was important to show excitement when receiving a partner back home while (39%) agreed. However, (70%) of the respondents disagreed on the second metric that they should listen when their partners are talking as compared to (27%) who agreed. On the third item on bonding between partners, an overwhelming number of respondents at (85%) strongly agreed that spending time with their partner brings peace and bonding and that it is harmful to a relationship for them to address their partners using a harsh tone. Only (35%) participants disagreed with these two suggestions. The researcher's assumption was that couples who have gone through a pre-marital counseling program are able to experience marital bliss. Partners cannot experience bliss if they are either not listening to each other, not bonding with each other or if they are addressing each other harshly. A premarital counseling program would encourage a couple to take these issues seriously.

Table 4: Pre-marital Counseling and Marital Bliss and Satisfaction

Statement		SD	D	A	SA	Mean	SDev.	SE
I should show excitement when my partner comes back home	Freq.	2	2	22	30	2.289	0.728	0.102
	(%)	4	4	39	53			
It is important to listen to my partner	Freq.	2		15	39	2.316	0.554	0.071
	(%)	4		27	70			
Spending time with my partner brings bonding and peace	Freq.	2		6	48	3.193	0.913	0.123
	(%)	4		11	85			
It is harmful to our relationship for me to address my partner using a harsh tone	Freq.	3	1	12	40	3.571	0.816	0.116
	(%)	5	2	21	71			
It is important for me to show affection to my partner often	Freq.	2		14	38	3.632	0.698	0.099
	(%)	4		22	74			
I should let my partner know what I admire about him/her	Freq.	5	1	13	34	3.387	0.953	0.136
	(%)	10	2	27	63			
I should show an interest when my partner is sad	Freq.	2	2	18	34	2.357	0.911	0.109
	(%)	4	4	32	60			
It is important for me to help my partner to make his/her dreams come true	Freq.	6	16	11	16	2.755	1.051	0.150
	(%)	12	33	22	33			

The results also indicate that 74% of the respondents strongly agreed that it was important for them to often show affection to their partners while (63%) participants indicated the importance of letting their partners know things they admire in them. Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan, & Rusckstuhl (2000) found that partners in happy marriages tend to associate positive meanings to their spouse's behavior than spouses in troubled marriages.

Phillips, Bischoff, Abbott, & Xia (2009) state that negative behavior occurs in all marriages but when it happens among happily married couples, they are more likely to attribute the behavior to the pressure and anxiety of the situation. In this study (60%) respondents agreed that they should help their partners during depression while (32%) strongly agreed that this was important. A proper premarital counseling program should address such issues so that those intending to get married see the need to give each other quality time when together.

Premarital counseling and Marital conflicts

The contribution of pre-marital counseling in effectiveness of settling marital disputes was measured using 8-point metrics. These are descriptive statistics and do not directly compare the contribution of counseling to conflict resolution. The questions in Table 5 below aimed at establishing the effect premarital counseling may have had in assisting partners to relate well in their daily lives where there is respect which helps couples to resolve marital conflicts efficiently. According to Gottman (1999), the way partners relate to each other helps them to be friends which in turn determines how efficient they become in resolving marital conflicts. Startup which is the way a topic of disagreement is broached is critically important in predicting marital outcomes. The way a conflict discussion begins usually determines how it ends. If it starts harshly, it will end harshly. If it starts softly, it is more likely to end well.

A good percentage of the respondents at (94%) indicated that it was dangerous for them not to deal with marital conflicts conclusively. Another big percentage of participants at (91%) also indicated that it was wrong for them to criticize their partners. These metrics dealt with issues to do with bids for connection, respect for each other and solving marital conflicts. Partners who are friends would consider handling of marital conflicts as part of what they need to do to solidify their relationship.

A good percentage of the respondents at (88%) indicated that it was important to create shared meanings with their partners. Creation of shared meanings which is one of the principles of John Gottman would be instrumental in assisting partners to resolve their marital conflicts. This is something that a premarital counseling program should take very seriously. The assumption of the researcher was that couples who attend premarital counseling are able to work out marital conflicts that they come across during their marital life.

