

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

EFFECTS OF PREMARITAL EDUCATION AND COUNSELLING ON  
THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES OF UNIVERSITY OF CAPE  
COAST STUDENTS TOWARDS MARRIAGE

BY  
BETTY FRANCES BAIDOO

Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling, College of  
Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Guidance and  
Counselling

CALL No.	
ACCESSION No. 7309	
CAT CHECKED	FINAL CHECKED

JULY 2021

**SAM JONAH LIBRARY**  
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
CAPE COAST

DECLARATION

**Candidate's Declaration**

I hereby declare that the thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... *BFR* ..... Date.. *06/05/22*  
Name: .. *BETTY FRANCES BAIDOO* .....

**Supervisors' Declaration**

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down in the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature... *G Awab* ..... Date.. *09/05/2022*  
Name: .. *Prof. Godwin Awabil* .....

Co-Supervisor's Signature... *FS* ..... Date.. *09/05/2022*  
Name: .. *Prof. Frederick Ocansey* .....

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. The study was based on the quantitative research approach and adopted the quasi-experimental research design. The sample comprised 150 students selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaire comprising the Relationship Knowledge Questionnaire and the Marital Attitudes and Expectations Scale. The intervention was carried out for the two experimental groups (Premarital counselling and premarital education) in eight weeks. Data were analysed using One-Way and Two-Way Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the groups involved in the study in terms of their knowledge about marriage. Specifically, participants in the premarital education and premarital counselling groups had higher scores in terms of knowledge about marriage compared to the control group. The study also found that there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the groups in terms of the attitude towards marriage. Specifically, participants in the premarital education and counselling groups had higher scores relating to their attitudes towards marriage when compared with the control group. It was concluded therefore that premarital education and counselling improves the knowledge of students about marriage. It was recommended that to improve the knowledge and attitude of students regarding marriage, university counsellors and other marriage counsellors should adopt premarital education and counselling approaches in dealing with students.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My heartfelt appreciation goes to Professor Godwin Awabil and Professor Frederick Ocansey for their immense contribution towards this thesis. I am also grateful to all my Lecturers throughout this programme. I also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my husband and the family for their support, The Methodist Church Ghana for giving me the opportunity to pursue this programme. I also want to show my appreciation to Dr. Kyereme Dabone for their good works towards this project.



**DEDICATION**

To my husband, Mr. Kingsley Baidoo and children Emma, Sabina, Eben,

Arhin and Love



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
DEDICATION	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
KEYWORDS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	9
Hypotheses	10
Assumptions	11
Significance of the Study	11
Delimitation of the Study	13
Limitations	13
Operational Definition of Terms	14
Organisation of the Study	14
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	16
Theoretical Framework	17
Role Theory	17
Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)	19

Health Belief Model	21
Premarital Education Models	23
Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP)	23
Premarital Preparation and Relationship Enhancement (PREPARE)	26
Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS)	27
Relationship Evaluation (RELATE)	28
Save Your Marriage Before it Starts (SYMBIS)	30
Conceptual Review	31
Marriage	31
Counselling	32
Premarital Education	33
Marital Quality and Satisfaction	35
Issues Discussed in Premarital Education	37
Commitment	37
Communication	39
Intimacy	40
Conflict Resolution	41
Financial Management	42
Divorce and Its Causes	43
Infidelity	44
Financial Issues	44
Extraordinary Situations	44
Incompatibility and Irreconcilable Differences	45
Empirical Review	45

Influence of Premarital Education and Counselling on Marriages	45
Premarital Counselling and Demographic Variables (Gender and Age)	67
Conceptual Framework	73
Chapter Summary	74
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS</b>	
Introduction	75
Research Paradigm	75
Research Design	77
Study Area	80
Population	80
Sample and Sampling Procedure	81
Control for Extraneous Variables	83
Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria	84
Data Collection Instrument	84
Relationship Knowledge	85
Marital Attitudes and Expectations Scale (Park, 2012)	85
Validity	86
Threats to Validity and How they were Minimized	86
Reliability	90
Data Collection Procedure	91
Data Processing and Analysis	91
Intervention Techniques	92
Premarital Education Programme (PEP) Group	93
Premarital Counselling Group	102
Ethical Considerations	111



Chapter Summary	112
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	
Introduction	113
Demographic Data	113
Testing of Hypotheses	114
Hypothesis Two	117
Hypothesis Three	120
Hypothesis Four	122
Hypothesis Five	124
Hypothesis Six	127
Final Model	130
Discussion	130
Effect of Premarital Education and Counselling on Students' Knowledge about Marriage	130
Effect of Premarital Education and Counselling on Students' Attitude towards Marriage	132
Difference in the Knowledge of Participants about Marriage with Regard to Gender	135
Difference in the Attitudes of Participants towards Marriage on the Basis of Gender	136
Difference in the Knowledge of Participants about Marriage with Regard to Age	137
Difference in the Attitudes of Participants towards Marriage in the Experimental Groups on the Basis of Age	139
Chapter Summary	139

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction	141
Summary of Major Findings	143
Conclusions	144
Recommendations	145
Implications for Counselling	147
Suggestions for Further Research	147
REFERENCES	149
APPENDICES	176
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS	177
APPENDIX B: MARITAL ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS SCALE (Park, 2012)	180
APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTORY LETTER	184
APPENDIX D:	
APPENDIX E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE	186
APPENDIX F: PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OUTPUTS	187

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Selection of Participants	83
2	Demographic Data of Respondents	113
3	ANCOVA on Effects Premarital Counselling and Education on Knowledge about Marriage	115
4	Sidak Post-Hoc Comparisons	116
5	Adjusted Mean Estimates	117
6	ANCOVA on Effects Premarital Counselling and Education on Attitude towards Marriage	118
7	Sidak Post-Hoc Comparisons	119
8	Adjusted Mean Estimates	120
9	ANCOVA on Differences in Knowledge about Marriage in relation to gender	121
10	Adjusted Mean Estimates	122
11	ANCOVA on Differences in Attitude towards Marriage in relation to gender	123
12	Adjusted Mean Estimates	124
13	ANCOVA on Differences in Knowledge about Marriage in relation to age	125
14	Adjusted Mean Estimates	126
15	ANCOVA on Differences in Attitude towards Marriage in relation to Age	128
16	Adjusted Mean Estimates	129

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure		Page
1	Conceptual Framework	73
2	Final Model of Study	130



**KEYWORDS**

Marriage

Knowledge about marriage

Attitude towards marriage

Premarital education

Premarital counselling



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

It is expected that 'boy-girl' relationship among adolescence lead them to successful marriages. Marriage as a social institution is beneficial in so many respects. Specifically, marriage is good for couples, children, and the entire community (Kiuna & Kiuna, 2012). Unhealthy marriages, on the other hand, can put a couple's mental, financial, emotional, and physical well-being at danger (Lundbald & Hansson, 2005). It is of importance therefore that people are prepared for marriage. Premarital education is available to help would-be couples prepare for their marriage (Whitehead, 2004).

Premarital education refers to the services provided to young couples on the verge of marriage in order to advise, educate, and prepare them for the formation of a happy family (Al-Kahtani, 2000). When one considers the chances of facing big problems early in a marriage, the repercussions of marital pain, and the high rate of divorce, the advantages of premarital education become clear (Halford & Simons, 2005). This study therefore sought to investigate the efficacy of premarital education on university students. The introductory chapter covered the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, hypotheses, significance of the study, delimitations, limitations, definition of terms and organization of the study.

#### **Background to the Study**

The wedding ceremony, rather than the marriage, is often the focus of prospective couples (Shaju & Subhashini, 2017). Planning a lavish wedding seems to be appealing to some couples. Friends will be present, family will be

in attendance and acquaintances will also be there to offer their support. For this reason, elaborate plans may be made to ensure that guests are comfortable and have had enough to eat and drink. However, after the pomp and pageantry, everyone leaves and the couples are left to face the reality of the change in their status, married people. In this state, preparation before the wedding makes all the difference. Whether couples will stay together or fall apart will depend on the preparations done before the wedding ceremony.

Studies have shown that more marriages are falling apart in recent times (Tuffour, 2017). Divorce rates have increased across countries. For instance, Hungary, which reported the highest rate in divorce had 67 percent of marriages breaking apart. Other notable countries that have high rates of divorce include, France (55%), United States of America (53%), and Spain (61%). Other countries that have high rates of divorce include, Cuba (56%), and Czech Republic (66%) (Plunkett, 2014). In Africa, some of the countries with high rate of divorce are Botswana, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria and Ethiopia (Gage-Brandon, 1992; Moeti, Koloi-Keaikitse & Mokgolodi, 2017; Takyi & Gyimah, 2007; Tilson & Larsen, 2000). According to Tuffour (2017), Ghana specifically has seen a rise in divorce in recent times. Due to the consequence of divorce, it is critical that researchers look at characteristics that have the potential to reduce the likelihood of divorce and improve marital quality and functioning (Schachtner, 2017).

Making the decision to marry is a difficult task. As a result, marriage enrichment and education programmes are considered as a must for would-be partners. They have grown increasingly popular as prophylactic approaches to marital distress. Marriage preparation education has developed over the years

from religious marriage celebrants' advice to a variety of resources conducted by mental health specialists, educators, and trained lay couples. Sequence of therapy sessions, structured workshops, and community support groups have all been used to prepare couples for marriage (Halford, 2004; Doherty & Anderson, 2004). Among the most significant marriage preparation programmes is premarital counselling.

Several previous studies have shown that premarital education can be an effective process for marriage stability (Echebe, 2010; Otondo, 2008; Sukori, 2011; Tambling & Glebova, 2013; Teibowei, 2011). Premarital education is a method aimed at providing individuals with information on how to progress their relationship once they are officially married (Lopang & Bakadzimoeti, 2018). The practice of premarital education may be traced back many decades in history all around the world (Olson, Olson & Larson, 2012). Some decades later, premarital education has become widespread across the world. Premarital education also has its roots in the African Traditional Religion (Odero, 2018).

Premarital education is a type of education that focuses on a couple's interpersonal interaction and assists would-be couples in evaluating their relationship in preparation for marriage and learning how to have a happy and successful marriage. Premarital education increases the likelihood of happiness by assisting individuals in identifying their anxieties, values, beliefs, wants, and desires, as well as empowering them to communicate effectively in marriage relationships (Moeti, Koloï-Keaikitse & Mokgolodi, 2017).

Premarital education is a technique to reduce the likelihood of divorce and boost post-marriage relationship satisfaction. It can also provide an



opportunity for intervention based on the risks of divorce that have been recognized. Vaccination, nutrition, genetic counselling, contraception counseling, chronic disease counselling, infection treatment, and a reduction in teratogenic risk were all part of this effort. In addition, a premarital test may be administered to potential married couples as a baseline health evaluation. A potential bride and groom can be tested for positive health, genetic infectious, and blood-borne diseases here, reducing the risk of disease transmission to each other and their children (Mohamady, Said & Sayed, 2017).

Premarital education, according to Stahmann and Salts (1993), helps couples adjust smoothly from singlehood to married life and boosts couples' stability and contentment. They went on to say that premarital education improves couples' communication, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, as well as their friendship, commitment, and intimacy. Couples are given ways to help them reduce cases of divorce and instead enjoy happy, robust, and healthy marriages through premarital education (Echebe, 2010). Due to premarital education, couples acclimatise quickly to marriage (Teibowei, 2011).

Premarital education aims to increase stability and satisfaction by improving communication skills, increasing companionship and promise in the relationship, increasing intimacy between the couples, and introducing and implementing problem-solving and decision-making abilities in the areas of finances and marital responsibility (Mohamady et al., 2017). Communication, beliefs, values, roles in marriage, family ties, decision-making, and time spent together are all issues that couples are encouraged to explore. Again, during the premarital time, couples have the opportunity to discuss the future,

covering topics such as home economics, the decision to have children, employment problems, and home construction (Mohamady et al., 2017).

Furthermore, during the premarital period, men and women attempt to comprehend their true identities, expectations, and qualities, as well as those of their partners (Kalkan & Ersanli, 2008). This involves two key issues. The first is for the partner to know him or herself while the second is to know about his or her partner. People who are getting married frequently emphasize the type of person their partner is; because they do not study themselves, they have no way of knowing whether or not they will get along with him (Tarhan, 2008). The sense of responsibility, communication skills, stress coping skills, self-disclosure, and altruism are all factors to consider during the premarital phase (Boran, 2003; Yavuzer, 2004).

According to Mehroz, Yadak and Hatami (2010), when people have the right instructions, they can make better decisions and deal with emotions like fear, anger, shyness, and melancholy in a healthy way. In equipping young people with the right information about marriage, some educational approaches have been found to be effective.

Premarital education interventions take on a variety of forms. Some of these have been discussed extensively in the literature. These are Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS), Premarital Preparation and Relationship Enhancement (PREPARE), Relationship Evaluation (RELATE) and the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP) (Williams, 2007). One common strategy or approach is a defined curriculum (e.g., PREP) presented by qualified facilitators in a group environment.

Others include online programmes, whereas the majority of face-to-face premarital education programmes are provided in religious contexts and often contain religious perspectives (Stanley, Rhoades, & Markman, 2006). Some engaged couples prepare for marriage by filling out a detailed inventory or questionnaire that elicits issues related to future marital success, and then discussing those issues with a qualified facilitator or counselor. There are several characteristics all premarital programmes, regardless of their format or delivery.

To deal with the obstacles that often accompany married life, interventions focus on better understanding oneself and one's partner, actively assessing and matching expectations, establishing core principles for good relationships, and developing skills for effective communication (Clyde, Hawkins & Willoughby, 2020). Premarital education programmes also presuppose a prior commitment to a relationship and a shared future. Premarital therapies have been shown to improve communication skills and reduce the chance of divorce in the early stages of marriage (Fawcett, Hawkins, Blanchard & Carroll, 2010; Stanley et al., 2006). Importantly, couples who engage in premarital interventions are more likely to seek marital counselling later on to address issues (Williamson, Trail, Bradbury & Karney, 2014).

Globally, it has become evident that the provision of premarital education can significantly alter and make marriages better (Halford, Markman, Kline & Stanley, 2003). Such premarital education could reduce cynical and idealistic expectations and increase realistic expectations. Thus, overall, one of the most significant measures for preventing future marital

issues is premarital education (Mitwally, Abd El-Rahman & Mohammed, 2000). In Africa, similar reports have been made about the effectiveness of premarital education on the satisfaction that couples find in their marriages (Kariuki, 2017). From the foregoing, it has become clear that premarital education influences the relationship of people. It is against this background that the current study sought to examine the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Statistics have shown that two thirds of all marriages are bound to fail (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). Most couples complain of unhappiness within the marital relationship leading to marital distress and ultimately divorce (Reis & Sprecher, 2009; Halford, 2003). There have been general enquiry if some counselling programmes were effective and also if they reached the people who needed them. Premarital education has been cited by scholars to be a preventive tool for divorce (Carroll & Doherty, 2003).

Premarital education programmes are best described as a knowledge and skill-based training approach aimed at providing couples with information on how to improve their marriage once they are married (Senediak, 1990). These kind of programmes are usually instructional in nature, and they are usually time-limited and content-specific. These programmes, whether in the form of group therapy or individual therapy, are beneficial to all couples, regardless of whether they are newly married or have been married for a long time or are now about to get married (Simpson, Rholes, & Neligan, 2001).

Generally, premarital education has been demonstrated to reduce marital distress, improve communication skills, and boost relationship satisfaction (Johnson & Lebow, 2000). Also, it empowers couples to be successful in their married lives (Law & Crane, 2000). The efficacy of premarital education is therefore not in doubt (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, & Fawcett, 2008).

In the Ghanaian context, it has been confirmed that there is a gloomy picture of marital instability (Agbodza, 2016; Tuffour, 2017). Amankwah (2013) and Adjassah (2015) have both noted that divorce cases in Ghana are very high. Data from the 2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC) have revealed that 553,065 persons in Ghana have had their marriages dissolved while 405,090 have separated (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). The indication from the data is that most marriages do not last as long as expected. To curtail this therefore, there is the need to explore measures that can help reduce divorce rates. In terms of empirical studies, only a few studies on the effects of premarital education on marriage relationships have been published. Most of these studies have dealt with married couples and how counselling helps them, usually dealing with one therapeutic approach (Dei, 2019).

A few of the studies, such as that of Opoku-Adjei (2018) have focused on single young adults and how premarital education affects them. Opoku-Adjei's study focused mainly on just premarital education. The current study however expands to compare how premarital education and premarital counselling affects the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. In this sense, the current study will bridge the gaps

in the literature while at the same time providing empirical evidence on how unsuccessful marriages can be prevented in the future.

In the University of Cape Coast, consultations with Counselling Centre brought to awareness that most students bring several intimate relationship and marriage-based issues to counselling. This means that for most students in the university, they had issues and struggles with intimate relationships. This necessitated focusing on the University of Cape Coast in this study. Thus, if such issues are not addressed, there is the likelihood that students would enter into marriage with less appropriate knowledge concerning marriages or in other situations not get married at all.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. find out the effects of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.
2. ascertain the effects of premarital education and counselling on students' attitudes towards marriage.
3. determine the influence of gender on students' knowledge about marriage in the experimental groups.
4. examine the influence of gender on students' attitudes towards marriage in the experimental groups.
5. find out the influence of age on students' knowledge about marriage in the experimental groups.

6. ascertain the influence of age on students' attitude towards marriage in the experimental groups.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested to guide the conduct of the study:

$H_{01}$ : There is no statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.

$H_{A1}$ : There is a statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.

$H_{02}$ : There is no statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage.

$H_{A2}$ : There is a statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage.

$H_{03}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage in the experimental groups with regard to gender.

$H_{A3}$ : There is a statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage in the experimental groups with regard to gender.

$H_{04}$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage in the experimental groups on the basis of gender.

*H<sub>A4</sub>*: There is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage in the experimental groups on the basis of gender.

*H<sub>05</sub>*: There is no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage in the experimental groups with regard to age.

*H<sub>A5</sub>*: There is a statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage in the experimental groups with regard to age.

*H<sub>06</sub>*: There is no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage in the experimental groups on the basis of age.

*H<sub>A6</sub>*: There is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage in the experimental groups on the basis of age.

### **Assumptions**

The study is founded on the following assumptions:

1. Effective premarital education and counselling will significantly improve the knowledge and attitudes of students about marriage.
2. Demographic variables (gender and age) will significantly influence the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of students towards marriage.

### **Significance of the Study**

In recent times most graduate students in Ghana turn to enter into marriage immediately after tertiary education and this trend has drawn the



attention of many especially marriage counselors, policy makers of marriage laws in Ghana as well as prospective couples to the call to understand the effect of religious affiliations of prospective couples and how it can influence the relationship between perception of premarital counselling, perception of divorce and couple satisfaction and well-being in marriage.

In view of the above, this study sought to enlighten people especially university graduates who want to enter into marriage after tertiary education to appreciate the benefits of premarital counselling and how it can contribute towards attaining a stable and satisfactory marital life for prospective couples (Teibowei, 2011; Tambling & Glebova, 2013; Moeti, Koloi-Keaikitse & Mokolodi, 2017). In addition, since limited research work has been conducted in the arena of premarital counselling and its outcomes like perceived divorce, marital satisfaction and wellbeing of prospective couples, this study may serve as the gateway for such vital insight and knowledge which may add up to existing literature both in Ghana and beyond.

Furthermore, marriage counselors and psychologists who oversee counselling sections in various churches would be well informed about the antecedent and outcome of premarital counselling among graduate students in Ghana. Although, Bruhn and Hill (2004) have found that prospective couples hardly see any therapists and professional counsellors at the start of their romance, however this study would help counselors to gain valuable knowledge and information that can be incorporated into their counselling strategies when attempting to help their clients during counselling sections.

Finally, government agencies and institutions responsible for formulating marital laws and handling marital issues such as divorce cases and

conflict in marriage like the Domestic violence and victim support unit (DOVVSU) may also benefit from this study. Through this study such agencies might understand the valuable role of communication in enhancing marital satisfaction (Carroll & Doherty, 2003) hence this may guide them in designing massive public campaign and advocacy programmes to champion the call for premarital counselling in Ghana and beyond.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study dealt with the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of students towards marriage. Again, the study dealt with the role demographic variables (gender, age and year of study) play in how premarital education and counselling affect students' knowledge and attitude towards marriage. The participants in the study will be students from the University of Cape Coast.

### **Limitations**

Although the study promises to provide novel information about how premarital education and premarital counselling programme impact the quality of relationships towards marriage, there are a few notable limitations. The limitations of this study may stem from participants' ability to understand the lecture and discussion. This was addressed by engaging tertiary students who will be able to understand and participate in the lecture as well as discussion. Also, if participants are tired, quality of engagement will be low. This will affect how the intervention makes an impact. The researcher addressed this keeping the administration of intervention at a reasonable time so that participants do not lose interest. Finally, participants' already existing belief

that 'love is enough' (Cobb, Larson, & Watson, 2003) may discourage participants from making any change in behaviour.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

**Marriage:** This is used to refer to legally, traditionally and formally recognized union of a man and a woman as a couple. This means that heterosexual marriage is the focus in this study.

**Attitude towards marriage:** This is used to refer to the general views, perceptions and desirability of people towards marriage and their likelihood to get married.

**Knowledge about marriage:** This is used to refer to the general know-how about what marriage entails and how marriages work.

**Premarital education:** This is used to refer to counsellor-centered methods such as information sharing and social skills training in which the counsellor serves as a teacher educating students about marriage. The maximum number of participants was 50.

**Premarital counselling:** This is used to refer to client-centered methods such as cognitive restructuring and guided discovery (Socratic method) and mainly includes discussions and questions and answers about marriage. The maximum number of participants per group was 25. Thus, two sub-groups making a total of 50 participants.

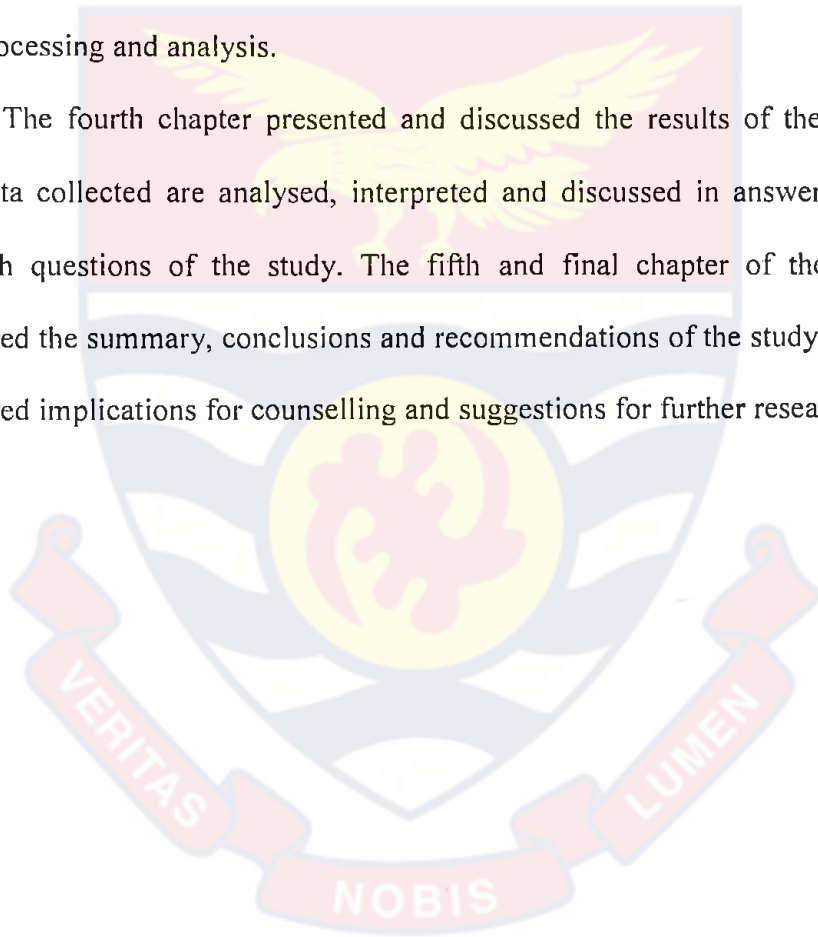
### **Organisation of the Study**

The study was organised in five chapters. The first chapter dealt with the introduction of the study. This included the background to the study, statement of the problems, purpose of the study, research questions and the

significance of the study. It also dealt with the delimitation of the study, limitations of the study, and definition of terms.

The second chapter reviewed literature related to the study. It covered the theoretical and conceptual frameworks as well as the review of related empirical studies. Chapter three of the study focused on the methodology for the study. This covered the research design, the study area, the population, the sampling procedures, the instrument used, data collection procedure and the data processing and analysis.

The fourth chapter presented and discussed the results of the study. The data collected are analysed, interpreted and discussed in answer to the research questions of the study. The fifth and final chapter of the study presented the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. It also presented implications for counselling and suggestions for further research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. This chapter dealt with the review of related literature. The review covered the outline below:

#### Theoretical Framework

- Role Theory
- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
- Health Belief Model

#### Conceptual Review

- Marriage
- Counselling
- Premarital Education and Counselling
- Premarital education programmes
- Marital Quality and Satisfaction
- Issues Discussed in Premarital Education

#### Empirical Review

- Influence of Premarital Education and Counselling on Marriages
- Premarital Counselling and Demographic Variables (Gender and Age)

#### Conceptual Framework

## Theoretical Framework

The study is founded on three main theories. These include the role theory, cognitive behaviour therapy and the health belief-model which are reviewed and discussed in detail in this section.

### Role Theory

Role theory as is connected to marriage was propounded by Baldwin, Ellis and Baldwin (1999). According to this theory, marital satisfaction and stability are affected by both an individual's primary role and their role support for their spouse's primary function. When spouses share a strong commitment to an activity or when one spouse who is extremely engaged to an activity has significant role support from the non-committed spouse, marital satisfaction is anticipated to be highest.

The theory has its central idea that human actions are directed in ways seeking to bring results that they hope will satisfy their motives. The proponents of this theory, in explaining why human actions are socially patterned, contend that most of a person's activities involve counter activities on the part of other persons (Weiss, 2014). This means that what one chooses to do at a point in time may go contrary to other people's way of life even if they share similar ideologies. Roles are considered to be social constructs because a husband cannot act as such without reference to a real wife. This implies that the actions of men and women are not separate, isolated or discreet but are intertwined activities of two or more persons (Manne & Badr, 2008).

Role theorists also contend that the integrative quality of a marriage is seen as a function of how couples perceive their roles, expect the role to be

and perform the role (Weiss, 2014). Hu, Li, Ye, and Wang (2021), identifying roles as work or employment, asserted that changing sex roles has potential impact for marital and family structure. He noted that economic constraints and resultant employment behaviours might over time have resulted in changing norms about sex roles. Carreiro (2021) noted that the most significant and dramatic changes in modern marriage has been on role expectation and behavior.

Glenn (1994) contributing to the changing perception in norms about marital roles noted that until recently these were culturally prescribed but they have now become a matter for negotiation in individual marriage. Akinade (1997) observed the flexibility in the expectation of the roles of the spouses in modern times. He contended that such flexibility in roles tends towards egalitarianism.

However, regarding the flexibility of roles, Manne and Badr (2008) object to it and rather see flexibility as a mere assertion derived from wishful thinking. They contend that people's own observation that marriage was no more an owner-property arrangement in which a wife was assumed to be "owned" by her husband meant she must then automatically be his equal. They argued the assumption that husband and wife roles complement each other's and therefore husbands and wives are equal cannot be valid. According to them, women have been assigned to tasks that carry fewer rewards, risky and at lower ranks and demand greater dependence. Such clarification by Manne and Badr (2008) is very crucial and momentary since it is the general perception that when gender-role differentiations are removed or reduced then wives are said to be equal to their husbands.

According to Thompson (2001), role expectations for appropriate behaviour in that position influence role behaviour, and changes in role behaviour happen in an iterative process of role sending and receiving. Jenson and Sineau (2001) are of the view that one of the most significant notions in role theory, according to them, is that people act out specific roles in predictable ways. Each function entails particular responsibilities, which are usually fulfilled subconsciously. A role is a collection of behaviours that a person acquires over time rather than something that comes naturally to them.

Therefore, when spouses share a strong commitment to an activity or when one spouse who is extremely engaged to an activity has significant role support from the non-committed spouse, marital satisfaction is anticipated to be highest. The theory is considered relevant in the current study because during premarital education, would-be couples are educated on the different roles of couples and how couples can support each other. Based on this, it is highly possible that would-be couples would have successful marriages.

### **Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT)**

Aaron Beck, a psychiatrist, developed cognitive behavioral therapy in the 1960s (Martin, 2019). He was practicing psychoanalysis at the time and noticed that his patients had an internal conversation going on in their heads during their sessions, almost as if they were talking to themselves. But they would only tell him a fraction of what they were thinking. From this, he came up with the theory to pay more attention to the thinking patterns of clients.

According to Cherry (2020), cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) as an approach in therapy focuses on altering negative thought patterns of clients. Negative beliefs are discovered, questioned, and changed with more objective,



realistic thoughts using cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT is about more than just recognizing thought patterns; it is about applying a variety of tactics to help people overcome them. Journaling, role-playing, relaxation techniques, and mental distractions are examples of such strategies.

According to Martin (2019), Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a goal-oriented, short-term psychotherapy treatment that focuses on problem-solving using a hands-on, practical approach. As a technique of treating with emotional difficulties, CBT focuses on changing people's attitudes and behavior by focusing on the thoughts, pictures, beliefs, and attitudes that are held (a person's cognitive processes) and how these processes relate to the way a person behaves. CBT is well-known as one of the most common therapy for psychological illnesses and marital issues (Poulsen et al., 2014). CBT can shield couples from the harmful impacts of disagreements and bad ideas by developing good mental states and variables.

