

**PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARITAL STABILITY IN ANGLICAN AND
CATHOLIC CHURCHES OF BUKOTO - NAKAWA DIVISION**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own effort and has never been produced anywhere in University of Kisubi or any other institution of higher learning for any award.

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APPROVAL

This dissertation has been done under my supervision and has met the requirements of University of Kisubi and is now ready for submission.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family which has supported me financially, spiritually, emotionally and psychologically and has been a source of joy to my life.

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DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Premarital counseling: This referred to a specific type of systemic counseling aimed at assisting couples that are considering marriage or are interventions which include understanding and improving the premarital individual and couple interactional factors that can influence both the quality and stability of the marital relationship.

Marital stability: This was regarded as a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a person in terms of intimacy, commitment and passion.

ABSTRACT

The main aim of the study was to establish the role of premarital counseling in marital stability using a reference of couples from Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa Division with specific reference to; investigating the relationship between Emotionally focused counseling and marital stability of couples; finding out the relationship between cognitive behavioral counseling and marital stability of couples and; establishing the relationship between Relationship counseling based on Gottman model and marital stability of couples in Bukoto, Nakawa division.

This study used a cross sectional research design where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to investigate the role of premarital counseling in marital stability of couples from Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa Division. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Counselors and religious leaders while simple random sampling was used to select the couples. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS V.16.0 that was used in categorizing responses into frequency counts, percentages and mean. Relational statistics like Pearson's correlations was also used to establish whether there is a linear relationship between the independent and dependent variable. Further, multiple regression model was also used to establish the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability in the study area.

The study results indicated that that 71 % of all the changes in perceptions about marital stability are explained by the changes in perceptions about Gottman's Relationship counseling (Pearson's coefficient = 0.549, $p= 0.000$); changes in perceptions about emotionally focused counseling (Pearson's coefficient = 0.731, $p= 0.000$) and changes in perceptions about Cognitive Behavioral Couple Counseling (Pearson's coefficient = 0.728, $p= 0.000$) as applied to couples in the study area. Of the three, emotionally focused counseling had a more significant effect on marital stability amongst couples in the study area. On the whole, premarital counseling significantly and positively affected marital stability in the study area.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study examined the role of premarital counseling in marital stability using a reference of married couples from Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa Division. This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, scope of the study, justification, significance, conceptual framework, and operational definitions of terms.

1.1 Background of the study

1.1.1 Historical Background

Marital stability is one of the most important aspects of family life, and the quality of one's marriage is a critical component of life satisfaction (Waite, 1995). Marital stability can affect not only the physical and mental health of spouses but also their children's development, well-being, biological function, academic performance, social skills, and relationships (Cummings & Davies, 2010).

Globally, premarital counseling and marriage preparation arose around 80A.D. when Apostle Paul wrote instructions about marriage to Christians in Corinth and Ephesus and it is probable that these words have been shared with premarital couples ever since (I Corinthians and Ephesians in the New Testament). Stahmann and Hiebert (1987) report that as early as 1164 marriage was an established sacrament in the church and clergy had a special role to play in the lives of premarital couples. Clergy spoke of the significance of marriage as a sacred union of a man and a woman, initiating a new relationship with God as well as each other. It is interesting to note that clergy were counseling couples numerous years before psychology and family

counseling were established as professional disciplines. Stahmann and Hiebert (1987) further state that in the early 1900's premarital counseling by the clergy consisted of teachings about the Christian nature of marriage, the place of religion in the home, and rehearsal of the wedding rite. Before the 1950's psychologists could not meet with those who had suffered difficulties about the nature of their interpersonal relationship. They could not meet each person individually because problems were viewed as stemming from neurotic or psychotic individuals in the relationship. The first mention of premarital counseling as something of value in emotional and physical health was in an article in *The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology* in 1928. From that time to the mid 1950's, literature in premarital counseling addressed physicians and made suggestions about what to include in the premarital physical exam (Stahmann and Hiebert, 1987).

In Africa initially, African Traditional Societies systematically initiated boys and girls. They often took the young initiates out of the community, and away from the concerns of everyday life, to teach them all the ways of adulthood: including the rules and taboos of the society; moral instruction and social responsibility; and further clarification of his/her mission or calling in life, marriage being one of the callings (Howe, 2011). Children were taught the necessary skills for adulthood including among other things; problem solving, rules and taboos of the society, social responsibility, what is considered appropriate behavior for women and men and would receive further clarification of their purpose or life mission. Oftentimes, successful completion of the rite of adulthood was publically celebrated with a "coming out ceremony" or reintroduction to society (Kalkan, 2010).

One of the responsibilities and prerogatives associated with the completion of initiation was marriage (Ansah-Hughes et al., 2015). Initiation, in fact, prepared the young adults for marriage.

Indeed, in most African societies, one could only get married only after having been initiated. This was often the time that young people received information and instruction regarding marriage, sex, family life, and procreation. Initiation rites varied from community to community. However, they followed a general pattern.

The first step was the separation of a group of adolescent novices from their usual surroundings to be secluded in an isolated place away from the community. There, they would be tested and taught by elders (Halford & Bodenmann, 2013). The testing usually involved demonstrating physical endurance, mental strength, and intelligence, all of which are very necessary skills that can be used in marriage. It is often the time when males were circumcised and females excised. They had to undergo the whole operation without showing any sign of fear and without expressing any discomfort.

In Uganda, pre-marital counseling was in existence even before the colonialists came. According to Kabura et al., (2005), due to increased separation of couples in catholic churches, the Church of Uganda advanced ways of harmonizing satisfaction in marriage and this led to emergence of premarital counseling. Premarital counseling was advanced to ensure that divorce is reduced through improving communication, attitude formation and patience (Senyonyi, Ochieng & Sells, 2012). In the 1970's there was an elevated interest by both clergy and marriage professionals in Church of Uganda in preparing couples for marriage.

Premarital counseling was also being given by the Aunts also known locally as “Senga” (sister to the father of the bride) in central Uganda. She was and in a way still is always expected to talk to her niece about what to expect in her marriage, how to be a good wife, how to be a good mother when the children come. The “Senga” was also supposed to talk to her niece about sex and how to please her husband. This was a good way of instilling knowledge to the bride to be, except that

the groom to be was never talked to and so the counseling was one sided. The groom was always left unattended with the assumption that he would automatically be able to make a stable marriage or be the perfect husband with no help at all (Senyonyi, Ochieng & Sells, 2012). This study therefore endeavored to find out whether such efforts of spear heading premarital counseling for both the man and the woman have influenced marital stability in Uganda while using couples from Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.

1.1.2 Theoretical perspectives

It is important to keep in mind the development of theoretical counseling perspectives in the mid-1900s. Prior to the 1950s, the predominant premarital counseling and psychotherapy approach was based on the psychodynamic theoretical perspective (Poulton & Andrews, 1992). In the 1950s, the client-centered, existential approach emerged as a powerful alternative to the more traditional medical model based on the psychodynamic view; this created divisions within and among the mental health professions (Steinberg & Silverberg, 1987).

During the 1960s, the cognitive, behavioral and transactional theoretical perspectives gained prominence and the competition between these different "schools" led to a confused and often dogmatic search for the "right approach." The 1970s saw the systems and transpersonal theoretical perspectives emerge as alternative views (Markman et al., 1987). Recently, the premarital counseling literature reflects a more eclectic trend that attempts to integrate these disparate perspectives.

Reiss' (1964) premarital sexual permissiveness model is one of the various tools that can be used by counselors to select the best counseling method yet it does not provide information on other aspects that are measured to depict marital stability. The limitations of the above called for the use of behavioral theories to explain how premarital counseling can affect marital stability.

Behavioral theories of marriage, like social exchange, have their roots in the work of Thibaut and Kelley (1959). The focus of social exchange theory, however, is primarily intrapersonal. Marital satisfaction is understood to be the result of each individual's weighing of attractions and alternatives, and those attractions and alternatives are conceived to be "aspects of perception, not action" (Gottman, 1982 & Newcomb & Bentler, 1981). Although rewards and costs are also basic elements of behavioral conceptions of marriage, instead the focus is on the interpersonal exchange of specific behaviors. Research in this tradition has concentrated on behaviors exchanged during problem-solving discussions and has been guided by the premise that rewarding or positive behaviors enhance global evaluations of the marriage while punishing or negative behaviors do harm (Markman, 1981; Wills, Weiss, & Patterson, 1974). This basic framework has been expanded to include the attributions that spouses make for partner behaviors (Bradbury & Fincham, 1991). The behavioral model suggests that cognitive responses affect marriage through their influence on subsequent interaction behaviors. Over time, the accumulation of experiences during and after interaction is thought to gradually influence spouses' judgments of marital quality (Gottman, 1993a)

Behavioral theory hence suggests that improving marital stability can be done with knowing each other's behavior and then marital counselors teach the intending couple how to accept these behaviors and change them for the good of the marriage (Smith, Vivian, & O'Leary, 1990). This approach suggests a mechanism to explain how judgments of marital satisfaction change over time.

Specifically, spouses learn on the basis of their interactions and the appraisals that follow from them whether or not they are in a rewarding relationship (Bradbury & Fincham, 1991). For satisfied couples, each satisfying interaction justifies continued satisfaction, which in turn makes

further satisfying interaction more likely. Marital distress, on the other hand, may be largely a consequence of a couple's difficulty dealing with conflict

However, the strong focus on interaction also can be viewed as a weakness of this model. Marital interaction, to be understood fully, probably needs to be examined within the broader context of spouses' lives (Davis, 1982). Within the behavioral tradition, micro-level analyses of interaction have been emphasized at the expense of considering the circumstances in which interaction occurs

From the above model, it is evident that premarital counseling should involve Emotionally Focused counseling to improve the attachment and bond between the intending couples, leading to better communication and a stronger relationship; Cognitive behavioral Couples counseling to assist romantic partners to get ready for distress in their relationship as well as Gottman Method.