It was evident that most participants were aware of the need for effective communication with their partners so as to avoid marital conflicts. Importance of acquiring skills to deal with marital conflicts conclusively scored highly at (96%) which can be interpreted to indicate that most partners are interested in learning to resolve marital issues if only they are taught how to do that. According to Caughlin, (2003), all couples experience conflict in their relationships. Such conflict may include issues to do with how much time the partners should spend with friends and relatives, how to handle family finances, issues to do with parenting and what activities should be shared by the partners while handling children. However, some couples are able to work through their issues more effectively than other couples. One study found that many Americans consider open communication to be crucial for individual well-being and relationship satisfaction (Caughlin, 2003).

Table 5: Pre-marital Counseling and Marital Conflicts

Statement		True	False	Mean	Sdev.	SE
It is dangerous for both of us not to deal with marital conflicts conclusively	Freq. (%)	51 96	3 4	1.161	0.242	0.021
It is important for my partner and I to create shared meanings	Freq. (%)	49 88	7 12	1.131	0.344	0.048
It is harmful to our marriage for me to criticize my partner	Freq. (%)	54 98	2 2	1.212	0.189	0.018
Important to learn the process of dealing with marital conflicts	Freq. (%)	49 93	6 7	1.081	0.231	0.034
I should never correct my partner publicly	Freq. (%)	51 91	5 9	1.112	0.312	0.034
It is dangerous for me to show contempt towards my partner	Freq. (%)	46 82	10 18	1.203	0.361	0.053
Respect my partner in and outside home	Freq. (%)	54 96	2 4	1.138	0.189	0.028
Appreciate my partner's achievements in life	Freq. (%)	54 96	2 4	1.139	0.189	0.028

Inferential Statistics

Effects Of Pre-Marital Counseling On Marital Bliss And Satisfaction

Table 6: Bivariate correlation between pre-marital counseling and marital bliss and satisfaction

		Attend Pre-marital Counseling	Marital Bliss and Satisfaction
Attend Pre-marital Counseling	Pearson Correlation	1	0.568**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000
	N	56	56
Marital Bliss and Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	0.568**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.000	
	N	56	56

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Using Pearson Correlation Significance model the researcher tested the effects of premarital counseling on marital bliss and satisfaction for couples. Marital bliss and satisfaction were measured using 8-point metrics as shown in table 4 above. A composite mean for all the

variables used was calculated and compared to the mean for pre-marital counseling to assess if there was significant relationship between the two. A bivariate correlation analytic tool was used to obtain the correlation between premarital counseling and marital bliss and satisfaction. This was one of the researcher's objectives.

There was significant positive correlation between pre-marital counseling and marital satisfaction [$r=0.568$, $n=56$ $p<0.000$]. This is illustrated to indicate that the more couples participate in pre-marital counseling programs the more satisfaction and bliss the couples have. The adjusted R^2 (0.334) showed the model featuring pre-marital counseling explains 33.4% of the factors affecting marital satisfaction while the rest is explained by other variables. There are many issues that occur in a marital relationship apart from those appearing in Table 4 above and these also affect what happens to the marital relationship either positively or negatively.

In this study the negative impact of not having attended pre-marital counseling was evident from some of the responses from participants who obviously did not attend counseling before marriage. Premarital counseling assists partners to recognize and resolve conflicts in order to advance their relationships. This type of counseling encourages partners to be considerate while making decisions and also constructing the relationship or choosing to go separate ways if there are signs that the relationship cannot materialize into a marriage. It also sensitizes them to know that later in their relationship, couple counseling can help them to continue building on their relationship.

Similar research has found that a repetition of everyday positive interactions and routine involvement in joint activities produce an increase in marital satisfaction and adjustment (Phillips et al., 2009). Driver and Gottman (2004) in their study discovered that couples that are satisfied in their marriage frequently participate in intimate emotional behavior such as kissing,

hugging, and conversing with the spouse about their day. The routine engagement in these types of activities communicating intimacy leads to thoughts of closeness and connection that in turn add value to the relationship. When these acts of fondness are repeated, they end up creating a strong bond between the couple and this results to cohesion and marital satisfaction (Phillips et al., 2009).