Martin (2019) argues that cognitive-behavioral therapy differs from many other types of psychotherapies in that the sessions are structured rather than the person talking about whatever comes to mind. The client meets with the therapist at the start of therapy to identify particular difficulties and set goals to work toward. These issues and objectives are then used to plan the topic of sessions and explore how to address them. Typically, the client and therapist will decide together on the primary subjects they want to work on this week at the start of a session.

The application of cognitive behavioural therapy to marital issues was formalized in the 1980s as Cognitive-behavioral Marital Therapy (CBMT). As a therapeutic theory, CBMT can explain why individuals and members in

the HBM was to account for the unwillingness of people to participate in preventive health programmes (Rosenstock, 1960, 1974). Later, the model was extended to study people's responses and behaviours in response to incidence of illnesses (Becker, 1974). The Health Belief Model assumes that an individual's behaviour is guided by expectations of consequences of adopting new practices. Since, it was originally focused on diseases, its concepts are related to diseases. However, they can be adapted to any endeavor of behaviour change.

According to Glanz, Rimer and Lewis (2002), there are some key constructs of the model. These constructs have been adapted as to how they relate to premarital counselling and marital satisfaction.

*Perceived Susceptibility:* is the likelihood or risk of having an unsuccessful marriage or divorce.

*Perceived Severity:* is the possible consequence of having an unsatisfied and unsuccessful marriage. The combination of susceptibility and severity has been labeled as perceived threat.

*Perceived Benefits:* Even if a person perceives personal susceptibility to be serious (perceived threat), whether this perception leads to undertaking an activity will be influenced by the person's beliefs regarding perceived benefits of the activity.

*Perceived Barriers:* Potentially negative characteristics of a specific action—perceived barriers—could operate as roadblocks to taking recommended activities. Individuals assess the projected benefits of an action against perceived restrictions in a form of unconscious cost-benefit analysis.

*Cues to Action:* These are the cues that can trigger actions.

*Other Variables:* Glanz et al. (2002) have indicated that demographic variables such as educational attainment, can also influence actions.

In relation to the current study, it can be inferred that individuals are likely to pursue premarital counselling if they believe that there is likelihood of having unsuccessful marriages (perceived susceptibility) and that such unsuccessful marriages can have consequences for the individual as a person (perceived severity). However, even in the light of this, the individual will consider the perceived benefits (successful marriage) of engaging in premarital counselling in connection with the perceived barriers (cost).

### **Premarital Education Models**

Many programmes and models aim to slow down the decision-making process of couples considering marriage, giving them more time to think about their choices and better prepare for their marriages (Stanley, 2001). This is part of the preventative approach, which is hoped to result in happier and more functional marriages (Carroll & Doherty, 2003; Markman & Hahlweg, 1993). Several counselling programmes have been discussed as used extensively during premarital education. These are Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS), Premarital Preparation and Relationship Enhancement (PREPARE), Relationship Evaluation (RELATE) and the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP).

### **Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP)**

Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP) teaches couples how to communicate effectively and apply problem-solving skills, all

of which have been linked to good marital functioning. Guidelines for resolving conflict, forgiveness, speaker/listener practices, and how to sustain and build delight and companionship are all examples of problem-solving abilities (Kepler, 2015). For individuals who teach relationship education, the curriculum includes the following resources: PREP attempts to assist couples maintain high levels of functioning and prevent marital difficulties by utilizing cognitive-behavioral marital therapy and communication-oriented marital enhancement programmes. Communication skills, confidence that marriage can endure, positive bonding between couples, contentment with sacrificing for marriage and spouse, relationship satisfaction and stability, communication, and conflict management are just a few of the subjects covered in PREP.

According to Ndlovu (2000), PREP is available in two formats: an extended version in which couples attend a weekly two- to two-and-a-half-hour meeting in groups of four to eight couples to hear brief lectures on communication and relationship issues, and a shorter version in which couples attend a weekly two- to two-and-a-half-hour meeting in groups of four to eight couples to hear brief lectures on communication and relationship issues. A communication consultant is appointed to each couple, who works with them individually as they practice skills. During an alternative weekend, twenty to forty engaged young people receive communication lectures in a group context and practice the skills on their own.

According to Stanley, Markman, St. Peters, and Leber (1995), these couples were separated into two groups: those who received the PREP and those who did not (the control group). These couples participated in research

sessions every year and a half. They discovered that how men handled problems was a better predictor of the marriage's future state than how women handled problems. Premarital invalidation was also found to be a predictor of future marital dissolution by these researchers. Those who took part in PREP had higher marital satisfaction after three years than those who were in the control group. There was a significant difference between the husbands who participated in PREP and those who did not in a 5-year pre- and post-test (Stanley et al., 1995).

According to Williams and Jurich's (1995) study on the effectiveness of PREP, couples who learned how to communicate and negotiate conflicts were not only less likely to divorce or separate than the control group, but they also reported greater mental satisfaction, fewer conflicts, and less physical violence. When compared to couples who received PREP from university clinicians, Mutter, Ande, and Hugo (2010) found that couples who received the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme (PREP) from their religious community had fewer negative interactions with their spouse and more positive interactions. Pastors and clergy, despite their lack of expertise, routinely give front-line care in cases of domestic abuse, depression, and suicide, and they enjoy the same level of approbation as psychologists and psychiatrists (Marks, 2007).

Stanley (2010) found that a husband's spouse's self-esteem, open communication, and relationship stability are among the top premarital predictors of marital sexual satisfaction. Self-esteem, open communication, and their husband's empathic communication were the best predictors of wives' marital sexual happiness. The open communication of their spouse,

which is consistent with the (PREP), is the second-best predictor of husbands' marital sexual satisfaction. This can minimize their risks for eventual marital discomfort or termination (Larson, Anderson, Holman, & Niemann, 1998).

### **Premarital Preparation and Relationship Enhancement (PREPARE)**

The Premarital Preparation and Relationship Enhancement (PREPARE) was created by Larsen and Olson (1989) as an inventory to help identify couples who are likely to divorce. Fowers and Olson (1986) set out to assess the predictive validity of the PREPARE premarital inventory while also evaluating its utility in predicting marital success. A three-year follow-up study with 164 couples who took PREPARE during their engagement was done. Satisfied couples scored much higher on the inventory than unsatisfied couples, divorced couples, and couples who had their marriage annulled, as predicted. It was also expected and discovered that unsatisfied married couples were not significantly different from couples that ended their marriage or divorced.

Researchers discovered that PREPARE scores from three months before marriage could accurately predict which couples were separated and divorced from those who were happily married with an accuracy of 80-90 percent. In 1989, Fowers and Olson conducted a discriminant validity research using a national sample of 5039 married couples to investigate the validity and clinical utility of the marital inventory ENRICH. A cross-validation group was formed by randomly splitting the data. ENRICH is a multidimensional scale, and two types of analyses were used to determine the scales' worth.

According to the results of discriminant analysis, happily married couples could be distinguished from unhappily married couples with 85-95

percent accuracy using either individual or pair scores. A second sample was used to cross-validate the results. Using regression analysis, it was shown that background factors account for very little variance in distinguishing happy from unhappy married couples when compared to their relationship dynamics, i.e. scale scores. Except for equalitarian roles, all ENRICH measures were significant, demonstrating the validity of a multidimensional questionnaire. Using the PREPARE premarital inventory, Fowers and Olson (1992) looked at four types of engaged couples from a sample of 5,030 couples.

Profiles were created utilizing a three-stage clustering analytical approach that included exploratory cluster analysis, replication of the exploratory results, and cross-validation analysis, all of which showed that the 4-cluster solution was the best. The vitalized couples (28 percent) had great scores across the board. The relationship quality of harmonious couples (27%) was moderately positive. Traditional couples (23%) had somewhat low intra-relationship ratings, but higher scores on scales indicating marriage planning. Pervasively low scores were found in conflicted couples (22 percent).

### **Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study (FOCCUS)**

FOCCUS stands for Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding and Study. It is a personalised consultation using a research-based questionnaire and gives couples a good snapshot of how their relationship works. It was developed by FOCCUS Inc., an apostolate of the Archdiocese of Omaha, and is suitable for couples planning to marry in the Catholic Church (Marriage Care, 2012). The picture that develops is shaped by the experiences and answers to questions about family life, how couples

communicate, settle differences and views on faith and spirituality. It is not a test to pass or fail, as every relationship is unique but the responses will help couples in identifying, discussing and working through any issues as they enter this new phase of your relationship.

The FOCCUS programme takes at least two, one-hour, sessions after completing the online questionnaire. Similar to PREPARE, the inventory is able to successfully predict 75% of the time in or during which engaged couples will have a high quality versus a low-quality marriage five years after marriage (Ndlovu, 2000). A research on FOCUS was done by Williams and Jurich (1995) with 270 couples and a follow up was conducted five years after their marriage. It was found that this instrument was able to predict more than 70% of the couples that had high flow quality marriage five years after marriage.

#### **Relationship Evaluation (RELATE)**

The RELATE model was developed after evaluating more than 50 years of research that identified key premarital predictors of later marital quality and stability. Larson and Holman's comprehensive evaluation of research on premarital determinants of marital quality was a fundamental paper for RELATE. The pair process model, which Gottman (1994) exhaustively researched and re-researched and found to be one of the best models for predicting marital success or failure, was included as one of the couple constructs. RELATE provides broad measurements of both sorts of constructs, as well as measures of family background, culture, and values, due to its comprehensive character (Busby, Holman & Taniguchi, 2001).



While the original scales in the instrument were derived from previous versions of RELATE and existing research, there is a conceptual model that organizes the multiple subcategories and indicates relationships between the components measured by the scales. Relationships are established and maintained within a sequence of contexts or subsystems, according to the systemic model underlying RELATE (Bradbury & Fincham, 1987, 1988, 1991). Although many contexts may be measured, the individual, familial, cultural, and couple contexts are the most essential for premarital and marital relationships (Holman, 2001; Larson & Holman, 1994).

Individual characteristics and personality qualities and views and attitudes (autonomy, spirituality, gender and role beliefs, etc.) make up the individual context (Busby et al., 2001). The style and quality of the parents' couple connection, the quality of each parent's interaction with the children, and the difficulties and trauma that a family must undergo are all key parts of the familial setting. These elements of the family contribute to a family tone that ranges from safe-predictable-rewarding to unsafe-chaotic-punishing.

Race, religion, financial class, and geography all play a role in the cultural setting (Busby et al., 2001). Culture also refers to the beliefs and values upheld by the social systems that surround families and individuals. Communication, conflict, sexuality, time together, and other shared activities make up the couple context, which can be quantified (Gottman, 1999). In general, these interaction patterns can be classified as positive or negative, and Gottman (1999) said that the ratio of positive to negative experiences in a couple relationship is an important predictor of relationship stability and satisfaction.

## **Save Your Marriage Before it Starts (SYMBIS)**

According to Fogg (2018), SYMBIS is an online programme that allows engaged or newly married couples (or even long-married couples) to log on and take an examination independently. Many questions regarding personality, upbringing, money attitudes, sex, and much more are included in the assessment. The assessment instrument's findings are addressed with a certified counsellor over the course of at least six sessions to go over any strengths, shortcomings, or red flags identified by the tool.

Comparatively, while FOCUSS places emphasis on variables that are consistent with Christian marriages, PREPARE is a circumflex model and RELATE is based on a developmental contextual model (Larson, Newell, Topham & Nichols, 2002). Larson et al. reported that all three inventories predicted marital satisfaction. However, FOCUSS and PREPARE do not have information on prenatal mental illness and similarity of intelligence. Busby, Ivey, Harris and Ates (2007) suggested that communication skills, conflict resolution, and good affect expression were all taught in most premarital counselling programmes.

Several researches have tested the effectiveness of the three premarital programmes under different conditions. Knutson and Olson (2003) sought to evaluate the PREPARE programme. The researches recruited 153 participants who were prospective couples. Participants were put into; the PREPARE group with feedback, the PREPARE group without feedback and the control group. A baseline was tested on all participants before administration at various levels was undertaken, which was followed by a post test. Findings from the study indicated that, significant changes were made in participants

who received the PREPARE programme. The PREPARE programme was designed to help prospective couples emphasise, send more messages about the value of marriage and also help couples learn to be helpful as well as equip participants with relationship skills.

Also, Busby, Ivey, Harris and Ates (2007) studied the effectiveness of self-directed, therapist directed and RELATE programmes. Like Knutson and Olson (2003), they recruited prospective couples. The findings showed that RELATE had more influence and was better at improving communication and relationship satisfaction. It allowed participants to discuss previous undiscussed issues and general improvement on communication. Busby, Ivey, Harris and Ates (2007) also suggested that, premarital programmes must be tailored to meet the need of individual couples rather than a one-size-fit-all approach. Therapists can assess the prospective couple by asking them questions or employ a formal method by filling out a questionnaire. Prior information about the couple can be collected by the therapist using this method. This will in turn aid the counsellor tailor out a programme that will be essential to the couple.

### **Conceptual Review**

The key concepts in the study are reviewed in this section.

### **Marriage**

Marriage, according to Siji and Rekha (2018), is a stable partnership in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to have children in the context of a family. Marriage is a partnership founded on God's intention of a man and woman living together (Ng'ang'a & Wasanga, 2010). God established marriage for three purposes, according to the Bible: friendship, pleasure, and

procreation, but marital dissatisfaction appears to affect people of all ages, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds, and frequently leads to divorce (Baker, 2019).

Marriage is a fleeting stage in a person's life, and it has traditionally been stressed as the most important social ritual for meeting people's emotional requirements (Nayeri, Lotfi, & Noorani, 2014). The need to love and have an intimate relationship with a spouse, to have a companion in life, to meet psychological requirements, and to boost joy are all incentives for marriage in today's society (Tavakol, Zarei, & Pour, 2014).

### **Counselling**

Counselling is seen as both an art and a science in which two or more people work together to help others with the counsellor usually being an educated, trained, professionally qualified and normally should be licensed and certificated as a helper and the client being the one looking for help. The primary goal of a counselling relationship is to assist clients in resolving challenges, worries, or problems that develop as a result of adjusting to life in an increasingly complex world (Maples, 1996). Again, Counseling, according to the American Counselling Association (2007), is a generally short-term theory-based practice of assisting individuals who are psychologically healthy in resolving developmental and situational challenges. Kelechi and Ihuoma (2011) stressed that the purpose of guidance and counselling is to enable a person to recognize and explore his or her seemingly limitless alternatives.

Counselling has again been described as a process through which clients learn to make decisions and develop new ways of acting, feeling, and thinking. Counselors help clients analyze their current levels of function and

the changes that must be made to reach the targeted personal objectives by concentrating on the set goals. As a result, counselling entails both choice and change as it progresses through stages including investigation, goal formulation, and action.

Counselling has been studied in relation to marriage. This has led to the field of couples counselling or therapy. Couples counselling, according to Kepler (2015), aids all sorts of couples in recognizing and resolving difficulties in order to improve their relationships. Couples counselling is usually a short-term process that is unique, with the treatment plan depending on the condition that the couple is in. Couples counselling is based on several goals. For instance, many couples seek couples counselling to strengthen their bonds, gain a better understanding of one another, and address specific relationships such as divorce, betrayal, anger, financial concerns, substance use and abuse, parenting conflicts, blended families, sexual problems, and a lack of communication. Would-be couples also receive premarital counselling to prepare them for the complications that marriage presents.

### **Premarital Education**

Premarital education is a systematic body of knowledge and skills provided for would-be couples with the aim of improving their relationship after they marry (Senediak, 1990). It is a term that refers to a type of education that aims to develop and enhance premarital relationships, resulting in more satisfying and stable marriages, with the goal of avoiding divorce (Kepler, 2015). Premarital education comprises all psychosocial interventions aimed at providing awareness, knowledge, and competencies to couples planning to

marry in order to mitigate marital issues and thereby improve marital quality (Egbo, 2012).

Premarital education, according to Bradbury and Karney (2014), increases the likelihood of couples seeking couples counselling in the future. Premarital education is more likely to be useful to couples because of the information they gain and because it represents an opportunity for future help seeking. Making couples aware of the availability of relationship interventions and familiarizing them with the habit of seeking help for relationship issues may increase the likelihood of seeking treatment later in their relationship (Bradbury & Karney, 2014). Premarital education has recently taken on a variety of forms, including conferences, couple counselling, marriage workshops, and panel discussions, among other things (Gardiner, Fishman, Nikolov, Laud, & Glosser, 2002).

Premarital education is a preventive initiative that seeks to support relationships prior to marriage in order to prevent the risk of future divorce and give them a better base for a stable and satisfactory marriage (Stahmann, 2000). Premarital education makes would-be couples aware of potential problems in marriage as well as provides them with information about how to prevent or lesson problems in marriage. Premarital education and counselling were designed to assist couples in maintaining relatively high levels of functioning over the course of their marriage (Baker, 2019).

The workshops were also intended to help couples strengthen their relationships. Individuals are provided interventions targeted as preventative measures to assist maintain marital happiness during times of conflict during premarital education sessions (Green & Miller, 2013). Green and Miller

claimed that premarital education initiatives could be critical, changes in dysfunctional interaction patterns within a marriage become difficult.

The providers of premarital education can therefore be private-secular or faith-based, although they come from different backgrounds. In recent times, the clergy, professional counsellors and therapists and physicians are known to provide premarital education for. Notwithstanding, Bruhn and Hill (2004) have found that, prospective couples hardly see any therapists and professional counsellors at the start of their romance. They reported that, most people at that stage presume they would do nothing to offend their partner and therefore do not seek professional counselling.

Nevertheless, premarital education is gaining reputation for having the potential to protect marriage relationship. The rise of divorce has become proof that counselling is not only needed when the marriage is at the brink of collapse, but also when it is fresh (Bruhn & Hill, 2004). Stanley (2001) outlined spousal finances, premarital co-habitation, among others, as key causes of divorce. Therefore, it is incumbent on premarital therapists to provide skills prospective couples will need to have a successful marriage (Bruhn & Hill, 2004).

### **Marital Quality and Satisfaction**

According to Farnam et al. (2011), marital satisfaction is the individual enjoyment with marriage that is based on intra-personal notions. According to Davis (2015), marital satisfaction is a subjective assessment of a couple's experience in their marriage. Self-report surveys are commonly used to assess marital satisfaction, in which spouses respond to a series of questions on various aspects of their marriage. In response to how satisfied are you, each

person can only rate their level of marital satisfaction. A couple's level of contentment cannot be determined by anybody other than the pair. However, marital happiness is only a subjective experience and opinion about how a couple views their marriage at the time they assess their marriage, not how well the relationship is functioning (Baker, 2019).

There is no objective view on how to categorize one marriage as being of good quality than another. In other words, one cannot evaluate a marriage based on mere observation as being a good or bad marriage other than being a participant in that marriage. Marital quality is therefore the subjective assessment of a marital relationship by partners involved in the marriage at hand (Larson & Holman, 1994). This means that individual's evaluation of the quality of their own marriage may differ. Even though the evaluation of marital quality is a subjective one, there are certain factors like background and contextual factors, individual traits and behaviour as well as couple interactional processes that can predict whether a couple will have a quality marriage or otherwise (Larson & Holman, 1994).

Nonetheless, perceived by most scholars, the most prominent factor in predicting a marital quality is premarital counselling. Stanley, Amato, Johnson and Markman (2006) found that involving oneself in premarital counselling was related to improved marital quality with regards to the levels of satisfaction and commitment as well as lowered the frequency with which conflicts occurs. Couples who attend Marriage and Relationship Education (MRE) assist couples estimate their marital happiness higher after they complete the programme, according to Blanchard, Hawkins, Baldwin, and Fawcett (2009). According to Wilmoth and Smyser (2010), marriage



preparation promotes marital satisfaction by increasing one's devotion to his or her spouse, which is linked to a lower divorce rate.

In addition, Futris, Barton, Aholou and Seponski (2011) showed that, premarital counselling leads to a higher degree of nuptial satisfaction and a lower likelihood of divorce for couples. They also have fewer negative interactions and a higher sense of satisfaction in their marriage, as well as fewer negative interactions. According to Kepler (2015), couples who do not have premarital counselling have a 40-50 percent likelihood of divorce. Premarital counseling, whether secular or faith-based, he claims, has the goal of assisting marriages in overcoming life's obstacles. Premarital counselling has been linked to marital quality and satisfaction in several previous research investigations.

### **Issues Discussed in Premarital Education**

During premarital education, several topics and issues are discussed. Some of these issues are reviewed in this section:

#### **Commitment**

According to Byrd (2009), commitment is a dynamic process, rather than a static process which begins when marriage commences. As a dynamic process, married people are responsive to life occurrences. Byrd opined that marital commitment is multifaceted comprising rational and practical phases. Johnson (1991) also pointed out that marital commitment has three components. These are personal, moral and structural commitment. Personal commitment bothers on the individuals' feelings of wanting to be in the marriage (Johnson, Caughlin & Huston, 1999). People who show personal commitment continue in the marriage because they are attracted to the partner

and or the marriage. Also individuals may remain in a relationship because they identify with the relationship to an extent that it forms part of their self-concept.

Moral commitment is shown in people who remain in a marriage because they feel obligated morally to stay (Johnson, 1991). People who show this kind of commitment do so due to their belief that it is improper to dissolve a marriage bond. Here, the words 'until death do us part' is binding. The feeling of being morally obliged to adhere to the promises made to the other partner keeps couples in the marriage. Finally, moral commitment encompasses peoples' want to achieve consistency. People may want to 'finish what they have started' (Johnson, 1991). This concept applies to marriages in a sense that, an individual who adheres to a moral commitment may want to see the marriage through only because they have started it.

The last component of commitment to be discussed is structural commitment. This kind of commitment, unlike the previous, is externally sourced. People who exhibit structural commitment feel constrained in the marriage and must stay due to one or two external factors (Johnson, Caughlin & Huston, 1999). Factors such as social pressure, where an individual is concerned about how they will be viewed by their social network should they leave the marriage; and alternative factors such as benefits that one stands to lose when they leave the marriage. To conclude, another kind of commitment widely discussed in literature, global commitment which measures ones' willingness to stay in the marriage. However, according to Johnson, Caughlin and Hudson (1999), components of global commitment align with personal commitment, thus, global commitment will not be discussed in detail.

## Communication

Communication is vital for the success of marriage. Kiuna and Kiuna (2012) opined that the key to resolving marital issues is communication. In order to develop lasting relationships, couples must communicate in ways that expose their deepest sentiments and underlying needs (Duba-Sauerheber & Bitter, 2013). Communication can be through words, verbal or written; non-words-symbols, sounds, or silence, facial expressions-jeers or smiles; touches-nurturing touch or lack of touch, playful touch, or coercive touch; and/or a combination of these elements in recurrent pattern (Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day, & Gangamma, 2012).

Communication can be effective or poor. Healthy families have effective communication, whereas unhealthy family relationships have inadequate communication. Poor communication is a typical concern among families struggling to keep their marriages together, according to marriage and family therapists (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Poor communication, which is often indirect and ambiguous, can lead to a variety of family issues, including frequent family conflict, a lack of intimacy, a lack of emotional attachment, and inefficient problem-solving strategies.

As a result, Amato and Previti (2003) claim that poor communication between spouses is a key cause of marital dissolution. Disagreements and poor communication styles, according to Dew, Britt, and Huston (2012), are both contributors to divorce. Typically, due to lack of excellent communication skills, males tend to withdraw from discussions about relationship problems (Herzog & Cooney, 2002). Knowing one's self as well as their partners in premarital period, one's ability to express their expectation from the marriage

and possessing problem solving skills are key to the development and continuance of the relationship.

In the transmission of relational issues and subsequent divorce for children of divorced parents, family processes such as inter-parental conflict and poor communication have been proposed as more significant predictors than demographic characteristics (Amato, 1996; Amato, Loomis, & Booth, 1995; Booth & Edwards, 1989). Surprisingly, most research has not looked at the link between parental engagement and adult offspring's eventual interaction patterns in their own relationships.

When potential couples engage in close relationship with the sole aim of understanding each other better in the area of establishing a common vision or goal, enhancing communication and appreciating the strength and weaknesses of each other, then counselling before marriage becomes inevitable. Justifiably so, prospective couples often tend to focus on the excitement regarding the wedding rather than the marriage (Shaju & Subhashini, 2017). Therefore, prospective couples especially those in tertiary institution may have differs views and perceptions about their marriage life and the essence of premarital counselling. Premarital counselling, according to Shumm et al. (2010), can provide couple with areas of incompatibility such as values, life objectives, and conflict resolution strategies.

### **Intimacy**

Intimacy has various connotations depending on age, sex, education, and culture, and no agreement is reached among researchers on what intimacy means at its core, making its definition challenging (Martin & Tardif, 2014; Mitchell, 2007). Bagarozzi (2001) defines intimacy as closeness, resemblance,

and a personal romantic or emotional dialogue that involves knowledge and comprehension of another person to communicate thoughts and feelings.

Physical, emotional, sensory, intellectual, and spiritual closeness that is mutually agreeable to the husband and wife is marital intimacy (Hawkins II, 2016). Genuine warmth, tenderness, and a connection between married spouses should be expressed. Intimacy can develop as a result of a partner's responsiveness being perceived as validating, caring, and understanding, resulting in a mutual feeling of intimacy (Hawkins II, 2016). In addition, intimacy is linked to each partner's own psychological health as well as the couple's relationship pleasure (Mitchell, Castellani, Herrington, Joseph, Doss & Snyder, 2008). Couples' contentment can be improved by increasing their intimacy (Hawkins II, 2016).

Intimacy has been found to be strongly linked to the quality of a couple's life, and is frequently referred to as a basic psychological need and one of the key characteristics of marital communication that influences marital adjustment and satisfaction (Kardan-Souraki, Hamzehgardeshi, Asadpour, Mohammadpour, & Khani, 2016). Several other studies have confirmed the importance of marital intimacy in achieving marital satisfaction (Greeff, Hildegard, & Malherbe, 2001; Kim, 2013). In this sense, a lack of intimacy is one of the most common causes of couples' distress and collapse, negatively impacting their relationships (Duffey, Wooten, Lumadue, & Comstock, 2004; Kim, 2013; Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day, & Gangamma, 2014).

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflicts are inevitable in marriages. As a result, premarital counselling devotes a section towards the resolution of conflicts (Savage,

2015). This is because in the absence of premarital counselling, marital conflicts can spiral out of control and lead to divorce. Couples learn during premarital counselling on how to manage their conflict because it will help their marriage thrive (Davis, 2015). Disagreements are properly managed when the married couple's overall purpose is to resolve conflicts and solve difficulties in a way that is mutually respectful and satisfying for both individuals in the relationship (Savage, 2015). Conflict resolution therefore forms an integral part of the premarital counselling session.

### **Financial Management**

Financial disagreement is one of the major issues that affect marital relationships (Dew, Britt & Huston, 2012). Several studies have revealed that financial issues are significant predictors of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Britt & Huston, 2012; Dew et al., 2012). When couples talk about money, it's not uncommon for tension and feelings to arise. As a result, premarital financial counselling assists couples in understanding, organizing, and resolving current financial concerns before to marriage (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Couples are frequently startled by how divergent their ideas on money are during the financial portion of premarital counselling.

When spouses are unable to reconcile opposing financial implications or have opposing aims for spending or conserving their money, disputes are likely to emerge. Divorces can result from such disagreements. Money problems between couples have been linked to a decrease in marital fulfillment, according to research (Dew, Britt & Huston, 2012).

## Divorce and Its Causes

Marriage is regarded as one of life's most crucial components. It is seen as a religious or spiritual act in most societies and so over the years the concept of divorce has been very much alien in most religious societies (Tajdeen, 2020). However, in recent times, divorce has become an acceptable part of marital relationships. It is viewed as a choice that allows people to leave their marriages if they cannot be repaired. Divorce can be done with mutual consent, which means that the parties are allowed to reach an amicable divorce settlement (Tajdeen, 2020). The parties who file for divorce under these sections have complete discretion over the terms of the divorce. Because the involvement of lawyers and the court is less in a mutual agreement divorce than in a contentious divorce, it appears to be considerably less expensive and speedier than a fought divorce.

Divorce can also be done with mutual consent which means that one partner may file for divorce under some conditions such as infidelity, cruelty, insanity, venereal disease of a communicable form and any other reason cited by the partner (Gandhi, 2017). Poor communication is a common thread among divorced couples, as the causes of divorce can frequently be traced back to communication problems between the married pair (Christensen & Shenk, 1991; Stanley, Markman & Whitton, 2002). To have a successful marriage, you must be able to handle dispute and communicate well. Communication issues are one of the most common reasons of conflict for couples (Schapp, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988), making it the most common problem reported by couples seeking professional counseling (Broderick, 1981). Even still, divorce may be essential at times.

Domestic violence (Logan, Walker, Horvarth, & Leukefeld, 2003) and substance abuse (Collins, Ellickson, & Klein, 2007) are examples of dysfunctional qualities in marriages that entail prioritizing the safety and well-being of the people involved, leaving divorce as the only alternative. However, many divorces may be avoided with counselling or communication training, which could help to avoid some of the negative effects of divorce. The following are some of the most common reasons for divorce. The knowledge of these can help in premarital education.

### **Infidelity**

In today's world, cheating is one of the leading causes of divorce (Gandhi, 2017). One of the most serious betrayals a marriage may experience is infidelity. Most marriages fail once infidelity sets in. This is because infidelity or extra marital affairs create a lack of trust in the relationship. The breakdown of trust in a shaky relationship can often lead to the collapse of the relationship.

### **Financial Issues**

Financial reasons have been cited in most of the literature to be a cause of divorce (Amato & Rogers, 1997; Britt & Huston, 2012; Dew et al., 2012; Tambling & Glebova, 2013). In most cases, living in poverty has been seen to be incredibly stressful and as such couples may have lots of difficulties in their marriage. This can lead to divorce in the end. Financial mismanagement is therefore very critical in terms of success in marital relationships.