1.1.3 Conceptual background

The study was guided by two main concepts that is, premarital counseling and marital stability. Premarital counseling was conceptualized to mean a specific type of systemic counseling aimed at assisting couples that are considering marriage or are interventions which include understanding and improving the premarital individual and couple interactional factors that can influence both quality and the satisfaction of the marital relationship (Halford & Bodenmann, 2013).

Premarital counseling is best defined as knowledge and skills based training procedure which aims at providing couples with information on ways to improve their relationship once they are married (Namani et al., 2014). Premarital counseling centers on a prevention perspective that has the goal of starting with happy couples and helping them maintain their relatively high levels of functioning (Shasih et al., 2011).

Stahmann (2000) defines premarital counseling as a process that enhances and enriches premarital relationships in order to promote more satisfactory and stable marriages and less divorce. Russell and Lyster (1992) concurred noting that marriage preparations provide couples with the opportunity to examine important aspects of their relationship and to develop skills necessary for communication and negotiation around areas critical to the development of intimacy.

On the other hand, marital stability also called marital quality is defined as the happiness and satisfaction one feels about their relationship with their spouse, as well as how well one feels their spouse fulfills their needs (Booth, Johnson, and Granger, 2005; Peleg, 2008). It is also defined as “an attitude of greater or lesser favorability toward one’s own marital relationship” (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981). According to the Encyclopedia of Social Psychology (2006), marital stability is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. This means that partners who perceive more benefits and fewer costs in their marriage are more satisfied (Halford & Bodenmann, 2013).

The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and with the marriage partner (Emily, Stone and Todd, Shackelford, 2000). A variety of factors contribute to marital stability for example, sexual satisfaction, communication, congruence of values and beliefs, family interference, infidelity, resentments and the nature of social exchange patterns and many more. For this study, general function, problem solving, effective communication, affectionate responsiveness and defined rules and roles were used to define marital stability.

1.1.4 Contextual Background

According to Lopang & Bakadzimoeti (2018), premarital counseling for Christians is designed to lay out a biblical foundation of marriage while preparing couples for the exciting and humbling responsibility of being husband and wife. Secondly, premarital Counseling provides a safe environment for working through any current or past relational issues. Third, church based premarital counseling lets couples define and work through their expectations of marriage.

Tambling & Glebova (2013) point out that 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 teach that all Christians belong to the universal priesthood of believers and are called to minister one another to achieve the ultimate goal of maturity in Christ (Eph.4). Sauerheber & Bitter (2013) emphasize the call to lay counseling as a specific ministry as well. In Galatians 6:2 Paul gives a directive to all Christians to get involved in a burden-bearing or “restoring” ministry to fellow believers (Egbo, 2012). Other Biblical passages such as Romans 15:14, Colossians 3:16 and 1 Thessalonians 5:14 also direct all believers to be involved in admonishing, encouraging or helping one another. Basing on the above assertions and a large number of verses in support of it, Christian churches globally have made premarital counseling a must for intending individuals. In light of Prov 24: 3-4; 2Tim 3: 16-17; Isaiah 55:11; Mat 14: 15-21 and so many other verses about marital counseling, Anglican and Catholic churches in Uganda and Bukoto in particular have made premarital counseling mandatory for intending couples.

Despite the existence of sufficient evidence of marital instability at global, continental, regional and national levels, area specific statistics of the same are not sufficient. Nonetheless, there have been several reported cases of violence and divorce amongst couples in this area as by the Uganda police. Still, several of the cases are never reported which implies that a lot needs to be done to increase the knowledge base.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Over the years, Uganda has experienced rising cases of domestic violence and divorce (as the outcomes of marital instability). The Uganda Police Force's annual crime report (2016), domestic violence cases that were reported and investigated increased by 4% (from 38,651 to 40,258 cases) between 2015 and 2016. Statistics from Hill Uganda (2017) showed that 7% of Ugandans have gone through divorce or separation in the four years preceding 2016. Informed by the Behavioral theory on premarital counseling, Catholic and Anglican churches have put up a series of strategies and made premarital counseling compulsory. With this, one would expect the cases of domestic violence and incidence of divorce to reduce significantly.

Despite the fact that Catholic and Anglican churches put lots of emphasis on premarital counseling as a key strategy for reducing marital instabilities, the status quo has worsened. The statistics from the Uganda Police (2020) shows that Domestic violence increased by over 20% in the period January to April whereas 7.6% of married Ugandans have divorce or are intending to divorce (Kasirye, 2020). In Bukoto, the statistics as reported by the Uganda Police (2021) show that domestic violence increased by 41.6% compared to that of 2016 whereas actual and intending divorce rates increased by 11.2% (Hill Uganda, 2021) and 26% (UDHS, 2021) respectively over the four year period which could undermine the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability.

In a bid to broaden the knowledge base on the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability and establish the statistical significance of the relationship between the two variables, the current study sought to investigate the role of premarital counseling in marital stability using a reference of married couples from Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa Division.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 General Objective of the study

The general objective of the study was to investigate the relationship between premarital counseling and marital stability using a case study of couples in Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To investigate the relationship between Emotionally Focused Counseling and marital stability of couples in Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.
- ii. To find out the relationship between Cognitive behavioral Couples Counseling and marital stability of couples in Anglican and Catholic Churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.
- iii. To establish the relationship between Gottman's relationship counseling and marital stability of couples in Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.

1.4 Research hypothesis

The study was guided by the following alternative hypotheses;

- i. Ha1: There is no significant relationship between Emotionally Focused Counseling (EFT) and marital stability of couples in Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.
- ii. Ha2: There is no significant relationship between Cognitive behavioral Couples Counseling and marital stability of couples in Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.

- iii. Ha3: There is no significant relationship between Gottman's relationship counseling and marital stability of couples in Anglican and Catholic churches in Bukoto, Nakawa division.

1.5 Significance of the study

The study will equip clergy with skills to prepare couples better. Additionally, the study could benefit the couples and their families in improving their marital stability. So, through these findings the church may likely improve their premarital counseling approaches. The study will be of importance in examining how attitudes and preparation before marriage in regards to premarital counseling have enhanced marital stability. The study will explore how the church can take a responsibility to prepare couples to build strong marriages from the very beginning until death. Premarital counseling has not been identified as a regular part of the clinical practice of most of today's marriage and family therapists and this will help Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MOGLS) to plan on how best the church can be involved in increasing stability in marriages. The study will examine the attitudes and beliefs of clergy concerning premarital counseling. The clergy's thoughts about the necessity, importance, and value of premarital counseling for the members of their local congregations and denominations will be surveyed.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This consisted of the content, geographical and time scope;

1.6.1 Content Scope

Premarital counseling is believed to have a significant effect on the stability of marriages. However, most studies have been carried out in settings that are geographically distributed and the sub components of the variables informed by a myriad of cultural issues yet the results kept

on varying. The study was limited to premarital counseling as an independent variable and marital stability as a dependent variable. Premarital counseling was limited on three components and these included; Gottman's relationship counseling, emotionally focused counseling and Cognitive behavioral couple counseling whereas marital stability was measured using general function, problem solving, effective communication, affectionate responsiveness and defined rules and roles.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

The study was carried out in Anglican and catholic churches within Bukoto in Nakawa Division, Kampala Uganda. Nakawa Division is one of the five administrative divisions of the city of Kampala, the capital and largest city of Uganda. The town of Nakawa is the site of the division headquarters. Nakawa lies in the eastern part of the city, bordering Kira Town to the east, Wakiso District to the north, Kawempe Division to the north-west, Kampala Central Division to the west, Makindye Division across Murchison Bay to the south-west and Lake Victoria to the south. The coordinates of the division are 0°20'00.0"N, 32°37'00.0"E (Latitude: 0.333333; Longitude: 32.616667). Neighborhoods in the division include Bugoloobi, Bukoto, Butabika, Kiswa, Kiwaatule, Kyambogo, Kyanja, Luzira, Mbuya, Mutungo, Nabisunsa, Naguru, Nakawa, and Ntinda. The average elevation of Nakawa is about 1,083 metres (3,553 ft), above sea level. This geographical scope was chosen because it was accessible to the researcher and tied in very well with the operationalization of the research problem under study. They also have many couples that have done premarital counseling there.

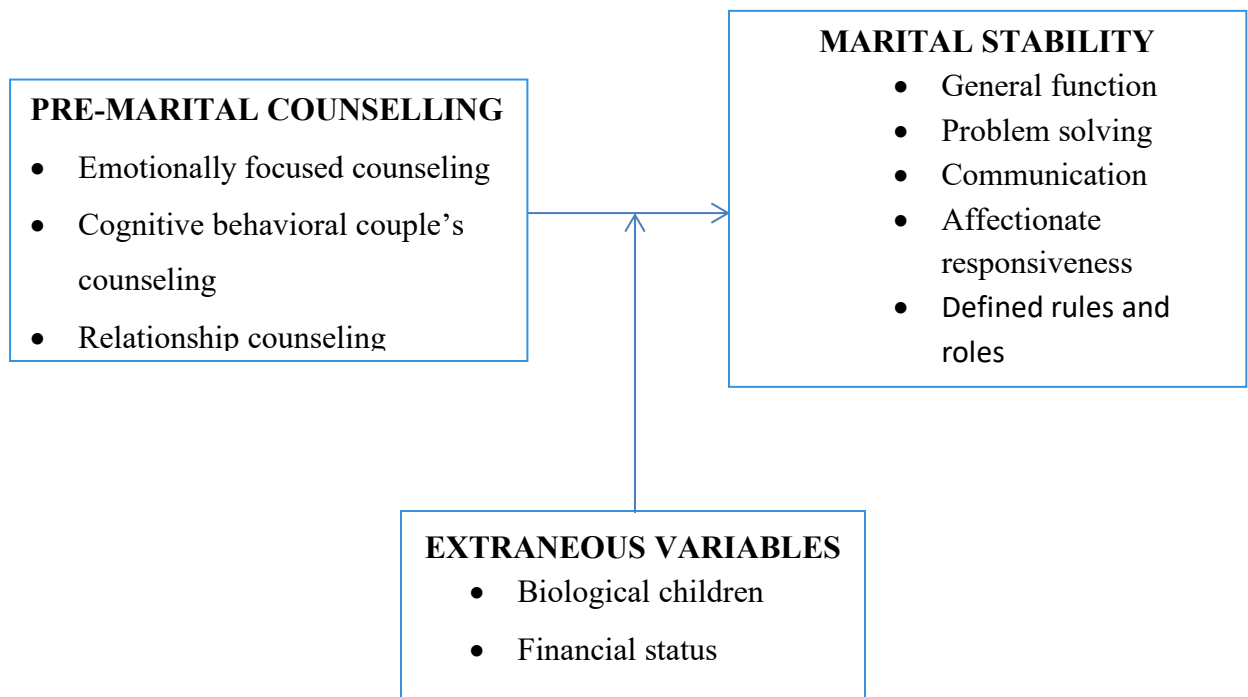
1.6.3 Time Scope

The study focused on the time framed November 2019 and June 2020. This period was chosen because this deemed sufficient for all corrections and modifications as could have been required by the supervisors and examiners.