Effects Of Pre-Marital Counseling On Marital Conflicts

Table 7: Bivariate correlation between pre-marital counseling and marital conflicts

		Attend Pre-marital Counseling	Marital Conflicts
Attend Pre-marital Counseling	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.120
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0.205
	N	56	56
Marital Conflicts	Pearson Correlation	-0.120	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0.205	
	N	56	56

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Apart from analyzing the data in Table 5 above on effects of premarital counseling on reduction of marital conflicts, the researcher used Pearson Correlation Significance tool to test the effects of premarital counseling on prevalence of marital conflicts. Like the above variable, the potential for occurrence of marital conflicts among couples was measured on 8 key metrics and the composite mean for all the variables were calculated. The result shows that there was negative correlation between pre-marital counselling and prevalence of marital conflicts though there was no significant difference in the means [$r=-0.120$, $n=56$ $p=0.205$]. This indicates that the more the couples participate in pre-marital counselling, the fewer marital conflicts were

experienced between them. The adjusted R^2 (0.0144) shows the model used to test the correlation explains only 1.4% of the effect of pre-marital counselling on marital conflict.

This study compares favorably with the findings of Futris, Aholou, & Seponski, (2011). In their study they concluded that marital education programs have served as a prevention strategy to strengthen marriages and cause marital happiness and bliss. One example of marital education prevention is the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program, also known as PREP. PREP focuses on teaching couples how to properly communicate and use problem-solving skills, which has been associated with successful marital functioning. These problem-solving skills typically include guidelines for managing conflict, forgiveness, speaker/listener practices, and how to maintain and develop enjoyment and companionship.

In other studies conducted elsewhere, Futris et al., (2011) revealed that pre-marital counseling has led to the improvement of empirically constructed and examined programs that can help change the development of marriage and counteract the divorce rate. Premarital education and couples counseling happen to be some of the most effective prevention programs for couples. The ultimate goal of premarital counseling is to support relationships before marriage in order to prevent the risk of future divorce and give the couple a better base for a stable and satisfactory marriage (Stahmann, 2000).

Views From Church Leaders On Effects Of Premarital Counseling On Marital Success

Apart from using the main research tool which was a questionnaire to obtain data for the study, the researcher also held discussions with two pastors from an Anglican Church, Deliverance Church and one priest from the Roman Catholic Church. These church leaders were all from the different congregations the researcher approached for purposes of conducting the research. The researcher had discussions with the church leaders seeking to know what their

views were on the effects premarital counseling has on marital success for the couples they interact with in their churches.

The first participant who is a priest in the Roman Catholic Church narrated to the researcher the number of times he has had to mediate between partners who after years of marriage have gone through serious marital problems, a situation he attributed to such partners not having had enough preparation for marriage. Discussions with such partners has indicated total lack of skills to manage conflicts, communicate, handle marital intimacy and other issues that give partners problems if not conclusively dealt with. Such partners have also confessed to not being good friends with each other. The participating priest informed the researcher that this situations have prompted the head of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome to issue instructions to the Roman Catholic Church leadership globally cautioning them against marrying young people before they attend a full program of premarital counseling.

Discussions with two pastors from the protestant congregations indicated very similar sentiments. The pastors informed the researcher that as a result of the issues they have noted as being peculiar to couples who never attended premarital counseling, they are now discouraging people from approaching the church with requests for marriage close to the wedding date. They are suggesting to those wishing to be joined in marriage to approach the church a year before the wedding date. They also confirmed that this has its own challenges especially in cases where the two people may be working in different parts of the country. Organizing premarital counseling for such partners has proved a big challenge.

Although the results of these discussions may not have formed part of the results in tables and figures above, the researcher believes the information shared by the three church leaders is a

good indication that health care providers need to take provision of premarital counseling much more seriously than has been the case in the past.

Summary

Chapter four contains the study results, their analysis and presentation in tables, figures and description. The results have been interpreted in relation to the objectives and the questions of the study and they have indicated key relationships between the dependent and independent variables. There is also reference to the literature reviewed by the researcher.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

Summary of findings

This chapter contains a summary of the study findings, researcher recommendation, areas of further research and a conclusion of the study. This study aimed at assessing the contribution of pre-marital counseling on marital success and marital satisfaction. It also sought to establish whether participating in premarital counseling helps couples to experience bliss in their relationships and whether they are able to resolve marital conflicts much more efficiently than those who did not attend premarital counseling. The target respondents were people who have been married for over two years.

A high proportion of the respondents at (52%) reported the program was satisfactory in helping them achieve their marital success while (40%) indicated they were very satisfied. Only (6%) of the respondents indicated they were unsatisfied while (2%) indicated their relationships were very unsatisfactory.