### **Extraordinary Situations**

Some strong marriages end due to extraordinary situations such as sicknesses and even death of a loved one (Gandhi, 2017). Even the strongest



people can be brought to their knees by extraordinary circumstances, putting the relationship to the test. When the sorrow of illness or death is too much to bear, the relationship can dissolve.

### **Incompatibility and Irreconcilable Differences**

In most cases, couples filing for divorce have cited incompatibility and irreconcilable differences as the major reasons for their divorce (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). When spouses disagree on major life issues such as religion, basic beliefs, where to live, and what kind of career to pursue, divorce is a possibility. Incompatibility is difficult to live with, especially if one partner has changed dramatically over time. Counselling or education for married couples can be beneficial in these situations. There may also be too many differences or problems that cannot be resolved (Gandhi, 2017). This can lead to a breakdown of marriage.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Influence of Premarital Education and Counselling on Marriages**

There had been several researches on the effect of premarital education on marriage. Some of these studies are reviewed in this section. According to Yilmaz and Kalkan (2010), premarital enrichment programmes greatly improve relationship satisfaction. Their findings showed that couples who participated in premarital education had better levels of relationship satisfaction than couples in the control groups. The couples who took part in premarital education were tasked with identifying underlying issues and devising solutions.

A study by Todd (2008) showed that there are less complaints associated with premarital preparation activities. However, there was no

statistical correlation between the claimed usefulness of premarital preparatory activities and perceptual accuracy in the study. Parhizgar, Esmaelzadeh-Saeieh, Kamrani, Rahimzadeh, and Tehranizadeh (2017) investigated the impact of communication skills on marital satisfaction among couples who attended pre-marriage counselling institutes in Iran. This parallel interventional trial involved 60 couples who visited a premarital counselling center connected with Alborz University of Medical Sciences (Shahid Rast Raveh). A basic sampling approach was used, and blocks randomization was used to assign samples to the intervention and control groups. There is also the intervention group received training in communication skills and sexual relations.

Participants in both groups completed the Enrich marriage satisfaction questionnaire before, after, and two months after the intervention. The findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the socio-economic characteristics of the couples between the two groups. Marital satisfaction has altered over time ( $P < 0.001$ ), according to the findings of repeated measures. A paired  $t$  test showed a significant relationship between marital satisfaction levels in the intervention group before and after the intervention ( $P < 0.001$ ), as well as before and two months after the intervention ( $P = 0.004$ ). The intervention group's marital satisfaction was much higher than the control groups.

Given the impact of communication skills on marital satisfaction, it may be prudent to incorporate communication skills curriculum in pre-marriage education classes. With Fawcett, Hawkins, Blanchard and Carroll (2010), a more complex pattern of results was discovered using meta-analytic

methods of current best practices to look across the entire body of published and unpublished evaluation research on premarital education. When unpublished studies are included in the analysis, the researchers found that premarital education programmes do not affect relationship quality/satisfaction, despite the fact that there are few studies on couples past the honeymoon stage to detect prevention effects.

Premarital education programmes, on the other hand, appeared to be helpful at increasing couple communication, with studies using observational rather than self-report measures yielding considerable impacts. Nonetheless, given the uneven, moderate findings, there is room to improve premarital education practice. Secula (2018) sought to evaluate the premarital preparation programme provided to congregants of the Three Forks Church of Christ in Kentucky in the United States. The findings within this research suggest that the recommended solution of a classroom-based premarital education programme in addition to current efforts would help to close the gap in the provision of premarital education and provide increased participation in such preparatory education in anticipation of lowering the prospect of divorce.

Yazdanpanah, Eslami, and Nakhaee (2014) investigated the efficacy of Iran's new premarital education programme. 351 women were split into two groups based on their premarital education: classic education and new education. One year after marriage, women's mental health, quality of life, marital satisfaction, and sexual satisfaction were assessed. The findings showed that both groups improved their mental health at a one-year follow-up, but both groups' physical health-related quality of life decreased. In terms of sexual and marital pleasure, however, there was no significant difference

between the two groups. Finally, there was a link between marital contentment and sexual satisfaction. Finally, the researchers concluded that the new premarital education programme did not outperform the traditional method. Given Iran's rising divorce rate, premarital education programmes may not be successful in attaining their objectives. As a result, a review of the premarital education programme was necessary.

Glade (2005) used Bowen Family Systems Theory in three sessions of conjoint therapy in Ohio to have a better understanding of the relationship between depressive symptoms and marital satisfaction. The Ohio State University's on-campus Marriage and Family Therapy Clinic was used to recruit participants for the study. At the start of the study, participants filled out self-report questionnaires about self-differentiation, relationship satisfaction, and depressive symptoms. Within two follow ups, the respondents submitted self-report measures of relationship satisfaction and depressive symptoms after the second and third therapy sessions. The data was analyzed using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM). HLM is a type of multilevel modeling that allows researchers to employ a couple of different levels of variables without sacrificing individual differences. Previous research comparing depressed symptoms and relationship satisfaction was verified and extended in this study.

First and foremost, depressive symptoms and relationship satisfaction were found to be significantly linked over time. Second, in both men and women, features of distinction were found to be linked to couple relationship satisfaction and depressed symptoms. Men's emotional reactivity scores and emotional cutoff scores, as well as women's emotional reactivity scores and

emotional cutoff scores, were found to have an impact on the trajectory of relationship satisfaction and depressive symptoms over time. Based on the findings of this study, systemic therapy based on Bowen Theory constructs could be an effective way to treat depressive symptoms in the setting of conjoint marital therapy.

In North Texas, Norvell (2009) investigated the effects of premarital counselling on newlywed communication. Individuals who had undergone premarital counselling were expected to have lower levels of demand/withdrawal communication and higher levels of spousal support, according to the findings. The effects of the counselling format were also investigated. Marital satisfaction, levels of demand/withdraw, and perceived spousal support were all measured in a survey of people who had been married for less than two years. The social learning theory was employed theoretically. Participating in premarital counselling had no effect on newlywed communication, according to the findings. Several earlier research have come to the same conclusion. Group counselling helps newlyweds to experience higher marital satisfaction than those who had met with a counselor one-on-one.

Hart (2009) used a grounded theory study to figure out what mechanisms contribute to premarital counselling's usefulness in Nebraska. According to the findings, many couples attend premarital counselling because it is required by their officiating church. Couples saw premarital counselling as another thing to do before the wedding ceremony because of this requirement. The role of the facilitator, counselling format, and unique individual factors such as age, maturity level, and education, as well as couple

factors such as length of dating relationship, cohabitation status, and having a child prior to marriage, all seem to have an impact on couples' experiences in premarital counselling.

Adolescents in rural and small-town high schools in the western United States (N = 159) were polled about their views on marriage and marriage education in Silliman and Schumm's study. They thought marriage preparation was important, but they were less familiar with and less likely to attend programmes than college students who had previously been assessed. As sources of information on marriage, youth valued parents, peers, volunteer couples, and personal experience, and were particularly interested in a brief, low-cost programme led by a volunteer couple that focused on communication and conflict-resolution skills and issues. In line with their developmental stage, youth attitudes toward and expectations of marriage reflected some realistic but many unrealistic expectations (Hart, 2009).

In addition, Kepler (2015) looked into the relationship between premarital and marital counselling and marital satisfaction in Minnesota couples. The following three questions were investigated using a cross-sectional design: Is premarital counselling associated with higher marriage satisfaction? Is marital or couples counselling linked to higher marital satisfaction and a lower risk of divorce during times of marital marriage? Is a positive premarital counselling experience linked to a higher likelihood of couples seeking marital or couple counselling during times of marital strife? Twenty-seven people responded anonymously to a Qualtrics survey about couples' premarital and marital counselling, as well as self-ratings of marital satisfaction. Chi-square analysis were used to analyze the data. The results

were not significant for any of the three research questions, but there was a trend that those who received premarital counselling reported higher marital satisfaction than those who did not receive premarital counselling.

In the city of Samsun in Turkey, Yilmaz and Kalkan (2010) looked at the effects of a premarital relationship enrichment programme on relationship satisfaction among couples. There were a total of 20 people in the experimental and control groups. The Mann-Whitney U test and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test were used to see if there were any significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores in the control and experimental groups. This premarital relationship enrichment programme was found to have a positive impact on relationship satisfaction. In mental health organizations, a premarital relationship development programme can be included in preventive studies.

In addition, Williams, Riley, and Van Dyke (1999) conducted a survey of people who had been married for 1–8 years to assess their views on the value of marriage preparation and specific aspects of their time in the United States. Two-thirds of respondents thought marriage preparation was a worthwhile experience, but the perceived value decreased as the marriage lasted longer. Providing time for couples to learn about each other, using a team of providers, addressing the Five Cs (communication, commitment, conflict resolution, children, and church), and having 8–9 sessions were among the most helpful aspects of marriage preparation.

Ndlovu (2000) conducted research in the Madadeni community of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa, on the importance of premarital counselling in preventing domestic violence. The study was conducted using an

exploratory/descriptive design. Purposive sampling was used to choose participants for the study. The data was gathered using an interview guide. The researcher came to the conclusion that premarital counselling was necessary in the fight against domestic violence.

Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, and Fawcett (2008) looked at the effectiveness of marriage and relationship education (MRE) on two common outcomes: relationship quality and communication skills, in a meta-analytic study. A comprehensive search yielded 86 codable reports with 117 studies and over 500 effect sizes. The effect sizes for relationship quality for experimental studies ranged from  $d = .30$  to  $.36$ , while the communication skills effect sizes ranged from  $d = .43$  to  $.45$ . Quasi-experimental studies generated smaller effect sizes, but these appeared to be due to pretest group differences. Moderate-dosage programmes produced larger effect sizes than did low-dosage programmes.

For communication skills, published studies had larger effects than those of unpublished studies at follow-up; there were no publication differences for relationship quality. There was no evidence of a gender difference. Unfortunately, a lack of racial/ethnic and economic diversity in the samples prevented reliable conclusions about the effectiveness of MRE for disadvantaged couples, a crucial deficit in the body of research. In addition, the researchers concluded that intervention outcomes important to policy makers, such as relationship stability and aggression, rarely have been addressed.

According to Williamson, Hammett, Ross, Karney, and Bradbury (2018), premarital education affects couples' progression through several



stages of later help-seeking, as established in a previous study in the United States. Analyses of five waves of self-report data from 431 ethnically diverse newlywed couples living in low-income neighborhoods showed that wives who received premarital education later considered seeking therapy at a higher level of relationship satisfaction and lower level of problem severity than those who did not, though this was not the case for husbands.

Wives who received premarital education were also more likely to declare that if their relationship was in crisis, they would seek therapy, but husbands were not. If they had received premarital education, spouses who explored seeking therapy were more likely to follow through with participation, but if they had not received premarital education, they were more likely to consider seeking therapy but not follow through. Similarly, couples who received premarital education sought therapy earlier than couples who did not receive premarital education, while they did not have a better degree of relationship satisfaction. Overall, the findings imply that premarital education is linked to subsequent help-seeking by empowering couples to take actions to sustain their relationship during their marriage (Williamson et al., 2018).

In Illinois, Futris, Barton, Aholou, and Seponski (2011) investigated if the impact of the PREPARE programme differed depending on the distribution mode. Engaged couples showed positive improvements in knowledge, felt more secure in their relationship, engaged in more positive conflict management practices, and felt more content with their relationship after participating in the programme. There were no differences between those who completed a series of conjoint sessions and those who attended a one-day

group programme. Finally, these data demonstrated the strength of premarital education and suggest that group workshops can be as successful as the more common conjoint sessions.

McGeorge and Carlson (2006) investigated the effectiveness of a premarital educational programme in the United States, with the secondary purpose of investigating if the structure (conjoint versus group) and gender of the participants influenced programme effectiveness. The information was gathered from 29 heterosexual couples. Couples were randomly assigned to one of three groups: (1) group premarital education, (2) individual premarital education, or (3) the comparison group (no premarital education). The PREP-M was used to assess couples' preparedness and preparation for marriage over the course of eight weeks. The data indicated that the instructional programme met its stated objectives. The implication is that couples' readiness and preparation for marriage improved as a result of premarital education.

Moharrami, Pashib, Zandi, Abbaspour, and Torbati (2017) studied the impact of premarital counselling on shyness and marriage expectations among Medical Sciences students in Torbat Heydariyeh, Iran. In Torbat Heydariyeh, Iran, a quasi-experimental study was undertaken on 30 single Medical Sciences students. The assessment tools were shyness and marriage expectations scales, which participants completed in the pre-test and post-test. The intervention group had eight sessions of premarital counselling, while the control group did not. Descriptive and analytic statistics were used to analyze the data. Participants in the control and intervention groups were 19.330.61 and 19.921.07 years old on average, respectively. There was no significant difference between the two groups' background variables ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Before and after the trial, there was no significant difference in shyness or marriage expectations in the control group, but there was a significant difference between the two variables in the intervention group ( $p < 0.05$ ). Overall, the findings imply that premarital counselling should be provided to students prior to selecting a spouse in order to lessen the stressful variables involved in the process. The implication is that premarital counselling reduces shyness, as well as skeptical and utopian marriage expectations.

In the United States, Busby, Ivey, Harris, and Ates (2007) compared three premarital education models: a self-directed programme, a therapist-directed programme, and an assessment-based relationship enhancement programme. Even though all of the treatments were beneficial, the level of effectiveness at the six-month follow-up was significantly different. In particular, the assessment-based programme was found to have a stronger impact on issue areas of the relationship than the therapist-directed or self-directed programmes, as well as a better impact on increasing communication and relationship satisfaction than the therapist-directed method.

In Iran, Mohamady, Said, and Sayed (2017) did a qualitative study to assess the impact of the health belief model on females' premarital counselling knowledge and practice. In a purposive study, the researchers sampled 340 people. According to the findings of the study, the more people knew about the health implications of premarital counseling, the more inclined they were to seek it. In her study on premarital self-disclosure in Kansas, Schachtner (2017) discovered that having frequent conversations with a romantic partner prior to marriage can lead to better marital outcomes many years later. The researchers analyzed data from 707 newlywed couples over the first four years

of marriage using a panel poll. According to the findings of the study, after participating in extensive self-disclosure before marriage, women experienced higher marital happiness than males.

Again, a study conducted by Futris, Barton, Aholou, and Seponski (2011) to assess the efficacy of premarital counseling programmes among university students found that engaged couples who participate in premarital counseling feel more confident in their relationship and engage in more positive conflict management behaviors, resulting in a feeling of satisfaction with their relationship. Furthermore. The study also suggests that group workshops for premarital counselling may be as helpful as the more common conjoint sessions.

In addition, Bruhn and Hill (2004) found specific features of premarital counselling that may be critical for married couples in the United States to improve marriage satisfaction. They focused on approaches that educate couples how to communicate, manage disagreement, and experiment with new roles and norms in their marriage. Carroll and Doherty (2003) also conducted a study in the United States to assess the effectiveness of premarital prevention programmes. The majority of participants in the programme fared better in their marriages than those who did not participate, according to the findings. Premarital preventive programmes are generally effective in providing rapid and short-term gains in interpersonal skills and overall relationship quality, according to Carroll and Doherty, and these improvements are significantly better than non-intervention couples in these areas. However, judgments about long-term effectiveness remain tricky due to a paucity of long-term follow-up study.

A study conducted by Halford, Moore, Wilson, Farrugia, and Dyer (2004) in Queensland, Australia, found that a self-directed programme was helpful in enhancing satisfaction and relationship stability. One of the main goals of this study was to see if adopting a flexible-format intervention was feasible. The authors concluded that this adaptable approach could boost relationship education engagement. This format's convenience and privacy may increase the availability of marriage preparation education, particularly for people who are resistive to face-to-face instruction.

During the first year of marriage in Canada, Bader, Microys, Sinclair, Willett, and Conway (1980) examined a developmental-systems-based programme of five small-group premarital sessions lasting between two and three hours. Communication, familial influences, finances, sexuality, law and ceremony, conflict, roles, and developing a stronger relationship were all discussed using didactic and pair discussion methods. Couples were referred by the church and self-selected, although they were assigned at random. Couple conflict decreased in both the treatment and control groups at 6 months, as evidenced by coded conversations for disagreement. At the end of a year, conflicts between control group partners had skyrocketed. During the first 6 to 12 months of marriage, the main sources of conflict shifted from religion, values, and social activities to money and jobs. For control couples, conflict over family and friends grew over time, but not for treatment couples. Within a year, programme participants outperformed their colleagues in terms of constructive conflict resolution in hypothetical activities. They were also more willing to seek professional or peer aid and support.

Sullivan and Bradbury (1997) have reasonable concerns about the usefulness of much of the premarital counseling that is currently provided to newlyweds in California prior to marriage. They discovered that over 90% of couples who had gone through premarital counseling would do so again. However, there were no differences in marital outcomes between those who received premarital training and those who did not. Those who had had premarital counselling in the previous five years were less likely than others to have considered divorce and to have confidence in their capacity to handle their future, according to a countrywide polling study (Stanley & Markman, 1997).

Couples were asked many questions concerning their premarital preparation experiences in a large sample study undertaken by the Catholic Church. When asked which topic areas were most useful, the three "C's" took the top three spots: communication (73.5 percent), commitment (70.4 percent), and conflict resolution (67.2 percent) (Center for Marriage and Family, 1995). Personality concerns, finances, background compatibility, and career issues were all rated much lower (Silliman & Schumm, 1999). Although it is unlikely that the majority of these couples' premarital programmes were skills-based, it is apparent that these couples, who were now far into their marriages, acknowledged the need of premarital training.

Furthermore, Stahmann and Salts (1993) discovered that a wide range of premarital counselling programmes have a high level of consistency. Communication, dispute resolution, financial management, sexuality, parenting expectations, and the partner's families of origin are just a few of them. The majority of the journal papers examined emphasized how

assessment questionnaires can help couples become more aware of their partners and gain insight into themselves.

Larson, Newell, Topham, and Nichols (2002) looked at three popular premarital assessment questionnaires. They looked at the PREPARE (Premarital Preparation and Relationship Enhancement Questionnaire), the FOCCUS (Facilitating Open Couple Communication, Understanding, and Study), and the Relationship Evaluation (RELATE). According to these writers, an increasing number of states are incentivizing couples to participate in premarital counselling assessments by providing incentives such as decreased marriage license fees. The authors compared the number of items, duration to administer, cost per pair scoring, supporting materials, validity, reliability, and the amount of training required by the teacher to complete the assessment.

They concluded that RELATE is the most straightforward to interpret, although it is intended for couples who want to know how prepared they are for marriage but don't want to see a therapist. RELATE is the most popular evaluation for premarital education and group interaction. PREPARE or FOCCUS, on the other hand, is a better instrument for more intensive counselling. Only utilize these if the couple has had at least three to four sessions with the counselor. They also recommended that all three instruments be supplemented with more broad personality tests, such as the Taylor Johnson Temperament Analysis (Taylor & Johnson, 1984).

Mahmoodi (2016) investigated the impact of counselling on married couples' reproductive and sexual health in Iran. This pre- and post-participation partial experimental study was conducted on 40 couples who

attended pre-marriage counselling classes and were chosen using an implausible simple procedure. The data gathering technique was a questionnaire created by Iran's Ministry of Health and Medical Education's family planning office, and its validity and durability were established. It consisted of two individual and knowledge assessment components that were completed prior to and after counselling by presenting a film and giving a lecture. The data was examined using descriptive statistics, index of distribution, and paired t-test in SPSS-11.5 software. Counselling and instruction enhanced the participants' level of awareness, according to the findings. As a result, it was concluded that counselling and instruction improve knowledge and awareness of marriage.

In Nairobi County, Kenya, Kariuki (2017) explored the impact of premarital counselling on marital stability among couples. A quantitative descriptive research design was used in this study. The sample consisted of 105 married people from the Milimani South Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA). The participants had been married for less than ten years. The Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) was used to assess marital distress as a measure of marital stability in this study. For the research questions, mean scores and standard deviation were used, as well as ANOVA. There was a substantial difference in marital happiness between couples who got varied numbers of premarital counselling sessions, according to the findings. Premarital counselling was also found to have a significant impact on marital satisfaction.

Baker (2019) conducted a qualitative phenomenological study in Dallas, Texas, to investigate the influence of Christian premarital counselling



(CPC) using the Prepare/Enrich curriculum on the spiritual growth and overall marital stability of couples. The spiritual benefits and marital stability that couples got by attending CPC were investigated through interviews with ten couples. This study gave me the opportunity to learn from couples who took part in CPC sessions. Overall, the participants said their CPC experience strengthened their spiritual basis, clarified their marital duties, and assisted them in growing as a couple.

In Isfahan, Iran, Noroozi, Taleghani, Merghati-khoei, Tavakoli, and Gholami (2014) did a study to describe the activities and functions of families in youngsters' sexual connections. In this qualitative research study, twenty-six single males and females aged 18 to 24 years old from Isfahan took part. The individuals had begun to engage in sexual activity of some kind. The researcher employed constant comparison analysis of investigation to assess the data. The findings showed that parents' child-rearing practices, parents' interactions, children's economic support, religious beliefs, and sexual awareness are all important factors in the creation of sexual relations before marriage.

The impacts of premarital counselling in military families were studied by Schumm, Silliman, and Bell (2000). Quinet, Shelmerdine, Dessel, and Unger (2015) interviewed a family therapist who has worked in Belgium, Senegal, Congo, and Vietnam to assess the effectiveness of family ('systemic') therapy. They discovered that family/systemic therapy was more beneficial than psychoanalytical procedures in low and middle-income countries (LMIC), owing to the lack of a tradition of introspection in LMIC and the robust structure of families as a social safety net. Crane and Morgan (2007)

offered a summary of efficacy and effectiveness research for family therapy in a similar vein. Data was gathered from four separate places: 1) a big western HMO with 180,000 customers in the local Utah region; 2) Kansas' Medicaid system; 3) CIGNA Behavioral Health, the behavioral health subsidiary of CIGNA, a large US health insurance firm with several million subscribers; and a Family Therapy training clinic.

According to the findings, family therapy reduces the frequency of health-care visits, particularly among high-utilizers. These findings were also confirmed in a clinic for graduate students. In addition, investigations of two distinct health-care systems as well as a cost projection study show that integrating family therapy as a treatment option does not considerably raise health-care costs. Earl (2017) investigated the impact of family therapy in a qualitative study. Seven main topics emerged from a thematic analysis of the interviews: 1) developing relationships, 2) paying attention to student development, 3) relevance, 4) actively engaging students in the process, 5) passion and curiosity, 6) giving and getting honest feedback, and 7) transparency.

The data suggested that family therapy can benefit relationships and marriages in general. As a result, family therapy is appropriate for increasing marital satisfaction. Carr (2009a) also did a review of the evidence regarding the effectiveness of couples and family therapy for individuals with diverse relationship and mental health problems based on meta-analyses, systematic literature reviews, and controlled trials. The evidence supports the usefulness of family therapy for relationship distress, psychosexual issues, domestic violence, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, alcohol abuse, schizophrenia, and

adjustment to chronic physical illness, either alone or as part of multimodal programmes. Carr (2009b) later did an evaluation of the effectiveness of family therapy and other family-based treatments for family problems (focusing on children) and concluded that marriage and family therapists should employ family therapy to address the difficulties that couples confront.

Furthermore, according to Sexton and Datchi (2014), high-quality therapy integrates credible scientific knowledge with individual clinical judgment made by family therapists in the context of dynamic interactions with a family or couple. As a result, effective family therapy can aid in family cohesion and unity. Again, a nine-month follow-up showed study sizes for behavioral marriage therapy ranging from 0.54 to 1.04, indicating that the average couples treated have better results after nine months than between 70% and 84 percent of non-treatment control groups (Dunn & Schwebel, 1995).

Other researchers have found that family-based techniques are effective in the treatment of marital and relationship discomfort. Zarnaghash, Zarnaghash, and Shahni (2013), for example, investigated the impact of family therapy on marital conflicts in Iran. The findings showed that family therapy had a substantial impact on the resolution of marital issues, particularly communication issues between couples. After their study, Ahluwalia, Anand, and Suman (2018) discovered that effective usage of marriage and family therapy required proper training to equip practitioners in treating co-morbid mental health conditions in the family, in addition to substance use disorders and family pathology. Evans, Turner, and Trotter (2012) found evidence to support the success of a number of techniques with couples and families,

including Multi-Systemic Family Therapy (MST) and family problem resolution, in their study of the effectiveness of family and relationship therapy. As a result of the findings, it is now possible to predict the permanence of marriages with only a 10% error rate. He discovered that the use of four attitudes, or the Four Horsemen (criticism, scorn, defensiveness, and stonewalling), seemed to accurately predict relationship failure.

Ntim (2014) looked at the effects of premarital counselling on adjustment among Christian couples in the Cape Coast Metropolis in Ghana. The study's design was based on a case study. The three churches from the metropolis were chosen using a convenience selection approach. The data for the study was collected using a structured questionnaire. For the study, 300 Christian couples were chosen as a sample size. The study found that the majority of Christian husbands and wives had a good attitude about premarital counseling, with only a few having a negative perspective. It was also discovered that many Christian husbands and wives found the experience and knowledge gained from premarital counselling to be extremely useful in their marriage.

Christian husbands and wives who had had premarital counselling did not differ significantly from those who had not. Furthermore, there was no discernible difference between Christian husbands and wives who had received premarital counselling and those who had not. As a result of the findings, counsellors were advised to conduct a pre-counselling assessment to identify areas where the prospective couple may face difficulties and counsel them on those issues. The study also suggested that the counseling relationship be ended based on the goals set, but in most cases, the relationship is ended

before the goals are met. As a result, counsellors and prospective couples should ensure that goals for the counselling process are established and that these goals are met before the counselling process is terminated.

Opoku-Adjei (2018) investigated the impact of premarital education for unmarried young people at the Abuakwa Seventh-day Adventist church in Ghana's Ashanti Region. For single young adults between the ages of 20 and 35, an eight-day marriage preparation programme was provided. 90 young adults were put through a ten-lecture presentation series that includes pre- and post-seminar questionnaires, question-and-answer methods, video presentations, and participant discussions. Premarital education was identified as the most significant aspect of the early preparation for marriages by the young adults in the study.

The seminar contents inspired the young adults, who expressed a desire to choose the ideal life partners, establish distinct living arrangements, and develop effective communication during their marriage. The participants also saw the need to strengthen their religious faith and expressed a desire to have a successful and stable marriage. In addition, the participants wanted to know more about communication and conflict resolution, as well as sexuality and family planning for couples. They also wanted to know how to pick a good marriage partner and when a young adult can refuse a marriage proposal. Overall, it can be concluded that premarital education was successful in empowering young adults in terms of their marriage knowledge.

Tuffour (2017) assessed the views of SDA pastors in South Central Ghana on marriage preparation, their competence levels, and the resources they use in carrying out the programmes. The study found that all the pastors

interviewed recognized the importance of premarital counselling in the church. However, no documented or written marriage preparation programme was used by pastors in the South Central Ghana Conference. The conference did not have a standard or plan regarding the number of times or sessions for premarital counseling. The study also found that most pastors who conducted premarital counselling did not use inventories or assessment tools, neither did they have a comprehensive follow-up plan after their premarital counselling. From the study of Tuffour, it can be realized that even though premarital counselling can be helpful for marriages, the pastors were not fully equipped to do so.

Further, Udofia, Bonsi, Agbakpe, and Udofia (2021) examined the effect of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and the relationship of three psychological variables, intimacy, self-esteem and locus of control among married couples who received marital counselling and married couples who did not receive marital counselling. The study employed a cross-sectional survey collecting data using questionnaires. The results showed that couples who attended premarital counselling before marriage were more significantly satisfied with their marriages than those who did not attend premarital counselling before marrying. Intimacy and self-esteem significantly influenced marital satisfaction among married couples who received premarital counselling, whereas only intimacy had a significant influence among couples who did not receive premarital counselling. This consolidates the view that premarital counselling can improve marital satisfaction.

Dzadey (2015) also carried out a study to examine the psychosocial factors affecting marital satisfaction among married individuals using

descriptive survey design was used. After sampling 200 married individuals from three congregations of the E.P Church Ho, it was found that those who did not have premarital counseling had higher marital satisfaction than those who had premarital counseling. The researcher concluded that, premarital counselling had little or no impact on marital satisfaction. This was in contradiction to most of the previous studies reviewed.

With high divorce and break-up rates in many countries, marital misery is a common relationship in doctors' offices. Behavioral marital therapy, emotionally focused couples' therapy, insight oriented marital therapy, cognitive marital therapy, and cognitive-behavioral marital therapy combo packaged treatments have all been demonstrated to be effective in marital counselling. These were evident in the literature reviewed.

### **Premarital Counselling and Demographic Variables (Gender and Age)**

Researchers have looked into some demographic characteristics to see how they relate to the success of premarital counselling. Gender and age are two of these characteristics. El-Ghany, Gad and Al-Haddad (2010), for example, investigated and contrasted premarital counselling knowledge and attitudes among Hadhramout University students in Yemen. On 400 students (males and females) from Hadhramout University Colleges, a comparative descriptive design was applied. College of Medicine and Health Sciences and College of Nursing represented the medical group, while College of Arts and College of Administrative Sciences represented the non-medical group. The data for the study was collected via a questionnaire.

Only 5.5 percent and 22.5 percent of students in the non-medical and medical groups, respectively, had a high degree of understanding regarding

premarital counselling ( $p = 0.000$ ). Furthermore, the study discovered that 68.5 percent of medical students and 59.5 percent of non-medical students, respectively, had a good view toward premarital counselling. In addition, the current study found that females (23.8 percent) had a higher level of knowledge about premarital counselling than males (9.3%) ( $p = 0.000$ ). There is a statistically significant difference in knowledge and attitude toward premarital counselling between medical and non-medical groups. The gender result indicates that females had a higher level of marriage knowledge following premarital counselling than males. Zarnaghash, Zarnaghash, and Shahni (2013) found that family therapy helped women resolve their individual disputes. As a result, providing therapy to women was more helpful in lowering marital disputes.