1.7 Conceptual framework

The following diagram presents a conceptual framework on the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE



From the conceptual framework in Figure 1.1, the Independent Variable (IV) which is premarital counseling was conceptualized as Gottman's Relationship Counseling, Emotionally focused counseling and Cognitive Behavioral Couple's Counseling whereas the Dependent Variable (DV) which is Marital stability was conceptualized as having elements like general function, problem solving, effective communication, affectionate responsiveness and existence of well-defined rules and roles in a marriage. It was further hypothesized that premarital counseling as

the Independent Variable is a causative factor in that any manipulation of premarital counseling and its elements as(IV) influences the dependent variable which is Marital Stability. Basing on the work of Olson & Olson (2000), marital stability is highly dependent on premarital counseling.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the concepts of premarital counseling and marital stability. Premarital counseling in this case was depicted as a major determinant of marital stability. The problem and purpose of the study was discussed: to establish the relationship between Premarital counseling and marital stability. Lastly, the chapter also tackled the significance of the study and scope of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter reviews the related literature available on the problem under study per selected themes that are related to the study. This chapter thus, presents the theoretical framework and literature related to establishing the relationship between premarital counseling assessments, premarital education, premarital counseling and marital stability.

2.1 Effect of Gottman method on marital stability

Gottman (1999) formulated the concept of the distance isolation cascade, which indicates the transition to an emotional climate in the relationship that has additional negative affections and attributions. In this stage, couples think that it is better if they work out problems alone rather than together and live their parallel lives.

In addition, Gottman (1999) has presented different strategies, including, verbal and nonverbal communication skills, which help couples with conflict management and relationship improvements. Further, there are several specific behaviors that show relational distress such as criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling, which is called the “Four Horsemen” in the Gottman method (Hawkins et al., 2012).

The Gottman model aims at examining ways of improving the relationship of love between the couples by increasing their knowledge of themselves and spouses in personal, emotional, cognitive, philosophical, intellectual, interest and taste areas. To Dillon et al., (2015), the model aims at understanding the emotional world of spouses and understanding the concerns and improving the cognitive space of each of the spouses about each other. However, the previous

scholars' results are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

According to Goudarzi & Boustanipour (2012), premarital counselors use this method in teaching effective ways to increase love, respect and positive interaction between the couples, revival of positive emotions, increasing gratitude, enhancing the ability to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the spouses, addressing the privileges of marriage history and philosophy of life, and substituting a more positive attitude toward the spouse. However, despite their use, the connection to marital stability has often been lacking and hence the need to bridge this knowledge gap.

In addition to the above scholars, Bean (2019) stated that the model helps couples to focus on being close to each other and increasing the scale of intimacy, effective ways of listening and speaking (in other words, effective communication skills, as well as ways of attracting the attention and affection of the other partner), and finally, investigating factors causing coldness in the relationship and fixing them. The scholars' assertions are applicable in Ugandan settings but they do not indicate whether the skills learned can be a significant fact in as far as improving marital stability is concerned.

To Slatcher, Selcuk & Ong (2015), the model has often been used in teaching the importance of accepting the spouse and involving partners in decision-making and respecting his/her opinions and feelings, exercising to investigate the forms of men's resistance to be involved in decision-making with their wives, measures to enhance the emotional feelings, and acceptance of surrender. In line with the above, Negash et al., (2015) added that through this model, the intending couples are equipped with learning ways to solve problems, identifying arguments, teaching the use of compensatory measures, paying attention to their physiology during debates,

and different methods of relaxation, as well as ways to solve particular problems. Just like the previous arguments, there is a knowledge vacuum with regard to the fact that the previous scholars were limited by the qualitative nature of their studies which called for the current study as a means to bridge the knowledge gap.

The couples are provided with ways to overcome permanent and indissoluble difficulties, paying attention to dreams and deep inner causes of these problems, exercises to explore dreams, working on cases reached a dead end, calming each other, and agreeing on insoluble problems (Mirecky et al., 2013). The scholars add that the Gottman model is useful in empowering partners to create a common concept in their married life through the creation of inner life by both spouses, and exercises to reach common ground and values by exploring the symbols, rituals, roles, goals and family rituals albeit failing to show by how much these do affect marriage in general.

The Gottman Method for Healthy Relationships [as an integrated approach] helps couples to be able to manage marital relationships and develop problem-solving skills. These skills make couples more flexible in their relationships and help them achieve a high degree of emotional stability and a peaceful life. Therefore, the discussed changes will have a positive effect on marital relationships, compatibility and intimacy among couples.

According to the results of the study by Davoodvandi et al., (2018), Gottman method can be used as an effective treatment in improving marital relationships, compatibility, and intimacy, which will result in increasing family strength. Secondly, based on the findings of Lahiji, Behzadipour & Besharat (2016), Gottman's theory-based training has had a significant effect ($\alpha=0.05$) on the reduction of marital conflict and marital instability of married couples but not in countries like

Uganda as there have been very few quantitative studies on the same, a facet that the current study sought to address.

This is so because Gottman's theory-based intervention is able to reduce the level of marital conflict and its components and marital instability significantly. Thirdly, the results of the study by Afarin, Daneshpour & Robertson (2019) showed that the Gottman method reduced emotional divorce and improved their verbal-nonverbal communication skills ($P < .05$). The main flaw of the above studies is that they were carried out in different jurisdictions where Shariah law is emphasized which may not be applicable in non-Muslim jurisdictions like Uganda.

However, the findings by Nikounejad & Naderi (2016) showed that training the principles of improving the relationships based on Gottman's method had no significant effect on couples' marital satisfaction ($P > .05$); but has been effective on its subscales (emotional relationships, quality of sexual relationships' trust, compromise and commitment) ($P \leq .05$). This gap created by inconsistencies between this study and the previously reported studies above has aroused interest in truly investigating the role of this assessment in marital stability using bigger samples and diverse groups in non-Muslim jurisdictions like Uganda.

2.2 Emotionally focused counseling on marital stability

Emotionally-Focused Couple Counseling (EFT) is one of the Couple Counseling methods. Emotionally-focused counseling is a short-term and structured approach for couple counseling which has been developed based on clear concepts of marital distresses, emotional cognition, adulthood love and emotional responses (Havaasi, Zahra-Kaar& Mohsen-Zadeh, 2017). However, the previous scholars' results are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

According to this viewpoint, marital distresses are created and then continue by the comprehensive states of negative emotions and attachment traumas, neglect of internal needs and demands, negative interactive patterns and undesirable emotional experiences (Johnson and Greenberg, 1985). Emotionally-focused couple counseling was propounded in the early 1980s as a response to the lack of active and efficient marital interventions (Johnson and Greenberg, 1985). During the last decade, emotionally-focused counseling has been more successful than other couple counseling approaches. Emotionally-focused couple counseling helps couples with achieving a secure attachment in their relationships. The previous scholars' results are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

Emotionally-focused counseling aims to specify vicious interactional cycle and problematic attachment traumas as well as to rebuild fundamental attachment emotions so that interaction cycles are changed and rebuilt (Falahzade, Sanai-Zaker&Farzad, 2013). Based on numerous evidences, the couples with disturbed relationships are overcome with some extremely negative emotions and responses such as criticism, enmity, rage, stress, jealousy, abandonment and defensiveness. These assertions are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

Raisi et al., (2018) studying the resolution of attachment traumas in couples using emotionally-focused counseling, concluded that determined couples are considerably more attached and have more thorough levels of experience compared to undetermined ones. They also make some progress in satisfaction and forgiveness. Such results support the resolution method of attachment trauma and suggest that emotionally-focused couple counseling is quite beneficial for couples although carried out using qualitative analyses.

Zuccarini et al., (2013) compared the effect of emotionally-focused and problem-solving empirical interventions on resolution of marital conflicts. Results revealed the effect of emotionally-focused counseling on couples adjustment, intimacy, and complained levels dominates that of problem-solving counseling and during pursuit stage, couples adjustment score for emotionally-focused counseling group was considerably higher than the score for those in problem-solving counseling group. The scholars do not show the extent of difference in effect on marital stability, a gap addressed by the current study.

Wittenborn et al., (2019) studying the effectiveness of emotionally-focused approach in couples sexual satisfaction, concluded that the emotionally-focused intervention impacts upon the enhancement of sexual satisfactions factors such as improvement of sexual behavior, willingness, emotions, quality, and satisfaction and this impact is greater for women than for men. I believe that the results of the above scholars would make sense but the challenge is that culture has often been neglected as one of the reasons for marital instability in Africa, a gap the current study sought to address.

Rathgeber et al., (2019) in their research entitled “the impact of emotionally-focused couple counseling on improving communication patterns in combat-related PTSD veterans and their wives” found that emotionally-focused couple counseling leads to an increase in the application of mutual constructive communication pattern by couples as well as to a decrease in their application of mutual Communication-avoidant patterns and abandonment expectation. Moreover, it seemed the increase in the application of mutual constructive communication pattern enhanced their mental health, although the scholars did not indicate by how much it would affect mental health and ultimately marital stability.