Regarding the importance of partners relating positively with each other instead of negatively, most of the respondents indicated they strongly agreed with the suggestion that it was important for them to show excitement when a partner comes home. The percentage for this group was (53%). This is indicative that premarital counseling had sensitized them to know the importance of responding positively to the presence of their partners. Responding positively to a partner helps to bring success to the relationship and it also helps to bring bliss and satisfaction to the couple. John Gottman refers to this as “turning towards each other instead of away from each other” and he suggests that this is helpful for all marriages.

However, (70%) of the respondents disagreed with the second metric that they should listen when their partners talk to them as compared to those who agreed at (27%). This may be indicative of the respondents not having understood the importance of listening to their partners. An effective premarital counseling program would ensure that those preparing for marriage see the importance of listening to each other. On the third item on the importance of spending time together, a big percentage of respondents at (85%) strongly agreed that spending time with their partner brings peace and harmony and that it is harmful to the relationship for them to address their partners using a harsh tone. This addresses the researcher's first and second objectives regarding marital bliss and marital success. Only (35%) of the respondents did not find value in not using a harsh tone while addressing their partners.

It was evident that partners in happy marriages are more prone to associate positive meanings to their spouse's behavior than spouses in unhappy marriages. Regarding conflict resolution and management which was the third objective of the researcher, (96%) of the participants indicated that it was dangerous for them not to deal with marital conflicts conclusively while (96%) indicated that it was wrong for them to criticize their partners.

It was evident that most couples were aware of the need for effective communication with their partners so as to avoid marital conflicts. All couples experience conflict in their relationships. The crucial issue is how partners handle such conflicts. The way conflicts are handled and the way partners relate with each is what determines the stability of a relationship. Ability to resolve conflicts amicably would also imply that couples would choose to live together and resolve their issues instead of taking the option of terminating their marriages when faced with challenges. All the above are issues a premarital counseling program using John Gottman's concepts would emphasize.

Recommendations

1. It is important that health care service providers and other professionals that offer premarital counseling ensure that no couples get married without going through a fully structured premarital counseling program. The current premarital counseling programs need to be revised to ensure that they include all the topics on issues that are likely to cause problems to the couple if not properly covered. A premarital program using John Gottman's concepts would be a wonderful tool for those wishing to prepare for marriage.
2. It is also important that all health care service providers clearly show those coming to them for premarital counseling evidence-based benefits of premarital counseling and disadvantages of not attending premarital counseling.
3. There is need also for the service providers to ensure that they encourage people wishing to be joined in marriage to come to them with adequate time for the provider to cover enough topics to enable the couple to start their marriage on a firm foundation.
4. The health care providers need to engage with policy makers in the government to show them the need to have people properly prepared for the institution of marriage. Couples who are going through marital problems may have challenges while performing their duties as workers. For this reason, government policy makers need to see the importance of everyone who has influence placing emphasis on the need for young people aspiring for marriage to be properly prepared so that they can have healthy, successful marriages. Happily married couples make efficient workers.
5. Church institutions and the counseling profession need to collaborate and ensure that premarital counseling is only offered by properly trained professionals. This is the only way the marriage institution will be saved from disintegrating.

Areas for Further Research

The literature reviewed by the researcher did not indicate any studies on use of premarital counseling programs using the principles of John Gottman. From 1975, Gottman & Levenson have conducted research on the longitudinal course of relationships. Utilizing a multi-method approach to their research, Gottman and Levenson observed couples in the laboratory (the “Love Lab”) talking about how their day went, talking about their real conflicts, and enjoying their time together, hanging out for 24 hours in an apartment laboratory. Results from these studies have enabled the two psychologists to obtain very useful information on what makes couples continue enjoying a good marriage and what can actually make them terminate their marriage.

Future research using couples in Africa based on studies of the two researchers may be instrumental in determining whether use of Gottman Marital Relationship principles during premarital counseling can help couples to manage conflict efficiently, build friendship between them and deepen their intimacy. A researcher using African couples would use activities that are culturally sensitive to the African setup to be able to gain maximum benefits in the study. Some of the activities suggested by Gottman in his seven principles have a western touch which may make it difficult for a researcher to get useful information and feedback from African couples.

Conclusion

This study found that pre-marital counseling was beneficial for the couples who participated in a pre-marital counseling program. Pre-marital counseling, also known as “premarital education,” is a type of counseling which assists premarital partners to prepare themselves for the institution of marriage so that they can build sound relationships after joining in matrimony. The study was informed by the principles in the Sound Relationship House by Gottman et al., (1999) who emphasize the importance of building friendship between partners to

ensure they enjoy bliss in their relationship. This equips the couple with conflict management skills that ultimately translates to marital success.