In Northern California, Sullivan and Anderson (2002) wanted to know what potential participants thought were desirable aspects in premarital prevention programmes. Eighty-six engaged couples filled out surveys about their demographics, personalities, and the relative relevance of premarital programme features. The findings show that the most essential aspects of premarital counselling to couples were leader traits, substance, and issues like communication, finances, and problem-solving. The study also discovered that the effectiveness of premarital counselling differed depending on gender and estimated marital risk level. The t-test and correlation analysis performed by Sullivan and Anderson (2002) demonstrated that there is no significant relationship between age, education, and income in relation to marriage satisfaction following premarital counselling.



In Kerala, India, Siji and Rekha (2018) investigated the impact of marital counselling on marriage quality among young people. The participants (N=60) couples were chosen from various parts of Kerala who came to the institute for counselling. They were given the Shah (1995) marital quality scale in the pretest, and consideration was also given to those significant innovations, skills, and techniques used by the counselor as an intervention over a three-month period. The paired t-test and ANOVA were used to evaluate the data. The findings demonstrated substantial variations in most marital quality variables before and after marital counselling.

In comparison to females, males were shown to be less domineering, better at self-disclosure, and less depressed. When comparing couples who had been married for less than five years to couples who had been married for more than 10 years, couples who had been married for less than five years had higher marital quality. However, there was no significant difference in marriage quality amongst young adults based on their location or family type. In Port-Harcourt, Nigeria, Dimkpa (2010) explored the impact of marital counselling on women's attitudes on marital stability. The study used a quasi-experimental approach with a pre-test and post-test period. The sample included 52 married women (both academic and non-academic) from the Faculty of Education at the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria's Rivers State.

A total of 26 people were assigned to the experimental and control groups. A self-designed questionnaire titled Women's Attitude toward Marital Stability Questionnaire was given to the participants as a pre-test (WATMSQ). For four weeks, the experimental group was lectured on a marriage

counselling programme. The post-test programme was given to both groups after four weeks. For the research questions, mean scores and standard deviation were used, and the research hypothesis was tested using a t-test. The results showed a substantial difference between the experimental and control groups' mean scores, with the experimental group's being higher. Marital counselling was also found to have a considerable impact on women's attitudes of marital stability.

McGeorge and Carlson (2006) also looked at how effective the Marriage Assessment and Preparation programme (MAP) was at improving participants' knowledge of marital relationships and healthy interactions in the US. The study examined marriage preparation education offered to couples jointly vs in a group setting and discovered evidence that, contrary to common belief, couples in group delivery had somewhat better outcomes, though not significantly better, than couples in conjoint delivery. Premarital education was also found to be equally effective for both men and women in the study. As a result, there was no discernible difference in the efficacy of premarital counselling for men and women. This finding contradicts everything we've learned so far from the studies we've looked at.

In a large random study of four middle American states, Stanley, Amato, Johnson, and Markman (2006) discovered that premarital education was related with greater levels of marriage happiness and commitment, lower levels of conflict, and decreased likelihood of divorce. These estimated impacts were consistent across race, income (including education), and educational levels, implying that premarital education is advantageous to a wide variety of couples. Ibisomi (2014) looked into the relationship between

age and current contraception use in couples. After controlling for confounders, it was discovered that age differences were not connected with general understanding of marital issues in Nigeria.

When it comes to marriage, Thomas and Kunzmann (2014) looked into a potential moderator of age differences in wisdom-related knowledge. There were no linear age variations in wisdom-related knowledge regarding marriage, according to the findings.

Agyemang, Agyemang and Sekyi (2020) investigated the perception couple holds that may knit marriages together in order to avert many crises that are common in marriages in the Asante Akim North Area. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The survey design which involves the qualitative and quantitative approach was employed for the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 200 respondents (thus 100 males and 100 female couples) for the study. The study sought the views of respondents using questionnaires and focus group interview was the main instrument used for the study. Data were analyzed using various analytical techniques and t-tests. The study revealed that there was no statistically significant sex difference in what constitute marital satisfaction. The findings also suggested that there was no statistically significant age difference in what constitute marital satisfaction. The researchers recommended that, there is the need for effective Guidance and Counseling service concerning home management and financial management on the part of couples and also newly married, aspirants and the youth should seek counselling about marriage, concerning joys and problems.

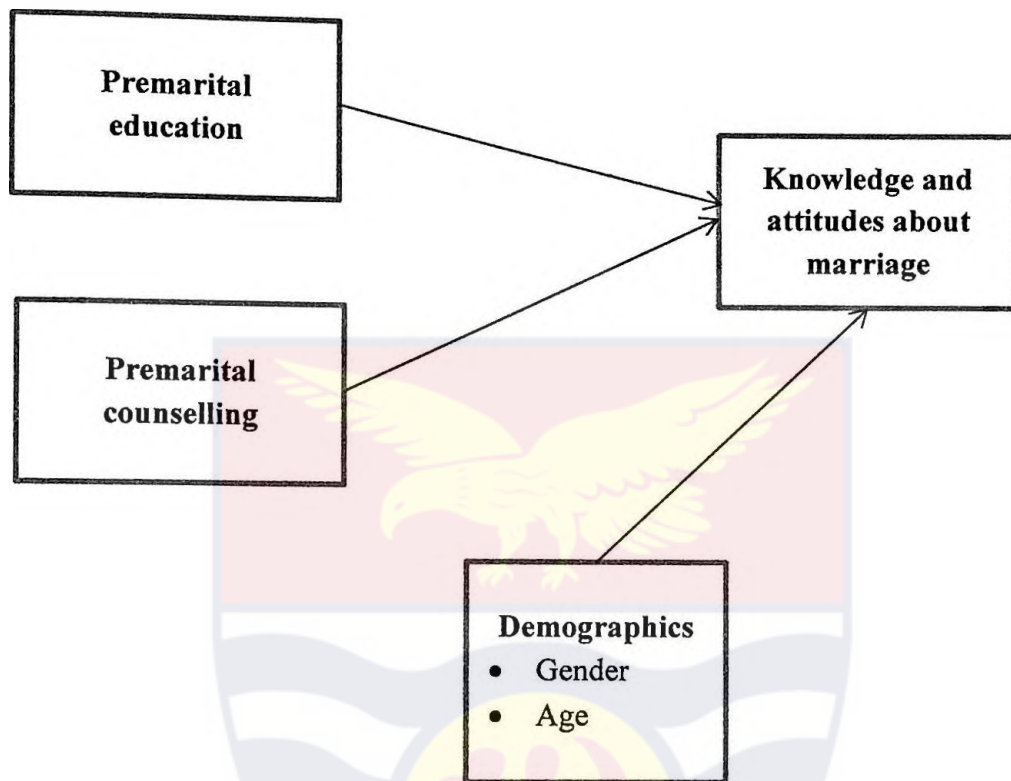
Adzovie (2020) used the descriptive research design, this study sought to find out the levels of marital satisfaction of 400 married Christians in the

Accra Metropolis, Ghana. The study found that Christian married men and women in Accra Metropolis were relatively satisfied in their marriages. Also, there were significant differences in marital satisfaction levels with regard to duration of marriage. Although there were no significant differences in marital satisfaction levels with regard to gender, females reported lesser satisfaction than males. Based on this, women were entreated to initiate counselling when needed to enhance their marital satisfaction.

Further, Adzovie and Dabone (2021) explored the impact of premarital counselling on the success of marriages. A sample of 300 married men and women were purposively selected for this study. The results showed that there was a significant mean difference between male and female married Christians regarding their perception on the essence of pre-marital counselling. Also, the duration of pre-marital counselling did not significantly affect the effectiveness of premarital counselling given. Christian married couples held a negative perception of the effectiveness of pre-marital counselling. Based on the findings, it was recommended that churches and other religious bodies continue to stress the importance of pre-marital counselling to the members. Counsellors should be more proactive in giving marital counselling to married people to compliment the pre-marital counselling married people are given.

Overall, the majority of the literature has indicated that premarital counselling effectiveness varies by gender. However, the same cannot be stated for age, as there are few research that look at how the effectiveness of premarital counselling differs depending on age. As a result, the current study will fill a real need by bridging this information gap.

The conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1 upon which the study is based.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework*

Source: Researcher's Own

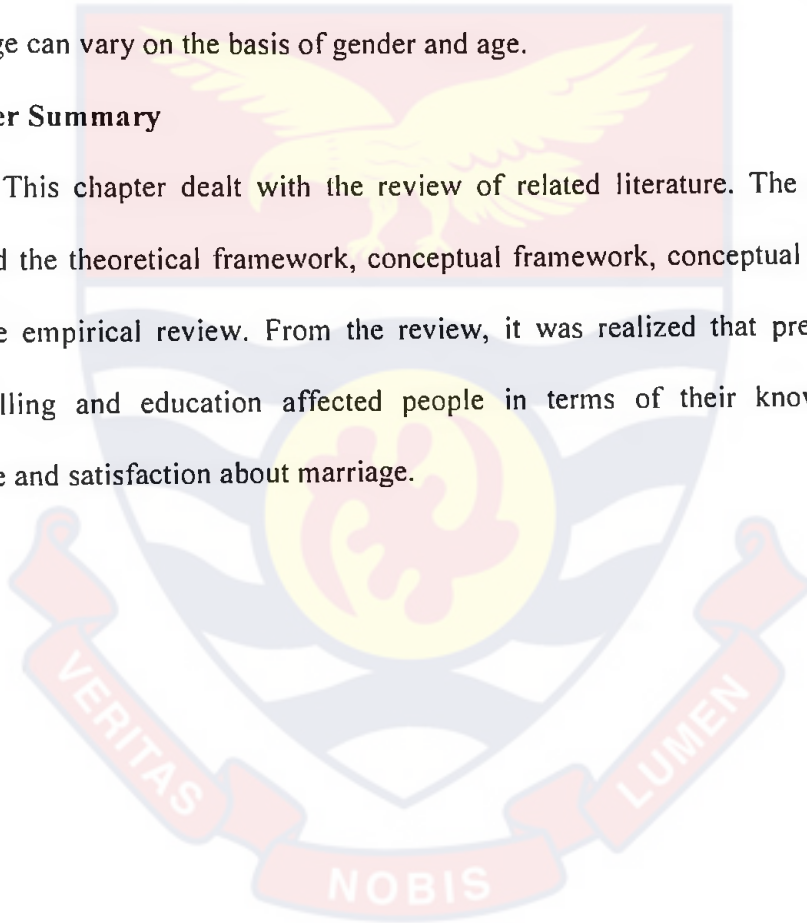
The conceptual framework depicts the relationship among the key variables in the study. It can be seen in the figure that premarital education and counselling can affect students in terms of their views knowledge and attitudes about marriage. It is anticipated in this study based on previous literature that the mindsets of the students may be altered at the end of the study. For instance, Schumm, Silliman, and Bell (2000) reported that premarital education has the capacity to influence the level of satisfaction of individuals regarding marriage. This means that through the education and counselling

provided, the existing knowledge of the students about marriage can be changed.

Aside this, it can be seen in the figure that gender and age of students are demographic variables that can cause a difference in the effects of the premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of students about marriage. This means that the extent to which premarital education and counselling affects the knowledge and attitude towards marriage can vary on the basis of gender and age.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter dealt with the review of related literature. The review covered the theoretical framework, conceptual framework, conceptual review and the empirical review. From the review, it was realized that premarital counselling and education affected people in terms of their knowledge, attitude and satisfaction about marriage.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. This chapter deals with the methodology involved in carrying out the study. It covered broadly the research approach, research design, study area, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instrument, data collection procedure and the data processing and analysis.

#### Research Paradigm

An approach to research has to do with the procedures, assumptions as well as plans that help in providing guidance to a research by formulating the research problem to the detailed methods used in the collection of data as well as analyzing and interpreting data (Creswell, 2014). For some time now, researchers' approach to a study has mostly been guided by philosophical assumptions of the nature of reality as well as how knowledge is acquired. Originally, the qualitative and quantitative approach to research has been viewed as being mutually exclusive with each having its own peculiar beliefs about how one should study social constructs (Bryman, 2012).

There are individuals who view knowledge to be absolute and therefore can be objectively studied. Such individuals belong to the positivist scientific paradigm. In other words, such individuals may resort to establish causality and/or relationship by way of conducting experimental or

correlational studies that are in congruence with quantitative research design (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2014).

As a result, the study took a quantitative research approach. A quantitative research method, by definition, is a procedure for gathering, evaluating, and integrating quantitative data at some point during the research process within a single study in order to get a better knowledge of the research problem (Creswell, 2005). The reason for the use of quantitative methods is grounded in the fact that quantitative research method allows for controlled and objective testing, experimentation as well as reducing bias in the collection and analysis of data. In addition, it allows for the assessment of how effective a treatment is in influencing the outcome of an experimental study between two groups.

Empiricism and positivism are concepts used to characterize quantitative research. Numerical data are employed to quantify or measure phenomena in this objective, formal, and systematic method. The quantitative approach to research describes, tests and examines cause and effect relationships using a deductive process of knowledge attainment (Carr, 1994). Research processes within the quantitative approach are descriptive, correlational, quasi-experiment and experimental research (Cormack, 1991). Supporting aims of the study is to find a link between counselling techniques and premarital counselling and education. One of the strengths of the quantitative method is the opportunity it offers the researcher to assess a larger sample size.



## Research Design

The current study employed the quasi-experimental design. A quasi-experiment resembles a true experiment but lacks randomization (Cook & Campbell, 1979). Quasi-experiment eliminates the directionality problem because the independent variable is manipulated before the dependent variable is measured. However, because participants are not randomly assigned, it is difficult to determine homogeneity across groups. This introduces confounding variables and therefore has a low internal validity. Notwithstanding, quasi experiments are used when the researcher, for some reason, cannot randomly assign participants to treatment conditions. Also, quasi-experimental design was adopted for use in this study because such designs usually have higher external validity than most true experiments, because they often involve real-world interventions instead of artificial laboratory settings.

Quasi-experimental design can be used in several different forms, namely, single-factor nonequivalent group design, nonequivalent groups factorial design, P x E factorial design, among others. According to Cook and Campbell (1979), the most frequently used quasi-experimental method are the nonequivalent control group designs and interrupted time series design. The nonequivalent control group design is used to examine how effective a treatment is in a programme.

Participants involved in this type of quasi-experimental research are group into two, with one group being the treatment group and the other being the control group. Individuals in the treatment group are those who have encountered the independent variable of interest whilst the control group are

those who have not had any encounter with the independent variable. The design is called nonequivalent control group design because the groups in question are not equal to each other at the beginning of the study since participants are not randomly assigned to groups and the experience between the groups differs throughout the study. This form of quasi-experiment can be conducted with a pretest-post design or a posttest design only (Goodwin, 2010).

The interrupted time series design involves collecting data on the outcome variable for a period of time before introducing the treatment and then measure the outcome variable after the introduction of the treatment over similar period of time. Even though, it is not binding that the period of study before and after treatment must be exactly the same, it is a general rule that the more the data points, the better the outcome of the study.

The non-equivalent pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental design was adopted for the current study. The pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design implies initially collecting and analyzing data from the treatment and control group before the intervention or treatment is introduced, to serve as a baseline for comparison which is termed as the pretest. Then after introducing the intervention to the participants in the treatment group, another data was collected and analyzed from both the treatment group and control to observe if any significant difference observed between the two groups was as result of the intervention or otherwise. The adoption of a pretest and a posttest in this non-equivalent control group design allowed the researcher to make comparison between the treatment group and the control group because of the presence of a baseline pretest score.

The study aimed at investigating the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students about marriage. With this in mind, students who were willing and available to partake in the study were grouped into treatment groups and control group with none of them knowing which group they belonged to in order to avoid response bias. Participants in all groups were asked to respond to questions on their knowledge and attitude towards marriage as information gathered here served as the pretest score for each group. After some period of time, students belonging to the treatment groups were asked to undergo the intervention. Afterwards, students in all groups were asked to respond to the same questions on their knowledge and attitude towards marriage. Data collected were analysed to assess the effectiveness of the treatments.

Usually, a scheme is used to show the procedure used in conducting a pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design, the current study is of no exception. The scheme below adopted Campbell and Stanley (1963) suggestions on nonequivalent control group design.

Experimental group 1:	O <sub>1</sub>	T	O <sub>4</sub>
Experimental group 2:	O <sub>2</sub>	T	O <sub>5</sub>
Nonequivalent control group:	O <sub>3</sub>		O <sub>6</sub>

Where, T is the treatment programme and O<sub>1</sub>, O<sub>2</sub> and O<sub>3</sub> are the pretest observations for the experimental and control groups. The observations O<sub>4</sub>, O<sub>5</sub> and O<sub>6</sub> represent the post-test observations for the experimental and control groups. The treatment plan for the experimental condition was such that, experimental group 1 was exposed to premarital education while experimental group 2 was exposed to premarital counselling. The nonequivalent control

group was post-tested along with the experimental groups to assess the efficacy of the premarital education and counselling interventions.

### **Study Area**

In October 1962, the University of Cape Coast was formed as a University College, with a special relationship with the University of Ghana, Legon. The University of Cape Coast Act, 1971 [Act 390] and later the University of Cape Coast Law, 1992 [PNDC Law 278] gave the College the status of a full and independent university on October 1, 1971, with the ability to grant its own degrees, diplomas, and certificates. There is currently a draft Bill to amend the University of Cape Coast Law, 1992 (PNDCL 278), which repealed the University of Cape Coast Act 1971 (Act 390), the University of Cape Coast (Amendment) Law, 1990 (P.D.C.L. 241), and the University of Cape Coast (Interim Administration Committee) Law, 1990 (P.N.D.C.L. 243), all of which established the University as a higher learning institution.

When the Bill is signed into law, it is expected that the University's initial mandate will be reassessed to allow for the training of professionals in other fields, ensuring that the University's focus is broadened. Aside from providing legal support for current University practices and ensuring consistency with the Ghanaian Constitution, the Bill's passage would also enable the University to solve new challenges and demands from Ghanaian society and nation at large, as well as keep up with changes in the higher education institutions.

### **Population**

The target population for the study was all undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana who are in

relationship but yet to get married. The number of undergraduate regular students in the University of Cape Coast is about 18,039 and this presents this researcher with a vast host of students' population within which participants as well as informants would be sampled to partake in the study.

The majority of students in the University of Cape Coast especially at the graduate level are young adults who are either married or single. Since the researcher is interested in counselling techniques, such students were the most suitable to be involved in such a study. In addition to this, the closeness of the University to the researcher as well as the feasibility of the study was considered in choosing the target population for the present study.

Another major reason for using students of the University of Cape Coast for the study was because consultations with the Counselling Centre showed that relationship issues were common struggles of students in the University. Carrying out the study in the University was therefore helpful in addressing any issues in the knowledge and attitudes of students towards marriage.

The accessible population from which the sample was drawn for the study comprised final year University of Cape Coast students in the Faculty of Educational Foundations. Since the entire undergraduate students' population of the University of Cape Coast was too broad and so was narrowed to the Faculty of the researcher to aid easily gathering the data. The population was also made up of students who were in relationship.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

One hundred and fifty (150) students were sampled for the study. According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2006), a sample of a maximum 50 is

suitable for the different groups in an experimental study. There were three different groups. Each group consisted of 50 participants. One group was the control group while the remaining two groups were the experimental groups receiving two different treatments. Each group consisted of equal numbers of male and female participants. The first experimental group benefited from premarital education while the second group was exposed to premarital counselling.

Multistage sampling procedure was used in selecting the sample. Overall, purposive sampling, simple random sampling and convenience sampling techniques were employed during the study. In the first stage, simple random sampling technique was employed in choosing one of the four colleges in the University. Thus, the College of Education Studies was selected at random.

In the second stage, purposive sampling technique was used in selecting only final year undergraduate University of Cape Coast students in the Faculty of Educational Foundations who were in a relationship but not married. This means that before an individual took part in the study, he or she had to be a student of the University of Cape Coast, in the Faculty of Educational Foundations and unmarried but must be in relationship. Final year students were used because they were more likely to be preparing for marriage. Also, the researcher was interested in counselling techniques, therefore, using purposive sampling presented the researcher with option to choose specific people or sites that can properly address the phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013).

After the second stage, the convenience sampling technique was employed in the study to select respondents who were available to partake in the study. Thus, the researcher selected participants who were willing and available to partake in the study. In other words, once the participant fit the criteria and he or she was willing and available, that individual was recruited as a participant for the study.

**Table 1: Selection of Participants**

Stage	Sampling Technique	Purpose
1	Simple random	This was used to select one College (Education Studies) out of the four colleges in UCC
2	Purposive	This was used to target participants who fit the criteria for the study. Thus, final year students in the Faculty of Educational Foundations, UCC who were unmarried but in relationships
3	Convenience	This was used to select only participants who were available and willing to participate in the study.

Source: Baidoo (2021)

### **Control for Extraneous Variables**

Selective control in the form of matching was employed to help control the effects of extraneous variables on the dependent variables. This was done by ensuring that there is some of uniformity with regard to the distribution of extraneous variables, like gender, age, level of education, among others. For instance, for each experiment, participants in each group (that is, treatment and control group), were matched with respect to their age, gender as well as other demographic characteristics to ensure these factors that might affect the study were uniform across groups (Goodwin, 2010). In addition, the study employed ANCOVA in its analysis. This also helped in controlling extraneous variables.

ANCOVA was used because it helped to isolate variance in the dependent variable attributable to variables that are not the subject of the study (Vogt, 1999). In doing this, extraneous variables are statistically eliminated from the analysis. In essence, ANCOVA provides a way of statistically controlling the (linear) effect of variables one does not want to examine in a study. In addition, ANCOVA was used because in experimental studies when researchers want to remove the effects of some antecedent variable, ANCOVA can be helpful. For example, pretest scores are used as covariates in pretest-posttest experimental designs. This is very useful in quasi-experiments when subjects cannot be assigned randomly to control and experimental groups.

#### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Participants who were involved in the study were unmarried undergraduate students of the University of Cape Coast from the Faculty of Educational Foundations. However, these students must have been in a relationship for at least six months. This is because the study sought to find out the state of their relationship as well as how they think about the future of the relationship. In order to prove that an individual was a student of the University, students' identification (ID) cards were inspected before permission was granted for a participant to partake in the study.

#### **Data Collection Instrument**

A questionnaire was used to gather data from respondents. The questionnaire comprised two different measures. These measures have been described below:



### **Relationship Knowledge**

To measure participants' levels of knowledge regarding relationships, the Relationship Knowledge Questionnaire (Higginbotham, Bradford, Mock, & Skogrand, 2011) was employed. "My expertise of how to properly listen to a spouse/partner", for example, was one of the six statements on this six-item questionnaire. On a four-point scale, the individual rates himself or herself as being poor, fair, good, and excellent. Therefore, the scale for scoring this instrument comprised 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good and 4=Excellent. This measure was taken prior to the intervention and after the intervention. Higginbotham et al. (2011) reported that the Cronbach's alpha for the Relationship Knowledge Questionnaire ranged from .60 to .87.

### **Marital Attitudes and Expectations Scale (Park, 2012)**

The Marital Attitudes and Expectations Scale (MAES) final instrument, which consists of 36 items rated on a 7-point Likert scale, is the culmination of the factor analyses, reliability analyses, and validity analyses (0 to 6; ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). Its purpose is to assess a person's desire to marry, as well as their general attitudes toward marriage and their expectations for various aspects of marriage. The MAES is designed to be used by everyone, regardless of their marital status or sexual orientation. The IMS scores range from 0 to 18, the GAMS scores from 0 to 60, and the AMS scores from 0 to 138. Higher IMS scores indicate a more positive intent to marry, a more favorable attitude toward marriage in the GAMS, and a more optimistic expectation for marriage in the AMS. The MAES scores range from 0 to 216 in total.

## Validity

According to Okoye (1996), the validity of an instrument is a measure of how well it measures what it is supposed to measure. It can also be defined as the degree to which data analysis results accurately reflect the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The quality of the data collection instrument to measure what it is designed to measure is an indicator of validity (Kumar, 2005). The two supervisors of the researcher checked the content validity of the data gathering instrument. The degree to which an instrument covers the entire range of meanings within a concept is referred to as content validity. In this study, the supervisors ensured that the questionnaire adequately assessed its intended targets.

### Threats to Validity and How they were Minimized

Validity in an experimental design refers to the degree to which the research determines cause-effect relationship, which could be internal or external (Ogah, 2013). In experimental studies, validity can be internal or external. Experimental designs are faced with some threats to their validity. Some of the threats of have been identified along with how they were dealt with in the study.

**Threats related to internal validity:** Ogah (2013) views internal validity as the degree to which a study captures the true causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Thus, it establishes a trustworthy cause-and-effect relationship between a treatment and an outcome. However, there can be situations which can derail the ability to establish the true causal relationship between the intervention and the outcome. These are threats to

internal validity. Some of these threats are discussed and how to overcome them indicated.

**Maturation:** In the course of the study, some changes might occur which might include participants getting fatigued, older or wiser than when the study began. These changes in the dependent variable may be due to normal developmental processes and could happen especially when the study period is quite long (Ogah, 2013). In this study, the researcher ensured that the study period span did not span for too long a time to be able to deal with the effects of maturation. Also, the existence of a control group helped in dealing with the effects of maturation in this study.

**History:** History includes some external factors or events that might occur during the course of a study beyond the control of the researcher. In such situations where such effects affect one group but not the other, it could interfere with the results of the study. This may result in observing a change that may not be attributable to the experimental treatment. In dealing with the effects of history in this study, the presence of a control group was used. This is because the outcomes of the control group helped to establish whether history had an effect on the study or not. This means that in the absence of the effects of history, the post-test outcomes in the control group was the same as during the pre-test.

**Testing:** When the same test is conducted two times or more, there is the likelihood that performance on the second and subsequent tests may be influenced by the taking of the first test. It is therefore a threat to internal validity and is common to pre-test-posttest experiments. This can be controlled by having a control group where the effect of testing applied

equally to the two groups thereby nullifying any possible threat (Akinade & Owolabi, 2009). This was done in this study. Also, by ensuring that timing of taking the second test was not too close to the first test, the effect of testing nullified.

**Experimental Mortality:** Mortality means the loss of subjects. It is the situation where some of the participants of the experiment are lost because of instances such as dropping out of the study. The existence of pretesting in this study helped to ensure that the effects of mortality could be controlled. Thus, those who dropped out of the study were known and the effect of the treatment on those who stayed in the study was clearly seen.

**Participant Effect:** This refers to any change in performance that can be attributed to a participant's motives or attitude. This could result in contamination of the design. Some of the contamination could be the John Henry effect and the Hawthorne effect (Ogah, 2013). The John Henry effect is when the control group finds out about the experimental treatment and puts in efforts to compete with the experimental group. Again, there could be the Hawthorne effect which is when the experimental group puts in more effort simply because they are taking part in the experiment while the control group may also feel demoralised and puts in less effort.

In this study, participant effect was overcome by using standardization of procedures and instructions. In doing standardization, all participants in every step of the experiment were treated in the same way. Again, the single-blind procedure was used. This involved participants knowing about the goal of the experiment, but not knowing which group they were in. As a result,

participants were not influenced by their participation to the detriment of the study.

**Threats related to external validity:** External validity refers to how well the outcome of a study can be expected to apply to other settings. In other words, this type of validity refers to how generalizable the findings are. While rigorous research methods can ensure internal validity, external validity, on the other hand, may be limited by these methods. Some of the main threats to external validity and how they were overcome are discussed in this section.

**Generalizability:** One aspect of external validity is ecological validity which refers to whether a study's findings can be generalized to the real world. External validity is threatened when a study does not take into account the interactions of variables in the real world. In overcoming this threat, the researcher used psychological realism. This means that the researcher made sure that participants are experiencing the events of a study as a real event by telling them a "cover story" about the aim of the study. This was to ensure that participants felt like the study was as real as in real life. This helped to be able to generalize the results to the real world. Also, the variables in the study were real life variables (marriage) and this helped to overcome the threat of generalizability.

**Pre- and post-test effects:** External validity would be threatened if the pre- or post-test is in some way related to the effect seen in the study, such that the cause-and-effect relationship disappears without these added tests. This means that the effects realized in the test would not exist in a real world without the test. In overcoming this, the researcher conducted the study outside the

laboratory in a natural setting. Participants met in the normal university setting and this helped deal with the threat of pre-and post-test effects.

**Sample features:** This threat is when some feature of the particular sample was responsible for the effect (or partially responsible), leading to limited generalizability of the findings. In this study, the sample for the study comprised normal students in the university and so the ability to generalize the findings to students in universities was not threatened by sample features.

### **Reliability**

The consistency or stability of a measurement instrument is referred to as reliability (Jackson, 2011). Also, reliability ensures that the instrument produces consistent results after a number of repeated trials (Kerlinger, 1979). The Cronbach co-efficient alpha was used to measure the reliability of the data collection instrument. This was done after the pilot testing with students of the University of Education, Winneba. University of Education, Winneba was chosen for the pilot testing because of similarities in the characteristics since it is also a public university.

Specifically, the University of Education, Winneba are both located in a coastal area like the University of Cape Coast. Also, the fundamental purpose of the University of Education, Winneba is to train education students just like the University of Cape Coast. Since the current study focused on students in the Faculty of Educational Foundations, using students in the University of Education, Winneba for the pilot test was appropriate.