Soltani, Mahmudi & Hosseini (2012) investigated the effect of behavioral and emotionally-focused couple therapies on the distress of couples and found that integrative couple counseling and tendency towards providing couples with a view through marital counseling may have more influence than behavioral couple counseling. This study confirms that this result needs to be replicated and that emotionally-focused couple counseling leads to a reduction in couple's distress in the long term. Furthermore, addition of a cognitive counseling and its combination with emotionally-focused couple counseling does not enhance its impact. Eventually, emotionally- focused couple counseling may have a greater impact than problem-solving counseling or a smaller impact than integrative systematic counseling. These assertions are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

The results of the multivariate analysis of covariance by Sayadi et al., (2017) showed that emotionally focused couple counseling significantly increased the posttest mean scores of marital commitment and its subscales (i.e., personal commitment, moral commitment, and structural commitment) in the experimental group ($P < 0.05$). Additionally, according to the univariate analysis of covariance, there was a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of the mean scores of the couple burnout at the posttest stage ($P < 0.01$). These assertions are based on quantitative analyses in other countries and cannot be used to make conclusions on the state of affairs in Uganda which called for a more quantitative study based in Uganda.

The results by Teymori, Mojtabaei & Rezazadeh (2021) suggested that both interventions were effective in increasing ER in couples; however, there was no significant difference between Emotion-Focused Couple Counseling (EFCT) and compassion-based counseling on Emotion

Regulation ($F=1.57$, $P=0.218$). Thus, there was a significant difference in ER scores among women affected by infidelity between assessment phases in the emotionally focused counseling group ($F=11.27$, $P=0.001$). Follow-up scores also increased; there was a significant difference between ER values in women affected by infidelity between assessment phases in the compassionate focused counseling group ($F=14.29$, $P=0.001$). In other words, the level of women's ER increased from the pre-test session to the follow-up. There was no significant difference between ER values between the two groups in different assessment phases ($F=1.57$, $P=0.218$). These inconsistencies in the results as well as the fact that the studies were carried out in non-Ugandan settings called for the current study.

The findings by Behrad, Bahrami & Abedi (2016) showed that teaching emotion-focused couple counseling based on religious instructions has a significant effect on social compatibility of couples (0.34), emotional compatibility (0.59), and job compatibility (0.24, $P<0.05$). Decrease in cooperation, sex, relationship with the relatives of the spouse; increase in children's protection; loss of effective communication; and separating the finances were 0.37, 0.25, 0.48, 0.15, 0.43 and 0.17, respectively ($P<0.05$). These assertions are based on quantitative analyses in other countries and cannot be used to make conclusions on the state of affairs in Uganda which called for a more quantitative study based in Uganda.

The effect of emotionally focused counseling has been seen to be positive with respect to the various components of marital stability in several jurisdictions. However, there are varying results as some show positive significant results while others show insignificant results. Secondly, none of the above studies has been carried out in the African or Ugandan context which limits the validity of the previous scholarly work in Uganda.

2.3 Effect of Cognitive Behavioral Couple counseling on marital stability

Cognitive-behavioral couple counseling (CBCT) aims at assisting romantic partners who report distress in their relationship. Over the years, CBCT has been extensively evaluated in treatment outcome studies, which have repeatedly concluded in its effectiveness for decreasing couple distress and dissatisfaction as well as for addressing communication or problem-solving difficulties (Epstein et al., 2019). Studies have also found that such improvements seem to be maintained for up to 2 years by most couples. These assertions are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

CBCT techniques aim to help couples with poor communication skills and problem-solving difficulties that affect the interaction process in the relationship. Training couples in communication skills, problem and conflict resolution, identification and expression of emotions, expression of affection and sexual problems, cognitive restructuring, and acceptance and tolerance are significant topics in couple counseling (Dugal et al., 2018; Sher, 2011). These assertions are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

Furthermore, it is important to consider a partner's vulnerabilities and the impact of the environment as a probable influence in the partner's cognitions, emotional responses, behaviors, and the couple's functioning (Halford & Doss, 2016). Marital adjustment is associated with better expectations about marriage and results in cost-benefit outcome (Durães et al., 2020). These assertions are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

Thus, satisfaction with the conjugal relationship is more intrapersonal than an interpersonal concept. This is due to the various unrealistic expectations that a spouse has of their partner, the

relationship, and the rewards received (Miller et al., 2013). In fact, unhappy couples tend to have more dysfunctional interactions and behaviors than those in a happy relationship. These assertions are based on qualitative analyses and cannot be easily empirically assessed which called for a more quantitative based study.

In addition, couples living in conflict tend to lack communication and problem-solving skills, have defensive attitudes, are emotionally detached, and are vulnerable to mental diseases and at risk of psychological disorders. Several implications including physical, cognitive, behavioral aspects, and stress arise as a result of marital distress (Halford & Doss, 2016). Furthermore, relationship distress may predict the onset of an individual's first episode of depression or anxiety. These assertions are based on quantitative analyses in other countries and cannot be used to make conclusions on the state of affairs in Uganda which called for a more quantitative study based in Uganda.

CBCT is considered one of the most widely evaluated therapeutic approaches for working with couples. Since the 1980s, several dozens of RCT-studies have supported the effectiveness and efficacy of CBCT (Bradbury & Bodenmann, 2020). 70% of the couples improved after CBCT, and 50% show stable effects over a period of five years (Christensen et al., 2010). Christensen et al. (2004) reported 71% of clinical recovery in integrated CBCT compared to 54% in classical CBCT. According to this study, CBCT proves to be efficient in the long term, with an effect size of $d = 0.92$ at the 5-year follow-up, slightly outperformed by ICBT ($d = 1.03$) (Christensen & Glynn, 2019). Bodenmann et al. (2008) reported effect sizes of $d = 1.46$ at the 6-months follow-up and $d = 1.74$ at the one-year follow-up of coping-oriented CBCT in treating depression. In the various meta-analysis, effect sizes for CBCT ranged from $d = 0.53$ (Rathgeber et al., 2019) up to $d = 0.95$. These assertions are based on quantitative analyses in other countries and cannot be

used to make conclusions on the state of affairs in Uganda which called for a more quantitative study based in Uganda.

The results by Maleki et al., (2017) showed that cognitive-behavioral couple counseling has been effective ($p < 0.000$) psychological well-being, marital intimacy, and couples quality of life. To the scholars, the probable logic of CBCT effectiveness on reduction of couples' conflicts is the point that each person's marital relationship quality is a result of his/her own beliefs, thoughts, behaviors, and actions and is related to his/her previous decisions and performance. CBCT helps them to have and feel more happiness and positive points in their relations and try more to rebuild their past relations that, in turn, lead to an increase in their physical and mental health, reduction of marital disappointment, and physical tiredness. These assertions are based on quantitative analyses in other countries and cannot be used to make conclusions on the state of affairs in Uganda which called for a more quantitative study based in Uganda.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study. It covers the research design, study population, sample size and selection, sampling techniques and procedures, data collection methods, data collection instruments, pretesting (validity and reliability), procedure of data collection, data analysis and measurement of variables.

3.1 Research design

This study used a cross sectional design which involved the analysis of data collected from a population, or a representative subset. The study design was adopted for this research because it enables an in-depth study, as Sekaran (2003) suggests. Data on the research variables was gathered and analyzed to determine the correlation coefficient; which was used to measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two factors. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) add that correlation is investigative and attempts to capture people's attitudes, feedback and their patterns of behavior. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were employed. For the quantitative, numerical data was collected to explain, describe, understand, predict and control phenomenon of interest; a 5 point Likert-scaled self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data. The quantitative approach was used because it is strict on objectivity and its findings can easily be generalized (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative approach tends to promote great understanding of not just the way things are, but also why they are like that.

3.2 Study Population

The study population included 288 couples (both officially married by religious authorities and cohabiting (Uganda Demographic and Household Survey, 2021) that had ever attended or not attended premarital counseling in Anglican and Catholic Churches around Bukoto, Nakawa Division between 2007 and 2020. Secondly, religious leaders, priests, counselors involved in providing premarital counseling in the church were also targeted for this study. The officially married couples were selected on grounds that they had attended some premarital counseling while the cohabiting couples were selected because it was thought that probably not all of them had attained counseling prior to their living arrangements. On the other hand, the counselors, priests, religious leaders were chosen because of their knowledge and were expected to provide more insight on the study questions.

3.3 Sample size and determination

A sample is a subset of some pre-determined size from a population of interest (Gott & Duggan, 2003) which when studied, the sample results may be fairly generalized back to the population from which they were chosen (Trochim, 2002). To get a reasonable representative sample suitable to give reliable results, Krejcie & Morgan (1970) formula was used to determine the sample size from the target population.

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 NP(1-P)}{e^2(N-1) + \chi^2 P(1-P)}$$

Where;

n is the sample size

N is the population (N= 288); e is the acceptable sampling error (e = 0.05)

P is the proportion of the population (if unknown =0.5)

χ^2 is the chi square of degree of freedom 1 and 95% confidence level = 3.841

This means that, basing on the selected population, a sample of 165 couples (married and cohabiting from the study area.

3.4 Sampling Techniques

The study used both probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling techniques.

3.4.1 Probabilistic Sampling Techniques

The study used simple random sampling technique to select the sample. This technique was used to minimize sampling bias (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The simple random sampling technique was used to select random representatives from the study population. The researcher would wait outside the churches and after mass or service would approach a married couple, introduce herself and ask for a few minutes of their time to participate in a short research being done. The researcher also moved from house to house randomly and asked those couples she found if they were willing to help and answer some research questions. This technique was preferred for this study because it ensures that each member of the target population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. It basically produces a random sample.

3.4.2 Non-probabilistic Sampling Techniques

From the existing non-probabilistic sampling techniques, purposive sampling was employed to select priests, reverends and counselors who were targeted due to their perceived knowledge arising out of the known experience. The researcher consciously decided who to include in the sample. This technique was employed following the postulate that if sampling had to be done from smaller groups of key informants, there would be need to collect very informative data, and thus the researcher needed to select the sample purposively at one's own discretion (Sekaran, 2003). It was used to collect focused information. It was used because it selects useful cases only and thus saved time and money.

3.5 Data Sources

The researcher used both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data was collected from the couples that had participated in premarital counseling as well as the counselors that provided the same. This data formed a basis for analysis in the proceeding chapter. Secondary data on the other hand was collected from reviewing books, journals and other material and formed a basis for the first two chapters.

3.6 Data collection

This section includes the data collection methods and data collection tools as briefly described in the sub sections below.

3.6.1 Data collection methods

The researcher used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches. **The Quantitative data collection approaches**, rely on random sampling and structured data collection instruments that fit diverse experiences into predetermined response categories. They produce results that are easy to summarize, compare, and generalize.

Quantitative research is concerned with testing hypotheses derived from theory and/or being able to estimate the size of a phenomenon of interest. Depending on the research question, participants were randomly assigned to different treatments. In the event that it was not feasible, the researcher collected data on participant and situational characteristics in order to statistically control for their influence on the dependent, or outcome, variable. The study's quantitative data gathering methods included administering surveys with closed-ended questions (questionnaires).

Qualitative data collection methods play an important role in impact evaluation by providing information useful to understand the processes behind observed results. Furthermore, qualitative

methods were used to improve the quality of survey-based quantitative evaluations by helping generate evaluation hypothesis; strengthening the design of survey questionnaires and expanding or clarifying quantitative evaluation findings.

3.6.2 Data collection tools

The main tool of data collection used by this study was the questionnaire administered to the respondents for filling by hand. This was designed with both closed ended and open-ended statements. The closed ended statements followed a 5-point Likert scale. The tool is selected because of the need to collect sufficient quantities of data while minimizing interviewer bias. Advantages of questionnaires include increased speed of data collection, low or no cost requirements, and higher levels of objectivity compared to many alternative methods of primary data collection. However, questionnaires have certain disadvantages such as selection of random answer choices by respondents without properly reading the question. Moreover, there is usually no possibility for respondents to express their additional thoughts about the matter due to the absence of a relevant question.

An interview guide was drafted for the key informants (counselors and religious leaders) as a qualitative data collection tool. This is because of the need to obtain judgmental and humanistic reasoning on the relationships between the variables under study. Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around a topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses.

The interview is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject. Interviews are commonly used in survey designs and in exploratory and descriptive studies.

3.6.3 Measurement of variables

The variables under study were measured using ordinal means of variable measurement (Likert, 1967). This is so because of the fact that there exists no universal measure of the components and sub components of the variables at hand but rather perceptions of the participants. This was possible with the use of a five point Likert scale (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Not sure, 4. Agree, 5. Strongly agree).

3.7 Data Quality control

The data quality control includes the validity and reliability as in the sub sections below

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the credibility or believability of the research. The current study will use content validity measure of the research instruments (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Content validity addresses the match between test questions and the content or subject area they are intended to assess. In the measurement of validity issues such as relevance of the data collection instruments, clarity, simplicity and ambiguity will be given utmost consideration. The study used the following formula to calculate the content validity index.

$$CVI = \left(\frac{n_e - \left(\frac{N}{2}\right)}{\left(\frac{N}{2}\right)} \right)$$

Where n_e is the number of raters who accepted that the tool is essential and N the total number of raters. A CVI of 0.8 (as in table 2) meant that the tools passed the validity test and hence were deemed relevant for this study

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the repeatability of findings. The current study used the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Suppose that we measure a quantity which is a sum of

K components (K -items in the questionnaire or interview guide): $X = Y_1 + Y_2 + \dots + Y_k$. X is the sum of responses (or ratings, Y) to the various components K . Cronbach's α is defined as:

$$\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1} \left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^K \delta_{Y_i}^2}{\delta_X^2} \right)$$

Where δ_X^2 is the variance of the observed total test scores, and $\delta_{Y_i}^2$ the variance of component i for the current sample of persons. Using statistical procedures on the above formula and the data provided, a Cronbach's coefficient of 0.937 (as in table 2) meant that the data collection tools passed the reliability test and were suitable for the study.

Table 3.1 Data Quality Control statistics

Variable	Reliability	Validity
Pre-marital counseling	0.911	0.8
Marital stability	0.827	0.8
Both Variables	0.937	0.8

Source: Pilot Study data

3.8 Data management and analysis

Data was gathered by use of a questionnaire administered to the couples (any available). Data processing was done by sorting the questionnaires (removing half-filled or wrongly filled questionnaires). Entry of data collected was done manually with the use of MsExcel to form an excel file. Entry of data collected by the key informants was done manually by generating themes and into MsWord.

Qualitative data analysis was done using content analysis and presented as narratives in the next chapter. Quantitative analysis, on the other hand was done using simple descriptive methods (frequency tables and charts). Descriptive statistics helps facilitate data visualization. It allows

for data to be presented in a meaningful and understandable way, which in turn, allows for a simplified interpretation of the data set in question.

Secondly, inferential analysis (correlation and regression using SPSS 22) was used and conclusions were based on the p value. Chi Square cross tabulation was used to establish whether the stated demographic characteristics of the respondents affected the responses provided by the respondents regarding the variables under this study. Inferential analysis was used to try to infer from the sample data what the population might think.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced a limitation of non-response as time may be limited to effectively inform all the sampling units about what is required of them in the study. There were some elements of bias because some respondents were unwilling to provide all the required information for confidentiality reasons. The other key factor that limited this study was the sampling frame. This study did not represent the views of a large body of couples in the area.

3.10 Ethical considerations

The researcher presented an approved letter to the respondents proving the academic intent of the proposed study to the respondents. Further, the researcher asked for consent from the respondents about their inclusion. A positive response meant that the researcher would administer the questionnaire to the respondent and collect the required information. The researcher avoided asking life pinning questions in a bid to keep the perspectives of the respondents within positive values about the study intent.

3.11 Summary

The methodology adopted in this research is believed to be the best since it allows the researcher have a multiplicity of selection choices regarding the design, tools, sampling techniques and the

like. Further, cases of validity and reliability have been catered for in this study to see to it that the problems arising out of poor collection tools design are eliminated.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

From the previous chapter, we'd planned to use data from 165 married individuals but of these, 122 questionnaires were returned fully and rightfully answered indicating a response rate of 73.9%. This chapter presents an interpretation of the findings about the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability in Bukoto parish, Nakawa division.

4.2 Respondents' Demographic characteristics

This sub section presents an analysis of the respondents' demographic characteristics including the age, gender, education level, marital status and tenure as in the tables below.

Table 4.1: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20-30 years	20	16.4	16.4	16.4
	31-40 years	58	47.5	47.5	63.9
	41-50 years	34	27.9	27.9	91.8
	Over 50 years	10	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

The results in table 4.1 above show that 58 (47.5%) of the respondents were in the bracket 31 to 40 years of age. Secondly, 34 (27.9%) of the respondents were between 41 and 50 years, 20 (16.4%) were between 20 and 30 years, and 10 (8.2%) were over 50 years.

Table 4.2: Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	65	53.3	53.3	53.3
	Female	57	46.7	46.7	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

The findings in table 4.2 indicate that of the respondents, 65 (53.3%) were male and 57 (44.3%) were female. The implication of the findings is that in many of the cases, the women were very reluctant to provide the required information and hence replaced with the willing male respondents. Nonetheless, the study found no significant differences in response by gender grouping.

Table 4.3: Education Level of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Bachelor's degree	52	42.6	42.6	42.6
	Certificate	10	8.2	8.2	50.8
	Diploma	37	30.3	30.3	81.1
	Other	14	11.5	11.5	92.6
	Post graduate	9	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

With reference to the education level of the respondents, the results in the table show that 52 (42.6%) of the respondents held bachelor's degree qualifications, 37 (30.3%) held diploma level qualifications, 10 (13.9%) held other certificate and 9 (6.1%) had post graduate degrees. This implies that the awareness about the study variables was non-discriminant of the education level of the respondents.

Table 4.4: Religious affiliation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Catholic	71	58.2	58.2	58.2
	Anglican	51	41.8	41.8	100.0
	Total	122	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

The table above shows that of the respondents, 71 (58.2%) were catholic and the rest were Anglicans. The distribution is explained by the lower response rates amongst the Anglican respondents because distribution was 82 questionnaires to each grouping. However, the study found no significant differences in responses regarding the relationships between the variables under study.

4.3 Describing marital stability

This was the study's dependent variable and the descriptive analyses of the responses from the sub components of marital stability are captured as in the tables below.

Table 4. 5 Descriptive Results for general function

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
The members of our marriage are open and honest to each other	30 (24.6%)	71 (58.2%)	2.14	1.974
In our marriage, some members forgo their own wishes in order to advance other family members	46 (37.7%)	64 (52.5%)	2.42	1.077
If a member in our marriage becomes physically or mentally ill, others will help him or her	50 (41.0%)	59 (48.4%)	2.71	1.012
In our marriage, the members are always tolerant of each other's problems	13 (10.7%)	80 (65.6%)	1.61	1.821

Source: Primary data

Obtaining information on general function of marriage was one of the components of marital stability as per the current study. Information on honesty and openness, wishes, unconditional help and tolerance has always been viewed by experts as key aspects of marriage (Mirecki et al., 2013). From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 58.2% disagreed that the

members of their respective marriages are open and honest to each other and this is proven right with a mean of 2.14 and a standard deviation of 1.974 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 52.5% disagreed that some members forgo their own wishes in order to advance other family members and this is proven right with a mean of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 1.077 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

Third, it is shown that of the respondents, 48.4% disagreed that if a member in their marriage becomes physically or mentally ill, others will help him or her and this is proven right with a mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.012 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

Lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 65.6% disagreed that the members are always tolerant of each other's problems and this is proven right with a mean of 1.61 and a standard deviation of 1.821 (an indication that the responses are very dispersed from the mean).

From the above descriptive analyses, it is clear that the couples rated low when it came to general information on tolerance, honesty and openness, wishes as well as provision of unconditional help to the spouse. This is shown by mean responses that are very low on all the aspects or elements covered under the general function component of marital stability as Mirecki et al., (2013) postulated.

Table 4. 6 Descriptive Results for problem solving

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
We usually use all possible means to solve marriage problems	21 (17.2%)	89 (72.9%)	2.61	1.627
If we do not find a solution to the problems of the family, we accept the reality and move on	26 (21.3%)	80 (65.6%)	2.71	1.821
In solving marital problems, all views of the members are taken into consideration before a solution is obtained	11 (9.0%)	92 (75.4%)	1.76	1.415
When making marital and family decisions, all the members are respectful of each other	9 (7.4%)	96 (78.7%)	1.62	1.322

Source: Primary data

Spousal problem solving is another factor studied in as far as marital stability is concerned. The descriptive statistics present the responses with regard to problem solving in a marriage. From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 72.9% disagreed that they usually use all possible means to solve marriage problems and this is proven right with a mean of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 1.627 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 65.6% disagreed that if they do not find a solution to the problems of the family, they accept the reality and move on and this is proven right with a mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.821 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

Third, it is shown that of the respondents, 75.4% disagreed that in solving marital problems, all views of the members are taken into consideration before a solution is obtained and this is proven right with a mean of 1.76 and a standard deviation of 1.322 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

Lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 78.7% disagreed that when making marital and family decisions, all the members are respectful of each other and this is proven right with a mean of

1.62 and a standard deviation of 1.322 (an indication that the responses are very dispersed from the mean).

From the above descriptive analyses, it is clear that the couples rated low when it came to problem solving component of marital stability. This is showed by mean responses that are very low on all the aspects or elements covered under the problem solving component of marital stability as Bean (2019) postulated.

Table 4. 7 Descriptive Results for communication

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
The individuals in our marriage sincerely discuss their true feelings	48 (39.3%)	70 (57.4%)	2.86	1.181
We talk to each other to resolve all disagreements and misunderstandings	46 (37.7%)	77 (63.1%)	2.42	1.214
We try hard to find out why another spouse in the marriage is upset	41 (33.6%)	62 (50.8%)	2.31	1.081
In our marriage, we do not keep any secrets from each other	53 (34.4 %)	58 (47.5%)	2.96	1.116

Source: Primary data

The third component of marital stability in the current study was spousal communication as presented in the table above. From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 57.4% disagreed that the individuals in their respective marriages sincerely discuss their true feelings and this is proven right with a mean of 2.86 and a standard deviation of 1.181 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 63.1% disagreed that they talk to each other to resolve all disagreements and misunderstandings and this is proven right with a mean of 2.42 and a standard deviation of 1.214 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

Third, it is shown that of the respondents, 50.8% disagreed that they try hard to find out why another spouse in the marriage is upset and this is proven right with a mean of 2.31 and a

standard deviation of 1.081 (an indication that the responses are not widely varied around the mean response)

Lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 47.5% disagreed that in their marriage, they do not keep any secrets from each other and this is proven right with a mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 1.116 (an indication that the responses are very dispersed from the mean).

From the above descriptive analyses, it is clear that the couples rated low when it came to communication component of marital stability. This is showed by mean responses that are very low on all the aspects or elements covered under the marital communication component of marital stability as Hawkins et al., (2012) postulated.

Table 4. 8 Descriptive Results for affective responsiveness

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
The members of our marriage are able to express their affection towards each other	45 (36.9%)	60 (49.1%)	2.61	1.941
In our marriage, attention is paid to children's feelings and emotions	62 (50.8%)	58 (47.5%)	3.18	1.362
After a prolonged physical or mental illness of a spouse, we do not get tired of taking care of him or her	41 (33.6%)	78 (63.9%)	2.31	2.021
It is difficult for our family members to be detached away from the family	55 (45.1 %)	69 (56.6%)	3.09	1.018

Source: Primary data

The fourth component of marital stability in the current study was affective responsiveness as presented in the table above. From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 49.1% disagreed that the members of their respective marriages are always able to express their affection towards each other and this is proven right with a mean of 2.61 and a standard deviation of 1.941 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response).

From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 47.5% disagreed that in their respective marriages, attention is paid to children's feelings and emotions and this is proven right

with a mean of 3.18 and a standard deviation of 1.362 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response)

Third, it is shown that of the respondents, 63.9% disagreed that after a prolonged physical or mental illness of a spouse, they do not get tired of taking care of him or her and this is proven right with a mean of 2.31 and a standard deviation of 2.021 (an indication that the responses are not widely varied around the mean response)

Lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 56.6% disagreed that it is difficult for their family members to be detached away from the family and this is proven right with a mean of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 1.018 (an indication that the responses are very dispersed from the mean).

From the above descriptive analyses, it is clear that the couples rated low when it came to affectionate responsiveness component of marital stability. This is showed by mean responses that are very low on all the aspects or elements covered under the affectionate responsiveness component of marital stability as Hawkins et al., (2012) postulated.

Table 4. 9 Descriptive Results for rules and roles

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
When it comes to housework, the members are very cooperative	51 (41.8%)	60 (49.2%)	2.96	1.986
The responsibilities in our marriage and family are properly distributed among members and we are satisfied with it	46 (37.7%)	54 (44.3%)	2.81	1.881
If one of our family members arrives home late, he or she will be held accountable and they accept it	31 (25.4%)	77 (63.1%)	2.08	1.242
We have rules for using social and mass media such as virtual networks, satellite services, etc	35 (28.9 %)	65 (53.4%)	2.26	1.188

Source: Primary data

The final component of marital stability in the current study included marital rules and roles as presented in the table above. From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 49.2% disagreed that when it comes to housework, the members are very cooperative and this is proven right with a mean of 2.96 and a standard deviation of 1.986 (an indication that the responses are

widely varied around the mean response). This is supported by the fact that many couples believed that they paid the maids to do this kind of work.

From the study results, it is shown that of the respondents, 44.3% disagreed that the responsibilities in their marriage and family are properly distributed among members and they were are satisfied with it and this is proven right with a mean of 2.81 and a standard deviation of 1.881 (an indication that the responses are widely varied around the mean response). The reason for this is that some of the members tend to be too lazy and always occupied with work related aspects at home.

Third, it is shown that of the respondents, 63.1% disagreed that if one of the family members arrives home late, he or she is held accountable and they accept it and this is proven right with a mean of 2.08 and a standard deviation of 1.242 (an indication that the responses are not widely varied around the mean response). The response was supported by the fact that some of the members prove difficult to hold accountable even when they are not in the wrong.

Lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 53.4% disagreed that they have rules for using social and mass media such as virtual networks, satellite services, etc and this is proven right with a mean of 2.26 and a standard deviation of 1.188(an indication that the responses are very dispersed from the mean). The response was supported by the fact that sometimes, the couples did work online and the other spouse cannot intervene.

From the above descriptive analyses, it is clear that the couples rated low when it came to rules and roles component of marital stability. This is showed by mean responses that are very low on all the aspects or elements covered under the rules and roles component of marital stability as Zuccarini et al., (2013) postulated.

In conclusion, the responses on all the components of marital satisfaction in the study area are very low indicating that there exists instability in many of the marriages in the stated area. This is a justification for the many Domestic Violence cases reported and hence the justification of the problem statement as it was in the first chapter of this report.

4.4 Describing pre-marital counseling

This was the study's independent variable and the descriptive analyses of the responses from the sub components of pre-marital counseling are captured as in the table below.

Table 4. 10 Descriptive Results for relationship counseling

	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	S.D
I was individually counseled on how to accept and manage my partner's influence in the marriage	33.6	62.3	2.94	1.203
I was individually counseled on how to have dialogue about problems in the marriage	45.9	48.4	2.31	1.424
I was counseled on how to create a shared meaning in the marriage with my spouse	56.6	41.8	3.16	1.459
I was counseled on how to know and accommodate my partner's other world in our marriage	41.8	44.3	3.09	1.154
I was counseled on how to Share Fondness and Admiration for my partner, express appreciation and respect	40.2	51.6	2.34	1.453
I was counseled on how to state my needs, be aware of bids for connection and respond to (turn towards) them	49.2	41.0	3.37	1.492
I was counseled on the positive approach to problem-solving and the success of repair attempts	63.9	31.2	4.22	1.238
I was counseled on how to create an atmosphere that encourages each person to talk honestly about his or her hopes, values, convictions and aspirations	50.0	31.2	3.88	1.287
Average			3.03	1.364

Source: Primary data

Relationship counseling is one of the various components or strategies used by church counselors when doing premarital counseling. The descriptive analyses of the responses on

satisfaction levels of the couples with relationship counseling as applied to couples in the study area are presented as in the table above

From the study, it is shown that of the respondents, 62.3% disagreed that they were counseled on how to accept and manage their partner's influence in the marriage and this is proven right with a mean of 2.94 and a standard deviation of 1.203. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of relationship counseling was handled.

Secondly, it is shown that of the respondents, 48.4% disagreed that they were counseled on how to have dialogue about problems in the marriage and this is proven right with a mean of 2.31 and a standard deviation of 1.424. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of relationship counseling was handled.

Further, it is shown that of the respondents, 41.8% disagreed that they were counseled on how to create a shared meaning in the marriage with my spouse and this is proven right with a mean of 3.16 and a standard deviation of 1.459. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of relationship counseling was handled

Further, it is shown that of the respondents, 44.3% disagreed that they were counseled on how to know and accommodate my partner's other world in our marriage and this is proven right with a mean of 3.09 and a standard deviation of 1.154. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of relationship counseling was handled.

It is further shown that of the respondents, 51.6% disagreed that they were counseled on how to Share Fondness and Admiration for their partners, express appreciation and respect and this is proven right with a mean of 2.34 and a standard deviation of 1.453. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of relationship counseling was handled.

It is also shown that of the respondents, 41.0% disagreed that they were counseled on how to state their needs, be aware of bids for connection and respond to (turn towards) them and this is proven right with a mean of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 1.492. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of relationship counseling was handled

Still, the results of the study show that of the respondents, 31.2% disagreed that they were counseled on the positive approach to problem-solving and the success of repair attempts and this is proven right with a mean of 4.22 and a standard deviation of 1.238. The response shows that the respondents were satisfied with how this element of relationship counseling was handled. Lastly, the results of the study show that of the respondents, 31.2% disagreed that they were counseled on how to create an atmosphere that encourages each person to talk honestly about his or her hopes, values, convictions and aspirations and this is proven right with a mean of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 1.287. The response shows that the respondents were satisfied with how this element of relationship counseling was handled.

Regarding the respondents' satisfaction with relationship counseling, the mean responses were 3.03 and standard deviation of 1.364 indicating that most of the respondents were dissatisfied with how Gottman's relationship counseling of premarital counseling was carried out unto them.

Table 4. 11 Descriptive Results for emotionally focused counseling

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
We were taught on identifying negative interaction patterns that contribute to conflict	37.7	59.0	2.95	1.352
We were taught on identifying negative emotions related to attachment issues	33.6	52.5	2.89	1.498
With EFT, each partner learnt to share their emotions and show acceptance and compassion for each other	42.6	50.8	2.95	1.386
We were taught to work on new communication strategies and practicing skills when interacting with each other	44.3	49.2	2.87	1.334
We were taught how to better see how insecurities and fears may be hurting their relationship	50	49.2	2.87	1.334
We were taught to learn to be emotionally available, empathetic, and engaged with each other	38.5	58.2	2.65	1.357
During the EFT counseling, we were taught to become more responsive to their partner's needs	39.3	52.5	2.89	1.491
Average			2.87	1.393

Source: Primary data

Emotionally focused counseling is the second of the various components or strategies used by church counselors when doing premarital counseling. The descriptive analyses of the responses on satisfaction levels of the couples with emotionally focused counseling as applied to couples in the study area are presented as in the table above

From the study, it is shown that of the respondents, 59% disagreed that they were counseled on identifying negative interaction patterns that contribute to conflict and this is proven right with a mean of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 1.352. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled.

Secondly, it is shown that of the respondents, 52.5% disagreed that they were counseled on identifying negative emotions related to attachment issues and this is proven right with a mean of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 1.498. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled.

Further, it is shown that of the respondents, 50.8% disagreed that each partner learnt to share their emotions and show acceptance and compassion for each other and this is proven right with a mean of 2.95 and a standard deviation of 1.386. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled

Further, it is shown that of the respondents, 49.2% disagreed that they were counseled on how to work on new communication strategies and practicing skills when interacting with each other and this is proven right with a mean of 2.87 and a standard deviation of 1.334. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled.

It is further shown that of the respondents, 49.2% disagreed that they were counseled on how to better see how insecurities and fears may be hurting their relationship and this is proven right with a mean of 2.87 and a standard deviation of 1.334. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled.

Still, it is shown that of the respondents, 58.2% disagreed that they were counseled on how to learn to be emotionally available, empathetic, and engaged with each other and this is proven right with a mean of 2.65 and a standard deviation of 1.357. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled.

Lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 52.5% disagreed that they were counseled on how to become more responsive to their partner's needs and this is proven right with a mean of 2.89 and a standard deviation of 1.491. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of emotionally focused counseling was handled.

Regarding the respondents' satisfaction with relationship counseling, the mean responses were 2.87 and standard deviation of 1.393 indicating that most of the respondents were dissatisfied with how Emotionally focused counseling of premarital counseling was carried out unto them.

Table 4. 12 Descriptive results for Cognitive behavioral Couples Counseling

	Agree	Disagree	Mean	S.D
I was counseled on how to broaden and diversify sexual behaviors in the marriage	41.0	51.6	2.71	1.371
I was counseled on how to identify, modify and enhance tolerance of negative emotions	51.6	43.4	3.02	1.151
I was helped to learn to detect and evaluate the appropriateness of my thoughts	38.5	59.0	3.11	1.096
During the CBCT, I was given sound counseling on effective spousal communication	37.0	50.8	2.86	1.563
I was counseled on acceptance and tolerance of differences between my behaviors and those of my partner	41.8	48.4	2.99	1.532
I was counseled on the best possible problem-solving skills in marriage	32.0	60.7	2.40	1.574
Average			2.85	1.381

Source: Primary data

Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling is the third of the various components or strategies used by church counselors when doing premarital counseling. The descriptive analyses of the responses on satisfaction levels of the couples with Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling as applied to couples in the study area are presented as in the table above

From the study, it is shown that of the respondents, 51.6% disagreed that they were counseled on how to broaden and diversify sexual behaviors in the marriage and this is proven right with a mean of 2.71 and a standard deviation of 1.371. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling was handled.

Secondly, it is shown that of the respondents, 43.4% disagreed that they were counseled on how to identify, modify and enhance tolerance of negative emotions and this is proven right with a

mean of 3.02 and a standard deviation of 1.151. The response shows that the respondents were not so sure with how this element of Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling was handled.

Further, it is shown that of the respondents, 59.0% disagreed that they were helped to learn to detect and evaluate the appropriateness of their thoughts and this is proven right with a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of 1.096. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling was handled

Further, it is shown that of the respondents, 50.8% disagreed that they were counseled on effective spousal communication and this is proven right with a mean of 2.86 and a standard deviation of 1.563. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling was handled.

It is further shown that of the respondents, 48.4% disagreed that they were counseled on acceptance and tolerance of differences between my behaviors and those of my partner and this is proven right with a mean of 2.99 and a standard deviation of 1.532. The response shows that the respondents were dissatisfied with how this element of Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling was handled.

lastly, it is shown that of the respondents, 60.7% disagreed that they were counseled on the best possible problem-solving skills in marriage and this is proven right with a mean of 2.40 and a standard deviation of 1.574. The response shows that the respondents were not certain about their satisfaction with how this element of Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling was handled.

Regarding the respondents' satisfaction with relationship counseling, the mean responses were 2.85 and standard deviation of 1.381 indicating that most of the respondents were dissatisfied with how Cognitive behavioral couples' counseling of premarital counseling was carried out

unto them. Overall, the results indicated that the respondents were not satisfied with the way the various components of premarital counseling were handled during the respective sessions. However, even with negative perceptions about marital stability in the study area, the statistics cannot be relied upon to conclude that it is because of dissatisfaction with premarital counseling that there exists marital instabilities.

4.5 Relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital stability

In order to make meaningful inferences about the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability, inferential analyses (correlation and regression run with SPSS version 22) were used. The relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital stability is investigated to establish the extent and direction using correlation analysis as in the table below.

Table 4.13 Relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital stability

		MSTA	RTHE	EFT	CBCT
MSTA	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	N	122			
RTHE	Pearson Correlation	.549*	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
	N	122	122		
EFT	Pearson Correlation	.731**	.675**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	N	122	122	122	
CBCT	Pearson Correlation	.728**	.651**	.561**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	122	122	122	122

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

Key

MSTA: Marital stability; RTHE: Gottman’s Relationship counseling

EFT: Emotionally focused counseling; CBCT: Cognitive Behavioral Couple Counseling

A Pearson Correlation of 0.549* and sig.(2-tailed) of 0.000 in the table above show that at 5% significance level, there was a medium, positive and significant positive relationship between the marital stability and Gottman’s Relationship counseling in the study area. Secondly, a Pearson Correlation of 0.731** and sig.(2-tailed) of 0.000 in the table above show that at 1% significance level, there was a high, positive and significant positive relationship between using Emotionally focused counseling of premarital counseling and marital stability in the study area. A Pearson Correlation of 0.728** and sig.(2-tailed) of 0.000 in the table above show that at 1% significance level, there was a high, positive and significant positive relationship between use of Cognitive Behavioral Couple Counseling during premarital counseling and the marital stability in the study area. From the above

4.6 The effect of pre-marital counseling and marital stability

The following multiple regression model captures the extent to which a change in pre-marital counseling affects marital stability as in the tables below.

Table 4.14 Model summary

Model	R	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	
				R Square	F Change	df1		df2
1	.754 ^a	.711	.27227	.711	1196.174	3	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), RTHE, EFT, CBCT

Source: Primary data

A figure of 0.754 shows that there exists a high correlation between the dependent (marital stability) and independent variables (RTHE, EFT, CBCT) amongst couples in the study area. A figure of 0.711 means that 71.1% of all the changes in perceptions about marital stability are explained by the changes in perceptions about Gottman’s Relationship counseling; changes in perceptions about Emotionally focused counseling and changes in perceptions about Cognitive Behavioral Couple Counseling as applied to couples in the study area.

A figure of 0.71 means that 71 % of all the changes in perceptions about marital stability are explained by the changes in perceptions about Gottman’s Relationship counseling; changes in perceptions about Emotionally focused counseling and changes in perceptions about Cognitive Behavioral Couple Counseling as applied to couples in the study area.

A Sig. F change value of 0.000 (which is less than) the level of significance, 0.05, shows that at 5% significance level, the model on the effect of Gottman’s Relationship counseling; changes in perceptions about Emotionally focused counseling and changes in perceptions about Cognitive Behavioral Couple Counseling on marital stability about as applied to couples in the study area is significant.

Table 4.15 Regression coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.208	.119		1.744	.082
	RTHE	.466	.078	.434	3.412	.001
	EFT	.681	.045	.662	14.053	.000
	CBCT	.632	.067	.611	4.578	.004

a. Dependent Variable: MSTA

Source: Primary data

The results indicated that (at $\beta = 0.632$) a unit increase or improvement in the use of Gottman’s relationship counseling during premarital counseling improved perceptions of the couples towards the stability of their marriages by 0.632. With a p- value of less than 1%, the effect of Gottman’s relationship counseling during premarital counseling on marital stability in the study area was significant at 1% significance level. The results of this study are consistent with the scholarly work of Hawkins et al., (2012) as well as Dillon et al., (2015) who stated that use of the relationship counseling by Gottman improved the stability of marriages, though the current study added inferences to the equation which improves the validity of the study results.

The results indicated that (at $\beta = 0.681$) a unit increase or improvement in the use of emotionally focused couple counseling during premarital counseling improved perceptions of the couples towards the stability of their marriages by 0.681. With a p- value of less than 1%, the effect of emotionally focused couple counseling during premarital counseling on marital stability in the study area was significant at 1% significance level. The results of this study are consistent with the scholarly work of Teymori et al., (2021) and Sayadi et al., (2017) who stated that use of the emotionally focused counseling improved the stability of marriages albeit carried out in a different geographical setting. Hence, the study is an addition to the existing body of knowledge. In support of the fact that EFT had a more significant role in ensuring marital stability, several key informants were interviewed and the results were not so different. According to a key informant;

“Focusing on emotions is the best idea in premarital counseling because emotions run everything. A marriage where couples were not counseled on preparations for emotional distresses such as anxiety, stress, depression and happiness and community demands may not be stable”

The results indicated that (at $\beta = 0.466$) a unit increase or improvement in the use of cognitive behavioral couple counseling during premarital counseling improved perceptions of the couples towards the stability of their marriages by 0.466. With a p- value of less than 1%, the effect of cognitive behavioral couple counseling during premarital counseling on marital stability in the study area was significant at 1% significance level. The results of this study are consistent with the scholarly work of Durães et al., (2020) and Christensen et al., (2010) who stated that use of the cognitive behavioral couples’ counseling improved the stability of marriages though in different geographical and cultural settings. Hence, the study is an addition to the existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings, the conclusions that could be drawn as well as the recommendations for the study. The chapter also presents the recommended areas for further study.

5.2 Summary of findings

Pre-marital counseling is a viable and critical tool in improving the stability of marriages. This section is divided in line with the study objectives.

5.2.1 The Relationship between relationship counseling and marital stability

A Pearson Correlation of 0.549* and sig.(2-tailed) of 0.000 in the table above show that at 5% significance level, there was a medium, positive and significant positive relationship between relationship counseling and marital stability in the study area.

5.2.2 The Relationship between emotionally focused counseling and marital stability

The correlation results yielded a Pearson Correlation of 0.731** and sig.(2-tailed) of 0.000 implying that at 1% significance level, there was a high, positive and significant positive relationship between emotionally focused counseling and marital stability in the study area.

5.2.3 The Relationship between cognitive behavioral couple counseling and marital stability

A Pearson Correlation of 0.728** and sig.(2-tailed) of 0.000 in the table above show that at 1% significance level, there was a high, positive and significant positive relationship between cognitive behavioral couples' counseling and marital stability in the study area.

5.3 Conclusions

This study investigated the effect of premarital counseling on marital stability. It was intended to investigate the relationship between premarital counseling and marital stability using a case study of couples in Bukoto, Nakawa division. This was in relation to the fact that there is evidence from FIDA and Ministry of Gender that even though couples legalize the marriages they get into, they still do not get the marital stability that they had anticipated hence there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of premarital counseling programs on marital stability.

Pre-marital counseling in this study was sectioned into three including relationship counseling, emotionally focused counseling and cognitive behavioral couple counseling. Of the three, emotionally focused counseling had a more significant effect on marital stability amongst couples in the study area. On the whole, premarital counseling significantly and positively affected marital stability in the study area.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made basing on the discussion and conclusions of the study:

First and foremost, the study recommends that couples should be encouraged to partake emotionally focused couple counseling as it had a more significant effect on marital stability.

When couples engage in such assessment there will be openness in the marriage. Also emphasis should be put on ensuring that couples disclose deep secrets to avoid shocks.

Secondly, the study recommends that couples should attend thorough cognitive behavioral couple counseling sessions to gain problem solving skills for successful marital contentment.

Third, the study recommends that premarital therapists should intensify their engagements with couples to ensure that there is more reduction in misunderstandings in couples. The premarital counseling should focus a lot more on going much deeper into problems of the couple, poor

communication skills, feeling stuck or disconnected, finding out the individuals unmet needs, frozen childhood needs and the deep seated roots of the problems that the couple is facing. It is only after finding this out and showing the individual ways of say, re-parenting oneself if necessary or dealing with these deep rooted problems by attending say anger management classes, maybe going for addiction counseling, to mention but a few, that the character or behavior of the client may improve. The partner will also be in a position to be more understanding of his or her partner and so better able to be patient with the partner who is facing these challenges. This will then improve on the stability of the marriage because the couple will have undergone some counseling on how to deal with their personal problems.

Further, the study recommends that the churches should continue sensitizing the public on the benefits of premarital counseling as the Church remains the biggest institution that provides this service to couples.

Finally, the study urges the government should put down policies and guidelines to be followed by the churches that are taking couples through premarital counseling. It should become law that for all those going to get married, they should undergo premarital counseling given by the places of worship where the couple is going to be married so that the chances of marital stability is increased thus reduce on aspects like domestic violence and eventually the divorce rate in Uganda.

5.5 Areas for further research

The study proposes that studies be carried out in other areas listed below in order to increase on the literature and provide solutions to issues rising in marital stability.

- a. Effect of premarital counseling on marital sustainability.
- b. Financial stability and marital contentment.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is a student of at University of Kisubi, a Constituent of Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi, pursuing a Master’s degree in Clinical Psychology and Counseling. I am carrying out a study examining the role of pre-marital counseling on marital stability: A case study of St. Andrew’s Church of Uganda, Bukoto, Nakawa Division. You have been selected to participate in this study because the contribution you make is central to the kind of information required. The information you provide is solely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Kindly spare some of your valuable time to answer these questions. Your name may not be required Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Instructions:

Please tick an option you consider the most appropriate to you.

Section A: Bio Data

1) Sex of respondent

- a) Male
- b) Female

2) Age group

- a) 20-30 years
- b) 31-40 years
- c) 41– 50 years
- d) 50 years and above

3) Level of Education

- a) Degree
- b) Diploma
- c) Secondary level
- d) Primary level
- e) Others specify

4) What is your religion?

- a) Anglican
- b) Catholic

c) Others (Specify).....

Section one: Pre-marital counseling

1. Thinking about pre-marital counseling, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your understanding of the premarital counseling in this area?

1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

No		1	2	3	4	5
	Relationship counseling					
1	I was individually counseled on how to accept and manage my partner's influence in the marriage					
2	I was individually counseled on how to have dialogue about problems in the marriage					
3	I was counseled on how to create a shared meaning in the marriage with my spouse					
4	I was counseled on how to know and accommodate my partner's other world in our marriage					
5	I was counseled on how to Share Fondness and Admiration for my partner, express appreciation and respect					
6	I was counseled on how to state my needs, be aware of bids for connection and respond to (turn towards) them					
7	I was counseled on the positive approach to problem-solving and the success of repair attempts					
8	I was counseled on how to create an atmosphere that encourages each person to talk honestly about his or her hopes, values, convictions and aspirations					
	Emotionally Focused Counseling					
1	We were taught on identifying negative interaction patterns that contribute to conflict					
2	We were taught on identifying negative emotions related to attachment issues					
3	With EFT, each partner learnt to share their emotions and show acceptance and compassion for each other					
4	We were taught to work on new communication strategies and practicing skills when interacting with each other					
5	We were taught how to better see how insecurities and fears may be hurting their relationship					
6	We were taught to learn to be emotionally available, empathetic, and engaged with each other					
7	During the EFT counseling, we were taught to become more responsive to their partner's needs					
	Cognitive behavioral Couples Counseling					
1	I was counseled on how to broaden and diversify sexual behaviors in the marriage					
2	I was counseled on how to identify, modify and enhance					

No		1	2	3	4	5
	Relationship counseling					
	tolerance of negative emotions					
3	I was helped to learn to detect and evaluate the appropriateness of my thoughts					
4	During the CBCT, I was given sound counseling on effective spousal communication					
5	I was counseled on acceptance and tolerance of differences between my behaviors and those of my partner					
6	I was counseled on the best possible problem-solving skills in marriage					

Section two: marital stability

2. Thinking about marital stability, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your understanding of the marital stability in this area?

1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied, 5 = very satisfied

No		1	2	3	4	5
	General function					
1	The members of our marriage are open and honest to each other					
2	In our marriage, some members forgo their own wishes in order to advance other family members					
3	If a member in our marriage becomes physically or mentally ill, others will help him or her					
4	In our marriage, the members are always tolerant of each other's problems					
	Problem solving					
1	We usually use all possible means to solve marriage problems					
2	If we do not find a solution to the problems of the family, we accept the reality and move on					
3	In solving marital problems, all views of the members are taken into consideration before a solution is obtained					
4	When making marital and family decisions, all the members are respectful of each other					
	Communication					
1	The individuals in our marriage sincerely discuss their true feelings					
2	We talk to each other to resolve disagreements and misunderstandings					
3	We try hard to find out why another spouse in the marriage is upset					

No		1	2	3	4	5
	General function					
4	In our marriage, we do not keep any secrets from each other					
	Affective responsiveness					
1	The members of our marriage are able to express their affection towards each other					
2	In our marriage, attention is paid to children's feelings and emotions					
3	After a prolonged physical or mental illness of a spouse, we do not get tired of taking care of him or her					
4	It is difficult for our family members to be detached away from the family					
	Roles and Rules					
1	When it comes to housework, the members are very cooperative					
2	The responsibilities in our marriage and family are properly distributed among members and we are satisfied with it					
3	If one of our family members arrives home late, he or she will be held accountable and they accept it					
4	We have rules for using social and mass media such as virtual networks, satellite services, etc					