A premarital counseling program involving these principles would be just what every couple would require to ensure they end up satisfied with their relationships. The Sound Relationship House introduced by John Gottman has seven levels that build on each other. The first three levels address issues to do with learning to appreciate the psychological world of one's partner. The second level addresses issues to do with being intentional about admiring one's partner while the third level encourages partners to be intentional about building emotional reservoirs by turning towards each other and not against each other. These reservoirs are useful to couples as they relate with each on a daily basis. John Gottman's principles encourage couples to be friends which is one of the best things that can ever happen to a couple. Friendship makes a relationship solid. It brings in commitment and trust which are two pillars every marriage should stand on.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am a final year Marriage and Family Therapy Masters Student at Pan Africa Christian University. This study seeks to investigate Effects of Premarital Counseling on Marital Success (Sound Relationship House) with a view of contributing to the effectiveness of the counseling interventions when dealing with families and children. To get the best information on this, I am circulating this questionnaire to as broad a cross-section of our society as possible. I would like to kindly request your participation in this study taking about ten minutes of your time to fill out the questionnaire below and by doing that helping to contribute to the improvement of counseling practice in dealing with issues of marital conflict between couples. I thank you in advance for your time and contribution. The questionnaire is anonymous and all information will in no way be related to the individual participant.

- a) What do you understand Pre-marital Counseling to be? Please give a short

Answer in your own words

.....
.....
.....
.....

- b) Did you and your partner attend Pre-marital Counseling? Yes/No

- c) If Yes, how many sessions?

- d) Please Indicate the topics covered during premarital
counseling

.....
.....
.....

- e) Among the topics covered during premarital counseling, what topics have really
impacted your relationship positively?

.....
.....
.....
Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

BUILDING LOVE MAPS (HOW MUCH MY PARTNER AND I KNOW EACH OTHER)
PLEASE CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER

1. It is very important for me to show interest in my partner's friends
.....TRUE/ FALSE
2. It is very important for me to show interest in the stresses my partner might be facing
.....TRUE/ FALSE
3. It is important for me to take an interest in my partner's
dreams..... TRUE/ FALSE
4. It is important for me to take an interest in my partner's philosophy of
life.....TRUE/ FALSE
5. It is important for me to be my partner's source of
support..... TRUE/ FALSE
6. I should show an interest in the relatives my partner care's
for..... TRUE/ FALSE
7. I should be interested in finding out what my partner's fears
are.....TRUE/ FALSE
8. It is important for me to show an interest in what bothers my partner
.....TRUE/ FALSE

FONDNESS AND ADMIRATION (HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE EACH OTHER)
PLEASE CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER

1. I should let my partner know what I admire about him/her..... TRUE/ FALSE

2. It is important for my partner and I to create shared meanings.....TRUE/ FALSE
3. It is important for me to help my partner to make his/her dreams come true..... TRUE/ FALSE
4. It is important for me to show affection to my partner often.....TRUE/ FALSE
5. I should never correct my partner in public..... .TRUE/ FALSE
6. It is dangerous for me to show contempt towards my partner.....TRUE/ FALSE
7. It is important for me to respect my partner in and outside home...TRUE/ FALSE
8. It is important for me to appreciate my partner's achievements in life and tell him/her so..... TRUE/ FALSE

TURNING TOWARDS NOT AGAINST EACH OTHER

Please circle the extent: - 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3= Agree, 4= Strongly Agree

1. When my partner comes back home I should show excitement at seeing him/her.....1.....2.....3.....4
2. It is important to listen when my partner is talking to me 1.....2.....3.....4
3. Spending time with my partner and bonding with him/her can bring peace to us1.....2.....3.....4
4. It is harmful to our relationship for me to address my partner using a harsh tone1.....2.....3.....4
5. It is important that my partner and I learn the process of dealing with marital conflicts1.....2.....3.....4
6. It is dangerous for my partner and I not to deal with marital conflicts conclusively1.....2.....3.....4
7. I should show an interest when my partner looks sad1.....2.....3.....4
8. It harmful to our marriage for me to criticize my partner1.....2.....3.....4

How would you rate your Marital Relationship? Please circle the correct situation below:

Please circle the extent: -

1=Very unsatisfactory: 2= Unsatisfactory: 3= Satisfactory : 4= Very Satisfactory

1. Gender - Please circle the correct gender below

2. Male ----- Female -----

3. I have been married for ----- years

4. Age – Please circle the correct range:

20 – 30

31 - 40

Over 41

CONCLUSION

Kindly check to ensure that you have answered all the questions to your satisfaction. I take this opportunity to thank you most sincerely for taking time to help us with this questionnaire. Your contribution to this study will go a long way in helping improve the counseling interventions given to members of our society that have had marital problems. In gratitude to you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire, I would be willing to share the results from this study if you would be interested to know. Please feel free to contact me on my email address which is – waitituwanjiku@gmail.com. Feel free also to contact me for any further information you may need.