The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.81 for the section on knowledge about marriage and 0.83 for the section on the attitude towards marriage. The overall reliability coefficient obtained for the questionnaire was

0.82. This reliability co-efficient indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher obtained ethical clearance before conducting the study. Following the ethical clearance, an introductory letter was obtained from the Department and sent through the appropriate channel in the University of Cape Coast. Data of potential respondents were obtained and then contact made with them. The researcher met participants in their lecture theatres. The researcher assured participants that information provided will be kept confidential and anonymous. The researcher sought their consent and established trustworthiness by building a rapport. Any tension was resolved by the researcher during the process of building rapport before the experiment commenced.

Before the intervention was administered, a pretest counselling was conducted to obtain baseline data. Afterwards, there was a counselling or education phase, which was the intervention. The posttest education or counselling phase followed the intervention to determine the effectiveness of the treatments. Care was taken to cover target students, that is, final year undergraduate students from the Faculty of Educations Foundations. Finally, an address was made available to students to make contact with researcher after the data collection process.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Information provided were analysed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). ANCOVA is an analysis tool commonly used for a pretest posttest experimental design. The pretest measure is sometimes referred to as

covariate. Covariates are confounding variables that can affect the outcome of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The effects of these confounding variables are reduced using ANCOVA. In a quasi-experiment, the researcher may have several confounds because of the absence of randomization. This apparent flaw was addressed by using ANCOVA. Specifically, One-Way ANCOVA was used in testing hypotheses one and two while Two-Way ANCOVA was used in testing hypotheses three to six.

### **Intervention Techniques**

The intervention phase lasted for eight weeks. Each session of the intervention lasted for 45 minutes, two sessions were undertaken each week. In all there were 16 sessions. This was the point where group counselling approaches were used with the participants. The time for meetings as well as days and venue (treatment) were agreed upon after consent was sought from the couples. The Premarital Education Programme participants met from 5:00 to 6:00pm on Monday and Tuesday while the Premarital Counselling group met on Thursday and Friday between 7:00pm to 8:00pm. Specifically, the Premarital Counselling group was divided into two comprising 25 members each. Therefore, their meeting times were:

Thursdays, 5:00pm to 6: 00pm (Premarital Counselling Group A)

Thursdays, 7:00pm to 8: 00pm (Premarital Counselling Group B)

Fridays, 5:00pm to 6: 00pm (Premarital Counselling Group A)

Fridays, 7:00pm to 8: 00pm (Premarital Counselling Group B)

The participants were very committed, and came with a mind of readiness to learn. Both intervention groups were given the needed attention they deserved. The breakdown of activities for both approaches is as follows:



## **Premarital Education Programme (PEP) Group**

The premarital education programme intervention took place within eight sessions. The first session was for introduction while the last session was for closure. The remaining six sessions were for the treatment. The number of sessions to meet was informed by the finding of Sabastin (2013) who found that respondents who attended between 6 to 8 sessions of treatment saw a higher improvement than their counterparts who had between 3 and 5 sessions. Also Kiser and Nunnally (1990) advocated that clients who received three sessions or less of group intervention in SFBT had a success rate of 69.4% while clients attending four or more sessions had a success rate of 91.1%. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and were also encouraged to think of possible solutions to the challenges rather than focusing on the challenges themselves. Counsellor-centered methods such as information sharing and social skills training are the main methods that were adopted in conducting the intervention in the premarital education treatment group.

The breakdown for the sessions is as follows:

### **Session One: Establishing Relationship**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. get to know other members of the group;
- b. explain the purpose of the group;
- c. explain at least three (3) advantages of group counselling to clients;
- d. list at least four ground rules to guide the group;

*Activities:*

This session was used to allow members acquaint themselves to the group and build healthy relationships. The repeated rounds method was used by members to introduce themselves and also learn the names of each other. The repeated rounds method is a process where group members introduce themselves in a manner where the first person mentions his/her name. The second person continues by mentioning the name of the first person as well as his/her own name. The process continues till the last person in the group mentions the name of the preceding member as well as his/her own name. The purpose of the group was clarified as well as role of the leader. How the group sessions were to be conducted was also discussed. Members were helped to verbalise their expectations.

Together with the participants, group rules were set. Some of the rules set included members showing respect for each other as well as to their views, being punctual and keeping issues discussed confidential. The advantages of group counselling were discussed. The group members were encouraged to think about their goals. They were made to understand that before the beginning of each session, their preferred goals would be established. This was to identify the change participants experienced. They were encouraged to set specific, measurable, attainable, and realistic goals. Participants were also encouraged to note any changes in their marital relationship before the next session. Members were given the opportunity to seek answers to questions or issues that perplexed them.

## Session Two: Relationship Issues

### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. acknowledge at least five behaviours that destroy marital relationship;
- b. identify the enormity of the problem in their marital relationship;
- c. explain at least five behaviours that improve relationships
- d. describe expected changes in the marital relationship.

### *Activities:*

The session started with a word of prayer from one of the participants after which questions or issues they wanted to clarify with respect to the first session were dealt with. The discussion for the day was based on the first scale of the MSI dubbed Relationship Issues with Items 2, 5, 10, 20, 21, and 25. This was anchored on the attachment versus independence theory. Through question and answer method behaviours that destroy marital relationship were elicited from the participants. At some point, the researcher used information sharing to provide information to the participants on relationship issues. The respondents were given an exercise to rank the enormity of relationship challenges in their marriage. We discussed the answers the participants brought out. It was showed that while some had grandiose challenges with relationship in their marriages others had slight challenges.

Through discussion method as well as the information sharing method, behaviours that could spark healthy relationship in marriage were brought forth. Drills were used to guide member to describe changes they envisage in their marital relationship. Each member shared his/her gains or what new they had learnt for the day. The researcher summarised what we had discussed for the day and also encouraged members to put to use what they had learnt. The

session then came to an end with a word of prayer from one of the participants.

### **Session Three: Affection, Love and Appreciation Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five challenges people face in expression of affection, love and appreciation;
- b. appreciate the magnitude of problems participants face in expressing affection, love and appreciation;
- c. Explain at least five ways in overcoming challenges people face in expression of affection, love and appreciation.

#### *Activities:*

The session started with prayer by a different member other than the ones who gave the word of prayer in the previous sessions. I then ushered participants into the day's session by finding out from them what gains they had made since the previous session. This helped me in appreciating and strengthening positive changes that may have taken place. It was also to motivate members that improvement was a possibility and that they should strive for it. From there, the researcher shared with them the objectives for the day. The day's discussions centered on the expression of affection, love and appreciation. Through the Dalton plan, challenges people face in the expression of affection, love and appreciation were identified by the participants. The Dalton plan is an educational concept created by Helen Parkhurst. It is a method of education by which pupils work at their own pace and receive individual help from the instructor when necessary. It also

encourages students to help each other with their work. This is useful in group activities (Bridgewater, 2013).

Using exploratory model the participants were allowed to talk briefly about their concerns based in the expression of affection, love and appreciation. From there they were guided to determine the magnitude of the problems associated with expressing affection, love and appreciation to their marriage partners. The discussion method was used to get participants to share their ideas as to how the challenge could be resolved. The researcher drew the participants' attention to the key issues discussed, reassured them of confidentiality. Participants were encouraged to share what they learnt from the session.

#### **Session Four: Commitment, Communication and Respect Issues**

##### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five challenges participants face in expression of commitment, communicating their views and showing respect;
- b. appreciate the magnitude of problems participants face in expressing affection, love and appreciation;
- c. explain at least five ways in overcoming challenges participants face in the expression of commitment, communicating their views and showing respect.

##### *Activities:*

The session started with prayer as the researcher began the day's session. After this, we discussed what the participants learned from the previous session. This gave me insight into whether the participants were benefiting from the intervention or not. After this, the researcher shared the

objectives for the day with the participants. The day's discussions centered on commitment, communication and respect in relationships and marriages. Using an exploratory approach, the researcher engaged the participants to bring out their main challenges regarding these three virtues.

After this, the researcher used information sharing to provide information to the participants on what commitment, communication and respect entails when it comes to marriage. This helped to bring out some answers regarding the problems and challenges that the participants indicated that they faced. After this, the researcher used social skills training in which the participants were tasked to express an honest and assertive view to their fellow participants in a respectful way. In doing this, the participants learned how to communicate their feelings while at the same time doing so with respect. After this, there was a summary of the session and the participants were required to highlight the key things they had learnt in the session. The session ended with prayer.

#### **Session Five: Sex and Romance Issues**

##### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five issues that participants have when it comes to sex and romance in marriage;
- b. acknowledge the magnitude of sex and romance issues in marriage;
- c. bring out at least five ways of handling sex and romance issues identified by the participants.

##### *Activities:*

The session began with a prayer said by one of the participants. After this, the participants were asked to give a summary of the things they learned

during the previous session. From their views, the researcher realized that the participants learned some things from the session on commitment, communication and respect. The researcher was encouraged to continue with the next sessions. The researcher then gave the objectives of this session and explained to the participants that this session dealt mainly with sex and romance issues. The researcher explained to the participants that confidentiality was assured and so they should feel free to express themselves. Basically, we explored what issues the participants had about sex and romance in marriage.

After this, the researcher engaged the participants in information sharing. In sharing information, the researcher started by explaining some of the sex-related issues which are important in marriage. The researcher also explained how significant romance is in the context of marriage. Particularly, it was highlighted that sex and romance are key things that help to improve the bonds in marriage. The participants were also encouraged to bring out information that they think can help improve sex and romance in marital relationships. In summarizing the session, all the participants highlighted what they had learnt through the interactions we had. The session then ended with prayer from another participant.

### **Session Six: Trust, Faithfulness and Financial Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five issues that participants have when it comes trusting and gaining trust, staying faithful and managing their finances;

- b. appreciate the degree to which the issues identified by the participants regarding trust, faithfulness and finances matter when it comes to marriage;
- c. highlight at least five means by which trust can be established in marriage, faithfulness can be ensured in marriage and finances can be effectively managed in marriage.

*Activities:*

As have been done throughout the previous sessions, this session began with prayer by one of the participants. There was then a recap of the issues learnt in the previous session. From the recap, it was realized that the participants had acquired some relevant knowledge when it came to sex and romance issues. After this, the objectives of the day's session were brought to bear. The day was meant to deal with trust, faithfulness and finances in marriage. Through the Dalton plan, issues that the participants had regarding trust, faithfulness and finances in marriage were identified by the participants.

Using the exploratory model the participants were allowed to talk briefly about their concerns when it came to trust, faithfulness and financial management. After this, the researcher engaged in information sharing to educate the participants on key ways in which trust and faithfulness can be ensured in marriage. In terms of financial management, the researcher had to engage in a lot of financial education. The researcher explained to the participants all that were required in effectively managing finances in marriage. At the end of the session, the participants were encouraged to share what they learnt for the session. Prayer was also said at the end of the session.



## Session Seven: Marital Roles

### *Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. identify at least three challenges spouses have with their marital roles;
- b. identify the magnitude of spouses' concerns with marital roles;
- c. describe at least five ways married people can discharge their marital roles effectively;

### *Activities:*

The counsellor introduced the session by enquiring about participants views from the previous session. Counsellor then shared the objectives for the day. The discussion centered on marital roles. We started with our usual word of prayer and we discussed our gains from the previous sessions. The researcher then shared the objectives for the day and we moved into the business for the day. Through discussion method participants identified some challenges they had with marital roles. The question and answer method was then used to get the participants to ascertain the magnitude of the challenges they had with marital roles by ranking them. Through the Dalton plan participants were equipped with skills which can help them in discharging their marital roles effectively. The researcher summarised the key ideas discussed and invited questions from the participants and ended the session with a word of prayer.

## Session Eight: Review of Sessions

### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. recap the preceding sessions;

- b. clarify issues relating to the sessions;
- c. evaluate the sessions;
- d. close the group.

*Activities:*

The researcher guided the participants to review the preceding sessions after a word of prayer was shared. The main lessons learnt were summarised and highlighted. Participants were invited to share their thoughts about the sessions and to discuss any other issues bothering them with regard to the earlier sessions. The participants were then asked to evaluate the sessions. There were comments such as “I’m now a counsellor”, “I’m renewed” and “I can now handle my marital issues much better now”.

The researcher drew the participants’ attention to the end of the interventions. While some were beaming with smiles, it was a sorrowful moment for others. The researcher commended them for their commitment and maturity in handling the issues and disagreements that came up and encouraged them to go and practice what they have acquired and build bridges rather than walls. The researcher also assured them of my availability for their future counselling needs and my maintaining confidentiality with the issues discussed. The researcher briefed them on the need for a posttest and scheduled an appointment with them for the posttest.

**Premarital Counselling Group**

The premarital counselling group comprised 50 members. This group was sub-divided into 25 per group for counselling purposes. The premarital counselling intervention also took place within eight sessions. A 45minutes to 1 hour duration was used for each session. Spilka and Dobson (2015) advocate

that counsellors use eight weeks of treatment in dealing with marital distress among couples. The processes of the intervention were similar to that of group-oriented approach. Specifically, some of the methods that were used in the premarital counselling treatment group included the client-centered methods like cognitive restructuring, guided discovery and discussions. The following are the details of the sessions.

### **Session One: Establishing Relationship**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. create rapport
- b. explain the purpose of the group.
- c. explain at least five (5) benefits of couple-oriented counselling to clients.
- d. list at least four ground rules to direct the group.

#### *Activities:*

The researcher started the session by introducing herself to the couple and the couple doing same. The researcher assured the couple of utmost confidentiality and encouraged them to do same with the issues we were to discuss. The purpose of the group was explained to them. Through discussion method we learnt the benefits of couple-oriented counselling. The ground rules set for the group included: respect one's spouse's views, punctuality, regular attendance, keeping discussions confidential and respect for the privacy of others. The participants were encouraged to think about their goals. They were made to understand that before the beginning of each session, their preferred goals would be established. They were encouraged to set specific,

measurable, attainable, and realistic goals. Participants were also encouraged to note any changes in their marital relationship before the next session. Members were given the opportunity to seek answers to questions or issues that perplexed them. The researcher summarised the key issues discussed for the day and requested one of them to say a word of prayer.

### **Session Two: Relationship Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. acknowledge at least five behaviours that destroy marital relationship;
- b. identify the enormity of the problem in their marital relationship;
- c. explain at least five behaviours that improve relationships
- d. describe expected changes in the marital relationship.

#### *Activities:*

The session started with a word of prayer from one participant. The researcher sought questions from the couples with regard to the previous session and clarified them. The discussion for the day centered on relationship issues. Through question and answer method, behaviours that destroy marital relationship were elicited from the participants. The respondents were given an exercise to rank the enormity of relationship challenges in the marriage. We discussed the answers the participants brought out. It was showed that while some had serious challenges with relationship issues which may come up in their marriages others had slight challenges.

Through discussion method behaviours that could spark healthy relationship in marriage were brought forth. Drills were used to guide member to describe changes they envisaged in their marital relationship. Each

participant shared his/her gains or what new they had learnt for the day. The researcher summarised what we discussed for the day and also encouraged members to put to use what they had learnt. The session then came to an end with a word of prayer from one of the participants.

### **Session Three: Affection, Love and Appreciation Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. identify at least five challenges they face in expression of affection, love and appreciation;
- b. appreciate the magnitude of problems participants face in expressing affection, love and appreciation;
- c. explain at least five ways in overcoming challenges they face in the expression of affection, love and appreciation.

#### *Activities:*

The session started with prayer as I ushered participants into the day's session by finding out from them what gains they had made since the previous session. This helped me in appreciating and strengthening positive changes that may have taken place. It was also to motivate members that improvement was a possibility and that they should strive for it. From there, the researcher shared the objectives for the day with the couple. The day's discussions centered on the expression of affection, love and appreciation. Through the Dalton plan challenges people face in the expression of affection, love and appreciation were identified by the participants.

Using the cognitive restructuring method, some of the cognitive distortions of the participants such as black-and-white thinking, catastrophizing, overgeneralizing and personalizing in terms of affection, love

and appreciation issues were identified. From there they were guided to determine the magnitude of the problems associated with expressing affection, love and appreciation to their marriage partners. Using some elements of cognitive restructuring such as self-monitoring and gathering evidence as well as guided discovery participants shared their ideas on how the challenges identified could be resolved. The researcher drew the participants' attention to the key issues discussed, reassured them of confidentiality. Participants were encouraged to share what they learnt for the session. The session ended with a prayer.

#### **Session Four: Commitment, Communication and Respect Issues**

##### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- d. identify at least five challenges participants face in expression of commitment, communicating their views and showing respect;
- e. appreciate the magnitude of problems participants face in expressing affection, love and appreciation;
- f. explain at least five ways in overcoming challenges participants face in the expression of commitment, communicating their views and showing respect.

##### *Activities:*

Prayer was said by one of the participants to begin the day's session. After this, we discussed what the participants learned from the previous session. This gave me insight into whether the participants were benefiting from the intervention or not. After this, the researcher shared the objectives for the day with the participants. The day's discussions centered on commitment, communication and respect in relationships and marriages. In the first place,

the researcher used the question and answer method to bring out their main challenges regarding these three virtues.

After this, the researcher used guided discovery to help participants to bring out what commitment, communication and respect entails when it comes to marriage. This helped to bring out some answers regarding the problems and challenges that the participants indicated that they faced in these areas. After this, the researcher used elements of cognitive restructuring to help the participants alter any views which were negative in terms of commitment, communication and respect in marriage. After this, there was a summary of the session and the participants were required to highlight the key things they had learnt in the session. The session ended with prayer.

#### **Session Five: Sex and Romance Issues**

##### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- d. identify at least five issues that participants have when it comes to sex and romance in marriage;
- e. acknowledge the magnitude of sex and romance issues in marriage;
- f. bring out at least five ways of handling sex and romance issues identified by the participants.

##### *Activities:*

The session began with a prayer said by one of the participants. After this, the participants were asked to give a summary of the things they learned during the previous session. From their views, the researcher realized that the participants learned some things from the session on commitment, communication and respect. The researcher then gave the objectives of this session. The researcher explained to the participants that this session dealt

mainly with sex and romance issues. The researcher explained to the participants that confidentiality was assured and so they should feel free to express themselves. Through the question and answer method, we explored what issues the participants had about sex and romance in marriage.

Through the exploration, the researcher realised that the participants held some bit of negative views and distortions such as black-and-white thinking, catastrophizing and overgeneralizing about sex and romance in marriage. Because of this, using cognitive restructuring method such as gathering evidence, we engaged in a process of getting information that refuted the views that the participants held so that they had a change of views. Particularly, the researcher highlighted that sex and romance are key things that help to improve the bonds in marriage. In summarizing the session, the participants were required to highlight what they had learnt through the interactions we had. The session then ended with prayer from another participant.

### **Session Six: Trust, Faithfulness and Financial Issues**

#### *Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- d. identify at least five issues that participants have when it comes trusting and gaining trust, staying faithful and managing their finances;
- e. appreciate the degree to which the issues identified by the participants regarding trust, faithfulness and finances matter when it comes to marriage;
- f. highlight at least five means by which trust can be established in marriage, faithfulness can be ensured in marriage and finances can be effectively managed in marriage.



*Activities:*

As have been done throughout the previous sessions, this session began with prayer by one of the participants. There was then a recap of the issues learnt in the previous session. From the recap, it was realized that the participants had acquired some relevant knowledge when it came to sex and romance issues. After this, the objectives of the day's session were made known to the participants. The day was meant to deal with trust, faithfulness and finances in marriage. The use of guided discovery helped to bring out some of the issues relating to trust, faithfulness and finances in marriage as perceived by the participants.

After this, any negative views held by the participants about trust, faithfulness and financial management in marriage were dealt with. Together with the participants, we brought out ideas and views about how trust and faithfulness can be ensured in marriage as well as how finances can be well managed in marriage. The participants were encouraged to share what they learnt for the session. Prayer was also said at the end of the session.

**Session Seven: Marital Roles***Objectives:*

The objectives of the session were to:

- a. identify at least three challenges spouses have with their marital roles;
- b. identify the magnitude of spouses concerns with marital roles;
- c. describe at least five ways married people can discharge their marital roles effectively;

*Activities:*

The counsellor introduced the session by enquiring about the participants' successes from the previous session. Counsellor then shared the objectives for the day. The discussion centered on marital roles in marriage.

We started with our usual word of prayer and we discussed our gains from the previous sessions. The researcher then shared the objectives for the day and we moved into the business for the day. Through discussion method participants identified some challenges they had with marital roles. The question and answer method was then used to get the participants to ascertain the magnitude of the challenges they had with marital roles by ranking them. Through the Dalton plan participants were equipped with skills in discharging their marital roles effectively. The researcher summarised the key ideas discussed and invited questions from the couple and ended the session with a word of prayer.

**Session Eight: Review of Sessions***Objectives:*

The objectives of this session were to:

- a. recap the preceding sessions;
- b. clarify issues relating to the sessions;
- c. evaluate the sessions;
- d. close the group.

*Activities:*

The researcher guided the couple to review the preceding sessions. The main lessons learnt were summarised and highlighted. The participants were invited to share their thoughts about the sessions and to discuss any other

issues bothering them with regard to the earlier sessions. They were then to evaluate the sessions.

The researcher drew participants' attention to the end of the interventions. In this approach too there were a lot of mixed feelings. Some of the couples were very remorseful while others were so delighted. The researcher commended them for their commitment and maturity in handling the issues and disagreements that came up and encouraged them to go and practice what they have acquired and build bridges rather than walls. The researcher also assured them of my availability for their future counselling needs and of my maintaining confidentiality with the issues discussed. The researcher briefed them on the need for a posttest and scheduled an appointment with them for the posttest.

### **Ethical Considerations**

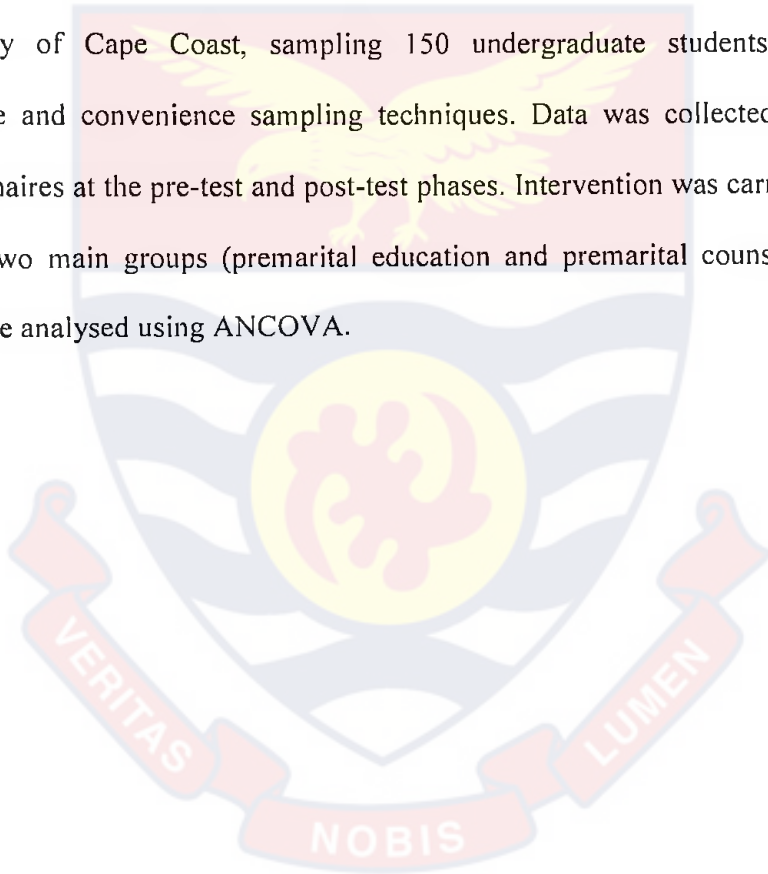
The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the Institutional Review Board to be able to conduct the study. Aside this, some ethical issues were followed. Participants in research have the right to: voluntary participation, informed consent, protection from harm, anonymity, confidentiality, dignity, and self-respect, according to Creswell (2007). These ethical rules were followed to assure the study's legitimacy and participants' safety. Before any data was collected, participants were fully told about the study's topic and their permission was asked.

Also, permission was sought from participants before any form of recording or writing was done. This was done to protect the right to privacy of participants. The researcher ensured that the participants were not brought to any psychological harm in the process of collecting data. The current study

had very little threat to psychological harm. Regardless, the researcher ensured that confidentiality, informed consent and anonymity were enforced during the data gathering, analysis and reporting stages.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter was focused on the methods involved in carrying out the study. The quantitative approach was adopted for the study. The quasi-experimental design was used for the study. The study was conducted in the University of Cape Coast, sampling 150 undergraduate students using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data was collected using questionnaires at the pre-test and post-test phases. Intervention was carried out for the two main groups (premarital education and premarital counselling). Data were analysed using ANCOVA.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. This chapter presented the results and discussion of the study.

#### Demographic Data

This section presented the demographic data of the respondents. The data covers the gender and the age of the respondents. The frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic data are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Demographic Data of Respondents**

Item	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	75	50.0
Female	75	50.0
Total	150	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20	31	20.7
21-25	71	47.3
26-30	38	25.3
Above 30	10	6.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

It can be seen in Table 2 that 50% each of the respondents were males and females. The researcher used equal proportion of males and females in the study so that the number of respondents would not interfere with the results of the study. Also, it is seen in Table 1 that about 47% of the respondents were aged between 21 and 25 years while 25% of the respondents were aged between 26 and 30 years. Only, 6.7% of the respondents were aged 30 years and above. From the data in Table 2, it is clear that the respondents aged from below 20 years to over 30 years.

### **Testing of Hypotheses**

#### **Hypothesis One**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.

H<sub>11</sub>: There is a statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.

This hypothesis aimed at finding out the effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage. Three groups were compared, namely, the control group and the two experimental groups (premarital counselling and premarital education). In testing this hypothesis, one-way ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) since there was only one independent variable. ANCOVA helped to find differences in adjusted means (i.e., adjusted for the covariate) and to "statistically control" for a "confounding variable" which may affect the results. The dependent variable was "post-test scores on knowledge about marriage", the independent variable was the groups of the participants (premarital counselling, premarital

education and control groups) and covariate variable was “pre-test scores on knowledge about marriage”. The results are presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

**Table 3: ANCOVA on Effects Premarital Counselling and Education on Knowledge about Marriage**

Dependent Variable: Post-test (Knowledge)							
Source	Type III		Mean			Partial	Observed
	Sum of Squares	Df	Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared	Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	6256.997 <sup>a</sup>	3	2085.666	65.117	.000	.572	1.000
Intercept	2489.288	1	2489.288	77.718	.000	.347	1.000
PREKN	394.663	1	394.663	12.322	.001	.078	.937
GROUP	5025.763	2	2512.881	78.455	.000	.518	1.000
Error	4676.337	146	32.030				
Total	158200.000	150					
Corrected Total	10933.333	149					

a. R Squared = .572 (Adjusted R Squared = .563)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

Table 3 shows that the groups (that is the premarital counselling, premarital education and control groups) were significantly different ( $F_{(2, 146)} = 78.455, p < .05, \eta^2 = .518$ ). Based on the significant differences found, a follow-up post hoc was done to find out which of the groups were significantly different. Table 8 shows the Sidak Post Hoc results. Sidak Post Hoc was deemed the most appropriate post hoc test because it assumes that each comparison is independent of the others, which increases its power in showing differences.

**Table 4: Sidak Post-Hoc Comparisons**

		Dependent Variable: Post-test Scores (Knowledge)			95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Premarital counselling	-13.976*	1.146	.000	-16.744	-11.209
	Premarital education	-10.245*	1.171	.000	-13.074	-7.416
Premarital counselling	Control	13.976*	1.146	.000	11.209	16.744
	Premarital education	3.731*	1.139	.004	.981	6.481
Premarital education	Control	10.245*	1.171	.000	7.416	13.074
	Premarital counselling	-3.731*	1.139	.004	-6.481	-.981

Based on estimated marginal means

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Sidak.

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 4, there was a significant difference between the premarital counselling group and control group (mean difference =13.98,  $p=.000$ ). Also, there was a significant difference between the premarital education group and control group (mean difference =10.25,  $p=.000$ ). Finally, there was a difference between premarital counselling group and premarital education group (mean difference =3.73,  $p=.004$ ). From the results, it is clear that the interventions were effective and so the mean differences among the groups were significant. Specifically, participants in the premarital counselling group had higher mean differences compared to the other groups. The specific adjusted means of the various groups are shown in Table 5.



**Table 5: Adjusted Mean Estimates**

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Knowledge)				
Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	95% Confidence Interval
Control	23.260 <sup>a</sup>	.816	21.647	24.873
Premarital counselling	37.236 <sup>a</sup>	.801	35.654	38.818
Premarital education	33.504 <sup>a</sup>	.813	31.898	35.111

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 5, it can be seen that after adjusting for the effects of the covariate (pre-test), participants in the premarital counselling group recorded the highest mean (37.24). The implication is that the participants who received premarital counselling had improved knowledge about marriage.

#### **Hypothesis Two:**

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage.

H<sub>11</sub>: There is a statistically significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage.

This hypothesis aimed at finding out the effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage. Three groups were compared, namely, the control group and the two experimental groups (premarital counselling and premarital education). In testing this hypothesis, one-way ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) was used since there was only one independent variable. The dependent variable was "post-test scores on attitude towards marriage", the independent variable was the groups of the participants (premarital counselling, premarital education and control groups) and covariate variable was "pre-test scores on attitude towards marriage".

The results are presented in Tables 6, 7 and 8.

**Table 6: ANCOVA on Effects Premarital Counselling and Education on Attitude towards Marriage**

Dependent Variable: Post-test (Attitude)							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	175511.139 <sup>a</sup>	3	58503.713	78.276	.000	.617	1.000
Intercept	74418.791	1	74418.791	99.570	.000	.405	1.000
Pre-test	11171.019	1	11171.019	14.946	.000	.093	.970
GROUP	157573.121	2	78786.560	105.414	.000	.591	1.000
Error	109120.861	146	747.403				
Total	2415928.000	150					
Corrected Total	284632.000	149					

a. R Squared = .617 (Adjusted R Squared = .609)

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

Table 6 shows that the groups (that is the premarital counselling, premarital education and control groups) were significantly different ( $F_{(2, 146)} = 105.414$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .591$ ). Based on the significant differences found, a follow-up post hoc was done to find out which of the groups were significantly different. Table 7 shows the Sidak Post Hoc results.

From Table 7, it is seen that there was statistically significant difference between the premarital counselling group and the control group (mean difference = 79.57,  $p = .000$ ). Also, there was statistically significant difference between the premarital education group and control group (mean difference = 41.43,  $p = .000$ ). Difference was also observed between the premarital counselling group and premarital education group (mean difference = 38.14,  $p = .000$ ).

**Table 7: Sidak Post-Hoc Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: Post-test Scores (Knowledge)						
(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig. <sup>b</sup>	95% Confidence Interval for Difference <sup>b</sup>	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Premarital counselling	-79.565*	5.481	.000	-92.805	-66.325
	Premarital education	-41.428*	5.470	.000	-54.640	-28.216
Premarital counselling	Control	79.565*	5.481	.000	66.325	92.805
	Premarital education	38.137*	5.473	.000	24.918	51.357
Premarital education	Control	41.428*	5.470	.000	28.216	54.640
	Premarital counselling	-38.137*	5.473	.000	-51.357	-24.918

Based on estimated marginal means

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

b. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Sidak.

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From the results, it is clear that the interventions were effective and so the mean differences among the groups were significant. Specifically, participants in the premarital counselling group had higher mean differences compared to the other groups. The adjusted means for the various groups are shown in Table 8.

**Table 8: Adjusted Mean Estimates**

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Attitude)				
Group	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	78.869 <sup>a</sup>	3.870	71.220	86.518
Premarital counselling	158.434 <sup>a</sup>	3.872	150.782	166.086
Premarital education	120.297 <sup>a</sup>	3.866	112.655	127.938

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values:  
Pre-test Scores = 76.0333.

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

After adjusting for the effects of the covariate (pre-test), participants in the premarital counselling group recorded the highest mean (158.43). The implication is that the participants who received premarital counselling had improved attitudes towards marriage.

### Hypothesis Three:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to gender.

H<sub>11</sub>: There is a statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to gender.

This hypothesis aimed at finding out the difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to gender. The post-test scores were compared in terms of the gender. In testing this hypothesis, two-way ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) was used to find the differences in the adjusted mean scores of males and females. This was because there were two independent variables. The dependent variable was post-test scores on knowledge about marriage while the independent variables were the groups of the participants (premarital counselling, premarital education and control

groups) and gender (male and female). The covariate variable was pre-test scores on knowledge about marriage. The results are presented in Tables 9 and 10.

**Table 9: ANCOVA on Differences in Knowledge about Marriage in relation to gender**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Knowledge)							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	6492.913 <sup>a</sup>	6	1082.152	34.850	.000	.594	1.000
Intercept	2487.389	1	2487.389	80.104	.000	.359	1.000
Pre-test	390.011	1	390.011	12.560	.001	.081	.941
Group	4755.418	2	2377.709	76.572	.000	.517	1.000
Gender	125.755	1	125.755	4.050	.046	.028	.516
Group * Gender	106.288	2	53.144	1.711	.184	.023	.355
Error	4440.420	143	31.052				
Total	158200.000	150					
Corrected Total	10933.333	149					

a. R Squared = .594 (Adjusted R Squared = .577)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

It can be seen in Table 9 that there was statistically significant effect of the premarital counselling and education on knowledge about marriage in relation to gender ( $F_{(1, 143)} = 4.050, p < .05, \eta^2 = .028$ ). The implication is that male and female participants in the experimental groups responded significantly different in terms of how the intervention affected their knowledge about marriage. The adjusted mean scores of the participants in terms of the gender and the groupings are shown in Table 10.

**Table 10: Adjusted Mean Estimates**

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Knowledge about Marriage)		95% Confidence Interval for Difference		
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Male	24.572 <sup>a</sup>	1.240	22.121	27.022
Female	22.309 <sup>a</sup>	1.039	20.255	24.364
Male	37.072 <sup>a</sup>	1.017	35.061	39.083
Female	37.482 <sup>a</sup>	1.246	35.018	39.946
Male	35.433 <sup>a</sup>	1.152	33.155	37.710
Female	31.725 <sup>a</sup>	1.097	29.556	33.894

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values:  
Pre-test scores (Knowledge about Marriage) = 22.89.

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 10, it can be seen that male participants in the premarital education group (35.43) had higher adjusted mean scores than their female counterparts. However, female participants in the premarital counselling group had higher adjusted mean score (37.48) than their male counterparts. This implies that male participants in the premarital education group had improved knowledge about marriage while female participants in the premarital counselling group had improved knowledge about marriage.

#### **Hypothesis Four:**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of gender.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of gender.

This hypothesis aimed at finding out the effects of premarital counselling and education on the attitudes of participants towards marriage with respect to gender. The post-test scores were compared in terms of the gender. In testing this hypothesis, two-way ANCOVA (analysis of covariance)

was used to find the differences in the adjusted mean scores of males and females. This was because there were two independent variables. The dependent variable was post-test scores on attitude towards marriage while the independent variables were the groups of the participants (premarital counselling, premarital education and control groups) and gender (male and female). The covariate variable was pre-test scores on attitude towards marriage. The results are presented in Tables 11 and 12.

**Table 11: ANCOVA on Differences in Attitude towards Marriage in relation to gender**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Attitude towards Marriage)							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	184099.863 <sup>a</sup>	6	30683.310	43.645	.000	.647	1.000
Intercept	68133.781	1	68133.781	96.916	.000	.404	1.000
Pre-test	13535.046	1	13535.046	19.253	.000	.119	.992
Group	159159.024	2	79579.512	113.196	.000	.613	1.000
Gender	5644.246	1	5644.246	8.029	.005	.053	.804
Group * Gender	2976.030	2	1488.015	2.117	.124	.029	.429
Error	100532.137	143	703.022				
Total	2415928.000	150					
Corrected Total	284632.000	149					

a. R Squared = .647 (Adjusted R Squared = .632)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 11, it can be seen that there was statistically significant effect of the premarital counselling and education on attitude towards marriage in relation to gender ( $F_{(1, 143)} = 8.029$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .053$ ). The implication is that male and female participants in the experimental groups responded

significantly different in terms of how the intervention affected their attitude towards marriage.

The adjusted mean scores of the groups are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12: Adjusted Mean Estimates**

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Attitude towards Marriage)					
Group	Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Male	79.108 <sup>a</sup>	5.787	67.668	90.547
	Female	78.830 <sup>a</sup>	4.928	69.088	88.571
Premarital counselling	Male	150.927 <sup>a</sup>	4.881	141.279	160.575
	Female	169.469 <sup>a</sup>	5.944	157.719	181.218
Premarital Education	Male	110.323 <sup>a</sup>	5.414	99.620	121.026
	Female	129.528 <sup>a</sup>	5.204	119.242	139.815

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values:

Pre-test scores (Attitude towards Marriage) = 76.03

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 12, it can be seen that male participants had lower adjusted mean scores in the premarital counselling group (150.93) and the premarital education group (110.32) compared to the female participants. In essence, female participants had improved attitude towards marriage after the intervention.

#### **Hypothesis Five:**

$H_0$ : There is no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to age.

$H_1$ : There is statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to age.



This hypothesis aimed at finding out the difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage in the experimental groups with regard to age. The post-test scores were compared in terms of the gender. In testing this hypothesis, two-way ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) was used. This was because there were two independent variables. The dependent variable was post-test scores on knowledge about marriage while the independent variables were the groups of the participants (premarital counselling, premarital education and control groups) and Age (Below 20, 21-25, 26-30, and Above 30). The covariate variable was pre-test scores on knowledge about marriage. The results are presented in Tables 13 and 14.

**Table 13: ANCOVA on Differences in Knowledge about Marriage in relation to age**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Knowledge about Marriage)							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	6673.697 <sup>a</sup>	11	606.700	19.655	.000	.610	1.000
Intercept	2582.158	1	2582.158	83.654	.000	.377	1.000
Pretest	350.563	1	350.563	11.357	.001	.076	.917
Group	4430.231	2	2215.115	71.763	.000	.510	1.000
Age	70.333	3	23.444	.760	.519	.016	.210
Group * Age	291.833	5	58.367	1.891	.100	.064	.628
Error	4259.637	138	30.867				
Total	158200.000	150					
Corrected Total	10933.333	149					

a. R Squared = .610 (Adjusted R Squared = .579)

b. Computed using alpha = .05

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

Table 13 shows that there was no statistically significant effect of the premarital counselling and education on knowledge about marriage in relation to age ( $F_{(3, 138)} = .760, p > .05, \eta^2 = .016$ ). This denotes that the respondents did not respond significantly different in terms of their knowledge about marriage on the basis of age. The adjusted mean estimates of the various groups are shown in Table 14.

**Table 14: Adjusted Mean Estimates**

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Knowledge about Marriage)					
Group	Age	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Below 20	22.299 <sup>a</sup>	1.698	18.941	25.656
	21-25	23.838 <sup>a</sup>	1.090	21.682	25.994
	26-30	22.830 <sup>a</sup>	1.568	19.729	25.931
	Above 30	<sup>a,b</sup>	.	.	.
Premarital Counselling	Below 20	36.281 <sup>a</sup>	1.604	33.109	39.453
	21-25	37.530 <sup>a</sup>	1.278	35.004	40.057
	26-30	34.747 <sup>a</sup>	1.541	31.699	37.794
	Above 30	43.627 <sup>a</sup>	2.268	39.142	48.112
Premarital Education	Below 20	35.545 <sup>a</sup>	1.969	31.652	39.438
	21-25	32.993 <sup>a</sup>	1.105	30.808	35.178
	26-30	33.982 <sup>a</sup>	1.604	30.811	37.154
	Above 30	31.564 <sup>a</sup>	2.785	26.056	37.071

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pre-test scores (Knowledge about Marriage) = 22.89.

b. This level combination of factors is not observed, thus the corresponding population marginal mean is not estimable.

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 14, it can be seen that the adjusted mean score of the participants above 30 years was the highest (43.63) in the premarital counselling group while participants below 20 years had the highest adjusted

mean score (35.54) in the premarital education group. These differences were however not significant as depicted in the ANCOVA test.

#### **Hypothesis Six:**

H<sub>0</sub>1: There is no statistically significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of age.

H<sub>1</sub>1: There is statistically significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of age.

This hypothesis sought to find the difference in the attitude of participants towards marriage in the experimental groups with regard to age. In testing this hypothesis, two-way ANCOVA (analysis of covariance) was used. This was because there were two independent variables. The dependent variable was post-test scores on attitude towards marriage while the independent variables were the groups of the participants (premarital counselling, premarital education and control groups) and Age (Below 20, 21-25, 26-30, and Above 30). The covariate variable was pre-test scores on attitude towards marriage. The results are presented in Tables 15 and 16.

**Table 15: ANCOVA on Differences in Attitude towards Marriage in relation to Age**

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects							
Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Attitude towards Marriage)							
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Observed Power <sup>b</sup>
Corrected Model	178672.460 <sup>a</sup>	11	16242.951	21.155	.000	.628	1.000
Intercept	66642.157	1	66642.157	86.794	.000	.386	1.000
Pre-test	10337.617	1	10337.617	13.464	.000	.089	.954
Group	134535.805	2	67267.902	87.609	.000	.559	1.000
Age	237.655	3	79.218	.103	.958	.002	.068
Group * Age	2922.135	5	584.427	.761	.579	.027	.268
Error	105959.540	138	767.823				
Total	2415928.000	150					
Corrected Total	284632.000	149					

a. R Squared = .628 (Adjusted R Squared = .598)  
b. Computed using alpha = .05

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

From Table 15, it can be seen that there was no statistically significant effect of the premarital counselling and education on knowledge about marriage in relation to age ( $F_{(3, 138)} = .103, p > .05, \eta^2 = .002$ ). The implication is that participants did not respond significantly different in terms of their attitude towards marriage on the basis of age. The adjusted mean estimates are shown in Table 16.

Table 16: Adjusted Mean Estimates

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores (Attitude towards Marriage)					
Group	Age	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Below 20	81.547 <sup>a</sup>	8.355	65.027	98.067
	21-25	78.817 <sup>a</sup>	5.437	68.065	89.568
	26-30	76.736 <sup>a</sup>	7.761	61.390	92.082
	Above 30	<sup>a,b</sup>	.	.	.
Premarital Counselling	Below 20	158.206 <sup>a</sup>	8.276	141.841	174.571
	21-25	153.616 <sup>a</sup>	6.357	141.046	166.186
	26-30	166.012 <sup>a</sup>	7.721	150.747	181.278
	Above 30	157.654 <sup>a</sup>	11.338	135.235	180.074
Premarital Education	Below 20	113.020 <sup>a</sup>	9.807	93.630	132.411
	21-25	126.025 <sup>a</sup>	5.434	115.280	136.770
	26-30	115.569 <sup>a</sup>	8.004	99.744	131.395
	Above 30	111.815 <sup>a</sup>	13.866	84.398	139.233

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pre-test scores (Attitude towards Marriage) = 76.03.

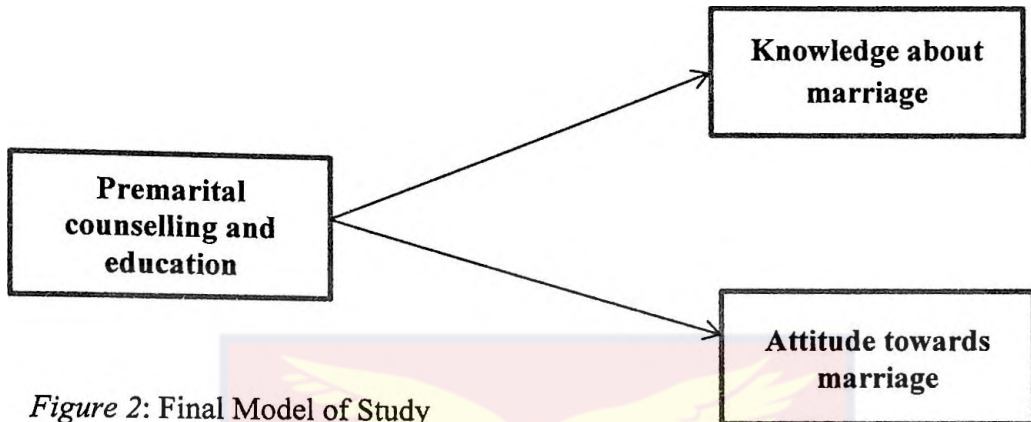
b. This level combination of factors is not observed, thus the corresponding population marginal mean is not estimable.

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

It is shown in Table 16 that the participants who were aged between 26 to 30 years had the highest adjusted mean score in the premarital counselling group (166.01) while the participants in the 21 to 25 years group had the highest adjusted mean scores in the premarital education group (126.03). Even though the differences observed were not significant, it is still clear that participants aged 26 to 30 and 21 to 25 years had improved attitudes towards marriage.

**Final Model**

On the basis of the findings, the final model for the study is shown in Figure 2.



*Figure 2: Final Model of Study*

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

It is shown in Figure 2, that both premarital education and counselling affected participants' knowledge about marriage and their attitude towards marriage. This was confirmed in the findings of the study. Also, it can be seen that both gender and age were insignificant in terms of the knowledge of the participants about marriage. Similarly, regarding attitudes towards marriage, the participants did not differ in terms of gender and age. These were all confirmed in the findings of the study.

**Discussion****Effect of Premarital Education and Counselling on Students' Knowledge about Marriage**

The results showed that there was significant effect of premarital education and counselling on participants' knowledge about marriage. Specifically, there was a significant effect of premarital education and counselling on participants' knowledge about marriage. From the results, it was clear that the interventions were effective and so the mean differences

among the groups were significant. Specifically, participants in the premarital counselling group had higher mean differences compared to the other groups. After adjusting for the effects of the covariate (pre-test), participants in the premarital counselling group recorded the highest mean implying that the participants who received premarital counselling had improved knowledge about marriage compared to those in the premarital education and control groups. Similarly, participants in the premarital education group significantly improved on their knowledge about marriage when compared with the control group.

The purpose of the premarital counselling and education was to provide information that will equip the participants with the right knowledge about marriage. On the basis of the results, it can be said that the purpose of providing premarital counselling and education was accomplished. The findings are in line with the findings of Mahmoodi (2016) who examined the effect of counselling on the knowledge about marriage and showed that counselling improved the level of knowledge and awareness of participants about marriage. Similarly, Opoku-Adjei (2018) examined the impact of premarital education for single young adults at Abuakwa Seventh-day Adventist church in Ashanti Region of Ghana and showed that premarital education was effective in empowering the young adults in terms of their knowledge on marriage.

In addition, McGeorge and Carlson (2006) evaluated the efficacy of a premarital educational programme using an 8-week intervention and found that the educational programme achieved its stated goal of improving the knowledge of people about marriage. In several previous studies, it has been

confirmed that the knowledge that young people have about marriage is improved when they are provided with counselling and education about marriage (Futris et al., 2011; Williams, Riley & Van Dyke, 1999).

In terms of specifics, Williams et al. (1999) surveyed individuals married 1–8 years to assess their perceptions of the helpfulness of marriage preparation and specific aspects of their experience. After providing education and counselling, Williams et al. found that individuals gained knowledge in terms of communication, commitment, conflict resolution, children and church or religion issues. Bruhn and Hill (2004) also identified certain aspects of premarital counselling which may be crucial for enhancing the knowledge and satisfaction in marriage for couples. They stressed on techniques that teach marriage couples to communicate, resolve conflict, and explore new roles and rules in their marriage relationship. Also, Futris, Barton, Aholou and Seponski (2011) assessed the efficacy of premarital counselling programmes among university students and showed that students who took part in counselling programme acquired more knowledge about marriage. All the findings of the previous studies along with the findings of the study sends the signal that premarital education and counselling are important in enhancing the knowledge of students and other young people about marriage.

### **Effect of Premarital Education and Counselling on Students' Attitude towards Marriage**

The study found that there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the groups in terms of the attitude towards marriage. Specifically, it was seen that there was a significant difference between the premarital counselling group and control group at post-test. Also, there was a significant



difference between the premarital education group and control group. From the results, it is clear that the interventions were effective and so the mean differences among the groups were significant. Specifically, participants in the premarital counselling group had higher mean differences compared to the other groups.

Thus, after adjusting for the effects of the covariate (pre-test), participants in the premarital counselling group recorded the highest mean. The implication is that the participants who received premarital education and counselling had improved significantly on their attitudes towards marriage. Thus, in essence, the treatments or interventions given to the participants worked. The findings of the current study are in line with previous studies. McGeorge and Carlson (2006) evaluated the efficacy of a premarital educational programme and found that the educational programme achieved its stated goal of improving the readiness and preparation of individuals for marriage. Yilmaz and Kalkan (2010) have also showed that premarital enrichment programmes significantly increase the relationship satisfaction level. Specifically, their findings showed that couples that took part in premarital education demonstrated higher relationship satisfaction levels when compared to couples in the control groups. This significantly improved their general attitudes towards marriage. Thus, they felt more like they wanted to marry after the counselling interventions. Dimkpa (2010) also showed that there was a significant difference between the experimental group's mean scores which was higher than that of the control group in terms of attitude towards marriage after the intervention.

Similarly, Moharrami, Pashib, Zandi, Abbaspour and Torbati (2017) investigated the effect of premarital counselling on shyness and expectations from marriage among students of Medical Sciences, Torbat Heydariyeh, Iran. Overall, the results suggested that premarital counselling was used for students before choice of spouse until to reduce the disturbing factors in spouse selection process. The implication is that premarital counselling improves idealistic expectations from marriage.

In the study of Silliman and Schumm (2004), adolescents in rural and small city high schools in the western United States reported their perceptions of marriage and marriage education. After receiving counselling and education about marriage, their attitudes towards and expectations of marriage generally became enhanced and felt more like they wanted to marry. Futris et al. (2011) showed that after participation in premarital education programme, couples exhibited positive gains in knowledge and attitude towards their relationship and marriage as a whole.

Further, Carroll and Doherty (2003) conducted a study with the aim of evaluating the effectiveness of premarital prevention programmes. The findings showed that majority of participants who took part in the programme were better off in their marriages than people who did not participate. Carroll and Doherty suggested that premarital prevention programmes are generally effective in producing immediate and short-term gains in interpersonal skills and overall relationship quality and that these improvements are significantly better than non-intervention couples in these areas. However, Carroll and Doherty indicated that because of a lack of extended follow-up research,

conclusions about long-term effectiveness remain elusive. In this sense, more longitudinal research is needed.

### **Difference in the Knowledge of Participants about Marriage with Regard to Gender**

The study showed that there was a difference in the effects of premarital counselling and education on the knowledge of participants about marriage in relation to gender. The male participants in the premarital education group had improved knowledge about marriage while female participants in the premarital counselling group had improved knowledge about marriage.

The findings of the current study support the findings of El-Ghany, Gad and Al- Haddad (2010) who explored and compared the knowledge and attitude about premarital counselling among Hadhramout University Students and showed that the females had high level of knowledge score than males about marriage. The result of El-Ghany et al. in relation to gender implied that after premarital counselling, females had improved level of marital knowledge than males. They concluded that there was gender difference in the knowledge about marriage. Sullivan and Anderson (2002) also found that there was a difference in the effectiveness of premarital counselling on the basis of gender and perceived marital risk level.

The findings of the current study, however, contradict the findings of some other studies. For instance, McGeorge and Carlson (2006) examined the effectiveness of the Marriage Assessment and Preparation programme (MAP) in improving participants' knowledge concerning marital relationships and healthy interactions. The study showed that premarital education was equally

effective for males and females. Thus, there was no statistically significant difference in the effectiveness of premarital counselling for males and females. Kepler (2015) also examined the connection between premarital and marital counselling and marital satisfaction for couples. The findings were not statistically significant in terms of gender.

The contradictions connote that in some situations, gender differences are observed in the level of knowledge about marriage after premarital education and counselling while in some situations, gender differences are not observed. In the situations where gender differences are observed, it is not surprising since females mostly have a greater desire in learning about marriage. In situations where gender differences are not observed, it could be because of the nature of the sample, as in, both males and females expressing the desire to learn about marriage. Regardless, more research is needed in this area because of the present inconsistencies in the findings of researchers.

#### **Difference in the Attitudes of Participants towards Marriage on the Basis of Gender**

The study showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the effects of premarital counselling and education on the attitude of participants towards marriage in relation to gender. Thus, male and female participants in the experimental groups responded significantly different in terms of how the intervention affected their attitude towards marriage. Specifically, female participants had improved attitude towards marriage after the intervention.

From the results, it can be said that both males and females improved in their attitudes towards marriage, with females improving better than males

after the intervention. The findings confirm the findings of Dimkpa (2010) that marital counselling had a significant effect on women's attitude towards marital stability. Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin, and Fawcett (2008) also examined the efficacy of marriage and relationship education (MRE) and concluded that both males and females improved in their attitudes towards marriage after being provided with the education. Schachtner, (2017) also found in her study that women had higher attitudes towards marriage than men after receiving premarital education.

On the other hand, the current findings contradict the findings of Siji and Rekha (2018) who examined the effectiveness of marital counselling on marital quality among young adults in Kerala State and showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the attitude towards marriage among males and females. In Ghana, Ntim (2014) investigated the impact of premarital counselling on adjustment among Christian couples in the Cape Coast Metropolis and showed that both men and women had positive attitude towards marriage after premarital counselling. The implication of all these is that both men and women experience some improvement in attitudes after receiving premarital counselling and education. However, whether males improve better than females varies contextually from researcher to researcher.

#### **Difference in the Knowledge of Participants about Marriage with Regard to Age**

The study showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage on the basis of age. The participants above 30 years and those below 20 years had improved knowledge about marriage. However, the improvements were not significant

as depicted in the ANCOVA test. This means even though there were slight improvements in knowledge among the various age groups, they were not statistically significant.

The findings imply that age is not significant when it comes to the effects of premarital counselling and education on knowledge about marriage. The findings are in line with the findings of Ibisomi (2014) who explored association between age and current contraceptive use among couples. Among the findings, it was noted that age differences were not associated with general knowledge regarding marital issues in Nigeria after adjustment for covariates. Similarly, Thomas and Kunzmann (2014) investigated a potential moderator of age differences in wisdom-related knowledge when it came to marriage. It was found that there were no linear age differences in wisdom-related knowledge about marriage.

The findings however contradict the findings of Opoku-Adjei (2018) who examined the impact of premarital education for single young adults at Abuakwa Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ashanti Region of Ghana. Opoku-Adjei showed that training during the seminar improved the knowledge of the participants with regard to their ages. Also, the findings confirm the findings of Stanley, Amato, Johnson and Markman (2006) that participation in premarital education was associated with higher levels of knowledge about commitment in marriage based on race, income (including among the poor), education levels and age of the participants.

There appears to be a depth of literature examining the age differences in knowledge about marriage after interventions. The inconsistencies among

the findings of the existing studies mean that more research is required on this phenomenon.

### **Difference in the Attitudes of Participants towards Marriage in the Experimental Groups on the Basis of Age**

It was showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the effects of premarital counselling and education on the attitude towards marriage on the basis of age. Even though participants aged 26 to 30 and 21 to 25 years had improved attitudes towards marriage, the difference among the other age groups was not significant. In essence, both the younger and older participants generally improved in their attitudes towards marriage. The findings could be because all the respondents are within the age range where they are all considered as young and youthful (20 to 30 years)

The findings confirm the findings of Sullivan and Anderson (2002) who conducted a study to examine the importance of premarital counselling among eighty- six (86) engaged couples in the United States and showed that premarital counselling enhance attitudes of individuals regardless of the age of the individuals. Siji and Rekha (2018) also showed that marital quality and attitude towards marriage among young adults in Kerala state was the same regardless of their age. Generally, the literature on this phenomenon is scarce and as such more research is needed in this area.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter focused on the results and discussion of the study. Specifically, six hypotheses were tested using ANCOVA. From the results, it was realized that premarital counselling and education improved the knowledge and attitude of university students towards marriage. Overall,

participants who received intervention improved in their knowledge and attitude towards marriage than the participants in the control group.





## CHAPTER FIVE

## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of premarital education and counselling on the knowledge and attitudes of University of Cape Coast students towards marriage. Specifically, the study sought to test six hypotheses:

1.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.  
 $H_{11}$ : There is a significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' knowledge about marriage.
2.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage.  
 $H_{11}$ : There is a significant effect of premarital education and counselling on students' attitude towards marriage.
3.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to gender.  
 $H_{11}$ : There is a significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to gender.
4.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of gender.  
 $H_{11}$ : There is a significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of gender.
5.  $H_{01}$ : There is no significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to age.

- H<sub>11</sub>: There is a significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage with regard to age.
6. H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of age.
- H<sub>11</sub>: There is a significant difference in the attitudes of participants towards marriage on the basis of age.

Literature relating to the study were reviewed. The review covered the Role Theory, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy and the Health Belief Model. A conceptual framework was presented for the study. Concepts relating to marriage, counselling, premarital education and counselling, marital quality and satisfaction and issues discussed in premarital education were reviewed. Previous studies were reviewed covering effects of premarital counselling and education on marriages and the relationship between premarital counselling and education and demographic variables (gender and age).

The study was based on the quantitative research approach. The quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. The study was conducted in the University of Cape Coast. The population comprised students in the University of Cape Coast. The sample comprised 150 students selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data were collected using questionnaire comprising the Relationship Knowledge Questionnaire and the Marital Attitudes and Expectations Scale (Park, 2012). The intervention was carried out for the two experimental groups (Premarital counselling and premarital education) in eight weeks. Data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

## Summary of Major Findings

The results showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the groups involved in the study in terms of the knowledge about marriage. Specifically, participants in the premarital counselling and pre-marital education groups had higher scores in terms of knowledge about marriage compared to the control group. The implication is that the participants who received the treatment (premarital counselling and education) had improved significantly in their level of knowledge at post-test.

The study also found that there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the groups in terms of the attitude towards marriage. From the results, it was clear that the interventions were effective. Specifically, participants in the premarital education and counselling groups had higher scores relating to their attitudes towards marriage when compared with the control group.

The study showed that there was a difference in the effects of premarital counselling and education on the knowledge of participants about marriage in relation to gender. The male participants in the premarital education group had improved knowledge about marriage while female participants in the premarital counselling group had improved knowledge about marriage.

The study showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the effects of premarital counselling and education on the attitude of participants towards marriage in relation to gender. Thus, male and female participants in the experimental groups responded significantly different in terms of how the intervention affected their attitude towards marriage.

Specifically, female participants had improved attitude towards marriage after the intervention.

The study showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of participants about marriage on the basis of age. The participants above 30 years and those below 20 years had improved knowledge about marriage. However, the improvements were not significant as depicted in the ANCOVA test.

Finally, it was showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the effects of premarital counselling and education on the attitude towards marriage on the basis of age. Even though participants aged 26 to 30 and 21 to 25 years had improved attitudes towards marriage, the difference among the other age groups was not significant. In essence, both the younger and older participants generally improved in their attitudes towards marriage.

### **Conclusions**

Conclusions were drawn based on the study's findings. In the first place, it is concluded that premarital counselling and pre-marital education improved the level of knowledge of students about marriage. However, premarital counselling improved participants' knowledge about marriage more than premarital education.

Also, it is concluded that premarital education and premarital counselling improved the attitude of students towards marriage. However, premarital counselling improved students' attitudes towards marriage more than premarital education.

It is further concluded that male and female students improved in their knowledge about marriage after receiving premarital education and

counselling. In terms of premarital counselling, females improved better than males in their knowledge while in terms of premarital education, males improved better than females in their knowledge about marriage. This sends the signal that male and female students may not respond in the same way to premarital education and counselling.

It can be concluded however that there is a difference in the attitude of male and female students after receiving premarital education and counselling. Both male and female students improve on their attitude towards marriage after receiving premarital education and counselling but females had improved attitude towards marriage more than males.

It is concluded that even though students above 30 years and those below 20 years improve in their knowledge about marriage, the difference is not very significant when compared to the other age groups. Thus, regardless of the age groups, individuals can experience improvement in knowledge about marriage.

Finally, it is concluded that students of all ages benefit from premarital education and counselling and get their attitudes improved. In essence, premarital education and counselling are helpful for students of all ages when seeking to improve the attitude of students towards marriage.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

1. To improve the knowledge and attitude of students regarding marriage, it is recommended that university counsellors and other marriage counsellors adopt premarital education and counselling approaches in dealing with students. This was because it was found that premarital

- education and counselling improved the level of knowledge and attitudes of students about marriage.
2. Since it was found that male and female students significantly differ in their knowledge about marriage after receiving premarital education and counselling, it is recommended that counsellors pay much attention to gender of students in the quest to improving their knowledge about marriage.
  3. It is recommended that both male and female students should receive attention from counsellors in the provision of premarital education and counselling to improve attitude towards marriage. However, female students appear to benefit much from premarital counselling and education and so such interventions should be tailored more to female students. This lays a duty at the doorstep of counsellors.
  4. Counsellors should pay attention to all students regardless of their ages when providing premarital education and counselling to improve knowledge about marriage. This is because the study found that students of all ages benefited in terms of their knowledge about marriage after receiving premarital education and counselling.
  5. Counsellors should pay attention students of all ages in the provision of premarital education and counselling to improve attitudes towards marriage. This is because the study found no differences among different age groups in terms of their attitudes towards marriage after receiving premarital education and counselling.
  6. The Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection should consider the study's findings in policy-making and implementation.

## Implications for Counselling

In the practice of counselling, the results of the study have some significant implications. In the first place, counsellors in universities could infuse premarital education and counselling in the provision of their services. This can help prepare students towards marriage to ensure that marriages work better. Secondly, marriage counsellors could make premarital education and counselling a fundamental part of their work even for students who are not readily getting married. The provision of the premarital counselling and education can empower students to be able to achieve successful marriages in future. Finally, counsellors in training should be equipped with expertise in premarital education and counselling so that they can effectively assist young people in preparing for marriage when they graduate.

## Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions for further studies were made:

1. Further research should be conducted to explore the effects of specific techniques in both premarital education and premarital counselling on the knowledge and attitude of students towards marriage. This can help counsellors know which specific techniques can be effective when working with students. Some of the techniques are information sharing, social skills training and guided discovery.
2. Further research can focus on people who received premarital education and counselling are married to find out whether the education and counselling they received are helping in their marriages. This can help identify any shortfalls in the provision of premarital

counselling and education to young people. A follow-up study would therefore, be relevant.

3. Further researches can also focus on adopting qualitative designs to help explore the individualized meanings of single students' attitude to the marriage institution in Ghana. This means exploring the personal and subjective views and attitudes of students who are single towards marriage.





## REFERENCES

- Adjassah, A. (2015). *Divorce rates high in churches*.  
<http://www.graphic.com.gh/new/generalnews>.
- Adzaho, R. D., Amoako, B. M., & Danyoh, J. D. (2020). Social media use and marital communication of Christian couples in Sogakope, Ghana. *Hybrid Journal of Psychology*, 1(1), 29-45.
- Adzovie, R. H. (2020). Attaining satisfaction in marriage: A study of marital satisfaction levels of married Christians in a developing country. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 12, 160-172.
- Agbodza, P. A. (2016). *The probability of divorce incidence in Ghana: Theoretical considerations*.  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293867248\\_The\\_Probability\\_of\\_Divorce\\_Incidence\\_in\\_Ghana\\_Theoretical\\_Considerations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/293867248_The_Probability_of_Divorce_Incidence_in_Ghana_Theoretical_Considerations)
- Aghdam, L. (2017). Effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy on the reduction of marital disaffection of women filing for divorce. *International Journal of Philosophy and Social-Psychological Sciences*, 3(6), 1-7.
- Agyemang, T., Agyemang, S., & Sekyi, J. R. (2020). Perception of marital satisfaction among couples in the Asante Akim North Area. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM)*, 8(7), 1454-1480.
- Ahluwalia, H., Anand, T., & Suman, L. N. (2018). Marital and family therapy. *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, 60(S4), S501-S505.
- Akinade, E. A. (1997). *Towards satisfactory marriage: A marital guidance counsellor's approach*. Caltop Publications Nigeria Ltd.

- Akinade, E. A., & Owolabi, T. (2009). *Research methods: A pragmatic approach for social sciences, behavioural sciences and education*. Connel Publications.
- Al-Kahtani, N. H. (2000). Acceptance of premarital health counselling in Riyadh City 1417H. *Journal of Family & Community Medicine*, 7(2), 27-34.
- Amankwah, A. A. (2013). *Divorce rate Ghana: A.M.A records high divorce cases and low marriage registrations*. <https://allafrica.com/stories.html>
- Amato, P. R. (1996). Explaining the intergenerational transmission of divorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 58(3), 628–640.
- Amato, P. R., & Rogers, S. J. (1997). A longitudinal study of marital problems and subsequent divorce. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 59(3), 612-624.
- Amato, P. R., Loomis, L. S., & Booth, A. (1995). Parental divorce, marital conflict, and offspring well-being during early adulthood. *Social Forces*, 73(3), 895–915.
- Amato, P., & Previti, D. (2003). People's reasons for divorcing: Gender, social class, the life course, and adjustment. *Family Issues*, 24(5), 602-626.
- American Counselling Association. (2007). *Counselling fact sheets: Definition of counselling*. <http://www.counselling.org/Resources/ConsumersMedia.aspx?AGuid=97592202-75c2-4079-b854-2cd22c47be3f>

- Bader, E., Microys, G., Sinclair, C., Willett, E., & Conway, B. (1980). Do marriage preparation programmes really work? A Canadian experiment. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 6(2), 171–179.
- Bagarozzi, D. A. (2001). *Enhancing intimacy in marriage: A clinician's guide*. Routledge.
- Baker, A. M. (2019). *Marital stability and spiritual growth: A phenomenological study on Christian premarital counselling*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Liberty University].
- Baldwin, J. H., Ellis, G. D., & Baldwin, B. (1999). Marital satisfaction: An examination of its relationship to spouse support and congruence of commitment among runners. *Leisure Sciences Journal*, 21, 117–131.
- Baucom, D. H., & Epstein, N. (2013). *Cognitive-behavioral marital therapy*. Routledge.
- Baucom, D. H., Shoham, V., Mueser, K. T., Daiuto, A. D., & Stickle, T. R. (1998). Empirically supported couple and family interventions for marital distress and adult mental health problems. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66, 53-88.
- Becker, M. H. (1974). The health belief model and personal health behaviour. *Health Education Monographs*, 2, 324- 508.
- Berg, I. K., & Dolan, Y. (2001). *Tales of solution: A collection of hope inspiring stories*. W.W. Norton.
- Blanchard, V. L., Hawkins, A. J., Baldwin, S. A., & Fawcett, E. B. (2009). Investigating the effects of marriage and relationship education on couples' communication skills: A meta-analytic study. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23(2), 203–214.

- Boostanipoor, A., Sanayi-Zaker, B., & Kiamanesh, A. (2007). A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of cognitive – behavioural patterns in the treatment of marital problems. *Quarterly Journal of Counselling Researches And News*, 6(22), 7-25.
- Booth, A., & Edwards, J. N. (1989). Transmission of marital and family quality over the generations: The effect of parental divorce and unhappiness. *Journal of Divorce*, 13(2), 41–58.
- Boran, F. (2003). *Love and marriage*. Epsilon.
- Bradbury, T. N. & Karney, B. R. (2014). *Intimate relationships* (2nd ed.). Norton & Company.
- Bradbury, T. N., & Fincham, F. D. (1987). Affect and cognition in close relationships: Towards an integrative model. *Cognition and Emotion*, 1, 59-87.
- Bradbury, T. N., & Fincham, F. D. (1988). Individual difference variables in close relationships: A contextual model of marriage as an integrative framework. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 54(4), 713–721.
- Bradbury, T. N., & Fincham, F. D. (1991). A contextual model for advancing the study of marital interaction. In G. J. O. Fletcher & F. D. Fincham (Eds.), *Cognition in close relationships* (pp. 127–147). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Bray, J. H., & Jouriles, E. N. (1995). Treatment of marital conflict and prevention of divorce. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 21(4), 461–473.

- Bridgewaters, E. (2013). Effects of marital success among married people in Birmingham, England. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 28, 75-83.
- Britt, S. L., & Huston, S. J. (2012). The role of money arguments in marriage. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 33(4), 464-476.
- Broderick, C. B., & Schrader, S. S. (1991). The history of professional marriage and family therapy. In A. S. Gurman, & D. P. Kniskern (Eds.). *Handbook of family therapy* (vol. 2, pp. 3-40). Brunner/Mazel.
- Broderick, J. E. (1981). A method for derivation of areas of assessment in marital relationships. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 9, 35-34.
- Bruhn, D. M., & Hill, R. (2004). Designing a premarital counselling programme. *The Family Journal*, 12(4), 389-391.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Busby, D. M., Holman, T. B., & Taniguchi, N. (2001). RELATE: Relationship evaluation of the individual, family, cultural, and couple contexts. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, 50(4), 308-316
- Busby, D. M., Ivey, D. C., Harris, S. M., & Ates, C. (2007). Self-directed, therapist-directed, and assessment-based interventions for premarital couples. *Family Relations*, 56, 279-290.
- Byrd, S. E. (2009). The social construction of marital commitment. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(2), 318-336.
- Campbell, D. T., & Stanley, J. C. (1963). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Rand McNally & Company.

- Carr, A. (2009a). The effectiveness of family therapy and systemic interventions for adult-focused problems. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 31, 46-74.
- Carr, A. (2009b). The effectiveness of family therapy and systemic interventions for child-focused problems. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 31, 3-45.
- Carr, L. T. (1994). The strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative research: what method for nursing? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 20(4), 716-721.
- Carreiro, J. (2021). *Gender role beliefs, household chores, and modern marriages*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].
- Carroll, J. S., & Doherty, W. J. (2003). Evaluating the effectiveness of premarital education: A review of outcome research. *Family Relations*, 52, 105-118.
- Cherry, K. (2020). *What is cognitive behavioral therapy?* <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-cognitive-behavior-therapy-2795747>
- Christensen, A., & Shenk, J. (1991). Communication, conflict, and psychological distance in distressed, clinic, and divorcing couples. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 59, 458-463.
- Clyde, T. L., Hawkins, A., & Willoughby, B. J. (2020). Revising premarital relationship interventions for the next generation. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 46(1), 149-164.

- Cobb, N. P., Larson J. H., & Watson, W. L. (2003). Development of the attitudes about romance selection scale. *Family Relations*, 52(3), 222-231.
- Collins, R. L., Ellickson, P. L., & Klein, D. J. (2007). The role of substance use in young adult divorce. *Addiction*, 102, 786-794.
- Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (1979). *Quasi- experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Rand-McNally.
- Cormack, D. F. S. (1991). *The research process in nursing* (2nd ed.). Blackwell Scientific Publications.
- Crane, D. R., & Morgan, T. B. (2007). *The efficacy and effectiveness of family therapy: A summary and progress report*.  
[https://www.academia.edu/24857759/The\\_efficacy\\_and\\_effectiveness\\_of\\_family\\_therapy](https://www.academia.edu/24857759/The_efficacy_and_effectiveness_of_family_therapy)
- Creswell, J. W. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods*. SAGE.
- Davis, C. K. D. (2015). *An evaluation of the impact of a couples enrichment programme on relationship satisfaction, communication, conflict*

- resolution, and forgiveness* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln].
- Dei, D. (2019). The effect of cognitive-behavioral marital therapy (CBMT) on marital distresses among married couples in Ghana. *Texila International Journal of Psychology*, 4(1), 1-9.
- Dew, J., Britt, S., & Huston, S. (2012). Examining the relationship between financial issues and divorce. *Family Relations*, 61, 615-628.
- Dimkpa, I. D. (2010). Effect of marital counselling on women's attitude towards marital stability. *Edo Journal of Counselling*, 3(2), 189-196.
- Doherty, W. J., & Anderson, J. R. (2004). Community marriage initiatives. *Family Relations*, 53, 425-432.
- Duba-Sauerheber, J., & Bitter, J. R. (2013). An Adlerian approach to premarital counselling with religious couples. *Journal of Individual Psychology*, 69(4), 305-327.
- Duffey, T. H., Wooten, H. R., Lumadue, C. A., & Comstock, D. C. (2004). The effects of dream sharing on marital intimacy and satisfaction. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 3(1), 53-68.
- Dunn, R. L., & Schwebel, A. I. (1995). Meta-analytic review of marital therapy outcome research. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 9(1), 58-68.
- Dzadey, G. A. (2015). *Psychosocial factors of marital satisfaction: A study in selected congregations of the Ho East Presbytery of E.P Church, Ghana*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Methodist University College Ghana].



- Earl, R. M. (2017). *Teaching family therapy: A substantive and methodological review and critique*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University].
- Echebe, P. I. (2010). *Family psychology*. University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Egbo, J. O. E. (2012). Human resources development through guidance and counseling. Pathways of occupational adjustment. *Ibom Journal of Counselling*, 3(3), 16-26.
- El-Ghany, G. M. A., Gad, A. H., & Al-Haddad, A. M. (2010). Knowledge and attitude about premarital counselling among Hadhramout University students. *Zagazig Nursing Journal*, 6(11), 46-65.
- Evans, P., Turner, S., & Trotter, C. (2012). *The effectiveness of family and relationship therapy: A review of the literature*. Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA).
- Farnam, F. Pakgozar, M., & Mir-Mohammadali, M. (2011). Effect of pre-marriage counselling on marital satisfaction of Iranian newlywed couples: A randomized controlled. *Sexuality & Culture*, 15(2), 141-152.
- Fawcett, E. B., Hawkins, A. J., Blanchard, V. L., & Carroll, J. S. (2010). Do premarital education programmes really work? A meta-analytic study. *Family Relations*, 59(3), 232-239.
- Fincham, F. D., & Bradbury, T. N. (1987). The impact of attributions in marriage: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(3), 510-517.

- Fogg, C. (2018). *What is SYMBIS for marriage, and why is it important?*  
<https://www.journeytojoycounseling.com/2018/06/06/what-is-symbis-for-marriage-and-why-is-it-important/>
- Fowers, B. J., & Olson, D. H. (1986). Predicting marital success with Prepare: A predictive validity study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 12(4), 403–413.
- Fowers, B. J., & Olson, D. H. (1989). ENRICH marital inventory: A discriminant validity and cross-validation assessment. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 15(1), 65–79.
- Fowers, B. J., & Olson, D. H. (1992). Four types of premarital couples: An empirical typology based on PREPARE. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 6(1), 10–21.
- Futris, T. G., Barton, A. W., Aholou, T. M., & Seponski, D. M. (2011). The impact of PREPARE on engaged couples: Variations by delivery format. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 10(1), 69-86.
- Gage-Brandon, A. (1992). The Polygyny-divorce relationship: A case study of Nigeria. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 54, 282-292.
- Gandhi, B. (2017). *Why do couples divorce? These 6 reasons are often to blame.* <https://www.today.com/health/why-couples-get-divorced-t117476>
- Gardiner, K., Fishman, M., Nikolov, P., Laud, S., & Glosser, A. (2002). *State policies to promote marriage.* <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/hspparent.htm>
- Ghana Statistical Service. (2022). *2021 Population and Housing Census (PHC).* Author.

- Gharedaghi, A. (2013). *Comparison of the effectiveness of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and interpersonal psychotherapy (IPT) on reducing the level of pregnancy period depression and increasing marital satisfaction in the pregnant clients at Valiasr Reproductive Health Research Center*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Allameh Tabatabaei University].
- Glade, A. C. (2005). *Differentiation, marital satisfaction and depressive symptoms: An application of Bowen theory*. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University].
- Glanz, K., Rimer, B. K., & Lewis, F. M. (2002). *Health behaviour and health education: Theory, research and practice* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Wiley & Sons.
- Glenn, N. D. (1994). Quantitative research on marital quality in the 1980's: A critical review. *Journal of Marriage & the Family*, 52(4), 818-832.
- Goodwin, A. L. (2010). Globalization and the preparation of quality teachers: Rethinking knowledge domains for teaching. *Teaching Education*, 21(1), 19-32.
- Gottman, J. (1999). *The marriage clinic: A scientifically based marital therapy*. Norton & Company.
- Gottman, J. M. (1994). *What predicts divorce? The relationship between marital processes and marital outcomes*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Greeff, P., Hildegarde, L., & Malherbe, A. (2001). Intimacy and marital satisfaction in spouses. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*, 27(3), 247-257.

- Green, A. R., & Miller, L. D. (2013). A literature review of the strengths and limitations of premarital preparation: Implications for a Canadian context. *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 47(2), 256-271.
- Hafezi, K. K. H., & Ghadami, S. A. (2011). A comparative review of the effect of group counselling on the cognitive – behavioural and the selection approaches on the marital satisfaction of couples in Noor Abad city. *Quarterly Journal of Counselling Researches*, 38(10), 50-80.
- Halford, W. K. (2003). *Brief therapy for couples: Helping partners help themselves*. Guilford.
- Halford, W. K. (2004). The future couple relationship education: Suggestions on how it can make a difference. *Family Relations*, 53, 559–566.
- Halford, W. K., & Simons, M. (2005). Couple relationship education in Australia. *Family Process*, 44, 147-259.
- Halford, W. K., Markman, H. J., Kline, G. H., & Stanley, S. M. (2003). Best practice in couple relationship education. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 29, 385–406.
- Halford, W. K., Moore, E., Wilson, K. L., Farrugia, C., & Dyer, C. (2004). Benefits of flexible delivery relationship education: An evaluation of the couple CARE Programme. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, 53(5), 469–476.
- Hart, T. L. (2009). *Exploring how couples utilize premarital counselling: A grounded theory approach*. [Unpublished dissertation, University of Nebraska – Lincoln].

- Hawkins, A. J., Blanchard, V. L., Baldwin, S. A., & Fawcett, E. B. (2008). Does marriage and relationship education work? A meta-analytic study. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 76*(5), 723–734.
- Hawkins, J. L., II. (2016). *Can participation in the "A more excellent way: Marriage enrichment programme" contribute to increased intimacy in marriage?* [Unpublished doctoral thesis, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary].
- Herzog, M. J., & Cooney, T. M. (2002). Parental divorce and perceptions of past inter-parental conflict: Influences on the communication of young adults. *Journal of Divorce & Remarriage, 36*(3-4), 89-109.
- Higginbotham, B., Bradford, K., Mock, J., & Skogrand, L. (2011). *Outcomes from the Utah healthy relationship initiative: The first year.* [Unpublished manuscript. Utah State University, Logan].
- Holman, T. B. (2001). *Premarital prediction of marital quality or breakup: Research, theory, and practice.* Kluwer Academic/Plenum.
- Hu, Y., Li, J., Ye, M., & Wang, H. (2021). The relationship between couples' gender-role attitudes congruence and wives' family interference with work. *Psychology Research and Behaviour Management, 14*, 49-59.
- Ibisomi, L. (2014). Is age difference between partners associated with contraceptive use among married couples in Nigeria? *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health, 40*(1), 39–45.
- Jackson, S. L. (2011). *Research methods and statistics: A critical approach* (4th ed.). Cengage Learning.

- Jacobson, N., & Addis, M. (1993). Research on couples and couple therapy- What do we know? Where are we going? *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 61*, 85-93.
- Jenson, J., & Sineau, M. (2001). *Who cares? Women's work, childcare, and welfare state redesign*. University of Toronto Press.
- Johnson, M. P. (1991). Commitment to personal relationships. In V. H. Jones, & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Advances in personal relationships* (Vol. 3, pp. 117-143). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Johnson, M. P., Caughlin, J. P., & Huston, T. L. (1999). The tripartite nature of marital commitment: Personal, moral, and structural reasons to stay married. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 61*(1), 160-177.
- Johnson, S., & Lebow, J. (2000). The "coming of age" of couple therapy: A decade review. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 26*(1), 23-38.
- Kalkan, M., & Ersanli, E. (2008). The effects of the marriage enrichment programme based on the cognitive-behavioral approach on the marital adjustment of couples. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 8*(3), 977-986.
- Kardan-Souraki, M., Hamzehgardeshi, Z., Asadpour, I., Mohammadpour, R. A., & Khani, S. (2016). A review of marital intimacy-enhancing interventions among married individuals. *Global Journal of Health Sciences, 8*(8), 74-93.
- Kariuki, M. W. (2017). *Effectiveness of premarital counselling programmes on marital stability among selected couples in Nairobi County*. [Unpublished master's thesis, United States International University – Africa].

- Kelechi, L., & Ihuoma, C. (2011). The role of guidance counsellors in the career development of adolescents and young adults with special needs. *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 51-62.
- Kepler, A. (2015). *Marital satisfaction: The impact of premarital and couples counselling*. [Unpublished master's thesis, St. Catherine University and the University of St. Thomas].
- Kerlinger, F. N. (1979). *Behavioural research: A conceptual approach*. Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Kim, M. (2013). The effect of marital intimacy, sex communication, and sexual satisfaction on the marital satisfaction for Korean middle-aged women. *Journal of Next Generation Information Technology*, 4(8), 441-448.
- Kiser, D., & Nunnally, E. (1990). *The relationship between treatment length and goal achievement in solution-focused therapy*. <http://rsw.sagepub.com/content/11/4/411.refs>
- Kiuna, A., & Kiuna, R. (2012). *Marriages works, so why is it falling apart*. Jubilee Publisher.
- Knutson, L., & Olson, D. H. (2003). Effectiveness of PREPARE programme with premarital couples in community settings. *Marriage & Family: A Christian Journal*, 6(4), 529-546.
- Kumar, R. (2005). *Research methodology: A step by step guide for beginners*. Sage Publications.
- Larsen, A. S., & Olson, D. H. (1989). Predicting marital satisfaction using PREPARE: A replication study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 15(3), 311-322.

- Larson, J. H., & Holman, T. B. (1994). Premarital predictors of marital quality and stability. *Family Relations*, 43, 228-237.
- Larson, J. H., Anderson, S. M., Holman, T. B., Niemann, B. K. (1998). A longitudinal study of the effects of premarital communication, relationship stability, and self-esteem on sexual satisfaction in the first year of marriage. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 24(3), 193–206.
- Larson, J. H., Newell, K., Topham, G., & Nichols, S., (2002). A review of three comprehensive premarital assessment questionnaires. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 28(2), 233-239.
- Law, D., & Crane, D. (2000). The influence of marital and family therapy on health care utilization in a health maintenance organization. *Journal of Marital Family Therapy*, 26, 281-291.
- Logan, T. K., Walker, R., Horvath, L. S., & Leukefeld, C. (2003). Divorce, custody and spousal violence: A random sample of circuit court docket records. *Journal of Family Violence*, 18, 269-279.
- Lopang, G. B., & Bakadzimoeti, K. K. (2018). Perceptions about premarital counselling and marriage stability in Botswana: A case of towing village. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 23(3), 34-41.
- Lundbald, A., & Hansson, K. (2005). Outcomes in couples' therapy: Reduced psychiatric symptoms and improved sense of coherence. *Normadic Journal of Psychiatry*, 59(5), 374-380.
- Mahmoodi, G. (2016). The effect of marriage counselling on the knowledge of the married couples. *International Journal of Medical Research & Health Sciences*, 5(7S), 354-359.



- Manne, S., & Badr, H. (2008). Intimacy and relationship processes in couples' psychosocial adaptation to cancer. *The Cancer Journal*, 112(110), 2541-2555.
- Maples, M. (1996). Cornerstones of a civilized society. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal*, 47(3), 41-60.
- Markman, H. J., & Hahlweg, K. (1993). The prediction and prevention of marital distress: An international perspective. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 13, 29-43.
- Marks, J. P. (2007). *Christian premarital training in the local church setting: A study of the effectiveness of the SYMBIS model in reducing divorce and producing stable and satisfying marital relationships*. [Unpublished doctoral thesis, Liberty Theological Seminary].
- Marriage Care. (2012). *FOCCUS: Guidance for couples marrying within the Catholic Church*. <https://www.marriagecare.org.uk/marriage-preparation-2/foccus/>
- Martin, B. (2019). *In-depth: Cognitive behavioural therapy*. [https://psychcentral.com/lib/in-depth-cognitive-behavioral-therapy/#:~:text=Cognitive%20behavioral%20therapy%20\(CBT\)%20is,change%20the%20way%20they%20feel.](https://psychcentral.com/lib/in-depth-cognitive-behavioral-therapy/#:~:text=Cognitive%20behavioral%20therapy%20(CBT)%20is,change%20the%20way%20they%20feel.)
- Martin, G. M., & Tardif, M. (2014). What we do and don't know about sex offenders' intimacy dispositions. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, 19(4), 372-382.
- McGeorge, C. R., & Carlson, T. S. (2006). Premarital education: An assessment of programme efficacy. *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, 28(1), 165-190.

- Mehroz, Y. T., & Hatami, H. (2010). The effect of training life skills on reducing shyness and anger management in students. *Proceedings of the Third Congress of Psychology*.
- Mitchell, A. E. (2007). *The effect of self-disclosure and empathic responding on intimacy: Testing an interpersonal process model of intimacy using an observational coding system*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Texas A&M University].
- Mitchell, A. E., Castellani, A. M., Herrington, R. L., Joseph, J. I., Doss, B. D., & Snyder, D. K. (2008). Predictors of intimacy in couples' discussions of relationship injuries: An observational study. *Journal of Family Psychology, 22*(1), 21–29.
- Mitwally, N., Abd El-Rahman, D. A., & Mohamed N. (2000). 'Premarital counselling: View of the target group. *The Journal of the Egyptian Public Health Association, Lxxxv*, 31-51.
- Moeti, B., Koloi-Keaikitse, S., & Mokgolodi, H. L. (2017). Married women's lived experiences on the value of traditional premarital counselling "Go Laya" on marital stability in Botswana. *The Family Journal, 25*(3), 247-256.
- Mohamady, S., Said, A. E. S., & EL Sayed, H. (2017). Effect of application of health belief model on females' knowledge and practices regarding the premarital counselling. *Journal of Nursing and Health Science, 6*(1). 5-15.
- Moharrami, I. S., Pashib, M., Zandi, A., Abbaspour, S., & Torbati, A. G. (2017). Effect of premarital counselling on shyness and expectations

- from marriage among medical science students. *Bioscientific and Biotechnology Research Community*, 10(3), 11-16.
- Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. African Centre for Technology Studies.
- Mutter, K. F., Ande, T., & Hugo, C. J. (2010). Christians' perceptions of hypothetical case studies of five pastoral approaches to marital therapy: An exploratory study. *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*, 29(4), 326-334.
- Nayeri, A., Lotfi, M., & Noorani, M. (2014). The effectiveness of group training of transactional analysis on intimacy in couples. *Procedia-Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 152, 1167-1170.
- Ndlovu, T. M. (2000). *The need for premarital counselling in combating domestic violence: Case studies within the Madadeni*. [Unpublished master's thesis, University of Zululand].
- Ng'ang'a, R., & Wasanga, C. (2010). *Assessment of the existing premarital counselling programmes offered in selected PCEA Churches in Kiambu District*. Paper presented during the 11th KAPC counselling conference, 7th-9th September 2010, Safari Park Hotel.
- Noroozi, M., Taleghani, F., Merghati-Khoei, E. S., Tavakoli, M., & Gholami, A. D. (2014). Premarital sexual relationships: Explanation of the actions and functions of family. *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research*, 19(4), 424-431.
- Norvell, K. (2009). *In good communication and in bad: A study of premarital counselling and communication skills in newlywed couples*. [Unpublished master's thesis, University of North Texas].

- Ntim, E. (2014). *The impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment among Christian couples in the Cape Coast Metropolis*. [Unpublished master's thesis, University of Cape Coast].
- Odero, M. E. A. (2018). *Premarital counselling and its influence on marital quality among seventh day Adventist members in Kibra Division of Nairobi County, Kenya*. [Unpublished master's thesis, PAC University].
- Ogah, J. K. (2013). *Decision making in research process: Companion to students and beginning researchers*. Adwinsa Publications (Gh) Ltd.
- Okoye, R. O. (1996). *Educational and psychological measurement and evaluation*. ED-Solid foundation publishers.
- Olson, D. H., Olson, A. K., & Larson, P. J. (2012). PREPARE-ENRICH Programme: Overview and new discoveries about couples. *Journal of Family & Community Ministries*, 25, 30-44.
- Opoku-Adjei, D. (2018). *Providing a premarital education seminar for the single young adults of Abuakwa Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana*. [Unpublished doctoral project, Andrews University, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary].
- Otondo, O. (2008). *Tough new rules to curb marital conflict*. Royal.
- Parhizgar, O., Esmaelzadeh-Saeieh, S., Kamrani, M. A., Rahimzadeh, M., & Tehranizadeh, M. (2017). Effect of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction. *Shiraz E-Medical Journal*, 18(5). e44693.

- Park, S. S. (2012). *The development of the marital attitudes and expectations scale*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Colorado State University].
- Plunkett, M. (2014). *World's 10 most divorced nations*.  
[www.therichest.com/rich-list/world/worlds-10-most-divorced-nations/](http://www.therichest.com/rich-list/world/worlds-10-most-divorced-nations/)?
- Poulsen, S., Lunn, S., Daniel, S. I., Folke, S., Mathiesen, B. B., Katznelson, H., & Fairburn, C. G. (2014). A randomized controlled trial of psychoanalytic psychotherapy or cognitive-behavioral therapy for bulimia nervosa. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 171(1), 109-116.
- Quinet, A., Shelmerdine, S., Dessel, P. V., & Unger, J. P. (2015) Family therapy in developing countries primary care. *Journal of Family Med Dis Prev.*, 1(006).
- Reis, H. T., & Sprecher, S. (Eds.) (2009). *Encyclopedia of human relationships*. Sage Publications.
- Rosenstock, I. M. (1960). What research in motivation suggests for public health. *American Journal of Public Health*, 50, 295-301.
- Rosenstock, I. M. (1974). Historical origins of the Health Belief Model. *Health Education Monographs*, 2(4), 328-335.
- Russell, M. (2006). *Equine facilitated couples' therapy and solution focused couples therapy: A comparison study*. [Unpublished dissertation, Prescott, Arizona].
- Sabastin, K. (2013). Improving the marital quality of couples through cognitive behavioural therapy and integrative behavioural therapy in Entebbe, Uganda. *Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 27(1), 54-60.

- Park, S. S. (2012). *The development of the marital attitudes and expectations scale*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Colorado State University].
- Plunkett, M. (2014). *World's 10 most divorced nations*.  
[www.therichest.com/rich-list/world/worlds-10-most-divorced-nations/](http://www.therichest.com/rich-list/world/worlds-10-most-divorced-nations/)
- Poulsen, S., Lunn, S., Daniel, S. I., Folke, S., Mathiesen, B. B., Katznelson, H., & Fairburn, C. G. (2014). A randomized controlled trial of psychoanalytic psychotherapy or cognitive-behavioral therapy for bulimia nervosa. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, *171*(1), 109-116.
- Quinet, A., Shelmerdine, S., Dessel, P. V., & Unger, J. P. (2015) Family therapy in developing countries primary care. *Journal of Family Med Dis Prev.*, *1*(006).
- Reis, H. T., & Sprecher, S. (Eds.) (2009). *Encyclopedia of human relationships*. Sage Publications.
- Rosenstock, I. M. (1960). What research in motivation suggests for public health. *American Journal of Public Health*, *50*, 295-301.
- Rosenstock, I. M. (1974). Historical origins of the Health Belief Model. *Health Education Monographs*, *2*(4), 328-335.
- Russell, M. (2006). *Equine facilitated couples' therapy and solution focused couples therapy: A comparison study*. [Unpublished dissertation, Prescott, Arizona].
- Sabastin, K. (2013). Improving the marital quality of couples through cognitive behavioural therapy and integrative behavioural therapy in Entebe, Uganda. *Journal of Industrial Psychology*, *27*(1), 54-60.

- Savage, G. (2015). Modern marriage: Managing conflict and enforcing compatibility. *Journal of Women's History, 27*(2), 175-181.
- Schachtner, L. (2017). *Premarital self-disclosure predicting distal marital outcomes*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Kansas State University].
- Schumm, W. R., Silliman, B., & Bell, D. B. (2000). Perceived premarital counselling outcomes among recently married army personnel. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy, 26*(1), 177-186.
- Schumm, W. R., Walker, A. B., Roy, R., West, D. A., Atwell, C., Bartko, A., & Kriley, A. (2010). Predicting the short- and long-term helpfulness of premarital counselling: The critical role of counselling quality. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy, 9*(1), 1-15.
- Secula, N. (2018). *A premarital congregation-based education programme: Towards addressing a gap in premarital preparation in the Three Forks Church of Christ, South-Central Kentucky, USA*. [Unpublished master's thesis, South African Theological Seminary].
- Senediak, C. (1990). The value of premarital education. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 11*(1), 26-31.
- Sexton, T. L., & Datchi, C. (2014). The development and evolution of family therapy research: Its impact on practice, current status, and future directions. *Family Process, 53*(3), 415-433.
- Shah, A. (1995). Clinical validity of marital quality scale. *Nimhans Journal, 13*(1), 23-31.
- Shaju, M., & Subhashini, D. (2017). A study on the impact of job satisfaction on job performance of employees working in automobile industry, Punjab, India. *Journal of Management Research, 9*, 117-130.

- Siji, M. M., & Rekha, K. S. (2018). Effectiveness of marital counselling on marital quality among young adults: A pre-post intervention. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI)*, 7(4), 11-23.
- Silliman, B., & Schumm, W. R. (1999). Improving practice in marriage preparation. *Journal of Sex & Marital Therapy*, 25(1), 23-43.
- Silliman, B., & Schumm, W. R. (2004). Adolescents' perceptions of marriage and premarital couples' education. *Family Relations*, 53(5), 513-520.
- Simpson, J. A., Rholes, W. S., & Neligan, J. S. (2001). Support seeking and support giving within couples in an anxiety provoking situation: The role of personality. *Social Psychology*, 62(3), 434-446.
- Spilka, M. J., & Dobson, K. S. (2015). Promoting the internationalization of evidence-based practice: Benchmarking as a strategy to evaluate culturally transported psychological treatments. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 22, 58-75
- Stahmann, R. F. (2000). Premarital counselling: a focus for family therapy. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 163(22), 104-116.
- Stahmann, R. F., & Salts, C. J. (1993). Educating for marriage and intimate relationships. In M. E. Arcus, J. D. Schvaneveldt, & J. J. Moss (Eds.), *The handbook for family life education* (Vol. 2, pp. 33-61). Sage.
- Stanley, S. (2001). Making a case for premarital education. *Family Relations*, 50, 272-280.
- Stanley, S. M. (2010). Making a case for premarital education. *Family Relations*, 50(3), 272-280.

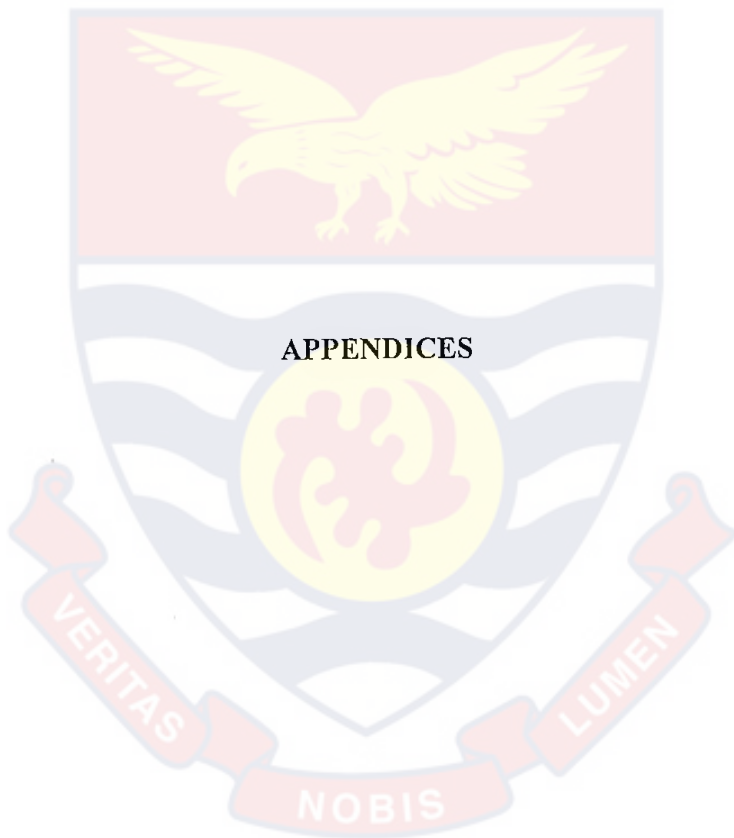


- Stanley, S. M., & Markman, H. J. (1997). *Marriage in the 90s: A nationwide random phone survey*. Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Programme.
- Stanley, S. M., Amato, P., Johnson, C. A., & Markman, H. J. (2006). Premarital education, marital quality, and marital stability: Findings from a large, random household survey. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *20*, 117–126.
- Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., & Whitton, S. W. (2002). Communication, conflict, and commitment: Insights on the foundations of relationship success from a national survey. *Family Process*, *42*, 659-675.
- Stanley, S. M., Markman, H. J., St. Peters, M., & Leber, B. D. (1995). Strengthening marriages and preventing divorce: New directions in prevention research. *Family Relations*, *44*, 392-401.
- Stanley, S. M., Rhoades, G. K., & Markman, H. J. (2006). Sliding versus deciding: Inertia and the premarital cohabitation effect. *Family Relations: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Studies*, *55*(4), 499–509.
- Sukori, B. J. (2011). *This marriage must succeed*. Royal.
- Sullivan, K. T., & Anderson, C. (2002). Recruitment of engaged couples for premarital counselling: An empirical examination of the importance of programme characteristics and topics to potential respondents. *The Family Journal*, *10*, 388-397.

- Sullivan, K. T., & Bradbury, T. N. (1997). Are premarital prevention programmes reaching couples at risk for marital dysfunction? *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 65*, 24–30.
- Tabachnick, B. G., & Fidell, L. S. (2006). *Using multivariate statistics* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Allyn and Bacon.
- Tajdeen, A. (2020). *Marriage and divorce*. King Publishers.
- Takyi, B. K., & Gyimah, S. O. (2007). Matrilineal family ties and marital dissolution in Ghana. *Journal of Family Issues, 28*(5), 682–705.
- Tambling, R. B., & Glebova, T. (2013). Preferences of individuals in committed relationships about premarital counselling. *American Journal of Family Therapy, 41*, 330–340.
- Tarhan, N. (2008). *Marriage psychology*. Timaş.
- Tavakol, M., Zarei, E., & Pour, H. Z. (2014). A comparison between controlling behaviours, intimacy and marital adjustment of Iranian couples resident. *Academic Journal of Psychological Studies, 3*(7), 415–422.
- Taylor, R. M., & Johnson, L. P. (1984). *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA)*. Psychological Publication.
- Teibowei, B. J. (2011). *Building a successful marriage*. Royal.
- Thomas, S., & Kunzmann, U. (2014). Age differences in wisdom-related knowledge: Does the age relevance of the task matter? *The Journals of Gerontology, 69*(6), 897–905.
- Thompson, G. F. (2001). *Are there any limits to globalization? International trade, capital flows and borders' (mimeo)*. Open University.

- Tilson, D., & Larsen, U. (2000). Divorce in Ethiopia: The impact of early marriage and childlessness. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 32(3), 355-372.
- Todd, S. D. R. (2008). *Premarital preparation activities and the level of complaints and perceptual accuracy in marriage*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Utah State University].
- Tuffour, F. (2017). *A marriage preparation programme in the South Central Ghana Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church*. [Unpublished doctoral thesis, Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary].
- Udofia, A. A., Bonsi, E. E., Agbakpe, G. F., & Udofia, E. A. (2021). The impact of pre-marital counselling and psychological variables on marital satisfaction among married couples in Laterbiokoshie, Accra, Ghana. *Journal of Psychological Research*, 3(1), 7-15.
- Weiss, J. M. (2014). *Marital preparation, experiences, and personal qualities in a qualitative study of individuals in great marriages*. [Unpublished master's thesis, Utah State University].
- Whitehead, D. (2004). Health promotion and health education: Advancing the concepts. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 47(3), 311-320.
- Williams, L. (2007). Premarital counselling. *Journal of Couple & Relationship Therapy*, 6(1/2), 207-217.
- Williams, L. M., Riley, L. A., & Van Dyke, D. T. (1999). An empirical approach to designing marriage preparation programmes. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 27(3), 271-283.

- Williams, L., & Jurich, J. (1995). Predicting marital success after five years: Assessing the predictive validity of FOCCUS. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 21*(2), 141–153.
- Williamson, H. C., Hammett, J. F., Ross, J. M., Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (2018). Premarital education and later relationship help-seeking. *Journal of Family Psychology, 32*(2), 276-281.
- Williamson, H. C., Trail, T. E., Bradbury, T. N., & Karney, B. R. (2014). Does premarital education decrease or increase couples' later help seeking? *Journal of Family Psychology, 28*, 112–117.
- Wilmoth, J. D., & Smyser, S. L. (2010). *Use of premarital assessment questionnaires by clergy in marriage preparation.*  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15332691.2010.491783>
- Yavuzer, H. (2004). *Marriage school.* Remzi.
- Yazdanpanah, M., Eslami, M., & Nakhaee, N. (2014). *Effectiveness of the premarital education programme in Iran.*  
<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/isrn/2014/964087/>
- Yilmaz, T., & Kalkan, M. (2010). The effects of a premarital relationship enrichment programme on relationship satisfaction. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 10*(3), 1911-1920.
- Yoo, H., Bartle-Haring, S., Day, R. D., & Gangamma, R. (2014). Couple communication, emotional and sexual intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy, 40*, 275-293.
- Zarnaghash, M., Zarnaghash, M., & Shahni, R. (2013). The influence of family therapy on marital conflicts. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 84*, 1838–1844.



## APPENDIX A

## UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

## DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

**Introduction**

Dear respondent,

This study seeks to find out your perceptions of marriage and how premarital education can affect the perceptions. The information you provide will help make recommendations that can improve the provision of premarital education for students. Please know that every information you provide will be confidential.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study.

**Section A: Background Information**

1. Gender: Male [  ] Female [  ]
2. Age (In years): Below 20 [  ] 21-25 [  ] 26-30 [  ] Above 30 [  ]
3. Duration of being in a relationship:  
Between 6 months and 1 year [  ]  
Between 1 year and 3 years [  ]  
Between 3 year and 5 years [  ]  
Above 5 years [  ]

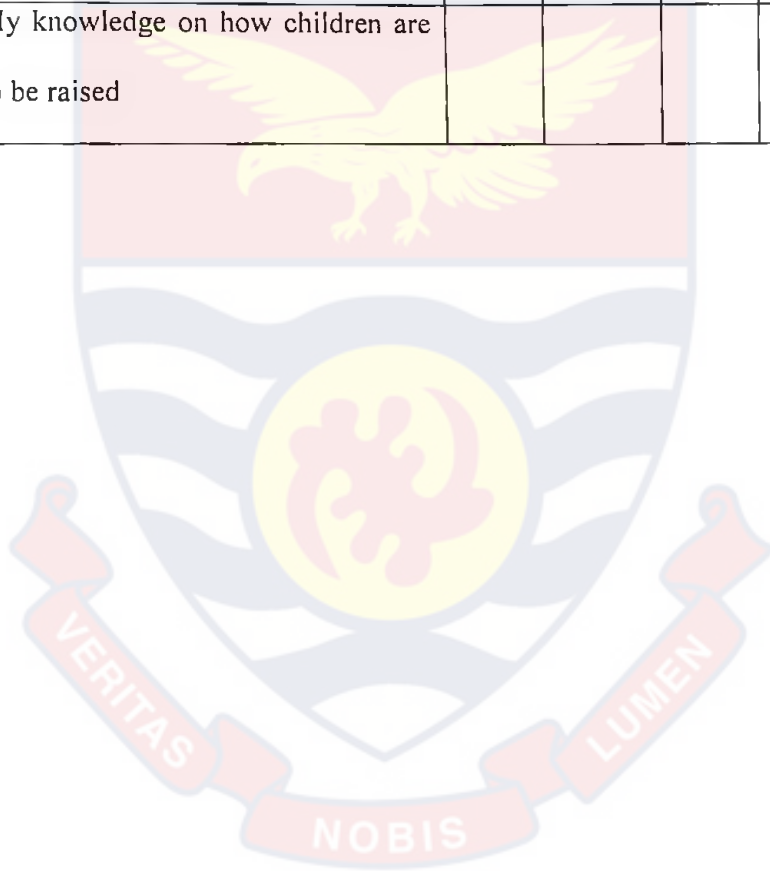
**Section B: Relationship Knowledge**

This section measures respondents' levels of knowledge regarding relationships. The individual rates on a 4-point scale with responses being "was/is poor, was/is fair, was/is good, was/is excellent."

Scale: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Very Good

Statement	1	2	3	4
1. My knowledge of how to listen effectively to a spouse/partner.				
2. My awareness of how to settle disagreements well.				
3. My understanding of how to solve problems and reach compromise.				
4. My understanding of ways to deepen a loving relationship.				
5. My knowledge of ways to have a strong friendship with a spouse/partner.				
6. My awareness of the importance of spending time together.				
7. My knowledge of how to spend leisure time with my partner				
8. My knowledge on how to communicate when there is a problem				
9. My knowledge on ways of communicating my love				
10. My knowledge on ways of managing finances				
11. My knowledge on issues relating to				

sex with my partner				
12. My knowledge on the roles and expectations my partner and I have for each other				
13. My knowledge on how to deal with anger and physical aggression				
14. My knowledge on how children are to be raised				





APPENDIX B

**MARITAL ATTITUDES AND EXPECTATIONS SCALE (Park, 2012)**

MAES is made of 36 items, rated on a 7-point Likert scale (0 to 6; ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). It is designed to measure intent to marry, general attitudes towards marriage and expectations for aspects of marriage. The MAES is intended to be applicable for any individual regardless of marital status or sexual orientation. Values range from 0 to 18 for the IMS, 0 to 60 for the GAMS and 0 to 138 for the AMS. Higher values reflect more positive intent towards marriage for the IMS, more positive attitudes towards marriage for the GAMS, and more positive expectations for marriage for the AMS. Overall, the MAES values range from 0 to 216.

0-6 Likert scale:

0=strongly disagree

1=moderately disagree

2=slightly disagree

3=neither disagree or agree

4=slightly agree

5=moderately agree

6=strongly agree.

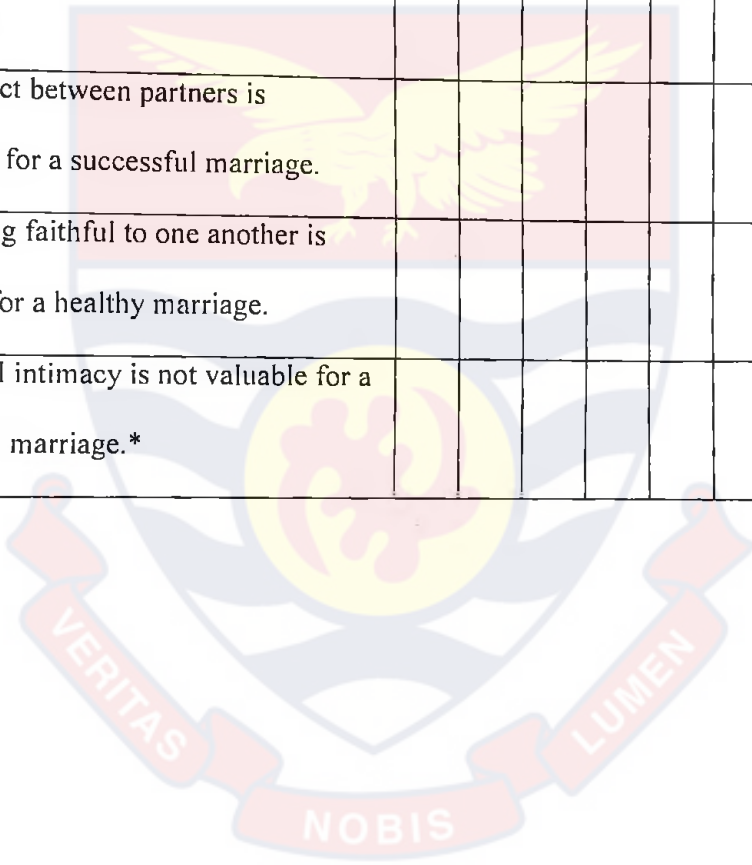
\* indicates reverse-scoring.

	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Intent to Marry Scale</b>							
1. I intend to get married someday.							
2. I want to marry.							
3. I do not hope to marry.*							

<b>General Attitudes towards Marriage Scale</b>								
1. Marriage is beneficial.								
2. I am fearful of marriage.*								
3. People should not marry.*								
4. I have doubts about marriage.*								
5. Marriage is a "good idea".								
6. I do not have fears of marriage.								
7. Marriage makes people happy.								
8. Most marriages are unhappy situations.*								
9. Marriage is important.								
10. Marriage makes people unhappy.*								
<b>Aspects of Marriage Scale</b>								
1. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a good marriage.								
2. Romance is important for a successful marriage.								
3. Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a good marriage.								
4. Trust is important for a good marriage.								
5. Sexual intimacy is valuable for a good								

marriage.								
6. Commitment is valuable for a successful marriage.								
7. Financial stability is important for a good marriage.								
8. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is important for a healthy marriage.								
9. Romance is valuable for a healthy marriage.								
10. Shared values between partners are valuable for a good marriage.								
11. Communication is important for a good marriage.								
12. Sexual intimacy is valuable for a healthy marriage.								
13. Financial stability is not valuable for a successful marriage.*								
14. Emotional support is important for a healthy marriage.								
15. Romance is not valuable for a good marriage.*								
16. Having a sense of personal fulfillment is valuable for a successful marriage.								
17. Commitment is not valuable for a								

healthy marriage.*							
18. Communication is valuable for a successful marriage.							
19. Financial stability is important for a healthy marriage.							
20. Trust is valuable for a successful marriage.							
21. Respect between partners is important for a successful marriage.							
22. Staying faithful to one another is valuable for a healthy marriage.							
23. Sexual intimacy is not valuable for a successful marriage.*							



APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Doc. No. UC/ED/11/05  
Date: 10/08/2010

October 1, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Betty Frances Bankwa a student pursuing a Ph.D. Programme in Guidance and Counselling at the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast. As it requirement, she is to submit a Thesis on the topic: *"Effects of Premarital Education and Counselling on the Knowledge and Attitudes of University of Cape Coast Students Towards Marriage"*. We are by this letter affirming that the information she will obtain from your Institution will be solely used for academic purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could provide her the necessary assistance.

Thank you

Dr. Stephen Akoh for  
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Thank you

clearance for further study

We would be most grateful if you could provide her the necessary assistance for ethical

the study

She has successfully defended her proposal and is seeking for ethical clearance to collect data for

As part of her requirement, she is expected to work on a thesis titled:

Counselling Intervention for a student from the Department of Guidance and

We guidance to you, Betty Frances Haidoo a student from the Department of Guidance and

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

UCC

Institutional Review Board

The Chairman

Dr. Beth

October 1, 2020

NOBIS



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Telephone: 0332033333  
Email: [ir@ucc.edu.gh](mailto:ir@ucc.edu.gh)

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES  
PART OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS  
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

16 October, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Ms. Betty Francis Bayden, BEd, MEd, PGDipEd/CoE of  
College of Education Studies, Department of Curriculum and  
Instruction, University of Cape Coast, P.O. Box 3179, Cape Coast, Ghana

is applying for ethical clearance for the study titled:

Effects of remote learning activities and responsibility on  
the knowledge and attitudes of University of  
Cape Coast students towards coronavirus

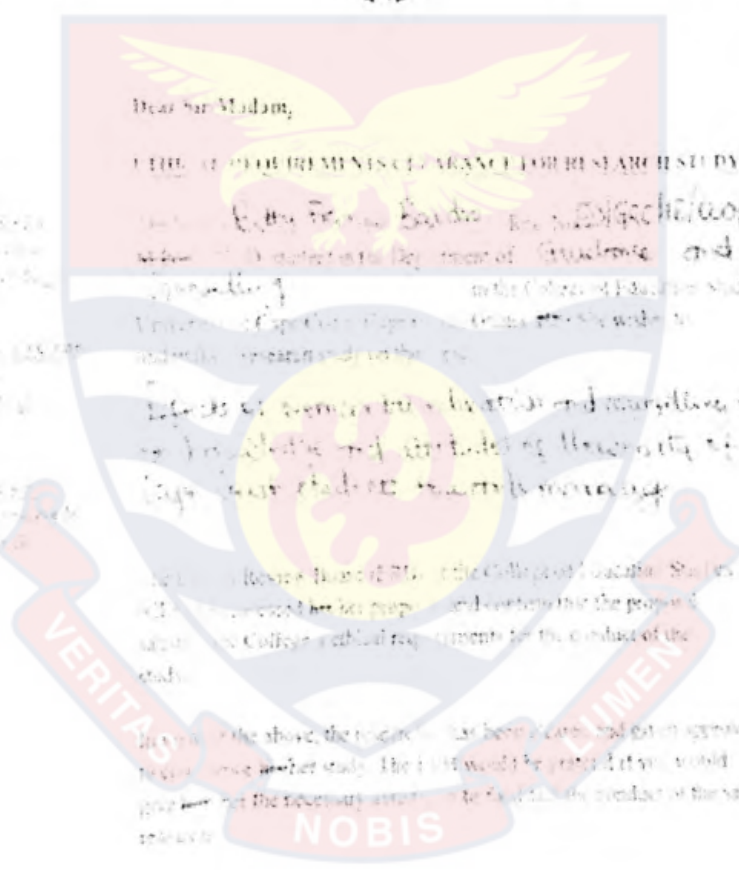
The study is being conducted in the College of Education Studies,  
University of Cape Coast. The proposed study has been approved by the  
College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the  
study.

In view of the above, the research has been cleared and approved  
for your research study. The clearance would be granted if you would  
provide the necessary information to facilitate the conduct of the said  
research.

Thank you  
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Adrian Osei  
Chairman, ERB

Handwritten notes on the left margin, including dates and names.



## APPENDIX F

## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OUTPUTS

## Tests of Normality (Knowledge and Attitude towards Marriage)

	Group	Statistic	Shapiro-Wilk	
			Df	Sig.
Post-Test (Knowledge)	Control	.957	50	.064
	Premarital counselling	.940	50	.063
	Premarital education	.957	50	.067
Post-Test (Attitude)	Control	.957	50	.370
	Premarital counselling	.940	50	.400
	Premarital education	.957	50	.100

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

## Homogeneity of Variances (Knowledge about Marriage)

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>

Dependent Variable: Post-test

F	df1	df2	Sig.
7.678	2	147	.110

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a</sup>

Dependent Variable: Post-test

F	df1	df2	Sig.
17.360	2	147	.180

Source: Field survey (Baidoo, 2021)



### Linear Relationship (Knowledge about Marriage)

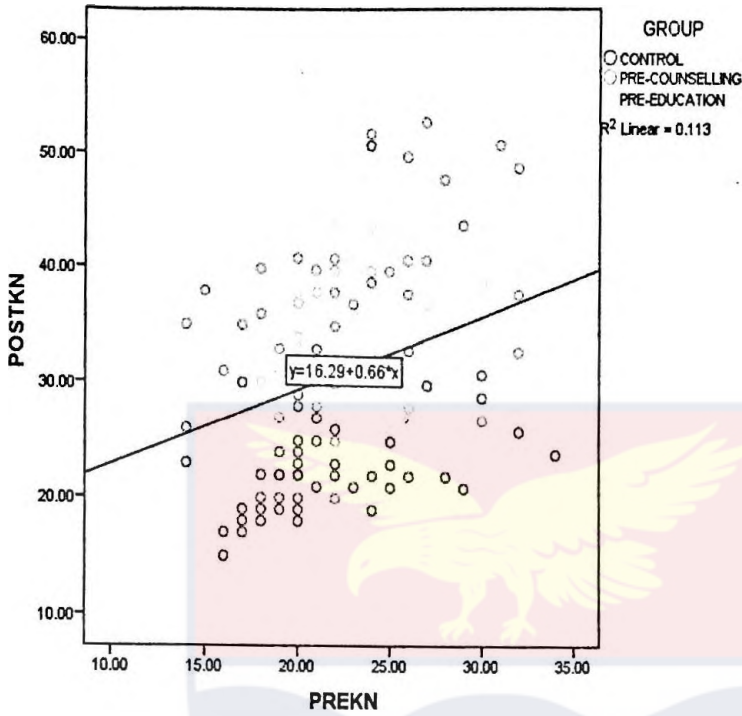
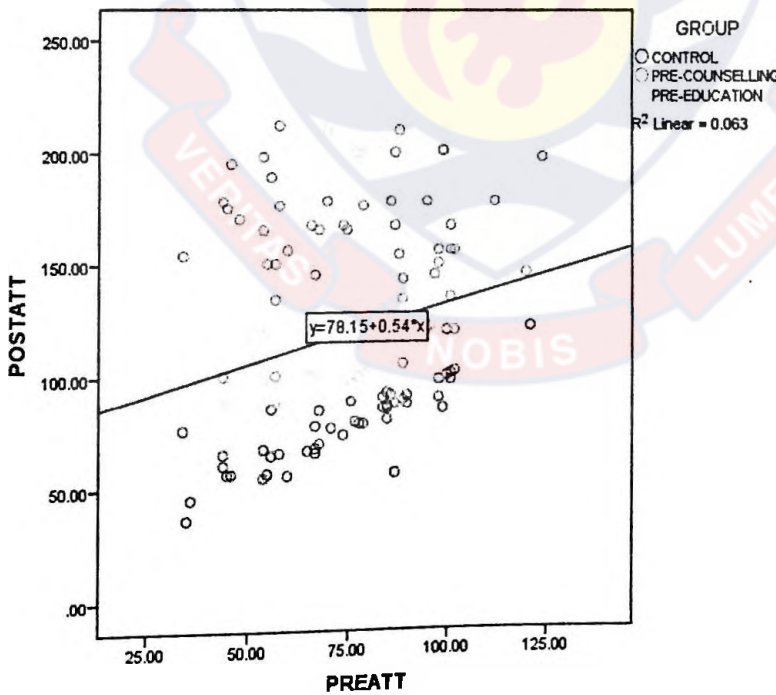


Figure 2: Linear Relationship

### Linear Relationship (Attitude towards Marriage)



**SAM JONAH LIBRARY**  
**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST**  
**CAPE COAST**