Thank you once again.

Appendix II – Data Collection Consent Letter (PAC University)

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN

UNIVERSITY



P.O. Box 56875, 00200 Nairobi, Kenya
+254 721 932050, +254 734 400694
enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke,
admissions@pacuniversity.ac.ke
www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PASCHALLINE V. WANJIKU WAITITU REG. NO. MFT/0482/15

Greetings! This is an introduction letter for the above named person a final year student in Pan Africa Christian University (PAC University), pursuing a Master of Arts in Marriage and Family Therapy.

She is at the final stage of the programme and she is preparing to collect data to enable her finalise on her thesis. The thesis title is **"Effects of Premarital Counseling on Marital Success among Married Couples in Kasarani Division, Nairobi County, Kenya"**.

We therefore kindly request that you allow her conduct research in your organization.

Warm Regards,

Lillian Vikiru

Dr. Lillian Vikiru
Registrar Academics

PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
P. O. Box 56875, NAIROBI - 00200.
TEL: 8561820/8561945/2013146

6th July, 2017

Where Leaders are made

Appendix III - Certification of Correction of Thesis Proposal



Pan Africa Christian University
P.O Box 56875-00200
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel: +254 721-932050/734-400694
Website: www.pacuniversity.ac.ke

CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTION OF THESIS PROPOSAL

PART I: RELEVANT DETAILS OF THE THESIS

Department: Counseling psy. Degree Title: Marriage and F. Therapy
Candidates' Name: Paschalline W. Wathwa Registration No.: 0482115 Signature: [Signature]
Date of Oral Defense: _____
Title of Thesis: The Effects of premarital Counseling on Marital Success among married couples in Kasarani Division, Nairobi County, Kenya

PART II: DECLARATION BY SUPERVISOR(S) AND THE REVIEWER(S)

I / we, the undersigned do hereby confirm that I / we have closely looked at the corrections as instructed by the Post Graduate Defense Committee and I / we do hereby certify that **ALL** the corrections have been effected as agreed.

NAME: _____ SIGN: _____ DATE: _____
(SUPERVISOR)

NAME: Dr. Esther Marwa SIGN: [Signature] DATE: 04/07/2017
(SUPERVISOR)

NAME: Amos A Keya SIGN: [Signature] DATE: 06/07/2017
(REVIEWER)

PART III: CONFIRMATION BY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Confirmed that the Supervisor and Reviewer appointed to oversee the corrections have done so as per the Instructions of the Post Graduate Committee

NAME: [Signature] SIGN: [Signature] DATE & STAMP: 6/7/2017
Dean, Graduate School

The Leadership University of Choice

Appendix IV- NACOSTI Research Clearance Permit

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, research site specified period.
2. Both the Licence and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. Upon request of the Commission, the Licensee shall submit a progress report.
4. The Licensee shall report to the County Director of Education and County Governor in the area of research before commencement of the research.
5. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further permissions from relevant Government agencies.
6. This Licence does not give authority to transfer research materials.
7. The Licensee shall submit two (2) hard copies and upload a soft copy of their final report.
8. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of this Licence including its cancellation without prior notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No.A 15272

CONDITIONS: see back page

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

MS. PASCHALLINE V. WANJIKU WAITITU
of PAN AFRICA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY, 0-100 NAIROBI, has been
permitted to conduct research in
Kiambu County

on the topic: **EFFECTS OF PREMARITAL
COUNSELING ON MARITAL SUCCESS
AMONG MARRIED COUPLES IN
KASARANI DIVISION, NAIROBI COUNTY -
KENYA**

for the period ending:
3rd August, 2018

Applicant's
Signature

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/17/41300/18207
Date Of Issue : 3rd August, 2017
Fee Received : Ksh 1000



Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation