

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



IMPACT OF PREMARITAL COUNSELLING ON MARITAL
SATISFACTION AND ADJUSTMENT AMONG SDA MEMBERS

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SATISFACTION AND ADJUSTMENT AMONG SDA MEMBERS

BY

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This thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the Faculty of Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's Signature:..... Date:.....

Name:.....

Supervisors' Declaration

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

Principal Supervisor's Signature: Date:.....

Name: -.....

Co-Supervisor's Signature: Date:.....

Name: -.....

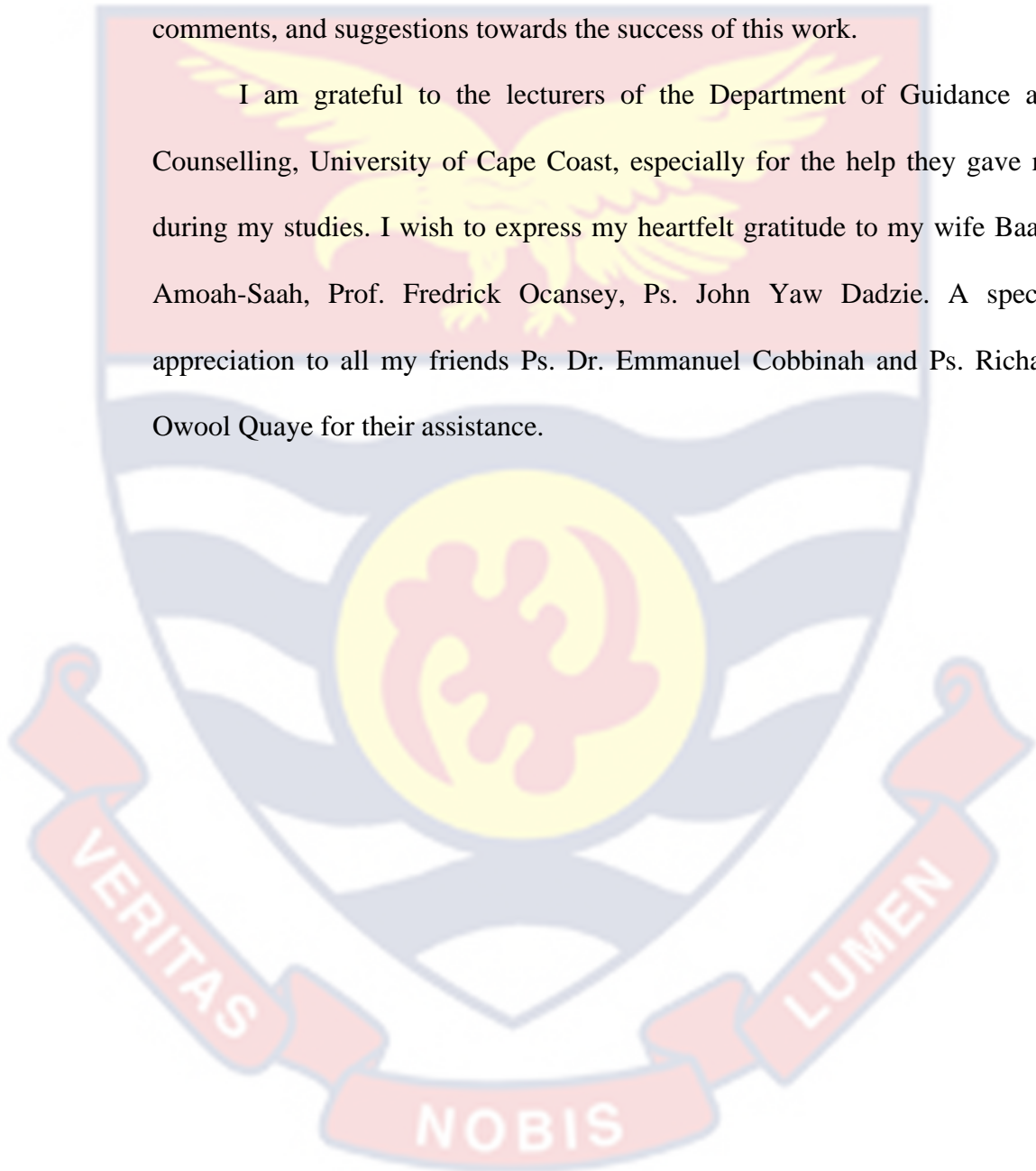
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and adjustment among married SDA members in the Central Region of Ghana. The study adopted a mixed methods approach. The causal comparative design was chosen for the study. A sample of 300 married individuals from SDA churches in the Central Region was selected through multistage sampling for the study. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guide. Quantitative data analysis was done through both descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data analysis was done through thematic analysis. The study found that the respondents were generally satisfied in their marriages and were adjusted in their marriages. The study revealed also that premarital counselling covered topics such as conflict management, communication, finances, coping with differences, future aspirations, parenting, sex and extended family relationships. The respondents perceived premarital counselling to be necessary and effective in dealing with critical issues in marriage. There was a statistically significant negative relationship between premarital counselling and marital satisfaction as well as a statistically significant positive relationship between premarital counselling and marital adjustment. The study showed that the respondents who received premarital counselling had high marital satisfaction compared to those who did not. In the same vein, the respondents who received premarital counselling were more adjusted than those who did not receive premarital counselling. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended that SDA church leaders should make premarital counselling a key pre-requisite for marriages in their churches so that all would-be couples have to partake in before getting married.

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DEDICATION

To my father, Mr. Micheal Nyarko Baasi



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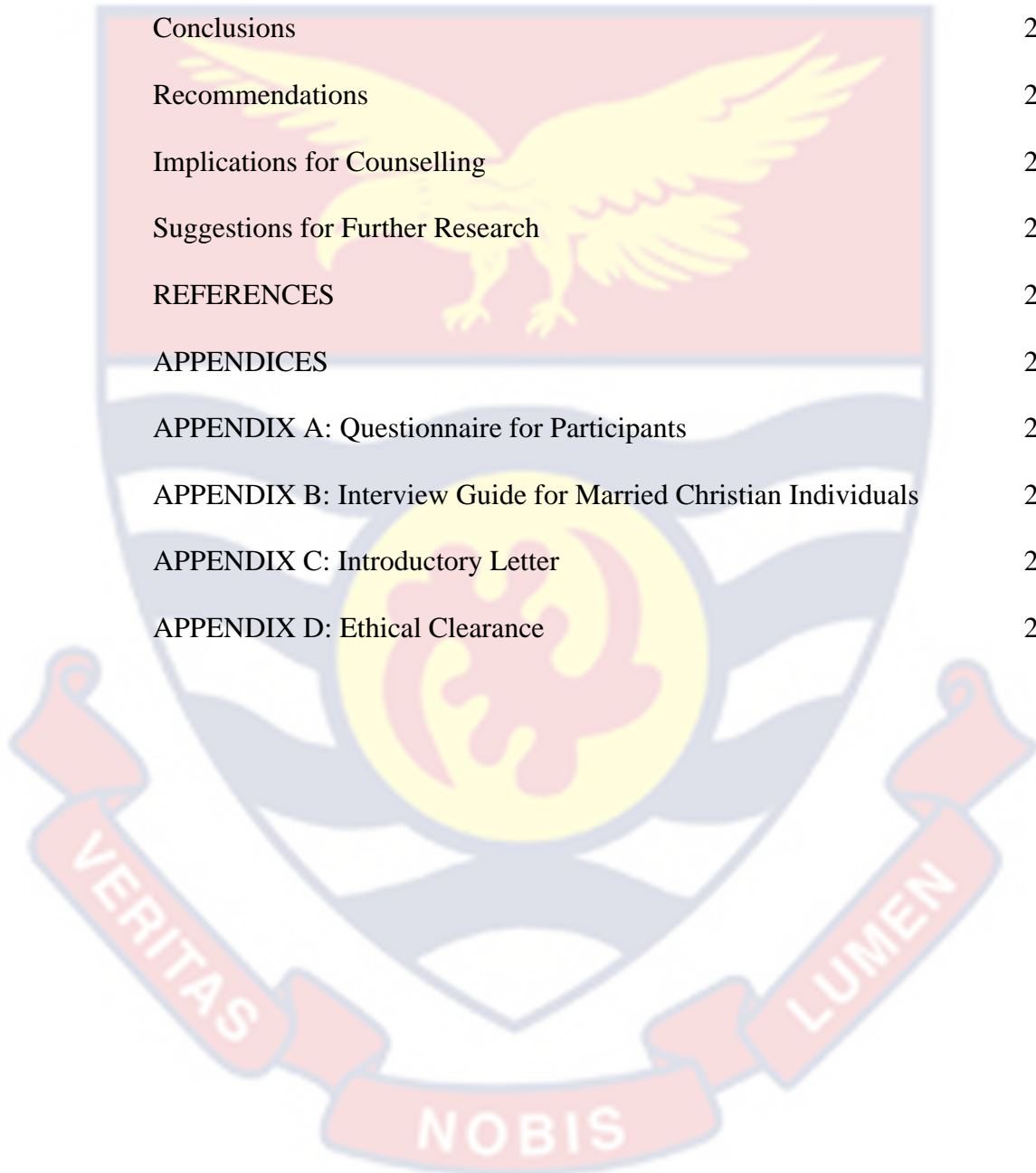
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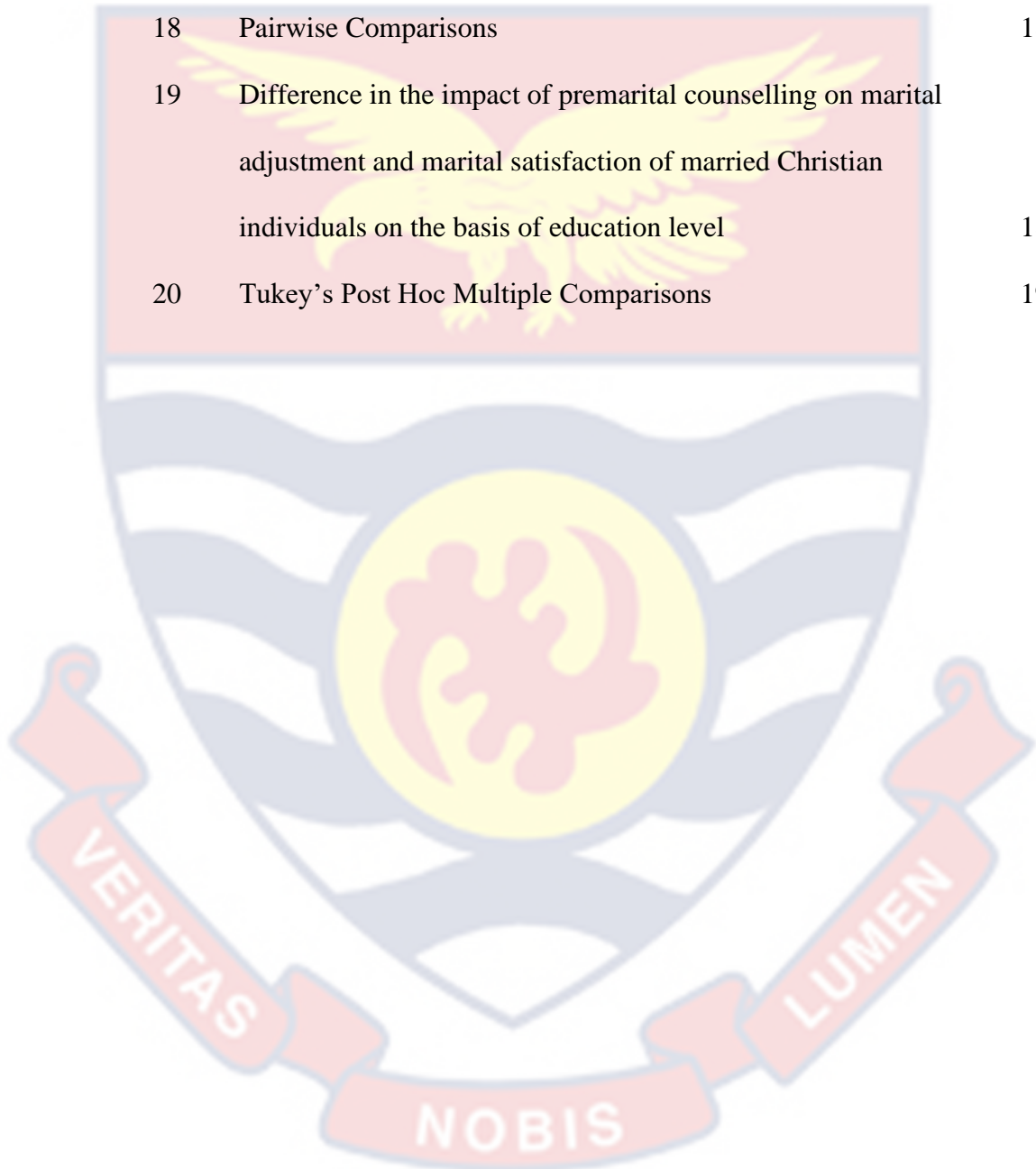
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The study examine how premarital counselling affects Christian couples' marital satisfaction and adjustment. An important hypothesis for this research is that couples who receive premarital counselling have a lower risk of marital problems, such as divorce. As a result, the researcher plans to conduct a study examining the impact of premarital counselling on Christian couples in Ghana's Central Region. This chapter provides an overview of the study's background, scope, and aims, as well as the research questions, significance, and limitations of the research.

Background to the Study

The institution of marriage has persisted across many cultures for a long time. Historically, the primary function of marriage was to unite families (Zineldin & Vasicheva, 2016). Since the inception of marriage, its norms and restrictions have been constantly evolving. This is a reference to global cultural dynamics and demographics. Man and woman are accepted into the true world of family life when they marry (Bowen, 2013). There is a lot of talk on marriage and family life, according to Ritvo and Glick (2002). To put it another way, marriage is an essential part of a person's life and even the world at large.

Defining marriage is difficult since each culture has its own understanding of what it means. Marriage is defined by a religion's ideas or philosophy in addition to cultural norms. To sum it up, marriage can be characterized as a partnership in which both parties benefit from each other, including the ability to reproduce legally, enjoy sexual pleasures, and show

affection and love for one another (Abra, 2001). As a result, the institution of marriage is restricted to heterosexual couples.

As stated by Haviland, Prins, McBride and Walrath (2011), marriage is a legal and customary agreement to enter into matrimony. Marriage is an institutional structure that regulates the coordination of domestic production between two individuals who are committed to sharing a home, a bed, a kitchen, a bathroom (Lauer & Yodanis, 2010). Marriage is defined as the union of a man and a woman who have reached the age of sexual maturity in each other's eyes. Couples should not be compelled to marry by their families, religious authorities, or the state. Even if some parents attempt to compel their children to marry someone they choose, in this case, marriage should be entered into voluntarily with the permission of the two people involved.

When it comes to sex, some cultures consider marriage as a prerequisite. This means that in some cultures and societies, having sex before being married is considered inappropriate (Martin, Martin & Martin, 2001). In addition to sexual fulfillment, marriage can provide emotional, religious, legal, and monetary support for those involved. Marriages based on the views of the couples, social standards, or parental preferences of a partner are common. When it comes to marriage, some people are given the option of picking whom they wish to marry in the future. In some cultures, planned weddings and child marriage are accepted as a matter of course (Koski, Clark & Nandi, 2017). In today's world, these marital rituals violate the most basic human rights laws.

When it comes to modern society, many people view marriage as a contract, especially in industrialized countries. A civil marriage is one that is done in accordance with local marriage rules and does not involve any religious

ceremony (Chatterjee, 2010). It can be said that in a religious context, marriage can be defined as a union based on religious principles and content that is sanctioned by the religious organization. As part of the agreement to wed, couples agree to a set of legal obligations or responsibilities for themselves and for their future offspring. It is no longer uncommon for governments to lift laws on interracial marriage, interfaith marriage, and same-sex marriage. Dissatisfaction in marriages is analogized by West (2015).

Marriage discontent is on the rise right now. However, despite data showing that most people marry with the hopes of having a happy life and realizing their aspirations in marriage, such unions are frequently marred by dissatisfaction. The majority of people want a happy marriage, according to Mobegi, Mokoro and Keari (2016). As a result, it is critical to promote marital satisfaction among couples. About half of all marriages end in divorce in the United States; however, premarital counselling has been shown to reduce the likelihood of divorce by 30 percent (Phegley, 2003). When couples are unhappy in their marriages, they often break up. Premarital counselling can be a remedy to this.

In most cases, marriage generates normative or legal responsibilities between the parties involved and their children. Polygyny is illegal in most sovereign governments; however, some are allowing it in decreasing numbers of jurisdictions, such as the United Nations and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Interracial marriage, religious marriage, and, most recently, same-sex marriages were all outlawed in many parts of the world for much of the twentieth century, but these restrictions were gradually lifted.

Divorce rates are rising despite widespread acceptance of marriage as a sacred institution. The Seventh-day Adventist Church believe that marriage was initiated by God in the Garden of Eden where He (God) joined Adam and Eve together as couples. The SDA church does not support or encourage divorce. The church believes and support that “what God has joined together, let no man put asunder”. The SDA church holds that apart from adultery and death, a Christian cannot divorce his or her partner and the church disfellowship any member who divorces his or her partner apart from adultery or death. Therefore, the church hates divorce (Levterov, 2015). Researchers such as Amoateng and Heaton, as cited in Abra (2001), found that divorce rates in Ghana have been rising. "Overall, we observe a high rate of divorce in Ghana," the authors wrote (p. 93). One of life's most important decisions is choosing a spouse, and only a small percentage of couples are able to make the choice rationally.

Many individuals and institutions, including religious institutions, have found that premarital counselling helps lower the high divorce rate. Premarital therapy is meant to help couples iron out their differences and get them ready for marriage before the big day arrives. In addition, the pair learns to communicate effectively, which helps them deal with issues as they come up. Premarital counselling programmes take a preventive approach by educating engaged couples about the variety of challenges that could arise in their marriage and arming them with the tools they need to deal with them successfully (Markman & Hahlweg, 1993).

It is possible to think of premarital counselling as a scheduled appointment between prospective spouses and a counsellor or psychologist who helps the prospective spouses evaluate their relationship and make decisions

about how to maximize their happiness in marriage (Onserio et al., 2016). A premarital counselling program for all couples is needed to lower the number of divorces. Accordingly, Williams (2007) argued that premarital counselling should be a mandatory necessity for any couple planning to be married, because it helps couples prepare for marriage by educating them about the process. Since premarital counselling is essential to a happy marriage, Christian denominations have mandated it for all prospective spouses (Adzovie & Dabone, 2021).

When it comes to marriage, premarital counselling has been widely accepted as a means of reducing or preventing divorce or separation by many institutions and organizations. It is the goal of premarital counselling to help couples get ready for marriage by teaching them how to deal with the problems that will inevitably arise during their union (Waters, 2003). It is widely believed that premarital counselling can help couples avoid separation and divorce and keep their unions strong. So many ways to get premarital counselling are available, including prayer, skilled counsellors, clergy members and traditional counselors. Prior to marriage, couples attend premarital counselling to help enhance their relationship. To keep a marriage running and on track, spouses require each other to exhibit positive behavior, to understand and apply specific concepts and procedures, and to gain competence (Harway, 2005).

Christian premarital counselling research shows that couples who participate in premarital counselling activities are completely satisfied and stable in their relationship (Jacobi, 2017; Hook, Worthington, Hook, Miller & Davis, 2011). Due to the centrality of biblical teachings in Christian belief, premarital Christian counselling can benefit religious couples (Diblasio, 2010). Affinity grace, according to Patrick et al. (2013), is a means for couples to avoid

perpetual conflict or crises. According to the findings of Patrick et al. (2013), affinitive grace can play a significant role in supporting processes that lead to forgiveness and help resolve marital crises or conflicts that recur again.

Even if you and your partner are not planning to be married, it is common practice in some communities to conduct full premarital counselling (Hawkins & Ooms, 2010). There are certain pre-marital counselling programs that emphasize the importance of a healthy relationship. Couples' self-defeating attitudes can lead to disagreements and issues in marriage. Another benefit of premarital education is that it educates those who are thinking about getting married how to pick a spouse who will not cause them troubles in their marriage but who will instead bring them joy and fulfillment. When it comes down to it, pre-marital counselling aims to help couples avoid marital dissolution by shaping their attitudes and behaviors.

According to Kamotho (2001), divorce and separation are on the rise among Christians all over the world, and Ghana is no exception to this trend. Similarly, John (2010) claims that Christian marriages are more likely to end in divorce or separation than non-Christian marriages. According to Leman and Wilcox (2015), while divorce is the norm in some societies, it is not always the case that a stable marriage leads to a stable family or society. Every member of a family, including children, will be affected if a couple begins to face marital conflict or issues. Increasing marital dissolution is due to the rise of individualism, the disintegration of extended families, and the failure of most marriages due to the absence of role models for married life, according to Kamotho (2001). He went on to say that marriage problems, which can lead to divorce and separation, affect church members and church leaders alike.

Premarital counselling has been linked to higher levels of marital contentment, according to Kariuki (2017).

Even if marriage dissolution is widespread in some circumstances, Leman and Wilcox (2015) say marital stability will contribute to peace and stability in families and communities as well as the nation as a whole. In the event of marital difficulties, the entire family, including the children of the spouse, would be affected. Even if a couple decides not to divorce, they must be aware that any conflict or struggle that emerges in their marriage might have an impact on their children. Children in a conflicted marriage are more likely to think about and worry about the situation. In Ghana, divorce is now commonplace in all social and cultural contexts. In today's society, divorce is becoming more common for both educated and non-educated men and women.

For as long as they live together, marriage is one of the best institutions for fostering an intimate bond between two people. Couples who are happy in their marriage and their individual lives are more likely to be healthy, according to Rosen-Grandon, Myers and Hattie (2004). Marriage happiness has been shown to significantly minimize marital depression, according to Williams (2003). There are numerous advantages to a happy marriage, including a happy marriage, a stable marriage, affection, and love. As a result, their marriage will be successful. The importance of marital contentment and stability cannot be overstated, although this is not always simple for couples to achieve. Couples' interpersonal relationships are beset by emotional issues and a dearth of communication abilities.

According to Stutzer and Frey (2006), a happy marriage and a healthy family life are the two most important indicators of overall marital quality.

Furthermore, they stated that these two signs are critical in assessing a couple's marital relationship. Marital contentment and a healthy family life can alleviate and even avoid many family problems, when taken seriously. Couples must be satisfied and adaptable in order for a marriage to succeed. If a couple's marital pleasure is not met, it can have a negative impact on both parties' physical and mental health (Holt-Lunstand, Birmingham & Jones, 2008). To express a high level of marital stability, such as satisfaction with one's marriage and a favorable adjustment to one's spouse, the term "marriage satisfaction" is often employed. To solve marital problems, couples need to have a lot of fun together. Children in a happy marriage are more likely to perform well in school, be happy, and have stronger social skills and interpersonal relationships. The success of a marriage depends on how happy the pair is with each other.

Marriage happiness can be broken down into three categories. The findings and opinions of experts in the area of marriage led to the discovery of these parameters. Relationship, Adjustment, and Intimacy in Marriage are the three factors to consider (Rika Fatimah et al. 2009). The first factor is the interaction between partners in various contexts, including the home, recreation, self, conflict, and communication (Huston et al. 1987). The second dimension of marital adjustment represents other behaviours that are linked to couple interaction, such as differences between partners, attachment to partners, and companionship with partners (Spainer & Cole 1976). Finally, one's evaluation of their own and their partner's conflict resolution skills, affection, identity/self-confidence, ability, autonomy, and shared social activities constitutes the marital intimacy component (Waring et al. 1981). Harmony and a good fit between all aspects of a marriage are essential for its quality. Adjustment

between partners can lead to greater closeness in a marriage and improve its quality. In addition, in a healthy and happy marriage, the spouse's adjustment is facilitated by the setting and a sense of intimacy, which generates a sense of convenience and care.

Commitment to marriage is essential to promoting stability, according to Chartier (2016). When a couple is well-prepared before being married, it is easy to be happy in their marriage. Premarital counselling is an option that some couples choose to forego. Training that prevents premarital breakdown which harms couples is vital. When a marriage is stable, it leads to happiness, love, and marital contentment (Gottman, 2011).

If you want a happy and stable marriage, you should focus on your adjustment as a couple. In order for married couples to have a long and happy marriage, they need to make adjustments in their marital relationship. To ensure a happy marriage, couples need to adjust to one other. A couple's whole experience in their relationship is reflected in the term "marital adjustment." There are a number of ways for newlyweds to get to know each other, and one of the most common is through marital adjustment. Couples' marital adjustment depends heavily on their maturity, development, and understanding. In order to protect each other, couples must be mature enough to know each other and comprehend themselves. The first few years of marriage are a time of many changes for both partners. It has been observed that the way in which couples deal with conflict is more indicative of whether or not they will be happy in their marriage than the quantity of conflict itself (Gottman et al., 1998). Contrast this with marriage happiness, which refers to emotions like joy, pleasure,

fulfillment, enjoyment, delight, and amusement as opposed to adaptation, accommodation, enhancement, adherence, and transformation.

When a couple is satisfied and stable in their marriage, their marriage will naturally flourish as a result of marital adjustment. The advancement of a marriage is slowed by a poor relationship between the couples (Khurshid, Hashmi & Hassan, 2007). There is a need to solve the issue of marital adjustment in order to solve the existing rate of marital difficulties and divorce in Ghana. Several sessions of premarital counselling help couples develop the skills and knowledge they will need to deal with disagreement in their marriage. Premarital counselling helps couples better understand their duties in a marriage, as research has shown (Ambakederemo & Ganagana, 2006). Research out of Nigeria suggests that sexual unhappiness is a common problem for African women (Ojomu et al., 2007) and Ghana (Owiredu et al., 2015) about half of men and women do not take pleasure in their personal lives (54.2% and 20%, respectively). Increasing physical satisfaction between partners has been shown to improve marital satisfaction (Golombok & Rust, 1988; Sokolski & Hendrick, 1999). That's why it's crucial for couples to have access to counselling services long before they're needed (Sullivan, Pasch, Cornelius & Cirigliano, 2004).

Premarital counselling purposes to help couples advance their communication and conflict resolution skills, as well as help them create a realistic goal for their marriage (Ambakederemo & Ganagana, 2006). Before and after marriage, premarital counselling helps to resolve issues and prepares couples for marriage chores. The marriage contract is in jeopardy today. Because of the rising divorce rate, many young people are hesitant to tie the

knot. In light of the high prevalence of divorce worldwide, premarital counselling is necessary to help couples prepare for their new life together. Premarital counselling is essential for preparing future spouses for the possibility of divorce as well as for the rest of their marriage (Knudson-Martin et al., 2015). Helping couples avoid divorce is the goal of intervention against divorce. Premarital counselling's purpose is to help couples find happiness and stability in their marriages by encouraging them to make modifications to their relationship. As a result, premarital counselling is essential for prospective couples who want a long-lasting union.

Statement of the Problem

Marriage has become a burden and punishment to some couples. Sometimes some individuals in marriage cry and suffer so bitterly to the point that they seek to divorce and separate. Marriage which is supposed to be a blessing to couples now seems to be a curse to some couples. Leaman and Wilcox (2015) reported that in some contexts, marital breakdown has become common in the sense that it has become like an expelled norm. When couples begin to experience marital conflicts or challenges, it affects the entire family which includes children. Similarly, Kamothe (2021) noted that marital breakdown is increasing because of the development of individualism, extended families drifting apart and failure of most marital relationship as a result of lack of role models and satisfaction in marriages. He further indicated that church members and leaders are at large affected by a breakdown of marriages.

The rate of marital breakdown and separation is increasing among Christians in the entire world of which Central Region in Ghana is not an exception (Kamothe, 2021). Similarly, John (2010) also reported that the rate

of marital divorce and separation is on increase or high with Christians couples in the world. The incident of unprecedented increase in separation rate has become a major concern for families and marriage researchers. The consequence of divorce is destroying children's future, causing broken hearts and other challenges to both women and children (Fagan & Churchill, 2012).

This rampant rise in divorce has brought about deviant and bad behavior such as stealing, broken homes, streetism, armed robbery, teenage pregnancy, child labour and smoking of weed among children (Foukes-Jamison, 2001). In September 2011, Legal Aid Ghana stated that annually, 40% of registered marriages break down within the period of 14 months in Ghana (Ghana web, 2011). These divorce issues in Ghana does not only affect divorced couples but also extended families of both couples. The situation also prevents young men and women who want to marry. Sometimes what young men and women witness in adult couples' marriages actually discourages their decisions to marry. Statistical information from Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) revealed that in 2010, there were 1.3 divorce per 1000 marriages and this increased to 2.3, 4.6, 4.3 and 6.0 within 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Similarly, according to Ghana Demographic and Health survey (GDHS), in Ghana, there was 7.3% and 7.4% increase in divorce cases in 2003 and 2008, which is quite high. Again, rendering to Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), the current divorce rate in Ghana is about four thousand (4000) each year which is 10% greater than national percentage. Greater Accra and Central Regions have the highest divorce rates in Ghana (GSS, 2019).

In the same vein, Amato (2000) also found out academics of children with divorced parents drop significantly and the children suffer greatly than the

parents themselves. Despite premarital counselling by religious leaders and secular counselors, the rate at which divorce is on the high in Ghana is alarming and needs serious attention. This issue has given problems to many families and societies as well as churches in Ghana, especially in the Central Region.

Premarital counselling has been perceived by many people as proficient way of including churches. The aim of premarital counselling is to workout challenges in the would-be link before marriage and also to prepare would-be couples on what they are supposed to do in their relationship. It also equips would-be couples to advance necessary skills and knowledge that will help them resolve challenges in their marriage. The basic philosophy behind premarital counselling is to give would-be couples a privilege to explain values to get better considerate of their partners expectations (Shahhosseini et al., 2014).

Some Christian congregations have begun mandating prenuptial counselling for all engaged couples before they are allowed to tie the knot within the congregation. Premarital counselling is associated with healthier marriages, but there is no clear proof that it decreases the likelihood of divorce (Shahhosseini et al., 2014). This shows that premarital counselling is very important in marriage preparation.

Additionally, Amankwaa (2018) said that out of 1,511 registered marriages in Accra's Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), 618 traditional marriages were broken down in 2009. There were 7.3% and 7.4% divorce rates in Ghana in 2003 and 2008, according to the Ghana Demographic and Health Survey (GDHS) (2003 and 2008). There are currently roughly 4000 divorces in Ghana each year, which is about 10% of the population, according to the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS). Greater Accra and the Central Regions have the

highest divorce rates in Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service [GSS], 2019). For families and marriages researchers, Aghajanian and Thompson (2013) say that the exceptional rise in divorce rates has become a major concern. According to these claims, divorce is now one of the most common issues facing Ghanaians today.

There have been some studies in the Ghanaian context which have shown that marital instability is common especially among Christian couples (Tuffour, 2017; Agbodza, 2016). Amankwah (2013) and Adjassah (2015) have both noted that divorce cases in Ghana are very high. Several other Ghanaian studies such as that of Arthur-Norman (2015), Akpadago (2014) Dabone (2012) and Ackumey (2011) carried out on marital satisfaction in the Central, Brong-Ahafo and Northern Regions of Ghana have shown that most married people in Ghana are not satisfied in their marriages. In spite of these studies, gaps exist in the literature because the studies did not assess the impact of premarital counselling on the marital satisfaction of couples. Also, none of these studies examined how premarital counselling affects marital adjustment. These gaps will all be addressed in the current study.

Christians in Christian churches have faced marital difficulties and divorce, according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2012), regardless of whether they had premarital counselling or not. Early marriage among young people in the Central Region is a significant factor in the breakup of marriages in churches. Divorce rates among couples who wed in their teens are higher than those of those who wed in their mid-twenties and early thirties, according to Chan and Halpin's (2005) study on the age of marriage and divorce. It was also revealed by the researchers that couples who wed at an early or young age were more

likely to divorce and remarry. Cohabitation is another factor that contributes to divorce in the Central Region. Cohabiting partners, according to Ambert (2009), are not committed to one another and cannot even decide to get married. In addition, Amato (2010) found that couples that stay together before marriage are more likely to split up than those who do not. Finally, in the Central Region of Ghana, one of the largest hurdles is poverty or financial difficulties, which is a major cause of divorce. According to Dobson (2012), one of the most common reasons for a marriage to fail is a lack of financial support from one's spouse.

Married couples or married individuals face challenges in their marriages. Thirty percent of couples come for assistance from pastors, the elders and family concerning their marital challenges, in the various SDA churches in Central Region (SDA church report, 2021). Statistics from family life from the SDA church in the Central Region (2022) indicated that about 124 marriages were dissolved while 207 were separated; 105 marriages were dissolved and 150 separated in 2021; 102 marriages were dissolved and 140 separated in 2020. According to this report, marital instability is high among SDA married members in the Central Region. In spite of the wide-spread acceptance of marriage as sacred, marital instability and marital breakdown are increasing in the SDA church in the Central Region. Married individuals seek divorce and separation irrespective of the marriage and family talks, seminars and doctoral instruction on marriage and family life in the SDA churches. The Church is unwavering in its commitment to this vision of marriage and the family, perceiving any compromise as a departure from God's ideal. The idea that marriage is ordained by God is based on scripture. The Church has faith in both the divine law and the divine compassion that forgives sins. It holds that people

who have disobeyed God's holy standards in the area of divorce and remarriage have just as much of a chance of finding triumph and salvation as those who have disobeyed God in any other area.

In order to deal with these marital concerns, we need to work together, with the help of researchers, counselors, religious leaders, chiefs, and the government. Premarital counselling can help couples resolve the expectations they bring to the marriage; however, the literature mentioned did not take this into account. Separation and divorce in the Central Region have not been studied in relation to prenuptial counselling. A lack of information on this issue exists in the Central Region. As a result, study into what factors help married couples adjust and be happy is needed in order to avoid divorce. These cases show that there are theoretical and geographic gaps in the literature that need to be resolved. An investigation into the effects of pre-marital counselling on marital contentment and modification among Christian couples in the Central Region is therefore being suggested. It will be studied to see if prenuptial counselling can help couples avoid divorce.

Purpose of the Study

The study's overarching goal is to learn how premarital counselling affects marriage happiness and success among SDA couples based in Ghana's Central Region.

Objectives of the Study

Deducing from the purpose, the following were the specific objectives of the study:

1. assess the marital satisfaction of married SDA individuals in the Central Region.

2. assess the marital adjustment of married SDA individuals in the Central Region.
3. find out the content of premarital counselling offered by SDA churches in the Central Region.
4. identify the perceptions of married SDA individuals on premarital counselling.
5. examine the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA individuals in the Central Region.
6. find out whether the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA individuals in the Central Region will differ on the basis of gender.
7. find out the differences in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA individuals in the Central Region on the basis of length of marriage.
8. find out the differences in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA individuals in the Central Region on the basis of level of education.

Research Questions

The ensuing research questions were answered in the study:

1. What is the level of marital satisfaction of married SDA members in the Central Region?
2. What is the level of marital adjustment of married SDA members in the Central Region?
3. What is the content of premarital counselling offered by the SDA churches in the Central Region?

4. What is the perception of married SDA members in the Central Region on premarital counselling?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

H₀1: There is no significant difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not.

H_a1: There is a significant difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

H_a2: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

H₀3: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

H_a3: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

H₀4: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married SDA members on the basis of education level.

H_{a4}: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married Christian individuals on the basis of education level.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will be of help to pastors and marriage counsellors to help them better understand the topic of premarital counselling. This study's findings will assist future couples understand the reputation of premarital counselling. Premarital counselling approaches, strategies, and processes will be made known to pastors and marriage counsellors in the study.

Married couples can benefit from the research findings by avoiding misunderstandings and conflicts from the outset. As a result of this study, it is hoped that the literature on premarital counselling will be improved. It is hoped that this research would help to lower the number of marriages ending in divorce in Ghana. The study's findings will also help married couples and newlyweds advance the skills they need to preserve a well marriage. Divorcees who desire to remarry would benefit from this study's findings, which will help them recognize and correct the flaws that led to their divorce in the first place.

Marriage counsellors may use the research findings to better assist their clients in resolving marital conflicts. To help with family law matters, it will serve as guidance for the Ministry of Gender, Women, and Children Affairs. The findings will also assist the DOVVSU, the family court, and social services in developing policies to safeguard women and children. As a final point, the study will inspire other scholars to look at different areas of the subject.

Further studies on the issue and other closely linked fields will be stimulated as a result of this research. The study's results will add to the growing

body of work on marriage. Other scholars and students can use it as a resource. When the study is published online and made available in university libraries, this will be accomplished.

Delimitation of the Study

Setting a particular scope is necessary to make the findings trustworthy in a study of this type. The study's boundaries are defined by the methods used, the study's location, and the study's subject matter. To begin, I restricted the scope of the investigation mixed methods. Generalizations can be drawn from the statistical data used in the quantitative method. Quantitative and Qualitative methods helped me acquire the necessary data for both descriptive and inferential statistics.

First and foremost, this research is conducted in Ghana. Only the Central Region was involved in the study's scope in order to provide better coverage and more efficient work. Due to money and time constraints, the researcher was unable to undertake a study that would have covered the entire country. Only married SDAs in the Central Region were included in the study.

Finally, the study attentive on the influence of premarital counselling on SDA married couples in the Central Region's marital satisfaction and adjustment. Researchers, counsellors, and psychologists are increasingly concerned about marital troubles; therefore, this topic is ripe for investigation.

Limitation of the Study

There are a few caveats to this study. As a first step, a questionnaire is used to gather information. Due to privacy concerns, it may not be able to get precise answers from the respondents because some of them may not be willing to express themselves.

Even though I want to spend around 20 minutes explaining some of the items, some respondents may not finish responding to sections of the questionnaires. Before the questionnaire is sent out, this will be done. Respondents may request clarification from their colleagues who have already completed the questionnaire. As a result, the answers given may not be as accurate or trustworthy.

Definition of Terms

Counselling: Is a process by which a counsellor assists the counsellee (client) in making choice, plans, adjustments or decisions with regard to his situation. It is established and kept by trained professionals with the goal of influencing the client to alter their behaviour.

Premarital Counselling: Premarital counselling is counselling done before a couple gets married to help them prepare for marriage, work out their differences, and enter into a committed partnership with each other.

Couple Counselling: Couple Counselling is a type of counselling for intimate partners and it involves explanation of any conflicts between the partners, is often short term, focuses on specific problems and the goal is to improve communication, interactions and to strengthen relationships.

Marital Satisfaction is a measure of how well a couple has adapted to one another and the changes that have occurred in their lives as a result of their union; it is a condition of authentic happiness and contentment.

Marital Adjustment can be defined as the integration of couples with different personality to trait in a union in order to complement each other to achieve happiness and common goal. It is a measure of how well a couple gets along as a couple. For married couples, adapting to their relationship is a lifelong process

of self-awareness because they have already studied their own personalities and views. When a couple is aware of each other's strengths and faults, they better understand and forgive each other when conflict arises.

Christian Premarital Counselling: This is a church-based marriage preparation counselling considered to impart partners about the truth of marriage based on the Holy Bible and also positions the partners to enter to marriage based on sacrificial love for each other. This is the focus of the study.

Family: Parents, children, uncles, aunts, nephews, etc. who are all living under the same roof and are connected to one another in some way by blood, marriage, or adoption make up a family.

Marriage: This is the union between man and woman from different families who come together in form of mutual agreement to establish their own family.

The Seventh-day Adventist church is a protestant Christian sect that celebrates the Sabbath on Saturday (the seventh day of the week in both the Christian and Hebrew calendars) and looks forward to the soon-coming return of Jesus Christ.

Organisation of the Study

Chapter One of the study presents the general background to the study. It discusses the need for the study at the statement of the problem and proceeds to present the research objectives, research questions, hypotheses and significance of the study. The delimitation, limitation and definition of terms are also presented. Chapter Two deals with the review of relevant literature related to the study such as conceptual framework, theoretical framework and empirical review. Chapter Three is the methodology of the study which describes the research approach and procedures that are used for the study.

Methods of collecting and analysing data are just as essential as other aspects of a research project's planning and execution. Discussions and results of the research are presented in Chapter 4. The study's results and recommendations are summarised in Chapter 5, along with a general overview of the study, a set of conclusions drawn from the data, and some ideas for future studies.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter of the study explored how other authors have expounded upon subjects that are relevant to our research problem. This chapter organized our discussion into three main sections: Theoretical Framework, Conceptual Review, and Empirical Review. The Empirical Review section leveraged previous studies to reinforce the interconnected concepts.

Theoretical Framework

The theories which underpin the current study are the Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction, Social exchange theory, Solution Focused Premarital Counselling Therapy and the Complimentary Needs Theory.

The Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction

Various aspects of marital contentment are intertwined in the concept of "dynamic goal theory," which holds that the marital goal is what each partner expects from the union (Li & Fung, 2011; Wazir, Bashir & Ghaffar, 2020). For marriage fulfillment, achieving the most important marital aim is essential (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Li and Fung's (2011) dynamic goal theory explains and analyses the connection between marriage objectives and marital pleasure. From a lifespan viewpoint, this idea separates goals for the next stage of the partnership. Marital goals and their relationship to marital satisfaction are explicitly addressed in the paradigm. The dynamic goal hypothesis of marital pleasure has three components. These are aspirational objectives for one's own development, as well as aspirations for the benefit of others and companionship goals (Li & Fung, 2011).

Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of needs can be used to explain these three types of marital goals. As the push for gender equality and empowerment of female-focused personal improvement grows, so does the importance of personal growth goals for both couples in marriage. According to the dynamic goal theory, the importance people place on marital goals changes throughout time (Li & Fung, 2011). Personal development objectives are important for young individuals, whereas instrumental goals take front stage in adulthood and friendship goals take centre stage in late adulthood.

The theory also discusses communication methods. Effective communication skills in marital partnerships can lead to greater satisfaction in a relationship since it encourages people to engage in problem-solving (Wazir et al., 2020). Couples' marriage goals are more likely to be met if they communicate effectively with one other. Couples that successfully negotiate their marital expectations will have more time to practise good communication skills, which will lead to a more contented marriage (Li & Fung, 2011). Engaging in meaningful conversation and exchanging constructive criticism with your spouse will help you achieve your marital goals. Work-life balance is positively associated with successful communication techniques, such as listening attitudes, according to Li and Fung (2011). When couples understand that their marital connection is balanced, they will feel satisfied, and when both subjects gain mutual profits, there will be a sense of stability and prosperity in their married relationship, which leads to the development of goals (Li & Fung, 2011). Goal achievement is the most essential factor in marital satisfaction, especially the most important goals, as stated by the dynamic goal of marital fulfillment (Li & Fung, 2011).

Application of Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction to the Study

The theory is regarded pertinent in the current study because it gives an indication of the fact that marital satisfaction in marriages does not just happen but demands some form of work. Specifically, couples have to communicate and work together to achieve their goals (both individual goals and group goals). Couples who have received premarital counselling would have learnt how to communicate and work together to attain their goals and as such may be more satisfied in their marriages.

Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory explains social interactions and relationships based on the principles of costs and rewards. Developed primarily by researchers like Homans (1958), the theory suggests that people engage in relationships and interactions to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs. These rewards and costs can be both tangible and intangible, and they are not limited to material possessions; they also encompass emotional well-being, status, companionship, and more.

Concepts of Social Exchange Theory:

Social exchange refers to the process of individuals evaluating the potential rewards and costs associated with a relationship or interaction. Rewards can include things like companionship, emotional support, and help with tasks, while costs may involve sacrifices, effort, and potential negative experiences.

The outcome of a social exchange is the net result of subtracting the costs from the rewards. If the outcome is perceived as positive, the individual is more likely to continue or invest in the relationship. The comparison level is the

standard by which individuals evaluate the outcomes of their relationships. It is influenced by past experiences, societal norms, and personal expectations. If the actual outcome of a relationship exceeds the comparison level, the individual perceives the relationship as satisfying. This concept involves considering what could be gained or lost by ending the current relationship and pursuing an alternative one. If the potential outcome of an alternative relationship is higher than the current one, an individual might be more inclined to consider leaving the current relationship.

Equity: Equity refers to the perception of fairness in a relationship. Individuals seek a balance between what they invest in a relationship and what they receive from it. When there's a perceived lack of equity, feelings of guilt or resentment can arise.

Dependency: Dependency in a relationship arises when one person relies heavily on the other for rewards. This can lead to power imbalances and potential manipulation.

Application of Social Exchange Theory

Premarital counselling can be seen as an investment of time, effort, and sometimes finances. It involves sharing personal thoughts, feelings, and vulnerabilities with a counselor. According to the Social Exchange Theory, individuals engage in relationships and interactions to maximize rewards and minimize costs. In the context of premarital counselling, rewards can include improved communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and a deeper understanding of each other's expectations. Costs might involve sharing uncomfortable topics, confronting challenges, and dedicating time to attend counselling sessions.

The theory suggests that individuals evaluate their relationships based on comparison levels (CL) - their personal standards for what constitutes a satisfying relationship. Premarital counselling can influence these comparison levels by setting realistic expectations for marriage. By addressing potential challenges and discussing SDA-specific beliefs and values, counselling can help couples develop more accurate and achievable expectations for their marital life. This alignment between expectations and reality can lead to higher levels of satisfaction and adjustment.

Premarital counselling can impact the comparison of alternatives (CLalt) by providing couples with insights into the potential benefits of investing in their current relationship versus seeking alternatives. If couples understand the value of working through challenges and developing strong communication skills, they may perceive the alternative of not participating in counselling as less appealing. This understanding could motivate them to invest in their relationship and work towards its improvement.

Social Exchange Theory emphasizes the importance of equity in relationships. Premarital counselling can facilitate equity by providing both partners with equal opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings. Additionally, counselling helps couples understand the importance of sharing responsibilities and maintaining a balanced partnership. This emphasis on equity can contribute to marital satisfaction, as both partners feel their contributions are valued and respected.

In relationships, dependency can lead to power imbalances and potential manipulation. Premarital counselling can encourage interdependence, where both partners are encouraged to contribute to the relationship's growth and

success. By promoting open communication and collaboration, counselling can reduce the potential for unhealthy dependency and promote a more balanced partnership.

Social Exchange Theory acknowledges that relationships involve long-term commitment and investment. Premarital counselling reinforces this commitment by preparing couples for the challenges that may arise in marriage. By teaching effective communication and conflict resolution skills, counselling equips couples with tools to handle future difficulties, encouraging them to invest in their relationship even when faced with obstacles.

Social Exchange Theory provides a lens through which we can understand the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and adjustment among SDA members. By addressing rewards, costs, expectations, alternatives, equity, and other elements, this theory helps illuminate how premarital counselling can positively influence couples' relationships within the SDA context. It emphasizes the idea that investing in counselling can lead to greater rewards in terms of marital satisfaction and overall relationship quality.

Solution Focused Premarital Counselling Theory

The solution focused (brief) therapy was propounded and advanced by American social worker called Steve de Shazer, in Kim Berge, and their team. The solution focus therapy was developed inductively rather than deductively. Questions and compliments are the basic tools of the solution focused therapy: counsellors or therapists intentionally refrain from making interpretations and really confront their clients but rather focus on identification of client goals in counselling relationship, generally a detailed description of what life will be like when the goal is accomplished and the challenges are either gone or coped with

satisfactory. Solution focused therapist or counsellor invites the client to envision their preferred future by describing what their life will be like when the challenges are either gone or being coped with satisfaction that it no longer constitutes a challenge.

According to Douglas et al (2001), the solution focused premarital counsellor can use the framework of a number of topics that are discussed in premarital education or counselling such as finance, parental roles, communication and conflict resolution skills. The frame work of this therapy does not work for premarital counselling only, but also it can assist many premarital activities. The aim of this therapy is to assist couples to work toward their shared vision in their marriage. Therefore, there is the need for the counsellor to assist couples by linking each partner's vision together to develop the main shared vision. The solution focused counselling therapy postulates that the counsellor should respect dignity, unique resources and strength of the individual couple. The counsellor must give orientation to the partners which focus on their aims and purpose of their future marriage as they are in the process of getting married. This orientation, if possible, should include skills training into solution focused premarital counselling sessions or relationship. This skill-based training will help couples to get more experience in marriage and expose them to some possible challenges in marriage and how they can overcome them in future. For example, it will help partners to know how to communicate with each other positively and also have quality time with each other.

Marital skills such as extended family relationships, how to handle finances in marriage, conflict resolution management skills, effective or

positive communication skills and others are all included in solution focused premarital counselling programme. Besides this, there are other premarital counselling interventions that are in solution focused premarital counselling therapy such as solution orientation questions, partners resource map and giving feedback. Solution focused therapy gives comprehensive useful frame work for premarital counselling or education for would-be couples. This theory is a supportive, useful method in counselling would-be couples. The solution focused therapy believes in focusing on solution rather than challenges. It allows the couples to develop their own goals in marriage. Again, solution focused therapy provides a comprehensive knowledge for counsellors to work with their clients. Solution focused premarital counselling helps partners to work on their shared vision in order to construct techniques that will help them to attain their shared vision.

Solution focused therapy provides couples with requisite knowledge and skills for the preparation of future marriage. Again, this theory adopts solution-oriented approach which is adopted for using with various population. The solution-oriented approach values the individual differences and similarities of all human beings in their relationship with others, especially in marriage. Solution focused therapy is very effective in both premarital counselling and education for would-be couples. Solution focused premarital counselling places the couple as unique in their own life and stresses the good culture resources of all individual couples. This theory is good for all the couples in different ethnic groups and different tribal background. Generally, solution focused counselling acknowledges value for tribal or social background of the individual couples or

partners by designing premarital education programmes for all various couples with different cultural background.

The criticism of solution focused therapy is that it has simple approach which will result in reducing or minimizing couple's challenges. It is also likely that some couples may not have the skills or resources to overcome or solve their challenges. Even though there are advantages of adapting this theory in premarital counselling, it will not be necessary for some couples. For example, the counsellor cannot use solution focused therapy to assist partners who are in violent relationship. Such couple or partners may take advantage to specific domestic violence programme that talks about conflict resolution in marriage. The counsellors should be careful of using solution focused therapy when their clients are in distress or disturbed.

Application of Solution Focused Therapy to the Study

Solution focused therapy is very important to use in the study because it assists marriage partners to work on their vision to achieve their goal in marriage. This theory emphasizes couple's strength to come out with better solutions to the challenges that they are encountering in marriage. Solution focused premarital counselling is basically strengthening skills method of counselling that focuses on a partner's strategies to come out or advance a shared vision for their marriage relationship. Solution focused premarital counselling assists couples to work together with their vision in order for them to have healthy marriages or satisfaction in their marriage. With the help of this theory, recommendations were made for partners to develop strategies or plans to help to attain or achieve their goals in future.

Complimentary Needs Theory

Robert Winch created and developed the complementary needs theory in the 1950s, which is a mate-selection theory. According to this theory, people should look for spouse whose opposite personality traits complement their own in order to find true love and be happy in their relationships (Winch, 1954). Individuals typically choose a spouse whose attributes compensate for their deficiencies so that they may fill in the gap in their lives. There are two ways in which needs complement one another. For example, if one partner is more outgoing and social while the other is introverted and reserved, they may complement each other well in social situations. Partners may fulfill each other's emotional needs by providing support, understanding, and companionship. In this sense, one partner's emotional strengths can compensate for the other's emotional vulnerabilities, leading to a more balanced emotional connection. There are two types of needs: complementary and similar, or opposing and complimentary, as defined by Winch (1954).

It has been suggested that complementary needs theory can be used to help people select a spouse for marriage. It explains why a person decides to be married in the first place. According to Winch (1954), couples are similar in many aspects, including their socio-demographic make-up. In most cases, a person looks for a mate who is compatible with his or her requirements and whom he or she believes can provide the least amount of need fulfilment. People are on the lookout for partners who can fill in the holes and inadequacies they may have in their personal and professional lives. To put it another way, people look for partners who can assist them overcome their shortcomings.

People who have diverse personality traits or beliefs are more likely to find a spouse with the same personality trait as them, according to Bulcroft (2012). Those with diverse values and personality characteristics, according to Bulcroft (2012), have a higher chance of marrying and having a successful marriage than those with identical values or personality characteristics. The desire to marry someone who shares one's ideals and/or character attributes is a common refrain among singles. Those who are humble and those who are prideful are more likely to get married. The theory of mate selection based on complementary requirements aids couples in overcoming their personality flaws and ingrained weaknesses. As Olson and DeFrain (2000) write in their study, marriage is a fantastic place for couples to cultivate themselves for a healthy relationship. Having the support of both partners is essential to a good marriage. If couples help one other overcome their weaknesses in life, marriage can be a success.

Couples' weaknesses are highlighted in this philosophy, which also works to help each partner overcome their own issues (Bakar, Osman, Bachok & Abdullah, 2018). The theory helps to minimise the difficulties that may occur in a relationship. Couples in complementary needs marriages rely on each other for support, and they receive it in abundance. This theory has been supported by Regan et al. (2020), who found that when comparing long-term marriages to short-term sexual relationships and long-term romantic relationships, the most desired traits are those that are sexually desirable (e.g., health, sex drive, and attractiveness).

While individuals claim that they prefer complimentary attributes in their possible relationships, they tend to go with those who share the same

qualities. The idea emphasises the importance of complementarity in two ways. The first is a value mate. It is at this point in the relationship when the partners begin to evaluate the capabilities of their fundamental beliefs and values after having a successful exchange while they are still in the stimulation stage of attraction. Their comparisons of fundamental religious and political beliefs, attitudes toward money and work, people's preferences for lifestyles, pastimes, and opinions about character and personality are frequent (albeit in an indirect, conversational fashion) (Winch, 1954). However, despite the importance of physical attraction in drawing a couple closer, disagreements on many matters can overwhelm it. When looking for a long-term partner, these ideals and compatibility become more essential than physical attraction. The second is a balancing act between the two. It is at this point that the couples are also examining the extent to which they can build a co-operative role relationship. There are several ways in which they learn each other's views on authority and power, as well as how to divide work or merge beliefs.

Negotiation may be necessary to achieve a reasonable equilibrium for empirical evidence to the complementary demands through numerous studies, despite Winch's excellent research. Since the 1960s, only a few research have utilised or investigated the complementary needs idea (Brubaker, 2016; Rauthmann, 2013; Gifford & Cave, 2012; Wich, 1967; Schellenerg & Bee, 1960). Most scholars have found little evidence to support Winch's theory after his early studies (Sacchetti & Tortia, 2013; Kausel & Slaughter, 2011). The complementary needs theory has theoretical as well as empirical flaws that call into question its veracity. Using a tiny sample carries its own set of risks. A small sample may mask relationships between variables, whereas a big sample

will reveal them. There is a chance that this study will address both of these criticisms. Despite these drawbacks, Winch's research has a lot to offer anyone looking to delve more into the emotional application demands of marriage or anyone working in the field of marriage counselling.

Application of Complimentary Needs Theory to the Study

In the setting of the current study, Complimentary Needs Theory is relevant because it speaks of how a couple would be satisfied in their marriage if they complement each other. During premarital counselling, would-be couple gets to know each other more and look out for ways in which they can complement each other in marriage. This means that premarital counselling can have an impact on how couples complement each other in marriage and thus enhancing their possibility of being satisfied in their marriages.

Marriage Institution

Marriage is an institution which brings benefits to couples, children and the society or community at large (Kiuna & Kiuna, 2012). However, dissatisfaction marriage puts partners or spouses in emotional, physical, mental and financial danger (Lundbald & Hansson, 2005). Marriage is the very nearest union that can happen between a male and a female but few individuals get ready for it (Ng'ang'a & Wasanga, 2010). Marriage is a pillar of every healthy society. Marriage as an institution is the backbone on which the society or community is established. Marriage itself has to do with two strange partners living together (Karina, 2011). As a legal and social institution, it is a result of better intimacy between couples and the entire family and also provide specific set of rights, duties and opportunities. Marriage calls for many commitments such as person to person, family to family and partner to partner (Kepler, 2015).

In most of the societies, marriage is considered or seen as unbreakable, permanent bond, such that in some communities or societies, it is an abomination to break up (Bagarozzi & Sperry, 2012). In some communities, there is strong expectation attached to marriage so that if there is no conception the marriage can be dissolved. In other communities too, marriage cannot come on until conception takes place (Baker, 2019).

A study by Phegley (2003) revealed that about 50% of marriages result in marital breakdown in the United State of America but premarital counselling decreases the rate of marital breakdown by 30%. This really means that premarital counselling is very important which serves as solution to marital breakdown among couples.

Again, a study by Kepler (2015) showed that majority of people married with the aim of having happy life and achieve their expectation in their own marriage. In fact, successful marriage is a desire of individuals who enter into marriage. Mobegi, Mokoro and Keari (2016) conducted a research study on divorce rate in South Africa and results showed that about 35.6% of the 2010 divorcees were blacks while 30.5% were from the white population group. This means African marriages are breaking down more as compared to whites or western countries.

Leman and Wilcox (2015) reported that in some contexts, marital breakdown has become common in the sense that it has become like expelled norm, but marital stability automatically leads to peace in families, societies and entire nation as a whole. When couples begin to experience marital conflicts or challenges, it affects the entire family which includes children.

Similarly, Stutzer and Frey (2006) also reported that most major predictors of overall qualities of marital life are marital satisfaction and healthy family life. They further indicated that these two indicators are very important when it comes to marital overall assessment. Ambakederemo and Ganagana (2006), and Akande, Olowonirejylaro and Akuchie (2008) reported that behavior can easily be rooted and affect progress in many areas of life as well as marriage. In the lives of Christians, marriage is considered as sacred and a covenant but not the mere contract between couples.

Kariuki (2017) conducted a research study on premarital counselling programmes on marital stability among couples and found out that premarital counselling had a significant effect on marital satisfaction. This means that premarital counselling plays a significant role in marriage stability.

Stutzer and Frey (2006) reported that the most major predictors of overall qualities of marital life are marital satisfaction and healthy family life. They further indicated that these two indicators are very important when it comes to marital overall assessment. Considering it critically, one realizes that marital satisfaction and family health life solves a lot of family issues and prevents challenges in entire family but not only the marriage. Marriage itself cannot work without satisfaction and even adjustment between the couples.

Aghanjanian and Thompson (2013) revealed in their study on family system and marriage dynamic that the incident of unprecedented increasing of divorce rate has become a major concern for family and marriage researchers. The consequences of divorce are destroying children's future, causing broken heart, and other challenges to both women and children. The end result of divorce brings deviant or bad behaviours among children such as stealing,

broken home, streetism, armed robbery, teenage pregnancy, child labour and 'weed' smoking.

Amato (2000) also found that the children in divorce families suffer greatly than their parents themselves. Again, Foulkes- Jamison (2001) found from their study that children from divorce home suffer a lot. For instance, boys can engage in truancy and become high aggressive while girls engage in premarital sex which results in teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, Amato (2000) conducted a study on children from divorce marriage and intact family children and found that children from divorced marriage or families drop in academic than their counterparts from intact families.

Lehrer (2003) also found that early marriages end in divorces as compared to late marriages. Sometimes these individuals who married at the early ages may not be compatible and let alone prepare for marriage or ready to take up marriage responsibilities. Again, Jose and Affons (2007) also found from their studies that couples who got married at early or younger age are more likely to divorce and remarry.

Conceptual Review

The main concepts in the study are discussed in this section.

Marriage

Couples, children, and society as a whole benefit from marriage, which is an institution (Kiuna & Kiuna, 2012). Only a few people prepare for marriage, which is the adjoining union that can arise between a male and a female. Every good civilization is built on the foundation of marriage. Every culture or community relies on it in order to function properly. The foundation of a culture or community is built on the foundation of marriage. Marriage is all about two

strangers living together in the same house (Karina, 2011). For marriage to be a legal and social institution, there must be a greater level of closeness between partners, as well as the entire family. Marriage necessitates a wide range of commitments, including those between individuals, families, and partners (Kepler, 2015).

Marriage is often regarded as an unbreakable, everlasting link in most cultures, and ending a marriage can be viewed as an abomination in some cultures or societies (Bagarozzi & Sperry, 2012). Married couples in some societies are expected to have children, and those who do not can be divorced. When it comes to other cultures, marriage is not allowed until the foetus is born (Baker, 2019). Also, as shown by Phegley (2003), half of all marriages in the United States break up, although premarital counselling reduces the likelihood of marital collapse by 30 percent, thereby demonstrating the critical role premarital counselling has in preventing marriages from falling apart. It was found that majority of married people enjoy a happy life and meet their expectations in their marriage, according to a study by Kepler (2015). Having a successful marriage is a common goal for those who get married. While marital collapse may be widespread in some circumstances, Leman and Wilcox (2015) found that marital stability automatically leads to peace in families, societies and the entire nation as a whole. When a spouse is experiencing marital difficulties, the entire family, including children, is affected. Similarly, Stutzer and Frey (2006) found that marital happiness and good family life are the most significant determinants of total marital quality. They further suggested that these two indications are quite crucial when it comes to total marriage assessment.

Ambakederemo and Ganagana (2006), Akande, Olowonirejylaro and Akuchie (2008) indicated that behaviour may quickly root and affect progress in many areas of life as well as marriage. Research on prenuptial counselling programmes and marital stability conducted by Kariuki (2017) indicated that premarital counselling had a substantial impact on marital satisfaction. These findings show that marriage durability depends heavily on premarital counselling. Divorce has been a key worry for family and marriage researchers, according to Aghajanian and Thompson (2013) in their study on the family structure and marriage dynamic.

Christian Concept of Marriage

In God's purpose for humanity, marriage is a means of bringing two people together. God, according to Genesis 2:18-25 (ESV), wanted to institute and ordain marriage, which is a lifelong bond between spouses. As the verse says in Genesis 2:24 (ESV), "a man will leave his father and mother, cling to his wife, and they shall become one flesh"; it is for this reason that a man will leave his parents. Weddings are not just a human tradition; they are a divine institution that has spiritual importance. In Baker's (2019) view, God ordained marriage in His wisdom for three main reasons: pleasure, companionship, and the generation of children. A woman was designed by God to be the perfect companion for a man. Since marriage was the first institution ordained by God, it is the foundation of human civilization. Having a stable marriage is essential to the stability of all human communities in our world.

Marriage is seen as the most sacred union, a gift from God, and the most intimate of all relationships (Meredith & Meredith, 2003). It is important for couples to show their love by spending time together and making time for each

other in order to improve their marriages. Marital unions are considered sacred by many Christians. This marriage covenant helps couples to be one in all of their dealings together. It is an all-or-nothing union in which a man abandons his biological family and joins his wife in a sexual union that transforms them into one flesh. The consummation of a marriage serves as a legal seal on the union. Consequently, in order for a marriage to be consummated, it is necessary for partners to separate from their parents and come together as one.

Marriage should not be a hierarchy, but rather partnership between couples, according to Christian egalitarians. For God, a loving relationship between two people is the ideal state of affairs. There is "no Jew nor Greek, no slave nor free, no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus," states Galatians 3:28. If "Wives, submit yourselves as to the Lord," as Ephesians 5:22 (ESV) states, this does not indicate that wives alone should respect their husbands, as Ephesians 5:21 states that submission in the fear of God is also required of men. This suggests that both couples need to surrender to each other in marriage in order for it to work. Egalitarians believe that Christian marriage is based on mutual submission, which leads to healthy intimacy and a mutually satisfying marriage (Spencer & Besanson, 2009). In contrast, a Christian school of thought believes in a hierarchical system between married couples. As the saying goes: "Girls can complement one another because they have diverse gender roles." Even though men and women are equal in God's eyes, this school of thought holds that God has given them distinct roles in marriage based on their gender, with the male as the family's spiritual leader. According to this school of thought, the Bible establishes a hierarchical power structure, with God as the supreme authority and head of Christ's body (Spencer & Besanson, 2009).

Marital Stability

The term "stability" implies a situation in which there are no obstacles, issues, or even fears to overcome (Kepler, 2015). Stability refers to the capacity to return to one's initial or true position after being relocated while maintaining one's equilibrium. As a result of this comment, married couples will be better able to bounce back and thrive. Marital stability, according to Stevenson and Wolfers (2011), is defined as the ability of a marriage to proceed without a divorce. Stability in a marriage can also be defined as the ability to remain legally married without the need for a divorce. Instability inside marriages is on the rise, and it is escalating rapidly. Since the mid-1960s, marriage stability has improved in both developed and developing countries (Garriga & Harkonen, 2005).

Since the Second World War, many Christian writers have acknowledged that Christian marriages face major threats. works have depicted that divorced couples have mental and physical health issues (Amato, 2010; Wang et al., 2015). Children's mental health, academics, and social activities are negatively affected by divorce or separation, according to Schramm (2006), Amato (2007), and Lansford (2009). Marital discord has a negative impact on the family and the community (Orathinkal & Vansteenwegen, 2006). Finding characteristics that contribute to a stable marriage is not difficult because the goal is obvious. Divorce and relationship stability are indicators or predictors of divorce, even though there is a lot of research on this topic (Amato, 2010; Gottman & Notarius, 2002).

Many researchers, like Reis and Gable (2003), have found that commitment, sacrifice, and forgiveness all contribute to a stable marriage. The

foundation of any healthy or successful marriage is based on forgiveness, according to numerous studies. Small and large-scale mechanisms that affect marital stability have been found in social research investigations. It is not just socioeconomic factors that are to blame for the breakdown of marriages and families (Syphus, 2007). Marriages in Christian churches are now facing the same issues as those outside of them, according to Kiuna and Kiuna (2012). The frequent breakdown of marriages in the western world is now spreading to Africa and the churches, according to them. It is important that both parties are happy in their marriage for it to be stable.

A marriage's stability is difficult to gauge, let alone explain, due to the complexities involved. A healthy and satisfying relationship between the couples is the goal of marriage. In some cases, spouses expect to be happy in their relationship. Some of your hopes and dreams may come true, while others may not (Zikhali, 2009). The term "marital contentment" refers to an individual's or couple's opinion of their marital experience. As a result, the only people who can assess how happy a couple is in their marriage is the couple themselves (Amato, 2010). It is also said by Characteristics of Marriage Inventory (CHRISMA) (2006) that contentment in marriage is a subjective experience and the perception of the couples involved in their marriage. The stability of a marriage is directly linked to marital satisfaction. It is impossible for a marriage to be stable unless both parties are satisfied. Because of this, a happy marriage is an indicator or prediction of its long-term viability. When a couple's marriage is secure, they both appreciate their relationship with one other.

A person's overall opinion of their marriage is reflected in their level of marital satisfaction. Individual partners' needs, goals, and expectations for the marriage partnership are the foundation for marital stability. There are expectations that people have when they get into a marriage relationship. As a result of marital adjustment, couples are better able to maintain a stable marriage. Stability in a marriage is a relationship in which both parties have no intention of divorcing one another (Adesanya, 2002). Adesanya went on to say that the key to a happy marriage is for both partners to know what their responsibilities are and to do their best to fulfill them. When couples fail to fulfill their responsibilities, their marriages will not be stable. Without each partner fulfilling their share in the marriage, it will not work. Role-playing helps to keep marriages stable (Adesanya, 2002).

As Adesanya (2002) noted, there are a number of diverse facets that could contribute to the stability of a marriage. However, the utmost significant element in a long-lasting marriage is financial security. There are a number of other aspects that adds to a long-term marriage. Relationships based on physical intimacy, spirituality and religion, and having children in a marriage are all examples of these qualities being present in a relationship. Stability in marriage is a result of these elements. Love and trust concerns, sex-related issues, socio-cultural factors, economic factors, and antisocial vices are the primary causes of marital instability, according to Ambakederemo and Ganagana (2006). Marital instability at home can lead couples to seek premarital counselling in order to stabilise their marriages, according to Owaamonan and Osakinle (2005).

Marital Adjustment

Relationship stability, contentment, achievement, and fulfillment are all a result of a couple's capacity to maintain a positive mental state of mind throughout the course of their marriage. As a result, all marriages necessitate some degree of adjustment. Couples will have a difficult time maintaining a happy and healthy marriage if they do not make necessary adjustments. Marriage adjustment, according to Martin (2007), is a measure of how well a couple gets along with each other. For married couples, adapting to their relationship is a lifelong process of self-awareness because they have already studied their own personalities and views. When a couple is aware of each other's strengths and faults, they can better understand and forgive each other when conflict arises.

For a peaceful society, marital adjustment is a key component or factor (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2007). Prior to marriage, couples who seek a more satisfying and secure relationship can gain from premarital counselling, a list of events designed to help them do so (Stahmann, 2000). Even in the face of adversity, premarital counselling helps couples better get ready for marriage. The goal of premarital counselling is to support couples in resolving their marital difficulties and preparing them for a long and happy marriage (Waters, 2003). To improve marital adjustment, premarital counselling programmes have been found to be active in plummeting divorce rates and making marriages stable and satisfying (Waters, 2003).

A premarital counselling program's primary goal is to increase the couple's level of fulfilment and pleasure. The health of a family is directly linked to the well-being of its members. A healthy family has a significant impact on

the well-being of both spouses (Olson, 2008). Another part of premarital counselling is to help couples improve their communication and problem-solving capabilities, as well as help them make better decisions. It has been shown by Olson (2008) that premarital counselling programmes help couples share their understanding of various topics. Key to marital adjustment is the sharing of meaning between the couples. This will make it easier for couples to agree to disagree (Olson, 2008). Every couple should participate in premarital counselling, as it provides essential skills and knowledge about marriage. Couples who participate in premarital counselling benefit from these skills and knowledge (Busby, 2007).

Role of Premarital Counselling in Marital Adjustment

When both partners are happy in their marriage on a physical, emotional, mental, and social level, this is known as marital adjustment. When both couples accept and comprehend each other's attitudes and behaviours, marital adjustment can occur. Marital adjustment usually occurs when each spouse performs his or her role in marriage properly, which leads to feelings of contentment, success and stability in marital life. There are several aspects that contribute to an individual's determination to adapt to a new marital situation. Marital maladjustment might come from financial mismanagement, according to Ebebuwa-Okoh (2007). Couples have difficulties when their finances are mismanaged. Individual couples who overburden themselves with job activities may not be able to spend quality time with themselves or even their children because of the stress they are under, according to Guzman (2000). In addition, Osakwe and Ebebuwa-Okoh (2003) noted that emotional difficulties and a lack of mutual regard for one's own worth are two contributing causes to marital

maladjustment. Premarital counselling services are needed to prevent the maladjusted behaviour of entering couples. Premarital counselling teaches couples how to have healthy relationships, manage their finances, and come up with creative solutions to problems. A thorough programme for premarital counselling also includes resources for effective interpersonal skills and conflict management techniques. According to research, the degree to which spouses value things like communication, compromise, openness, and the ability to take constructive criticism to heart are all crucial components of a happy marriage (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2007).

Emotional expression, communication skills, gender-specific marital responsibilities, personality types among couples, and financial management are all traits that have been linked to better marital harmony over time, according to the research (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2007). In order to prepare couples for marriage, premarital counselling programmes teach couples how to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, handle finances, and build strong interpersonal relationships, among other things. These abilities improve the quality of a couple's marriage. Programs for premarital intervention counselling, according to Carroll and Doherty (2003), tend to be effective in fostering immediate and complete improvements in communication skills, conflict management abilities, and interpersonal interaction abilities. Premarital prevention programmes have long-term benefits, but the lack of rigorous follow-up studies inhibits discussion about the long-term effects of the programme, including marriage dissolution. There are so many ways to educate married couples, such as weekend retreats, group therapy, individual partner's therapy and types of facilitators such as lay counsellors (who are not trained in marriage and family

therapy) that both of them provide an equal task, which leads to better results for the couples (Carroll & Doherty, 2003).

When a couple decides to forgive each other's mistakes, it might be a sign of marital adjustment. When spouses forgave each other, their marriages were strengthened. According to Carroll and Doherty (2003), premarital education programmes that teach couples how to deal with conflict, communicate effectively, and build strong marriages are particularly effective in accomplishing these goals. Carroll and Doherty (2003) stated that these abilities are essential for a successful and joyful marriage and help spouses adapt to their new roles in the union. Premarital preventative counselling education had positive effects, according to Busby, Carroll and Willoughby (2010).

They also found that most premarital education programmes have a significant impact on marital fulfillment. In reference to their findings, premarital counselling programme evaluation helps couples maintain stability, improve communication, and lessen adjustment issues so that they can have a more satisfying marriage. Self-directed education under prenuptial counselling programmes is capable of sustaining a high rate of marital success, according to the researchers. As an added benefit, a premarital preventive education programme helps couples relax about the high expectations of marriage and gives them adequate time to talk about the most essential aspects of their union. It also gives them the chance to listen to one another and make adjustments in marriage. Yilmaz and Kalkan (2010) found that premarital counselling augmentation programmes have a substantial impact on the happiness of newlyweds. Premarital treatment participants had a better degree or range of

relationship satisfaction than their counterparts in control groups, according to their findings. Participants in premarital counselling were found to have difficulties and to have developed coping mechanisms to deal with these difficulties. Studying premarital relationship programmes, Carroll and Doherty (2003) showed that couples' communication, conflict resolution management and inter-relationship skills all improved as a result of prenuptial relationship programmes. A benefit of premarital counselling education programmes is that it enables spouses to know that they can turn to other counsellors if they face difficulties in their marriage in the future, said Bruhn and Hill (2004). This will give couples a sense of security that they can turn to in the event of a breakdown in their relationship rather than contemplating divorce or separation. In addition, couples can draw on the premarital counselling education resources they received to gain the knowledge and skills they need to adjust to married life. Premarital counselling should be based on the steps of engagement in order to avoid unreasonable material expectations that might cause marriage difficulties (Harway, 2005). Additionally, prenuptial counselling helps couples avoid bad communication patterns and disparities in understanding, which can ensure contentment (Harway 2005).

Knabb (2014) studied 116 married adults (58 pairs) from an uncompromising Christian megachurch to determine if there was a connection between religious affiliation and marital satisfaction. Questionnaires were used to collect the data. The study found that those who were matured in their Christian faith had high marital adjustment.

Qom City partners' religious beliefs were correlated with their level of satisfaction in their marriages in a study by Sedighi, Shahsiah, and Rasooli

(2014). The methodology of the research was correlational. Data were collected via questionnaire from a total of 150 participants (Espanire Dyadic Adjustment Scale). Marriage happiness and psychological well-being were found to be positively correlated with participants' faith beliefs. According to Sedighi et al., most Christian relationships are healthy.

Along with this, Mullins's (2016) research on successful marriages found that setting the assumption that both partners will regularly go to worship services and preaching is associated with better marital goals. Mullins also discovered that married people whose partners regularly attended worship sessions had happier marriages. The results of the research showed that the participants believed that their marriage had been sanctified through exposure to religious texts and practises such as worship events and preaching.

However, as Mullins (2016) notes, there were unfavourable effects on marriage caused by excessive church participation. Some partners said their overly religious partners experienced tension because they had to sacrifice time with their families to fulfil religious responsibilities. He discovered that tensions emerged when married Christians disagreed with sermon content, especially when the content was at odds with their own observations about marriage and family. The negative impacts of the stressful event were compounded because the family did not participate in worship services jointly.

The Importance of Premarital Counselling

According to Carroll and Doherty (2003), we live in a world where lifestyles, relationships, leisure and marriage are all changing. In other words, we have come a long way since the days when marriage was viewed as an outdated institution in society. Now, marriage has adopted a new shape in which

partners are in charge of deciding how their union should be. It has long been the norm for parents to choose their children's future spouses, but this is no longer the case in the modern world, according to Clinton and Sibcy (2006). This means that the happiness, stability, and overall adjustment of the marriage are all in the hands of the bride and husband. Premarital counselling and putting into practice the skills and knowledge gained during premarital counselling can help couples attain these goals. Those couples who put into practice what they learned in premarital counselling are more likely to have a happy and enduring marriage.

Premarital counselling has long been recognised as an essential technique for helping couples better understand and manage their differences before they tie the knot. Refusing to plan is just as bad as preparing to fail, according to Stanley, Bradbury and Markman (2000). This implies that if you are thinking about getting married, it is critical that you and your future spouse make plans to attend premarital counselling. Premarital counselling is essential because it acts as a roadmap or road map for couples who plan to get married. Couples are also given a comprehensive grasp of marriage and the ways in which they can overcome obstacles in their union.

Christianity views premarital counselling as an asset or investment for couples who plan to wed, according to Carroll and Doherty (2003). It is true that premarital counselling is one of the most valuable and worthwhile investments a couple can make in their future together. In premarital counselling, couples learn and practice strategies that help them have a happy and long-lasting marriage. Couples who have a successful marriage are a huge benefit. For other couples, premarital counselling may not be an option because of their busy

schedules. Some couples, on the other hand, do not give premarital counselling any consideration at all when preparing for their weddings.

According to Clinton and Sibcy (2006), there are couples that put a great deal of effort into preparing their weddings, but at the same time neglect to pay consideration to the elements that can help their marriages succeed. A lot of time, effort, and money is spent on the wedding ceremony by some couples instead of premarital counselling. One of the reasons marriages are falling apart more frequently these days is that couples are putting more emphasis on the wedding ceremony and how they can make it a success.

Many studies show that premarital counselling improves the quality of relationships between couples. Prior to tying the knot, premarital counselling programmes give couples the opportunity to communicate, ask relevant questions, and observe one other's behaviour or views. As a bonus, it provides them with an excellent opportunity to explore potential marriage-related matters. Young men and women are given many opportunities for self-discovery and adventure, as well as bonding with the person they wish to marry. Stanley et al. (2000) said that in light of this that a marriage and family therapist is typically essential to provide premarital counselling to help couples prepare for marriage by addressing concerns that may arise during the marriage.

Premarital counselling is essential to a happy marriage because it builds a solid foundation of trust and understanding between the two people getting married. Although Clinton and Sibcy (2006) found that individual differences between couples might cause problems in a marriage, premarital counselling provides couples with the essential skills and knowledge to overcome these difficulties. Premarital counselling can help couples who originate from diverse

backgrounds to overcome the differences in their views on marriage and help them comprehend and take into account the backgrounds of their respective spouses.

Premarital counselling is the most important part of a couple's entire marital preparation. Premarital counselling exposes couples to the potential pitfalls of marriage and teaches them how to avoid or overcome these pitfalls. To help couples build a solid basis for their marriages, Carrol and Doherty (2003) recommend premarital education. There are two primary roles of premarital counselling, according to Olson and Defrain (2005). Firstly, premarital counselling teaches partners how to have a satisfying marriage; secondly, premarital counselling helps couples recognise issues and their solutions or prevention as a result of individual differences during the marital connection (Scott et al., 2006).

Most couples surveyed by Nganga and Wasanga (2010) who studied pre-marital counselling courses at PCEA churches in Kiambu district reported that the sessions had been beneficial to their marriage. Sexuality, interactions, finances, and their specific positions and duties were just some of the subjects they felt helped them gain perspective on their marriage.

Similarly, Busby (2007) revealed that premarital counselling treated topics related to skills of resolving conflicts and how to communicate in the marriage relationship. Also, Clinton and Sibcy (2006) found that premarital counselling equipped couples on how to manage individual differences in marriage and how to deal with issues relating to their families.

Most married people in Techiman, Ghana, thought marriage preparation was important and should keep doing it, according to research by Ansah-

Hughes, Akyina, and Oduro-Okyireh (2015). Ansah-Hughes et al. also discovered that couples saw pre-marital counselling as highlighting potential problems the couple might encounter once married, preparing them for the challenges that inevitably arise. Nganga and Wasanga (2010) found that the vast majority of engaged couples agreed that premarital therapy was beneficial and that it helped them feel more prepared for marriage. Premarital counselling is the most important part of a couple's entire marital preparation. Prior to marriage, couples who seek a more satisfying and secure relationship can benefit from premarital counselling, a schedule of activities designed to help them do so (Stahmann, 2000). The schedule of issues discussed in premarital counselling can help get couples ready to handle any issues that marriage would throw at them later in their lives.

Yilmaz and Kalkan (2010) revealed that premarital counselling enrichment programmes have a substantial impact on the happiness of newlyweds. Premarital treatment participants had a better degree or range of relationship satisfaction than their counterparts in control groups, according to their findings. Participants in premarital counselling were found to have difficulties and to have developed coping mechanisms to deal with these difficulties. This gave support to the findings of Waters (2003) that even in the face of adversity, premarital counselling helps couples better prepare for a satisfied marriage. The goal of premarital counselling is to assist couples in resolving their marital difficulties and preparing them for a long and happy marriage.

According to research conducted by Udofia, Bonsi, Agbakpe, and Udofia (2021) couples who participated in premarital counselling reported

substantially higher levels of marital fulfillment compared to those who did not. The findings are in line with those of Kepler (2015), who discovered that spouses who had gone through pre-marital therapy were more satisfied with their marriages than those who hadn't.

Odero (2018) looked at the impact of premarital counselling on marital fulfillment among members of Seventh-day Adventist congregations in Nairobi County, Kenya, and discovered that those who participated in premarital therapy were more likely to report being satisfied with their marriages than those who did not. Since both studies centred on Seventh-day Adventist congregations, the findings from Odero and this one is identical.

Premarital counselling was found to significantly affect stability in marriage in research conducted by Egbo (2012). Egbo also noted that couples who sought premarital counselling were more likely to have harmonious, conflict-free relationships than those who did not.

Further, Gupta (2021) revealed that premarital counselling as a means of preparing partners for marriage is intended to cover a range of issues so that both partners can be on the same page on critical issues in marriage. According to Gupta, this includes talking about important things like how to handle money, who does what in the marriage, how decisions are made, how the pair plans to treat each other's families, how many children they want, and how they will be nurtured. These issues were confirmed in the current study.

Additionally, several previous studies all showed that topics dealt with in premarital counselling include communication, commitment, resolving conflicts, raising children, sexual issues and dealing with in-laws (Kariuki,

2017; Kiuna & Kiuna, 2012; Kardan-Souraki, Hamzehgardeshi, Asadpour, Mohammadpour & Khani, 2016)

The effects of the PREPARE programme were studied by Futris, Barton, Aholou, and Seponski (2011) to see if they differed with the method of delivery.

After completing the training, engaged couples made significant improvements in their levels of knowledge, confidence, and conflict management skills, as well as their levels of the connection satisfaction. There were no discernible differences between the outcomes of a 1-day group workshop and a set of conjoint sessions. In sum, these results highlighted the power of premarital education and suggested that group seminars could be just as successful as the more common combined events.

In addition to the foregoing, an evaluation of premarital counselling programmes conducted by Futris et al. (2011) among university students found that engaged couples who participated in such programmes reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction and greater use of constructive conflict resolution strategies. The results of the research suggest that group workshops for premarital counselling may be equally successful as the more common conjoint discussions.

Again, Mohamady, Said and Sayed (2017) conducted a qualitative study aimed at evaluating the health belief model on females' knowledge and practice concerning premarital counselling. The researchers sampled 340 participants in a purposive study. Findings from the study indicated that the more people knew about the health implications of premarital counselling, the more they were likely to engage in premarital counselling.

The impact of communication skills on marital happiness among couples who sought help at premarital counselling services was also studied by Parhizgar, Esmaelzadeh-Saeieh, Kamrani, Rahimzadeh, and Tehranizadeh (2017). Researchers at Alborz University of Medical Sciences used 60 engaged couples who visited the university-affiliated pre-marital counselling centre (Shahid Rast Raveh) for their parallel interventional research. Samples were randomly assigned to either the treatment or control groups using a straightforward sampling technique. Training in interpersonal and sexual dialogue was provided to the intervention group in addition to the standard trainings. Individuals in both groups performed the Enrich marital fulfillment questionnaire before, during, and two months after the treatment. There was no discernible distinction in the socioeconomic characteristics of the couples between the two groups, according to the results of the research. Repeated-measures analysis revealed that marriage happiness has evolved over time ($P = 0.001$). Additionally, a paired t test revealed a significant correlation between the intervention group's pre- and post-intervention levels of marital contentment ($P = 0.001$) and pre- and post-intervention levels of marital contentment two months later ($P = 0.004$). In contrast to the control group, marital happiness was much greater among those who received the treatment.

Moreover, Riska, Khasanah and Wanda (2021) conducted a study to examine how premarital counselling in Indonesia can be used to increase marital satisfaction. A total of 60 couples was chosen randomly for the study. The study was experimental in nature. The researchers found that premarital counselling has the potential to improve marital happiness. Therefore, it may be a viable

option for dealing with the contemporary problem of weak family resilience in Indonesia.

Secula (2018) used anonymous surveys to gather data from 20 people who were members of a specific American church. Christian premarital counselling was found to significantly affect marital happiness and reduce the likelihood of divorce.

Christian couples in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County, Kenya were studied by Mobegi, Mokoro, and Keari (2016), who looked into how premarital counselling affected marital strife. Out of a potential sample size of 8,000 married couples in the study region, 400 were interviewed. This research was cross-sectional and observational in nature. Research instruments included both structured surveys and an interview guide. Pearson correlation and multi-regression analysis, as well as descriptive statistics (frequency, proportion, mean, and standard deviation), were used to examine the data. The results revealed a strong correlation between premarital counselling and successful marriage adjustment among Christian couples. Important factors in marital adjustment problems can be traced back to aspects of premarital counselling, such as interaction, money counselling, sexual orientation, and scriptural counselling.

Similar research was conducted by Todd (2008) in Utah, which looked at how premarital planning affected marital complaints and satisfaction. According to the findings, couples who participated in premarital preparation exercises reported fewer problems than those who did not. There was also a strong correlation between premarital counselling and schooling and how well the couple adjusted once they were married.

The effectiveness of PMC in improving marital satisfaction by dampening unrealistic expectations about marriage was also investigated in a quasi-experimental before-and-after research conducted by Rajabi et al. (2019). They used information from 32 single people who were randomly allocated to either an intervention group or a control group. Nine sessions of relationship instruction were held twice weekly for a total of ninety minutes (about one and a half hours). After the intervention, Rajabi et al. (2019) found that people in the intervention group had more realistic hopes for marriage and a more positive experience overall.

Acosta (2020) looked at how factors like marital context, ethnicity, and CRE/MRE for partners might influence happiness in Christian marriages. Sixty-five Christians who have been married for at least five years and who are residents of a culturally diverse South Florida urban area participated in the research. The information was gathered via questionnaire. Involvement in couple relationship education (CRE) or marriage relationship education (MRE) was not found to have a statistically significant effect on the general marital satisfaction of Christian couples. (MRE). Researchers found no significant difference in marital happiness between couples who had premarital counselling and those who did not. According to Acosta, the results may be because some couples disregard premarital therapy and education.

Premarital counselling's effect on transition was studied by Ntim (2014) in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area of Ghana. The research employed a case study design. The three buildings in the city were chosen using a convenience sampling method. Three hundred Christian married pairs were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The research found that many Christian couples

viewed premarital therapy favourably. Findings also showed that premarital counselling was highly pertinent to the married lives of many Christian men and women.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction is an individual's evaluation of a couple's experience in their marriage. As Davis (2015) points out, marital satisfaction is a subjective measure of how each partner feels about their marriage. Marital contentment is an assessment made by the couples in their marriage. Surveys and self-reports can be used to measure marital satisfaction, in which couples answer a variety of questions about their relationship. Marital satisfaction is rated on an individual basis for each spouse. When it comes to marital satisfaction, it is not about how well the marriage is going, but rather how each couple perceives their relationship at the time of the assessment. According to Farnam, Pakgohar and Mir-Mohammadali (2011), marital satisfaction is a person's enjoyment of marriage that is founded on an intra-personal view of the union. Religion, according to Duba, Hughey, Lara and Burke (2012), may help partners and spouses find fulfilment in their marriages. Religious teachings can help couples overcome some of the difficulties they face in their marriage, as well as teach them how to deal with problems that arise. Marital pleasure can be increased by preparing for marriage as it enhances the individual's commitment to his or her partner, which will lower the divorce rate, according to Wilmoth and Smyser (2010). Williams (2003) states that improved marital satisfaction lowers depression in couples, and as a result, better results in terms of self-rated health are obtained (Umberson, Williams, Powers, Liu & Needham, 2006). Studies show that marital contentment is a significant

influence on a marriage's long-term health and well-being. The stability and quality of the marriage are not the only factors that contribute to marital satisfaction, but so are the interpersonal relationships between the partners in the marriage. A wide range of psychological and socio-cultural elements have been found to influence the couple's attitudes, emotional feelings, and communication, making it difficult to achieve marital pleasure (Rosen-Grandon et al., 2004). Marital contentment has been demonstrated to be a significant predictor of overall well-being (Stutzer & Frey, 2006).

Furthermore, marital contentment affects not only the physical and emotional health of couples, but also the well-being of children, social skills, relationships, and their own development (Cumming & Davies, 2010; Hoit-Lunstad et al., 2008). The more one feels unsatisfied in a marriage with the other partner, the greater the costs a spouse will impose on the other partner in an attempt to make the other partner happy is a psychological issue. However, although marital pleasure and its connections to human existence have been researched extensively, marriage counsellors see it as a critical research topic (Bradbury, Fincham & Beach, 2000). The most significant influence on a marriage's long-term health is how happy the couple is together (Li & Fung, 2011). Essentially, the term "marital contentment" is used to express how much a couple enjoys their union. Americans place great importance on a happy marriage, and more than 80% of them plan to be married at some point in their lives (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Similarly, according to Carroll and Doherty (2003), 93% of American adults believe that having a happy marriage is a major priority in their lives. According to them, it is apparent that Americans place great importance on ensuring that their marriages are secure and pleasant

(Carroll & Doherty, 2003). A happy marriage does not happen by accident; rather, it is the product of a couple's willingness to accept responsibility for their part in the relationship and to be patient with one another when they make errors.

No single element, according to Fincham et al. (2007), adds to the happiness or stability of married couples. Couples in happy marriages, on the other hand, are more likely to interpret their partner's attitude positively than couples in unhappy ones, according to Carrère, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan and Ruckstuhl (2000). Couples in successful marriages are more likely to see their partner's favourable behaviour or attitude. A happy marriage is more likely for couples who get along well or have a good understanding of one another's needs. In every marriage, one or both partners will engage in behaviours or attitudes that are deemed unacceptable, but when this occurs in a happy marriage, the pair accepts it as normal (Phillips, Bischoff, Abbott & Xia, 2009). The couple's everyday engagement and involvement in one other's attitudes contributes to a sense of contentment and adjustment (Phillips et al., 2009). In a similar vein, Driver and Gottman (2004) discovered that happy couples routinely participate in behaviours like hugging and kissing and talk about their day-to-day activities. A study by Nelson, Kirk, Ane and Serres (2011) found that couples who believe their marriage is sacred and believe that God is present in their relationship are more likely to have a successful marriage and better marital communication. In addition, Yoo, Bartle-Haring, Day and Gangamma (2014) revealed that the stability of a marriage is directly related to the happiness of both parties in the marriage.

Aman, Abbas, Nurunnabi, and Bano (2019) assessed marital satisfaction among Christian couples and found that most of them were satisfied with their marriages. Aman et al. (2019) added that a strong religious commitment and religious practice enhanced their satisfaction in marriage. Norman (2015) also revealed that majority of the Christians in his study were 'very satisfied' in their marriages. This satisfaction was mostly attributed to the counselling they received prior to the marriage. Additionally, the study of Aikins (2016) in the Cape Coast Metropolis found out that married people in Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis were satisfied with their marriages.

Strong (2010) examined issues of marital adjustment among members in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and found that the respondents were adjusted in their marriages. Specifically, the respondents saw their marriage to be strong and they felt well connected to each other. Similarly, Schramm, Marshall, Harris, and Lee (2012) found that religious husbands and women fared better in marital adjustment than their less religious counterparts. Presler (2014) looked at the intricate connections between churchgoing, personal religious practice, and marriage satisfaction, noticing that believers tend to be more content in their partnerships. From their results, the married individuals did not consider divorce and were willing to stay married. All of these were confirmed in the current study.

Further, the findings of Karney and Bradbury (2020) showed that most of the married people in their study enjoyed their marriages and were willing to stay together. From the foregoing, it is clearly indicated that marital adjustment was possible for most married people, particularly, Christians or religious

people. According to research conducted by Siji and Rekha (2018) in Kerala state, India, couples who have been married for less than five years report lower levels of marital quality and happiness than those who have been together for more than ten years. Therefore, there was a difference in marital happiness based on the duration of the couple's union. It is possible that as people stayed married, they found ways of enjoying their marriages more.

Christian faith dedication was investigated by Kamomoe, Pinto, and Selvam (2017), who looked for a link to marital contentment. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in this study. Two hundred and seventy-eight married Christians were randomly selected from a pool of one thousand Christians at the Holy Family Catholic Church in Nairobi County. In spite of the trials and tribulations inherent in any close relationship, the majority of Christian marriages were fulfilling. According to the findings, Christian devotion is also a major factor in happy marriages.

Korir (2017) looked into how Christians' religion, practices, and fellowship affected their happiness in marriage at CITAM Woodley. This investigation used a descriptive research and methodology. All 520 CITAM Woodley Christian couples were considered for this study. The 104 participants included 52 males and 52 females who were all chosen at random. Christians who got married and stayed wedded reported high levels of marital satisfaction. In particular, it was found that both religious practice and membership in community faith groups influenced marital happiness.

Njeri (2020) looked at the correlation between the mental health of spouses and the state of their marriages among members of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kiambu County, Kenya. A questionnaire was

used to gather information from 96 different married partners. Christian marriages in the study region were found to be of a high quality. The majority of marriages were of a good quality, with both partners feeling happy and secure in their relationships.

Sauerheber et al. (2021) surveyed 285 Christian spouses about their happiness in marriage, their religious beliefs, and their political leanings. The participants filled out a tri-instrument assessment. High levels of marital contentment were reported by the study's subjects. There was some evidence of a favourable correlation between religious belief and marital happiness. Marriage happiness was higher among those with a deeper moral conviction.

In addition, Spence (2011) looked into what factors contribute to marriage happiness and how unhappy couples can be helped through the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Ottawa. Two "Marital Satisfaction Inventory Revised" (MSI-R) questionnaires were provided to each of the 12 couples who agreed to take part in the research. Only one couple out of 12 surveyed in the research reported being completely happy in their union. That is to say, only one couple considered themselves to be excellent friends with their partner and felt satisfied in their relationship. The other 11 married partners all felt like something was missing in their union. Those who reported high levels of marital satisfaction were more likely to show affection towards one another, were able to work through disagreements constructively, and were seen as excellent parents by their partners.

Gottman and Silver (1994) looked at the relationship between demographic factors and marital happiness and found that married women and men had very different experiences. Consistent with the present study's results,

Adzovie and Dabone (2021) found that married men and women had different average impressions of the effect of premarital counselling on their relationships.

Schachtner (2017) found in her study on marital satisfaction among newly-wed couples that having frequent conversation with a partner before marrying the person can bring about satisfying marital relationship in the marriage later on. The researcher used panel survey to analyze data from 707 newly wedded couples over their first four years of being married. Results from the study showed that women had higher marital satisfaction than men after engaging in exhaustive self-disclosure before marriage.

Mickelson, Claffey, and Williams (2006), also in their study, found that males, on average, are more content in their marriages than women. Mickelson et al. noted also that affectionate and emotional support from one's partner tends to predict a more fulfilled marriage. They reasoned that this was because women offered greater emotional support to their husbands than men did in marriage, which would explain why married men were happier overall.

Women, according to Jackson et al. (2014), report less happiness than men in marriage. This, according to them, happen especially when they are in their middle-age. Another factor, according to Jackson et al. (2014), is also because of the labour force of women in the home. These make them more emotional in marriage and are always more likely to encounter problems in relationship and also initiate marital counselling or probably divorce Nurhayati et al. (2019) reported that male spouses are more dissatisfied in relationships and marriage and this makes them more likely to divorce than their female counterparts.

Marriage and gender norms were studied by Çetinkaya and Gençdoan (2014). The investigation was a relational model analysis. Six hundred and thirty-nine married adults from Bayburt and Erzurum provinces took part. The "Marital Life Scale," the "Gender Roles Attitudes Scale," and the "Life Satisfaction Scale" were utilised to assemble the data. The information gathered from the research was analysed using t-tests for separate groups, regression, and correlation. The results demonstrated a favourable and statistically significant connection between marital quality, gender roles, and contentment. Marriage quality was also discovered to vary by partner's sex.

As well as looking at moderators in a global population, Kowal, Groyecka-Bernard, Kochan-Wójcik, and Sorokowski (2021) analysed the correlation between marital happiness and having children. There were 7178 married people surveyed. They discovered that having more kids was a negative predictor of marital satisfaction, and that sex, education, and religiosity all interacted with having more kids and marital satisfaction, while socioeconomic status and degree of individualism did not.

Sorokowski, Kowal, and Sorokowska (2019) used a massive cross-cultural sample to investigate marital contentment across gender, religions, and countries. Their findings revealed that males report higher levels of marital satisfaction than women do, and that there was little difference in satisfaction levels between religious groups.

Personality factors that add to marital happiness in long-married couples (M = 49.2 years) were also investigated by Rosowsky, King, Coolidge, Rhoades, and Sega (2012). Each partner filled out the NEO-FFI, the HCTI, and the Horney-Coolidge Tridimensional Inventory to gauge their level of marital

satisfaction. (NEO-FFI). The level of happiness in marriage was moderately correlated between husbands and wives. The happiness of men and wives in their marriages also differed.

Once again, Putra and Afdal (2020) researched the topic of long-distance married partners' happiness in their marriages. A convenience sample of 45 married couples was used for this comparative investigation. According to the results, long-distance relationships are just as happy as traditional ones for both the husband and wife.

Yoo (2022) looked into how Korean couples' gender role attitudes affected their ability to communicate and how happy they were in their marriages. Yoo discovered that men and women have different perspectives on gender roles, dialogue, and marital happiness. Females placed a higher value on a more gender-neutral outlook, while males placed a higher value on effective dialogue and happy marriages.

Muraru and Turliuc (2013) investigated whether or not women and men vary in their experiences of the connections between their families of origin, romantic attachments, and marital satisfaction. The survey was given to 249 people randomly selected by the experts. There was no significant difference between males and females in any of the measured characteristics, the research found. Only emotional attachment was found to be a major predictor of marital adjustment, irrespective of gender.

Turkish women and men with diagnosed sexual dysfunction were also studied by Yilmaz Karaman, Sonkurt, and Gulec (2021), who assessed the health of their marital relationships. (SD). In total, 65 married couples were

surveyed to gather this data. Gender played a major role in how couples fared in their marriage, according to the findings.

In addition, Singh and Bahadur (2021) looked at the disparities in spirituality and marital adjustment between the sexes in families where both partners worked outside the home. The group size was 200, and information was gathered from them via questionnaire. It was found that marital adjustment was the same for both single-income and two-income families, regardless of gender.

Ahangar, Juhari, Yaacob, and Talib (2016) investigated the links between socioeconomic status and contentment in marriage. 387 Iranian college students who were already married participated in the research. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale was used as the tool for this study. According to the data, there is a correlation between how long a couple has been married and their degree of education. However, there is no correlation between marital happiness and factors like how long one has lived in Malaysia, one's salary, or one's gender.

Marriage happiness among Turkish adults was studied by Bulgan, Kemer, and Yldz (2018). They looked at factors like marital duration, individual characteristics, and whether or not the couple had a prearranged wedding. Two hundred and eighty-eight (288) married Turks (147 females and 141 males) from Turkey's major towns took part in the study. Results from hierarchical regression analyses showed that the linear combination of marriage type, marriage duration, and personality traits significantly predicted marital happiness. Marriage happiness among Turks was found to be significantly

influenced by four personality traits: agreeableness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism.

The researchers Prasetyo, Wahyuningsih, and Karunia (2015) looked at the connections between love and spousal contentment and identified the aspects of love that were most strongly linked to happiness in marriage. Questionnaires were used to gather the data. The findings showed that love contributed to marital happiness for women during the middle years of the relationship. They also verified that partners' happiness in marriage changed over time.

Similar research was performed by Oprisan and Cristea (2012) to identify the causes of marital dissatisfaction. In the end, they determined that variables like high levels of self-esteem and good communication between partners mattered more than how long a couple had been married.

In 2016, researchers Ojukwu, Woko, and Onuoha looked into the correlation between scholastic attainment and the longevity of marriages in the state of Imo. The research used an informal comparative approach. Simple random sampling was used to select 803 married people for the research. Data was gathered via questionnaire in this research. The results showed that low and high levels of education had a positive correlation with marital stability, while those with a middle level of education had no significant correlation with marital stability. Ojukwu et al. came to the conclusion that there was a correlation between higher levels of schooling and greater marital stability and happiness.

Marital contentment and related variables were the focus of a study by Nouri, Kebria, Ahmadianfar, Khosravi, and Amiri (2019). Five hundred married

women participated in this cross-sectional research. The Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale was used to gather the data, and Chi-square and one-way analysis of variance were used to analyse the results. A spouse's level of schooling, the age of their partner, and the number of years they've been married were all found to have an impact on marital happiness.

In a study published in 2015, Barongo analysed the correlation between gender and marriage happiness in Kisii Township, Kisii County. The study used a correlation survey methodology, and 200 spouses were chosen at random. The Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire was used to compile the data. The results revealed that among the sampled spouses in Kisii County, there was no correlation between gender, marital experience, education level, or marital satisfaction.

Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling is a form of psychotherapy that couples undergo in the months leading up to their nuptials. There are numerous approaches to premarital counselling. A wide range of options is available to those who want to learn more about a certain topic. Counselling before a wedding helps couples learn how they might improve their relationship once they are married (Vail, 2012). A six-month time span is required between counsellors and couples to complete this brief intervention. It is generally agreed that premarital counselling's primary goals are to assist couples develop positive communication skills, teach couples what a healthy marriage should look like, and drive couples to develop conflict-resolution skills (Sells & Yarhouse, 2011). Married couples who are well-educated and well-versed in their respective fields are more likely to enjoy a smooth marital journey. Couples who receive

premarital counselling are less likely to have an unhappy marriage or end up divorcing during the first few years of their union. In premarital counselling, couples are exposed to some of the most common obstacles and conflicts they will have in their relationship, and they are given advice on how to deal with them. The marriage counsellors provide premarital counselling to couples who plan to get married in order to teach them the skills and information they will need to be successful in their union. Again, premarital counselling gives couples the tools they need to have a better marriage in the future while simultaneously making their union more resistant to dissolution due to infidelity. Premarital counselling helps couples avoid divorce and maintain a long-term relationship. Despite the program's success, the debate of how helpful premarital counselling is at improving marriages and preventing divorce persists (Stanley et al., 2000). As demand for premarital counselling grows, there is a need to undertake a research study to establish the effectiveness of premarital counselling in ensuring marital adjustment and satisfaction.

Christian Concept of Premarital Counselling

Historically, premarital counselling started in Christian religion (Hook & Worthington, 2009). Christian premarital counselling which involves biblical teachings is necessary for Christians partners than secular premarital counselling (Marks, 2007). Most of the partners attend premarital counselling with ideas that are different, prior to getting married. It is essential for counsellors to include religious faith biblical teachings into their counselling reaction with their client in order to be effective (Holiman, 2009). Partners usually consider premarital counselling as a means to assist and enhance their relationship or better still as an opportunity to themselves with various ways

(Hook & Worthington, 2009). Moreover, partners who are “good Christians” or “religiously good” have better marital relationships when they had Christian premarital counselling (Perry, 2015). Perry further indicated that spouses who have gone through premarital counselling with biblical counselling automatically have successful marriage when both couples are convinced by religion (Perry, 2015). According to Doherty, Harris and Wide (2016), Christian premarital counselling provides partners with understanding and courage before marriage and prevents or reduces marital conflict during the beginning of marriage. According to Hook and Worthington (2009), traditional premarital activities have come as ways to reduce the divorce rate and to assist in helping spouses to be stable in their marriage. Again Moeti, Koloï-Keaikitse and Mokgololdi (2007) say that traditional premarital counselling planned to provide partners with important knowledge or techniques to assist partner’s communication skills, reduce conflict and give problem solving skills when there is conflict. Hook and Worthington (2009) stated that traditional premarital counselling has demonstrated to be essential for partners before marriage. Meanwhile, traditional premarital counselling provides one-way assistant to partners during difficulty time without a foundation to build on. Most partners complain that traditional premarital counselling is helping them in the initial stage in their marriage but lacks biblical teachings to relay on in time of crisis or conflict (Sahhosseini, Hamzehgareshi & Kardanssouraki, 2014). Counsellors incorporate spiritual or religious teachings into their counselling session with partner’s foundations to build upon (Nelson, Kirk, Ane & Seres, 2011). Partner who are wanting to get married should know that their spiritual walk as spouses

is not the work of human being but the Grace hand of almighty God (Weise, 2014).

Falke and Larson (2007) found that Christian partners respond in a better way when their Christian values and their issues are included in counselling relationship or session. Partners who incorporate God in their marriage relationship automatically take away unnecessary expectations because both of them comprehend their responsibilities according to biblical teachings on marriage. Couples who make Jesus Christ the center of their marriage have less conflict (Falke & Larson 2007). Therefore, there is a need for Christian couples to place God first in their marriage relationship and fully depend on His grace to survive. Nelson et al. (2011) confirms that partners who place God as their third and basic partner in their marriage relationship automatically have His grace in the crisis period. Partners who have given their marriage relation to God depend fully on God in their decisions, emotions and leave all their dealings in the hand of God.

According to Nelson et al. (2011), counsellors should inform partners right from the beginning of the counselling session that their marriage or their lives do not depend on themselves but God. Again, research has confirmed that marriage partners indicated that there was a strong relationship between their Christian values and the commitment to their marriage relationship (Nelson et al, 2011; Marks, 2007). Over the years, counsellors have recognized good effect of Christian religious values in the spouse's marriage relationships: due to this, there is a need for counsellors to use bible during the counselling session (Bondi, 2013). Christian denominations require that individuals who want to get married should go through premarital counselling before the marriage will be

constructed. Looking at the constant increasing divorce rate, a good gift that partners can provide for each other is to assist each other to attend premarital counselling (Hook & Worthington, 2009). Marks (2007) indicated that partners who go through premarital counselling have less separation or divorce rate than those who did not go through premarital counselling. Partners who participate in premarital counselling have opportunity to discuss issues that will affect their marriage in future to avoid separation or divorce. With the help of the premarital counsellor, couples will have a greater chance to discuss challenging issues before the marriage will be constructed. Premarital counselling has been identified to assist partner's satisfaction in marriage because during the premarital counselling session, partners can discuss their wants, values and emotional fear before the marriage will be constructed (Williams, 2007).

Nelson et al. (2011) found that partners indicated that their marriage relationship started with religious directives or points of view. Traditional premarital counselling can be seen as successful marriage and motivate couples to improve their relationship by knowing each other well (Shahhosseini et al., 2014). Even though partners go through very important topics during the traditional premarital counselling, couples will lose religious values that will help them to overcome crisis or conflict in their relationship (Holiman, 2009). Religious biblical teaching as a foundation on marriage has no more use during the premarital session which would-be couples by ministers, elders, and even faith-based activities. (Holiman, 2009). Falke and Larson (2007) confirm that partners who take part in premarital counselling activities normally show good achievement in marital knowledge. Again, they further indicated that couples

who took advantage of premarital programmes reported that they have conflict management attitudes, much confident and experience successful or satisfy relationship (Falke & Larson, 2007). Similarly, research studies on Christian premarital counselling have confirm that partners show total marital satisfaction and stability after they have participated in premarital counselling activities (Jacob, 2017; Hook, Worthington, Hook, Miller & Davis, 2011).

Religious partners can have advantage of Christian premarital counselling because of its biblical teachings which is the center of the Christian faith (Diblasio, 2010). Patrick, Backenbach, Sells and Readon (2013) started that affinitive grace will make a way for spouses to get out of constant repeated conflict or crisis. Again, Patrick et al. (2013) also found out that affinitive grace can perform an important duty in assisting processes that can bring forgiveness and assist in taking away constant repeated crisis or conflict in marriage relationship. Similarly, Diblasio (2010) stated that the solution for religious partners is to show each other Godly love, forgiving themselves and forget their past and plan to overcome hurtful attitudes in their relationship for a better future. Partners' good relationship with their maker is very important and it has better impact in their marital satisfaction and as well as marital stability. Couples who forgive themselves and others as Christian biblical teachings demand will automatically increase their marital success or stability because these two are almost the same (David & Stafford 2015).

Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling basically started in Christian churches, but many non-Christian couples have begun to seek this type of counselling (Hook & Worthing 2009). Short premarital counselling has huge merits or benefits that

can assist prevention of divorce (Schumm, Walker, Nazarinia, West, Atwell, Bartko & Kriley, 2010).

Duncan, Childs, Falke and Larson (2010) assert that during the thinking period of getting married, majority of partners start to open marital assessment, education and spend long period of time contemplating about their attitude. Partners are easily or likely to change during the beginning of their marriage, and because of that, they seek premarital assistance from books and internet rather than approaching a minister or a pastor for premarital counselling (Duncan et al., 2010).

Similarly, Borowski and Tambling (2015) found that many young partners who want to marry seek premarital counselling which is closer to their residence or their workplace and at least six-month period. They also indicate that partners confirm that conflict resolution management, communication and resolving couple's differences are the vital topics discussed in the counselling session with them. It aims at helping would-be couples to eliminate challenges, crisis or conflicts that will result in separation or divorce in their marriage (Borowski & Tambling, 2015). The aim, the reason and the advantage of the premarital counselling is to give marital stability or satisfaction (Borowski & Tambling, 2015). Premarital counselling programmes also recognize actual number of people who might have different choice of counselling and amend the plan of activities exactly rise in attendance (Borowski & Tambling, 2015). Premarital education is a technique or strategy training given to partners with assisted skills and knowledge which help them when they get married.

Partners who take advantage of going through the premarital counselling show or exhibit overall good mental and emotional health and do not show or

exhibit serious marital anxiety or suffering (Murray & Murray, 2004). Premarital counselling and education programmes are given or happen in so many settings and this is given by professionals like social workers, community agency workers, pastors or ministers, lay counsellors, counsellors and therapist.

Partners who attend premarital education programmes probably will take part in spouses counselling in their marriage (Williamson, Trail, Bradbury & Karney, 2014).

According to Cade (2010), premarital counselling for would-be couples should be eight hours request to finish and the counselling must be a set interval within the six months' period. Most of the activities are done in Christian settings by ministers or pastors (Duncan et al., 2010). Moreover, the programmes are facilitated by practitioners like counsellors, ministers, nurses, mental health workers and agencies or settings like community mental health centers, social workers and private counselling centers (Murray & Murray, 2004). Recently, would-be partners prefer reading marriage books, online courses, internet sites and inventories to prepare for their marriage rather than attending premarital counselling conducted by therapist (Duncan et al., 2010). Premarital counselling was basically instituted to assist would-be partners to function well in their marriage so that they can enjoy their marriage or have suitable marriage. The session has been designed in such a way that it will give partners skills and strategies to strengthen their marriage.

According to Green and Miler (2013), premarital counselling sessions are designed to give partners skills and strategies or techniques such as preventive procedures to assist marital success and stability during the difficult times or crisis. Most counsellors have found that three-fourth of the partners

went through Christian premarital counselling, even though pastoral counsellors stated that a small number of would-be couples attend Christian premarital counselling (Hook & Worthington, 2009). Even though the divorce rate is not rising up, Williams (2007) indicated that 43% of first marriages break down or divorce within fifteen years. The high divorce rate has been a need to fully providing would-be couples with preventive intervention measures for stable and healthy marriage (Williams, 2007). Again, Williams (2007) stated that various methods and strategies are developed in the premarital counselling setting over the few periods. Therefore, there is a great need for the premarital counsellors to give the couples a sufficient skills and knowledge to function well in their marriage.

The basic objectives or reasons for Christian premarital counselling are to reduce the divorce rate, continue to sustain a healthy marriage and encourage marital satisfaction among spouses. Again, premarital counselling educates would-be partners to acquire skills and techniques on how to overcome challenges or crisis in their marriage. The counselling assists couples to know what to do when challenges, crisis or conflicts arise in their marriage. Finally, premarital counselling helps couples to understand their marital roles, expectations and goals properly to avoid future conflict among the couples. McGrath (2017) asserts that premarital counselling would produce best results when expertise, attribute and skills of the premarital therapist or counsellor are tested. Even though some marriages break down or divorce, to some extent, it is important, especially when there are life threatening issues involved. Green and Miler (2013) indicated that the about one-third of marriages that break down are normally average to better marriages They also asserted that dissolve

marriages can be avoided when better tools and proper mechanisms in premarital counselling with couples are put in place to avoid marital challenges (Green & Miler, 2013).

The primary purpose of premarital counselling is to strengthen lifelong or everlasting better stable relationship among married couples (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin & Fawcett, 2008). In order to achieve this goal or purpose, premarital counsellors should have better tools to equip them to deliver. PMC or therapy is one of the major recognized therapies for relieving partner's anxiety and other related problems or effects (Williams, 2007). Meanwhile, there are various difficulties related to successful marriage counselling or therapy because there are much challenging couples who did not take advantage of marital counselling (Hook et al., 2011). Again, they also found that about 80% to 90% of partners who experience marriage break down or divorce did not seek marital counselling because they think that the treatment will not work and also is a waste of time and money (Hook et al., 2011).

Couples who participate in PMC report greater marriage satisfaction and stability as a result. Mutter, Ande, and Hugo (2012) report that spouses who participated in a Christian-based prevention and relationship enhancement programme reported a more positive and peaceful marriage as a result of the programme than those whose spouses had participated in a similar programme with medical professionals.

In spite of absence professional training of the ministers or main pastors, they normally give counselling assistance with clients who are experiencing problems such as depression, domestic violence, etc., and recognize some as trained counsellors, psychiatrists and psychologists (Marks,

2007). According to Mutter et al. (2010), partners who took part in their research studies received premarital counselling from various settings, but most of them sought premarital counselling from a minister or clergy and they indicated better outcome. Stanley (2010) asserted that of the best premarital indicators of a man as a husband's marital sexual satisfaction is their partner's self-esteem, open communication and marital stability.

After partners receive prevention relationship programme, they demonstrate better achievement of relationship skills, self-assurance in their marriage or relationship satisfaction (Futris, Barton, Aholu & Seponski, 2011). According to Futris et al. (2011), there is no difference among couples who attended premarital relationship programme and combined several sessions and those who had only one-day conjoint workshop. They further stated that firmness or power fullness of premarital counselling and education proposed team workshop can have same consequences on spouse's marital stability as much rampant combine session (Futris et al., 2011). One can agree that premarital counselling and prevention relationship enhancement programme have great impact on the spouse's marital success and stability. For instance, premarital relationship development programme such as preventive counselling in marital health settings (Hook et al., 2011; Muray & Muray, 2014). Premarital counselling and its related programmes serve as back bone for every marriage couple.

Types of Premarital Counselling

There are so many kinds of premarital counselling programmes that can assist partners before they join together as spouses (Davis, 2015). Even though there are so many methods and kinds of premarital counselling, many of these

methods and types have particular areas that assist partners to overcome challenges or crisis in marriage. Some of the topics that are discussed under premarital counselling are as follows: conflict resolution management, roles of the spouse, parenting, finances, sex, building good relationship with in-laws, etc. According to APA (2017), partners who received premarital counselling programme were 31% fewer or smaller probably to separation or divorce. Spouses reported that they gain from premarital counselling in their marriages (Shahhossini et al., 2014).

Secular Premarital Counselling

There is much likeness as well as contrast about two evidence base marriage enhancement programmes called premarital relationship enrichment programme and communication in marriage (Jocobi, 2017). All the two are traditional but not secular type of counselling or non-faith-based counselling. More importantly, it is to realize the outstanding past studies on ethics training which normally rely on secular training site other than combine Christian faith and clinical training (Schneller, Sweson & Sanders, 2010). CC represent the most resourced studied partner's relationship education programme accessible (Jakubowski, Milne, Brunner & Miller, 2004). To date, more than 7000000 partners around the world have taken part in partner's communication and this programme is translated into seven contrast languages. Jakubowski et al. (2004) indicated that curium had given the most exceptional outcome in both married couple and singles because it educates both the married and unmarried to become good communicators, increase talking and listening skills, build stable satisfying relationship with friends, family and others and provide conflict resolution management skills and anger management skills. CC course

has two basic parts. The first part is the basic communication course for partners and the second one has to do with building up with strategies or techniques that are taught in the basic level.

In addition to these, there is a third option, fundamental communication that focuses on different varieties of interpersonal connections. Each lesson covers eleven different ways to communicate and listen effectively to improve your decision-making, resolve conflicts, and control your rage. These relationship strategies assist partners to build strong, stable and satisfying marriage so that couples will enjoy their marriages to its fullest. The premarital relationship enrichment programme concept is both scientific and empirical based approach of educating couples. Again, premarital relationship enrichment programme has more than 30 years' research studies in the area of health relationship, together with a lot of research done at the University of Denver that is fully sponsored by the Nation Institute of Health (Jakubowski et al., 2004).

The effective and efficient education of premarital enrichment programme is benefited by couples who received it. This premarital relationship enrichment programme involves strong bond activity which is given in a relaxed procedure and it uses power point presentations with nice strategies and 10 CD, lecture, etc. These activities are very interactive with couples and partners are being asked to demonstrate their acquired strategies or skills. The topics under this programme are as follows: manage expectations and plans, study or learn stress management, couples work as team, discuss nurturing and being supportive, consider and evaluate the impact of previous experiences on the

future, use communication strategies such as listening and talking and increasing commitment to assist stable satisfaction.

Hope Focused Counselling Approach

Hope focused counselling approach is one of the types of premarital counselling which was propounded or developed by Worthington et al. (2007). It is a short intervention usually from 5 to 12 weeks with partners which mainly focuses on forgiveness and religious biblical rules of Christ's love character. This concept or method gives the couples the opportunity to compare the impact of marriage and relationship education studies. The hope focused counselling approach states that the excellence or quality of relationship part consequences starts from 24 to 36. The HFCA communication aspect or component is within 36% and 54% best in assisting partners to become good communicators (Hawkins, Blanchard, Baldwin & Fawcett, 2008). HFCA partner's enrichment is assessed to be among one of the four confirmable evidence based assisted methods to marriage relationship enrichment in the United States of America (Worthington, Ripley, Hook, & Miller, 2007). According to Worthington et al. (2007), hope focused counselling approach involves spouse's therapy and partner's enrichment activities.

With the help with Hope, Focus, Counselling, Approach (HFCA), a counsellor or therapist assists spouses to have hope in their marriage relationship at each level in their marriage. Various concept or methods that assist partners in their marriage relationship are teaching the couples and also educate them to focus on having better communication techniques as strategies. Again, HFCA educates spouses on problem solving and decision-making strategies and provides them skill base knowledge as preventive skills to build

sustainable quality marriage among the couples. This approach helps spouses to live in satisfying stable, healthy marriage.

There are other methods of marriage or relationship enrichment education programmes which use the same strategies building modules as HFCA uses. The major aim of HFCA is to restore marriage and renew marriages that are in crisis. It teaches couples that change is possible and gives the couple new outlook on the future of their marriage rather than focus on the problem and break the marriage HFCA. Therapists use teachings, training, exercise, forgiveness, and motivation to help couples to overcome their problems in their relationship. Again, HFCA uses the following techniques or strategies to help couples to solve their own problems in marriage. These include drawing on central values, promoting or encouraging confession and forgiveness, strengthening communication, aiding conflict resolution, changing patterns or ways of thinking, developing intimacy and cement commitment. Finally, this approach provides hope for therapist or counsellors to offer assistance to troubled marriages and spouses.

Faith-based Premarital Counselling

Faith-based premarital counselling examines each partner's faith and trust. It assists partners to assess their personal relationship with God, marital expectation for the future, their individual roles as couples and also assist couples to have marriage relationships that base on biblical and God honouring. Before Christians get married, partners have to go through premarital counselling to understand and plan to have peaceful marriage that will honour God. Pastors or ministers are the responsible persons for Christian premarital counselling. According to Bruhn and Hill (2004), ministers and the lay leaders

are responsible for premarital counselling for partners who want to marry. The coming in or emergence of faith-based counselling custom or activity came as a result of anticipations of the prominent teaching stages and increasing categories of professionalization or specialization in run after techniques for building peaceful marriage relationships and stability among couples (Van Dijk, 2013). Christian behaviour therapy counselling was fully stabilized or operationalized in 1940s (Bondi, 2013). Even though counselling is seen as a pattern or model of amend, according to Van Dijk (2013), it is essential to comprehend how premarital counselling was embraced and absorbed or included in a particular socio-religious condition or situation. Jacobi (2017) asserts that Christian counsellors must take note of two spiritually-based marital enhancement activities called spouses or couples treatment workshop and heirs. Counsellors are happy when they use eclectic concept of counselling with “size fits all” concept.

The purpose of the PREP is to help couples to build satisfying healthy and stable marital relationship based on Christian teaching on marriage. When the marriage couples have a good relationship with their maker (God), it will help the couples to have good marital relationship and communicate to themselves (Allgood, Harris, Skogrand & Lee, 2008). Adding, religion and spirituality in premarital counselling can assist or prevent healing procedure the counselee (Plumb, 2011). Therapists that use Christian spiritual teachings as part of their counselling are helpful in increasing and sustaining psychological and physical health of the counselee (Plumb, 2011). According to Plumb (2011), the advantage of adding religion and spirituality into counselling includes much scourage in coping and better decision making, increase social support and

stability. Again, he indicated that including or absorbing strong Christian teaching on sin and guilt may not assist clients with psychological sickness such as depression, hallucinations and delusions (Plumb, 2011). Encouraging faith or beliefs within the marriage in trouble period can be a challenging responsibility for the therapist because normally at the period when the partners has taken decision to go for counselling, couples may lose interest in their beliefs or faith. Belief or faith is a personal affair. When a spouse has faith in God, it helps him or her to awakening, strengthen remedy into marriage which gives God opportunity to make essential in their marriage that they cannot do with their personal effort. Furthermore, Worthington (2007) stated that faith absorbs faith when partners are ready to reinstate their relationship. Sometimes some spouses lose their faith before they attend counselling. When partners lose trust in themselves, they sometimes place their trust or faith on therapist and in their capacity to better their relationship by depending on the therapist to assist and reinstate their trust or faith to better their marriage relationship. Moreover, Mutter, Ande and Hugo (2010) asserted that the counsellor must use prayer in counselling session in such a way that counsellee will agree because counsellee may consider prayer for spiritual gain rather than mental gain. According to Diblasio (2010), spouses who make attempt to forgive themselves and love each other like God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ enjoy their marriage. Men and women who demonstrate forgiveness and love character of Jesus Christ in their marriage relationship fulfill God's divine aim for marriage. When this is done in the marriage relationship among couples, it increases intimacy between themselves and God. Behaviour counselling which is also called psychotherapy deals with the most important matters and challenging issues of

the client (Mcminn, Stanley, Webb, Seegobin, 2010); moreover, sometimes, behaviour therapy or psychotherapy counsellee request for spiritual counselling services. Luckily enough, America psychology association (APA) has given trained psychotherapists message or details that will assist to become much known and have the necessary capability or sufficient knowledge in spiritual and religious therapist matters (APA, 2017). Unfortunately, the impact of Christian premarital counselling (CPC) and Christian scriptural therapy do not have super abundance or excess of research study; now the ethical matters such as ability to produce intended result, effectiveness, capability and well-being of the counsellee must be taken into account by therapists when they want to refer client to religious therapist (Mcminn et al., 2010). When a therapist refers counsellee to a religious counsellor, it is important to educate the client about behaviour therapy so that the client will select his or her desire method or were to go for counselling, (Mcminn et al., 2010). Garzon and Tilley (2009) assert that present data and research cannot conclude that religious counselling is far better than secular counselling.

Premarital Counselling

Studies indicate that the earlier partners have premarital counselling, the better suffering or crisis can be prevented in their relationship (Davis, 2015). Advance preparation of premarital counselling among the would-be couples helps them to prevent negative behaviour or attitudes in their relationship (Schmidt, Luquet, & Gehlert, 2016). The advice or counsel from professional counsellors educates spouses better on fruitful skills to communicate effectively, resolve or prevent conflict and build a productive intimacy in their marriage relationship with different expectations and desire of how they want

their marriage to be. According to David and Stanford (2015), individual persons enter marriage relationship with different outcomes or desires of what life in marriage is supposed to be like in their marriage as partners. Whether expectations and desires fail or it did not come through as they were expecting, they become disappointed in their marriage and start creating problems. It is very important for marriage couples to discuss their desires, expectations and goals in their marriage. Sometimes, couples do not set achievement goals, or expectation. When this happens, it will be difficult to achieve it at the end. Therefore, there is a need for partners to set achievable goals and expectations in their marriage to avoid conflict or challenges in their relationship. According to Schmidt, Luquet and Gehlert (2016), the topics that couples can discuss under the premarital counselling are as follows: family, finances, intimacy, communication.

Intimacy

Intimacy in marriage relationship can be seen as close or friendship relationship between husband and wife or close mutual relationship between partners who want to marry. According to Hawkin II (2016), intimacy is growing through the views of the couple's reactivity which leads to the couple's attention confirmed, cared for and reciprocal emotion of intimacy. Also, intimacy or close relation is related to person's mental health of individual couples and the partner's marital happiness (Mitchell, Castellani, Herrington, Joseph, Doss & Snyder, 2008). Meanwhile sexual satisfaction is referring to all productive or beneficial reaction coming from individual's assessment of the constructive and unfavorable dimension involved with individual's sexual relationship and level to which one is enjoying with the sexual part of one's

relationship (Hyde et al., 2008 p. 441). Studies have indicated that a satisfying marriage relationship gives condition for many satisfying sexual intercourses and past research studies have been able to establish differences in sexual satisfaction among male and female (Holmberg & Blair, 2009; Birnie-Porter & Lydon, 2013). Moreover, sexual satisfaction of males with regard to physical and emotional sex lives are completely little higher than female in comparison. According to Birnie-Porter and Lydon (2013), the simple encouragement as a motivation for involving in sexual intercourses is to encourage in feeling closeness and intimacy. However, this has brought various scholars to find specific elements that bring growth or increase in sexual experience. Schmiedeberg and Schröder (2016) asserted that success of the relationship that is assessed by bad communication behaviours and intimacy in partner's communication provides important duty in sexual satisfaction among couples. Intimacy is an essential section of retaining the marital affection active and wholesome or sound for latest married partners (Hawking II, 2016). Intimacy of the couples involved emotional feelings, physical and spiritual proximity that is reciprocally pleasing to the married couples or partners. Therefore, there is a need for partners to show true love, care and forgiveness for each other. Married partners must demonstrate true warm-heartedness, proximity and link between themselves in the marriage relation. Closeness between husband and wife is very important in marriage than sexual activities because it strengthens the couples. Absence or self-control of sexual activities before marriage among the partners gives or produces good results in marriage (Alea & Vick, 2010). Closeness with our maker (Jehovah) through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the most satisfying life transformation a human being will ever encounter in

life (Kusner, Mahoney, Pargament & Demaris, 2014). Similarly, Kusner et al. (2014) stated that spouses who feel the happiness resulted from having close relationship with their maker (Jehovah) automatically will have close relationship with each other.

Intimacy comes in many ways in the marriage among the married couples. Partners who go through Christian premarital counselling ordered as children of God just as they want to do it for themselves or others. Also, Christian counsellors instruct partners to avoid premarital sex and any other sexual activities until they get married. If partners or spouses forgive themselves like Jesus Christ, they demonstrate the saving work of Jehovah's spirit for loving mankind (DiBlasio, 2010). Affection and forgiveness are a character of Jesus Christ released to appease the Lord's divine aim for relationships which result in growth in intimacy among married couples which automatically result in growth of intimacy with Jesus Christ (DiBlasio, 2010).

Communication

Communication can be seen as exchanging of message or even information by either speaking, writing or using other means. Also, it is a process of sending or receiving information or message. Communication is very important in marriage. Without effective communication, the marriage cannot function properly. Therefore, communication is the corner stone or bedrock of every relationship. Partners who want to be joined as spouses should show positive communication techniques to establish a satisfying and successful relationship among them (Futris et al., 2011). Positive communication links husband and wife together to share their emotional feelings, exceptions, desires, thoughts and plans for future development in their marriage relationship.

Communication becomes very productive when both partners open up in their discussions about issues concerning their relationship.

When the partners consider both verbal and non-verbal communication in their discussion, it helps them to understand each other well. Partners who feel free to express themselves during the discussion without any vagueness definitely give solution to their dispute or challenges in a better way (Futris et al., 2011). Normally, during the premarital counselling, partners are counselled to listen to each other whenever there is a discussion concerning their relationship and make sure that they understand each other's message and give appropriate feedback. Positive communication demands better purpose of each partner when they are communicating to solve their dispute, challenges or put some information or message across (Nicholson, 2014). Normally, better purpose in discussion or communication are demonstrated when partners want to comprehend, link and motivate themselves, whilst negative intentions in discussion or communication are normally showed when one wants to operate or even use bad words against the other. When this situation happens in the marriage, there is the need for couples to build positive communication techniques to curb the situation. When married partners build a solid positive communication technique, it will serve as bedrock in their relationship (Nicholson, 2014). Communication is a very important element in marriage relationship. Therefore, there is a need for couples to develop strong positive communication skills to help them to function well in their relationship. Spouses who show affection, hope, care, integrity, confidence among themselves provide life to their relationship and make it sound and active (Davis, 2015). The expression of affection will exhibit or display the partner's confidence and

develop a solid starting point in the relationship that can prevent or avoid marital conflict or crisis among couples (Nicholson, 2014). When spouses communicate how great their own partners are valuable to them, it will assist them catapult their marriage relationship from satisfactory to tremendous (Hahlweg & Richter, 2010). During the premarital counselling session among the couples, verbal communication plays a significant role during the counselling session. It assists couples to genuinely express how they feel about themselves. For example, verbal communication helps couples to openly discuss the negative attitudes or behaviour of the partner. In reality, communication serves as basic channel for couples to discuss their issues confronting their marriage. Partners study when they are premaritally counselled that affection never displayed orally could badly affect the marriage relationship just because of their partner (Schmidt, Luquet & Gehlert, 2016). Again, they indicate that the purpose of it is that couple may view or see their explanation of how their partner perceive and could never comprehend how greatly they are in affection with each other (Schmidt, Luquet & Gehlert, 2016). Partners who freely express anxiety or stress in the marriage relationship during the time of premarital counselling session have better stability in the fight for their married relationship (Sullivan, Pasch, Johnson & Bbradbury, 2010).

In marriage relationship, non-communication carries information like oral communication (Schmidt et al., 2016). Again, sometimes partners anxiously speak a word to themselves that will strike uncomfortable facial gesture (Schmidt et al., 2016). They further indicated that if this situation occurs, usually individual couples do not want to say something because facial gestures communicate what they want to say (Schmidt et al., 2016). Meanwhile,

facial gesture is not only kind or type of non-oral speech (Schmidt et al., 2016). However, spouses are educated during the premarital counselling session on how their non-verbal communication send message during their discussion on issues as couples (Schmidt et al., 2016). Whenever a partner decides not to open up in communication to listen to his or her partner's message or conversation, it will discourage one who is speaking or communicating to feel bad and disrespect. So, there is a need for couples to pay attention to themselves when one wants to put a message across. When a partner feels disrespected, he or she decides to remain silent for a long time in the relationship without communicating or responding to any word from the other partner. Gottman and Silver (2007) thus asserted that engaging in delaying tactics or refusing to cooperate in discussion occurs when one partner is communicating, and the other one is refusing to cooperate in the discussion: this affects the marriage relationship.

Physical act is one of the types of non-oral communication which has good effect on a partner's marriage relationship when this is done together with oral communication. During the premarital counselling session, spouses' study that physical acts can be done when they are eating, going to shop, removing garbage without telling the partner.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict is one of the common things that happen or occur in all marriages. No matter how you love yourselves as couples, you will experience conflict in your marriage. Marriage cannot exist without conflict. During the premarital counselling sessions, spouses are expected to understand the fact that conflict in marital relationship are automatic and sometimes conflict is healthful

or whole of, especially when fully settled (Savage, 2015). Spouses who study how to control conflict during the premarital counselling assist their marriage relationship to flourish or prosper (Davis, 2015). He further indicated that conflict resolution in marriage can be controlled or settled fully if the partner has total commitment to settle the conflict and also settle the challenges in such a way that both couples would be equally understand. When spouses cannot fully control their crisis, it will create tension or violation on their marriage relationship to depreciate over the period of time. Usually in premarital counselling, therapist or counsellors educate partners to be dedicated to their own marriage relationship and have abiding or continues outlook or outcome of the marriage relationship and a readiness to offer up themselves for the relationship.

Again, Davis (2015) further indicated that therapist educate the partners during the premarital counselling that agreement or alter or changes involve in attitude for the abiding or everlasting firmness or stable of the marriage relationship. According to Schmidt et al. (2016), premarital therapists make sure that spouses comprehend the necessity of their dedication by euphemizing that they are determined to live together in dedicated marriage whether in illness or in good health and have confidence for each other; that will assist them to be dedicated to themselves.

Parenting

Generally, there is no one method or style of parenting or raising up children. Premarital counsellors assist spouses to comprehend how to raise up children. Even though married couples have different methods or styles of parenting, premarital counsellors make sure that parents have the standard

method that can help them all. According to Balswick and Balswick (2014), there are four kinds of socio-emotional styles or methods. These are as follows: permissive, neglectful, authoritative and authoritarian. Even though we tend to make judgement or blame on neglectful method or style of parenting, the truth is that many parents are single-parents and others are career women who work from Monday to Friday. Due to their busy schedules at the workplace, they do not make enough time for their own kids or children (Balswick & Balswick, 2014). Partners during the premarital counselling period demonstrate or indicate that their method or style of parenting or raising up children fall under one of these four kinds of parenting methods or styles. Permissive style of parenting has to do with parent who have time for their children but do not control the child and allow the child to do whatever he or she wants. The authoritarian style of parenting deals with command or dictatorship. In autocratic style of parenting, whatever the parents say is final. Because of its dictatorship and command, children under this kind of parenting style do not open up to their parent and they do not have good intimate relationship with their own parents (Balswick & Balswick, 2014). Many counsellors believe better style of parenting as authoritative style where parents have strong control of their children and also the children have good intimate relationship with their parents and allow them to make better decisions for themselves (Balswick & Balswick, 2014). During the premarital counselling, couples are educated to teach their own children moral values as well as Christian values, respect themselves and also give more respect to adults, obey rules and regulations in the community as well as the nation as a whole and finally, obey the commandments of God. Partners are also encouraged by the counsellors to let their parenting style reflect

Jesus Christ to authorize their own kids that will assist them to study, develop and become what God wants them to be in future (Turansky & Miller, 2013).

Parents who authorize and allow their own kids and assist them to become responsible people in future also tend to help other people in the society.

It is a mandate for every parent to educate, teach, model and equip their children to become responsible persons in future. Parents who encourage their children to identify their capabilities and abilities assist them to enrich these standards or excellence (Balswick, 2014). According to Balswick and Balswick (2014), parenting or raising up children is one of the difficult topics that many spouses talk about before even starting premarital counselling. Spouses who differ or dispute themselves about the kind of parenting style to use will cause problem to themselves and their relationship with their kids (Fentz & Trillingsgaard, 2017). Partners study during the premarital counselling that when their parenting style is in harmony, they are not just developing good relationships with their kids, but also show better parenting when there is crisis (Balswick & Balswick, 2014).

Finances

Handling money among the couples or partners is one of the major topics discussed during premarital counselling. Money sometimes serves as sources of happiness and at the same time serves as source of conflict among married partners. In some cases, money creates or causes breakdown among couples. Money can create tension or conflict in a family. Research study indicates that handling finance in marriage is one of the major causes of separation or breakdown (Dobson, 2012). During the premarital counselling, the counsellor discusses with couple the following topics under finance: family

budget, debt, financial goals, savings, investment, project, etc. These sub-topics under finance sometimes create tension or conflict among Christian marriage couples. Sometimes, financial discussion among couples during the premarital counselling creates tension and hot argument. Financial discussion among couples in marriage usually results in tension if not conflict. Premarital financial counselling assists partners to comprehend, settle and present financial matters before marriage comes on or contracted (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Financial aspect in marriage is a very important factor and seen as vital in enriching or enhancing marital intimacy and satisfaction. Most partners incorporate financial counselling into their premarital counselling sessions. According to Wilmoth (2015), for partners who approach their religious leaders about their marital relationship matters, 60% indicated that financial management was their major challenge confronting their marriage relationship. During the financial aspect of the premarital counselling session, partners usually express shock and astonish about their diverse opinions on how they should manage or handle their finance (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Spouses who want their marriage relationship to be successful should also consider how they will manage or handle money in marriage to avoid future challenges or conflict.

Premarital counsellors educate partners to know that it is not likely that always they will agree on all the issues. However, they must understand at point in time what they should all agree on. Also, they must understand which aspect of finance they must build together. Partners must know that as soon as the marriage is constructed, they become financial partners. It is important for spouses to know that developing their finance together and comprehending both

short and long term aims before the marriage is contracted is a good decision (Tambling & Glebova, 2013).

Roles in Marriage

The roles of women and men in marriage is very important. Marriage cannot function without individual partners playing their roles. Marriage entails a set of obligations. These obligations encompass particular responsibilities to be carried out by each partner individually, as well as shared responsibilities that both spouses must fulfill. Role playing in marriage involves commitment, sacrifice and better understanding of marriage. McGoldrick, Carter, and Garcia-Preto (2016) indicated that ladies think that they are mandated to change how they live their life than their partners when they are in a marriage relationship. Furthermore, they asserted that the females are easy to get life cycle stress because of how they feel or think about people around them (McGoldrick, Carter & Garcia-Preto, 2016). Presently, ladies in marriage perform most duties at their work places and at home, which gives them more stress because of the hardship they pass through or confront them. They are usually affected by the stress which sometimes leads them to sickness, financial burdens and separation in marriage (McGoldrick, Carter & Garcia-Preto, 2016). Even though husbands and wives have particular duties in the marriage to play, satisfaction and happiness in marriage is one that each partner has to perform to maximize satisfaction in the marriage. It is necessary for family and marriage counsellors to comprehend or know the attitudes of husbands and how they interact with their family cycle (McGoldrick, Carter & Garcia-Preto, 2016). It is also vital to assist husbands comprehend and study how to make affection and recognize how they are, to acknowledge the betterment of protectiveness and the power

of companionship (McGoldrick, Carter & Garcia-Preto, 2016). Again, McGoldrick, Carter and Garcia-Preto (2016) stated that family counsellors must educate or tell husbands that they have so many to achieve than to lose by demonstrating or showing bad attitude. If husbands build a protective kind of attitude toward their own wives, it assists them to get closer to feeling safe, which eventually helps them to become conscious about the emotional needs (McGoldrick, Carter & Garcia-Preto, 2016).

Divorce and Remarriage

Another important topic under premarital counselling is divorce and remarriage. Divorce has a significant impact on the couple themselves and the children. Divorce causes stress, anxiety, depression, sickness and sometimes madness to most affected couple. Again, it causes poverty, teenage pregnancy, streetism, armed robbery among others to the children. According to Sweeney (2010), 69% of females marry again after separation or divorce. Premarital therapist and family counsellors know that divorce has negative effect on the marriage couple and their children. However, it is not the duty of the counsellor to persuade the partners to continue to live in their marriage when they have life threatening problems or conflict. Divorce is a global problem which is affecting every country worldwide. For example, United States of America has the major divorce rate in the entire world and continues to increase every blessed year (Sweeney, 2010). Balswick and Balswick (2014) also confirmed that from 1980 to date, there has been exactly 1.2 million divorce every year. If partners decide for separation, they are usually conflicted and unnecessary and unreasonable emotional feelings about separation (Balswick & Balswick 2014). Partners sometimes wonder if separation is a better choice to take when they consider

their own kids. Spouses do not normally think about negative impact and challenges separation has on themselves and the entire members of the family (Sweeney, 2010). Normally, couples will have their genuine aims that will suit them on intentions to breakdown the marriage without thinking about the harm they will create on other people in the family (Balswick & Balswick 2014).

Balswick and Balswick (2014) asserted that there are many factors in our culture and society that contribute to trend or way of breakdown and possible divorce society. He also indicated that there are other elements like standardization of separation and liberation of female which are leading elements to the increase of breakdown of marriage (Balswick & Balswick 2014). Apart from marital relationship, challenges among the couples, there are many other factors that contribute to a culture of separation and divorce unrestricted duty or role of truthful to the marriage relationship (Balswick & Balswick, 2014). Similarly, McGoldrick, Carter and Garcia-Preto (2016) indicated that apart from culture of separation, lack of solving or giving intervention to marital conflict problem also promote or increase divorce rate. Again, they also asserted that physicians can viably use models of persons or family remedy or preventions to assist better use of conflict settlement skills or techniques. Physicians, counsellors and family counsellors must check these bad issues by promoting the good factors that brings wholesome or wellbeing development of single-parent household (Balswick & Balswick, 2014). Kostenberger (2010) also asserted that separation or divorce is unpredictable in this world because of its sinful nature.

Premarital Counselling and Marital Satisfaction

Premarital counselling basically helps couples to live in stable marriages and enjoy each partner's company. Premarital counselling also increases stability and decreases instability among the couples. Most of the states in the United States of America provide premarital counselling for partners who need assistance in counselling (Tambling & Glebova, 2013). Marital stability requires that partners experience sexually satisfying intimacy in their marriage. Sex is a very important topic in premarital counselling because intimacy is key in marriage. Sex gives bonding, togetherness and intimacy even when partners do not make time to make love for long time (Gottman, 2017). Sex solves a lot of marital problems among couples. Sex unites couples against conflict. Sex is a physiological need which couples cannot do away with. Marriage cannot be complete without sex. Sex ordains the marriage through consummation. Marriage without consummation is not marriage. A person who denies his or her partner sex brings conflict into the marriage.

According to Kepler (2015), the causes of marital breakdown are as follows: lack of positive communication, difference in marital expectation, dispute on child rearing styles and infidelity. To be able to communicate positively is basic in every relationship because it indicates that partners comprehend each other. Futris et al. (2011) stated that spouses who go through premarital counselling experience more marital satisfaction and are not possible to get separated or breakdown. Normally, they also have less conflict and crisis and experience greater level of intimacy in their marriage relationship.

One of the challenges that couples face in their marriage is how their in-laws interfere in their relationship. These in-laws are relatives from both

couples. Some in-laws are considered as troublesome by many couples, most especially mothers and sisters of the partners. Some in-laws intentionally interfere with their children's marriage by giving them problems. Some even break their own children's marriage (Kepler, 2015). Sometimes, some couples want to stay away from their in-laws to avoid interference but extended family system practice in Ghana as well as Africa will not allow it. Some couples are attached to their parents especially some of the female couples. Too much attachment of the extended family creates opportunity for some in-laws to interfere into the marriage and create problems for the couples. Some in-laws too will stay distance from the couple but still control them through telephone conversation. In-laws usually create anxiety or stress among the partners who have emotional and psychological attachment to their partners. Premarital counselling assist couples to shift their attention or attachment from extended family to themselves.

When there is an in-law challenge and the wife's family is creating the problem, then the wife should support the husband and come out with laid down boundaries for her family to follow. In the same way, when husband's family is creating the problem, then it is the duty of the husband to support his wife to set clear boundaries for the family. Wherever the interference is coming from, it is the responsibility of the couples to set boundaries to stop it. Partners who allow their family to interfere in their marriage are not living to the standards of marriage and they are not protecting their marriage but rather causing harm to their own marriage.

In-laws do not have the final say in their children's marriage but the couples themselves. The spouses should have peace of mind in their marriage.

The privacy of the couple is very important and this privacy should not be destroyed by the in-laws. Therefore, there is a duty of spouse to protect their privacy in their own marriage. In-laws do not have authority to dictate to their children in marriage. According to Kepler (2015), premarital counselling has been identified and tested and proved to solve in-law's interference problem in marriage. Premarital counselling gives spouses enough problem-solving techniques or strategies to assist them to overcome challenges in marriage together with in-law's interference.

There are some spouses who are able to solve their problems easily but others also find it difficult to handle it and eventually result in separation. According to Dew and Huston (2012), the disputes and negative communication skills are the underlined factors of marriage breakdown. This actually happens when partners have challenges about how to handle finance in their marriage (Dew & Huston, 2012). Apart from communication in marriage, handling money has been a difficult task among couples. Financial issues in marriage create a lot of challenges among couples. Research study has confirmed that financial issues cause divorce among couples (Britt & Huston, 2012; Dew & Huston, 2012). When couples find it difficult to solve their financial problem confronting them in a way of overspending or money demands, dispute arises among the couples.

According to Britt and Huston (2012), couples asserted that their financial disputes are very challenging to overcome them, they last for long period of time, and very important to the couples than any kind of disagreement or problem. There is much proving that financial disagreement among the couples is related with decrease in marital gratification (Dew, Britt & Huston,

2012). The period between engagement and marriage or courtship period demands premarital counselling. This is necessary for the betterment of the marriage relationship and has been found to be very good (Li, Olson, & Solheim, 2015).

Premarital Counselling and Personality Development

The family background of an individual influences how the person behaves or conducts him or herself. Sometimes, how and where the person was brought up in the family has a great impact on the person's attitude or conduct. According to Duba et al. (2012), the family background of the person determines the personality of the person. Most importantly, sometimes, family members do not know the beliefs, regulations, expectations and ethical standards of the family. In order to design family trees or history during the time of premarital counselling with a counsellor, a procedure of mapping counslee's family holistically, common lineage can give better account on how the family works or runs and give understanding to the spouses by educating them on how to relate well with their partners. Premarital counselling discusses issues like family upbringing of the children. The spouses try to prevent bad attitudes that they encountered in the families. Negative attitudes are as a result of unresolved past issues from upbringings of the family. Premarital counselling assists partners with techniques to deal with problems that will arise in their marriage.

Premarital Counselling Skills and Financial Management Skills

According to Falconier and Epstein (2011), there are clinical instructions for operating with spouses about their financial matters. Partners are assisted during premarital counselling to deal with their financial issues properly during their marriage preparation. Some of the issues discussed are as

follows: joint account, how to settle debts, savings, financial goals, budgets, investment and others which create dispute among couples. A research study has found that marital conflicts come as a result of how to handle money in marriage. Partners knowing each other's financial position assists them to reduce financial conflict in marriage. It is a duty for the couples to control their expenditure rather than allowing their expenditure to control them. According to Marang'a (2013), preparing budget in marriage assists spouses to save enough funds to acquire properties that will better their lives as a couple.

Effectiveness/Satisfaction or Efficiency of Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling is very important in the lives of spouses as it serves as an effective way of solving marital conflict and problems by giving couples better skills and knowledge to overcome their challenges in marriage. Many states in America and other countries have been recognized as a positive impact of premarital counselling on marital relationships. Besides, experts in marriage and family have also written extensively on the effectiveness or efficiency of premarital counselling on marriage relationships. According to Stanley (2010), even though there is enough evidence to support the efficiency of premarital education programmes, the question still remains whether premarital counselling prevents marriage breakdown and sustains marriage stability. To be able to answer this question, the researchers have written extensively on the assessment of premarital counselling education programme. According to Carroll and Doherty (2003), researchers use the following terms interchangeably: premarital education, premarital counselling, premarital education counselling, marriage preparation and premarital therapy; and this particular study uses premarital prevention because of its general term and

ability to represent all the terms or kinds, uniform tactics to preparing would-be partners for marriage. Premarital counselling is a comprehensive skill-based therapy that provides strategies and resources to assist couples throughout their marriage life. Carroll and Doherty (2003) indicated that premarital counselling prevention is a skill-based marriage preparation programme which provides strategies to spouses to help them improve or strengthen their entire marriage life. These premarital counselling programme offer techniques and rich information on how to prevent or avoid conflict and crisis in marriage. Studies have identified premarital topics which assist couples to improve marital quality and satisfaction such as follows: commitment, roles, sexuality, communication, financial management, conflict resolution, etc. (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). Premarital counselling education programme is assessed as an assortment of strategies or skills like formal and informal groups; group presentations and discussions, spouse's experiences, etc. (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). A study has identified that these premarital counselling education programmes were correspondingly working in building preparation for marriage relationship (Stanley, 2001). Again, a study has been conducted to find the rate of premarital counselling programme conducted by pastors and professional counselors and found no difference between the two methods in providing positive change on the partners and fulfillment of education levels (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). This means that premarital counselling education provided by pastors or clergy and the trained counsellors are the same because both of them provide effective information and skill-based counselling to the couples.

Premarital counselling education programmes provide couples with positive communication skills, conflict resolution management skills, how to

handle finance in marriage, proper interpersonal relationship skills and others. These skills strengthen marriage relationships. According to Carroll and Doherty (2003), premarital intervention counselling programmes are usually good in building comprehensive instantaneous advances in communication skills, conflict management skill, and interpersonal relationship skills. These qualities last between six months and three years, but limited comprehensive follow up study reduces discussion that can bring the longer period results of premarital prevention programme on especially marriage breakdown. They further indicated that today, studies have provided so many ways of educating married couples, such as weekend retreats, group therapy, individual partner's therapy and types of facilitators such as lay counselors and trained counselors which both of them provide equal task which brings better results to the couples (Carroll & Doherty, 2003). There is no doubt that couples who take part in premarital counselling intervention programme get satisfied with their marriage relationship than those partners who do not take part in premarital counselling programme.

Several research studies have been found that there is a great significant relationship between premarital counselling and marital satisfaction; the outcome of premarital counselling has significantly reduced the divorce rate among married spouses that have taken part in premarital intervention therapy (Vail, 2012). Similarly, Yilmaz and Kalkan (2010) confirmed that premarital counselling enrichment programmes significantly improve the satisfaction level of the married couples. Their outcomes syndicate that spouse who participated in premarital therapy showed higher relationship satisfaction degree or range when compared to partners in control groups. Partners who participated in

premarital therapy were found to be having challenges and developing strategies to solve these challenges. Carroll and Doherty (2003) embarked on a meta-analytic study on assessment of premarital relationship programmes and they found that premarital relationship programmes provide positive improvement in communication abilities, conflict resolution management skills and inter-relationship skills among couples.

McGeorge and Carlson (2006) conducted a research study to assess the effectiveness of premarital programmes which comprises of twenty-nine (29) couples for eight (8) weeks. The outcome showed that fittingness for marriage and marriage desire are advocated for couples who participated in the premarital therapy programme as compared to the individual persons put or positioned in control groups. A study showed that 94.6% of couples who took part in the premarital therapy stated that they would advise partners who went to marry to participate in premarital therapy. Though there are so many kinds of premarital therapy programmes, statistics talks much about the importance of premarital therapy. More importantly, 80% of couples who took part in survey in this study, who did not participate in premarital therapy, they indicated that, they would advise partners who want to marry to take part in premarital counselling programmes (Vail, 2012).

Spouses who took part in premarital therapy begin to assess marriage relationship with much real manner. They have received techniques to communicate effectively or positively; premarital therapy assists spouses to stop their bad behaviors that can affect their marital satisfaction and have good picture of their spouse on how to discuss matters in a better manner. These

techniques improve marital satisfaction of the couples (Yilmaz & Kalkan, 2010).

Psychosocial Factors of Marital Satisfaction and Adjustment

Premarital relationship is a time when two partners from different background come together to create mutual relationship agreement that bonds of affection and trust which are vital to move together as a mutual friend before they finally decide to marry. According to Ozguven (2000), personal social and legal facilities like friendship or be in relationship before engagement and actual marriage contracted. These aim at fulfilling this purpose. Tugba and Melek 2010 asserted that premarital counselling education programmes improves marital relationship satisfaction of partners positively. Sullivan, Pasch, Cornelius, and Cirigliano, 2004 indicated that because of newly married couples do not encounter or experience any difficulties or stress, they do not see the need to change negative attitude or behaviours.

Carroll and Doherty (2003) conducted a study to assess the efficacy of the outcome of premarital counselling programmes and the outcome of the study indicated that the average of partners that took part in a premarital counselling prevention programme were better off than 79% of those who did not participate the study. This means that partners who took part in premarital counselling intervention programme had high rate of marital satisfaction and adjustment in their marriage relationship and reducing the rate of divorce or separation than partners who did not took part in premarital counselling intervention programme.

Stanley, McCain and Trathen (2006) found that taking part of premarital counselling education prevention programme by couples result marital

satisfaction and commitment in marriage and at the same time reduces the level of conflicts and divorce among couples. But Fawcett, Hawkins, Blanchard & Carroll (2010) indicated that they do not find better evidence yet for a great impact of premarital counselling education on marital satisfaction and adjustment, at least over the short period with time of the typical research study.

The role of gender is very important in marital satisfaction among marriage couples. The responsibilities of couples in marital relationship can be used to explain differences in relationship satisfaction. Most research founding has indicated that marriage men experience marital satisfaction than their women counterparts (Williams, 2003). The role of mother or woman in marriage is not easy task because some women combine work at home and also at workplace. The work of women in marriage is more demanding task than their men counterparts. Study has found that love and emotional assistance from partners determines positive marital satisfaction (Gove, Style & Hughes, 2006).

Moreover, the main difference in marital satisfaction among couples come as a result of how they express their feelings for instance females normally tend to cope with feeling by looking for assistance. From others (Simon & Nath, 2004) usually, women express their emotional feeling in their life opening (Simon & Nath, 2004) but men usually hide their emotional feelings and they do not want to discuss it in their relationship (Matud, 2004). However, Jeffrey, Richard & Ryan (2014) conducted a study and found that women tend to have lower marital satisfaction than their men counterparts.

Factors on Marital Success and Satisfaction

Generally, age at when an individual get marriage is very important because it can either have positive or negative impact on marriage relationship

among couples. Marriage as a social institution is not for boys and girls neither teenagers or adolescents but for mature people. Looking at the responsibilities husband and wife you realized that marital roles cannot performed by teenager neither adolescent. Research study found that later marriage increases marital stable and satisfaction (Glenn, Vecker & Love Jr. 2010). This means that when you compare latter marriages and early marriages, you realized that later marriages have stability and success than early marriages. Lampard (2013) compare the relationship between the age at marriage and the dangers involves in couples divorce and found that marriage relationship has significant impact on the divorce rate but major of the impact result from relative age at marriage. Relative age at marriage in Lampard's study was explained as reference to the proportion of ages at marriage which less than actual age at marriage. He further indicated that the impacts that increase age at marriage has on later ages. This means that marriages that happened after individual persons are over age thirty, outweighed by the bad impacts that matured age at marriage at later period of time has on the marriage. Lehrer (2008) conducted a research study to find out the impact on age at marriage has on marital success and satisfaction and he found that later marriage has a strong or positive impact on marital success and satisfaction as compare to early marriage. Generally, couples who marriage at the age thirties will have greater chance of marital satisfaction and success than those who got marriage at twenties. This means that maturity in marriage is very important because couples who married at the age of thirties automatically will be mature in reasoning and understand of life as far as marriage is concern than those who married at the age of twenties.

Research undertaken by Lehrer and Chen (2013) demonstrated that marriages between women in their late twenties and men of similar ages were more meeting and lasted longer than those between people who waited until they were in their early thirties to get married. Looking at the studies from Lehrer (2008) and Lehrer and Chen (2013) and Lampard 2013, one can have realized that age at marriage basically effects the success and satisfaction of marriage in that couples who marry at later age have marital satisfaction than those marry at early age.

Education is an acquisition of knowledge which has to do with teaching and learning either in classroom or outside the classroom. Generally, some men and women marry early after their Senior High Schools and Junior High School Education whiles some men and women preferred to marry after first degree and even master's degree. Generally, men prefer to complete their tertiary or first-degree education before they get marry as compare to females or women. Highly educated men and women have high rate of stress and conflict in their marriage relationship but if all of them are highly educated it prevent or reduces marital adjustment challenges among them (Jose & Alfons 2007).

Sometimes some people use education level to select their mates or partners, some even go ahead to select mate with the same education attainment or level, education has significant impact on the timing of marriage and also has relationship with marital adjustment and satisfaction among couples (Watson, Klohnen, Casillas, Simms, Haig & Berry, 2004).

There are so many research studies that has been confirm or found the positive correlation between the level of partner's education and marital satisfaction and adjustment. Normally partners with high qualifications such as

first and second degree are likely to satisfy in their marriage than those who had lower education. For instances a study conducted by the U.S Bureau of the census (2001) had college education were likely to marry and not possible to divorce or separate as compare to those who did not have college education.

This means that the education level is seen as determinant of marital challenge as well as marital stability or satisfaction among couples.

Marital adjustment and satisfaction among early years in marriage couples. Despite expectations from others and newly married couples themselves, early years of married couples are problematic and time for couples to make adjustment (Huston, Niehuis & Smith, 2001). According to U.S. Bureau of the census (200) on average the number of early year marriage that end in divorce basically last between seven and eight years. Similarly, national center for Health Statistics, (2001) found that 20 % of early marriages breakdown within the first five years in their marriage. This means that marital stability or satisfaction decline the early years in marriage. In early years, couples find it difficult to adjust to each other in marriage and often results in marital conflicts. Studies indicates that partners develop their own personal character and ways of resolving in marriage which often helps couples throughout in their marriage from early years (Schneewind & Gerhard, 2002). Sometimes individual couple brings unrealist or unachievable expectations in marriage relation which eventually results conflict. Result from study found that engage couple bring huge idealized perceptions of marriage than married partners (Bonds-Raacke, Bearden, Cerreiere, Anderson & Nicks, 2001).

Procedure of Carting out Premarital Counselling

The procedure to conduct premarital counselling is very important because it can affect the partner's marital relationship. This involves how to conduct the premarital counselling, when to conduct premarital counselling, who to conducting premarital counselling and contents of premarital counselling. It also includes specific counselling areas to be covered (Kyalo, 2012). Marriage involves a lot of issues such as marital roles, expectations, communication issues, conflict resolution management, how to rear the children, how to treat in-laws, finances, sexuality and etc. Ponzeti and Mutch (2006) indicated the need to comprehend the basics of Christian beliefs involves in marriage and discuss matters which result to unity in marriage. Christian believes that marriage is a covenant of sacrifice which demands putting the need of your partner first before yours; sharing things together as couples as their bodies, money, properties, intimacy, companionship which is the most thing in marital relationship.

Premarital counselling includes discussing about financial matters such as how and when to save, managing of income, loan or debit repayment, spending and handling money, preparation of family budget, various projects of Children school fees and any other financial related issues in marriage because financial issues in marriages can leads to marital conflict among couples. The counselors should be able to lay more emphasis how to handle money in marriage among the couples because handling money in marriage sometimes result in confusion, misunderstanding and serious conflict. Besides there is a need for counselor to educate couples to settle their debts, support the extended family, providing for the basic need of the family and the need of saving part of

their income. According to Gichinga (2010) there are different methods of preventing financial conflict in marriage, these are; do not hide money from your partner, prepare the budget together, prepare financial goal together and assisting themselves to live within budget prepared.

Communication is another important aspect in marriage which has to do with sending and receiving messages or information. Marriage cannot exist without communication because couples always discuss issue, that affect their marriage through communication. Couples should be able to communicate positively to each other and try to avoid negative comment which can easily create conflict. Positive communication can promote marital satisfaction solve marital conflict couples who communicate positively experience happiness in their marital relationship. According to Gichinga (2010), positive communication one of the attributes of a stable marriage and family. Positive communication enhances good marital relationship which leads to marital satisfaction. In view of this Macharia 2010 indicated that good communication is seen as the most basic vital in a characteristic of healthy family. Communication has two aspects these are verbal and non-verbal therefore partners should listen to each other by considering both verbal and non-verbal manners. Communication includes speaking and listening which it does not happen just like that, therefore there is a need for couples to develop good communication skills. Partners must know that there is a great difference between speaking and communication. Communication do occur when the individual you are talking to get the information exactly the way it was sent by the sender.

Good listening is prerequisite in communication and includes listening to one person at a goal is a very vital in communication process, giving particular attention. What the sender is saying, listening to particular words, that sender is using and get the actual meanings of the words, focus or giving attention to mannerism, or body language and voice tone, this has to do with listening and study or reading the mind, heart, eyes, emotional feeling and prevent disruption when the other person is speaking. According to Gichinga, (2010) the one who is receiving the message or information should ask clarifying questions to promote better understanding of what the sender is saying and meaning of the statement.

According to Lehrer and Cohen (2005), there are five levels of communication which partners are to ensure to follow from one level to another, level one involves few talking, mannerism or body language to send the information. This is a level of uncomfotability and demonstrates uncaring behaviour the partners should be helped by the counselor to develop skills that to overcome challenges in this level. It is a level where partners have to show love, affection, intimacy and empathetic feelings to each other. And also draw closer to themselves to avoid loneness uncaring attitude. Level two has to do with talking about facts and others. In this level partners talk realities in their marital relationship. Discuss the facts issues concerning their marriages and how they can deal with them. Level three really talks about ideas and opinions whereby the partner rejects or accepts his or her own spouse's ideas and opinions in their relationship. This really occur in marital relationship, sometimes, a partner may come out with good ideas that can help the couples but the other partner may reject or not agree even though is innovative ideas;

when this situation occurs, it can create conflicts among the couples. In situation like, partners should be able to agree to disagree by cope with the situation because there is no way a couples can agree with issues all the time. The other partner should be able to develop high level of tolerance and patience to partner.

Level four basically talks about emotions and feelings sometimes emotional feelings set in the discussion of the couples which can result misunderstanding among the couples. It is common in marriage that when there is discussion on issues, couples bring their emotional feelings into the discussions which create tension among them. Couples with this level should work on their emotional feelings to solve their communication challenge at this level. Level five also has to do with talking about hopes and failures. This level is the highest level of communication in marriage whereby the partners freely talk about their problems confronting their marriage and other related issues, couples also at level have opportunity talk about anything that worries them without fear. This level is also called “naked” and unashamed” where any secret hiding challenges of the individual partners will be disclosing.

Conceptual Framework

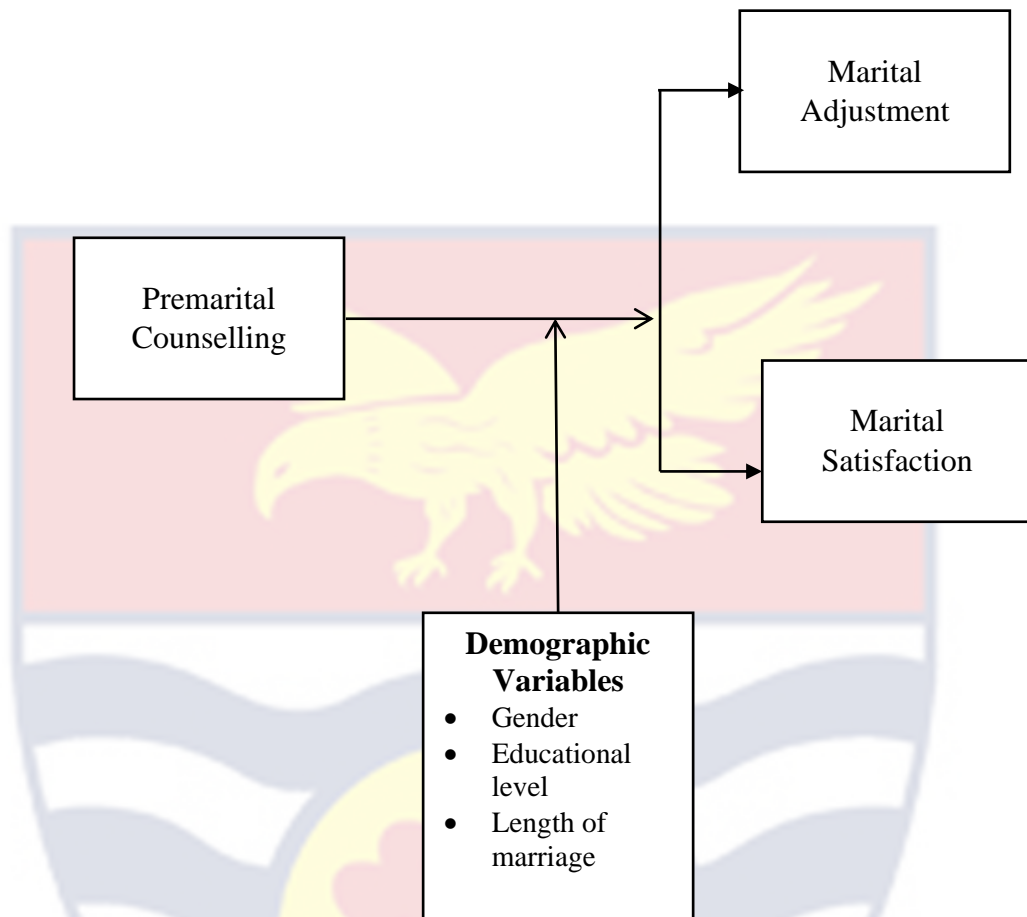


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Own Construct

From Figure 1, it can be seen that premarital counselling can influence marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. It is thus hypothesized in the current study that marital adjustment and marital satisfaction would be different for married individuals who had premarital counselling and those who did not. Also, it is shown in the figure that demographic variables like gender, age and denominations can play significant roles in the extent to which premarital counselling affects marital adjustment and marital satisfaction.

Empirical Review

Difference in Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment of People Who Received Premarital Counselling and those Who Did Not

According to research conducted by Udofia, Bonsi, Agbakpe, and Udofia (2021), couples who participated in premarital counselling reported significantly higher levels of marital satisfaction compared to those who did not. According to research conducted by Kepler (2015), married people who undergo pre-marital counselling report higher levels of marital happiness than their non-counseled peers.

The majority of the sample who attended pre-marital counselling reported higher levels of marital satisfaction compared to the non-counselees, according to research conducted by Odero (2018) among Seventh Day Adventist Churches in the Kibera District of Nairobi County, Kenya.

The results of Ntim's (2014) study on the effects of premarital counselling on adjustment among Christian couples in the Cape Coast Metropolis showed that many Christian spouses and wives viewed premarital counselling favourably. This was due to the fact that the couple's union was happier and more fulfilling after they had participated in premarital counselling.

Couples who sought premarital counselling at centres run by Parhizgar, Esmaelzadeh-Saeieh, Kamrani, Rahimzadeh, and Tehranzadeh (2017) saw an improvement in their level of marital happiness after receiving guidance on improving their communication skills. Couples who participated in premarital therapy reported higher levels of satisfaction than those who did not.

Robert Winch created and developed the complementary needs theory in the 1950s and argued that people are on the lookout for partners who can fill

the inadequacies they may have in their personal and professional lives. In the Complementary Needs Theory, a couple would be satisfied in their marriage if they complement each other and as such during premarital counselling, would-be couple gets to know each other more and look out for ways in which they can complement each other in marriage. This means that premarital counselling can have an impact on how couples complement each other in marriage and thus enhancing their possibility of being satisfied in their marriages.

According to Acosta's (2020) research on the effects of marital setting, ethnicity, and Couple Relationship Education (CRE) and Marriage Relationship Education (MRE) on marital satisfaction in Christian couples, neither CRE nor MRE led to a statistically significant increase in marital satisfaction. (MRE). According to Acosta, there was no significant difference in marital happiness between those who had premarital counselling and those who did not. According to Acosta, the results may be attributable to the fact that some couples do not engage in premarital counselling and education.

Bruhn and Hill (2004) revealed that a benefit of premarital counselling education programmes is that it enables spouses to know that they can turn to other counsellors if they face difficulties in their marriage in the future. This will give couples a sense of security that they can turn to in the event of a breakdown in their relationship rather than contemplating divorce or separation. In addition, couples can draw on the premarital counselling education resources they received to gain the knowledge and skills they need to adjust to married life.

Marriages are more stable and fulfilling when couples participate in premarital counselling courses, which have been shown to decrease divorce

rates. (Waters, 2003). In light of this data, it's safe to say that marriages where both partners received premarital counselling were more stable than those where neither partner did. There are two primary roles of premarital counselling, according to Olson and Defrain (2005). Firstly, premarital counselling teaches partners how to have a satisfying marriage; secondly, premarital counselling helps couples recognise issues and their solutions or prevention as a result of individual differences during the marital connection (Scott et al., 2006).

The solution focused therapy which was reviewed in the study emphasized that couples are assisted during premarital counselling on how to adjust successfully in their marriage. This theory lays emphasis on couple's strength to come out with better solutions to the challenges that they are encountering in marriage. Solution focused premarital counselling is basically strengthening skills method of counselling that focuses on a partner's strategies to come out or develop a shared vision for their marriage relationship. Thus, it assists couples to work together with their vision in order for them to have healthy marriages (Douglas et al., 2001).

According to Douglas et al. (2001), the solution focused premarital counsellor can use the framework of a number of topics that are discussed in premarital education or counselling such as finance, parental roles, communication and conflict resolution skills. This skill-based training will help couples to get more experience in marriage and expose them to some possible challenges in marriage and how they can overcome them in future. For example, it will help partners to know how to communicate with each other positively and also have quality time with each other. Through these, marital adjustment is likely to improve among couples who have had premarital counselling.

Ntim (2014) found no statistically significant variation in marital adjustment between Christian husbands and women who had and had not participated in premarital counselling. Ntim attributed this to couples not taking premarital counselling serious and not learning from it.

Generally, most of the studies mentioned in this section have confirmed that premarital counselling can improve marital adjustment. This means that couples who receive premarital counselling are more likely to have high marital adjustment than those who do not.

Difference in the Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment on the Basis of Gender

Schachtner (2017) found in her study that there was a significant gender difference in the level of marital satisfaction of married couples. Schachtner added specifically that women had higher marital satisfaction than men.

Similarly, Gottman and Silver (1994) also noticed that there existed significant difference between female and male married people in the satisfaction of their marriages. Çetinkaya and Gençdoğan (2014) examined the impact of gender roles on marriage.

Gender was found to be a major factor in the level of marital satisfaction by Kowal, Groyecka-Bernard, Kochan-Wójcik, and Sorokowski (2021). Using a massive, international population, Sorokowski, Kowal, and Sorokowska (2019) analysed marital happiness among Muslims, Christians, and atheists. According to their findings, males report greater marital happiness than women do. Sorokowski et al. found that there were significant gender differences in marriage happiness. The results of the present research confirmed this.

According to Sorokowski et al. (2019), men reported higher levels of marital happiness than women.

Marital satisfaction differed between husbands and women, according to research by Rosowsky, King, Coolidge, Rhoades, and Sega (2012) on long-married older adults. Thus, Rosowsky et al. found that male and female marital happiness varied significantly by gender.

Yoo (2022) studied Korean couples and their perspectives on gender roles, the quality of their communication, and their marital happiness. Yoo discovered that men and women have different perspectives on gender roles, dialogue, and marital happiness. Females placed a higher value on a more gender-neutral outlook, while males placed a higher value on effective dialogue and happy marriages.

Adzovie and Dabone (2021) found that there was a significant mean difference between male and female married people in terms of how they perceived the impact of premarital counselling on their marriage lives. This means that how satisfied couples were after premarital counselling varied by gender. It can be seen from the discussion that males and females have different levels of satisfaction after been exposed to premarital counselling. Specifically, females showed more satisfaction with their marriages compared to males.

Mickelson, Claffey, and Williams (2006) found that males and females differed in terms of their contentment with their marriages. Nurhayati et al. (2019) also reported that in terms of how adjusted couples were, males were more likely to contemplate divorce compared to females. This confirmed the existence of significant differences in the marital adjustment of couples. Yilmaz Karaman, Sonkurt, and Gulec (2021) conducted a study to determine the impact

of gender on spousal adjustment among Turkish men and women with a diagnosis of sexual dysfunction (SD).

Researchers Singh and Bahadur (2021) found no statistically significant variation in marital adjustment between single and dual earner couples between the ages of 25 and 45 when they compared the spirituality of these couples. Marital adjustment is the same for both males and women, according to research by Muraru and Turliuc (2013). They determined that emotional attachment was the sole important predictor of marital adjustment across sex lines.

Difference in the Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment on the Basis of Length of Marriage

Norman (2015) found significant differences existed in how satisfied the participants were on the basis of length of marriage. Similarly, Siji and Rekha's (2018) study in Kerala state, India showed that differences in marital quality and satisfaction was found to be existing in individuals who had been married for not more than five years in comparison with married people who had been married for a period of more than 10 years. Thus, marital satisfaction differed on the basis of length of marriage. It is possible that as people stayed married, they found ways of enjoying their marriages more.

According to research conducted by Ahangar, Juhari, Yaacob, and Talib (2016), the length of a couple's marriage is correlated with their level of happiness in their union. While Bulgan, Kemer, and Yldz (2018) looked at the impact of marriage arrangement (organized by parents vs. by the couple themselves), they found that longer marriages were more likely to result in contented spouses. It was also discovered by Prasetyo, Wahyuningsih, and Karunia (2015) that spousal happiness changes over time.

Marital satisfaction has been shown consistently in the discussion to be connected to length or duration of marriage. In most cases, the more people stay married, it is likely that they would know more about each other and through that improve their satisfaction in their marriage. During premarital counselling, couples are made aware that in the course of marriage, issues may come up and the ability of couples to resolve these issues may have an impact on their satisfaction in their marriage.

Schachtner (2017) indicated that duration of been married was not a key element in how adjusted couples are within their marriages. Oprisan and Cristea (2012) investigated marital satisfaction issues among couples and found that fulfilment or unhappiness is not contingent on years spent in a marital relationship. Similarly, Norman (2015) revealed that stability in marriage was a function of duration of been married. The evidence shown through the review is therefore that marital adjustment could be the same irrespective of how long the couple has been married.

Difference in the Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment on the Basis of Educational Level

Dabone (2012) reveal that the level of marital satisfaction of couples varied on the basis of their level of education. Specifically, Dabone found that higher educated married people were significantly more dissatisfied than individuals whose level of education was low.

Norman (2015) revealed that significant differences existed in how satisfied the participants were on the basis of their level of education. Ojukwu, Woko and Onuoha (2016) sought to determine the impact of educational attainment on marital stability among married persons in Imo State and

concluded that marital stability which was connected to satisfaction levels differed on the basis of level education.

According to Kowal, Groyecka-Bernard, Kochan-Wójcik, and Sorokowski (2021), higher levels of schooling are associated with happier marriages. It was also found that education, age of the spouse, and duration of marriage were all associated with marital satisfaction by Nouri, Kebria, Ahmadianfar, Khosravi, and Amiri (2019). Ahangar et al. (2016) looked at how different demographic variables correlated with marital happiness, and they found that higher levels of education were positively associated with happier marriages.

It can be seen from these studies that marital satisfaction varies on the basis of level of education. It is possible that those who are highly educated may obtain more information which they can use to enhance their satisfaction in marriages.

Reis and Gable (2003) found that for people to adjust in marriage, the main elements were commitment, sacrifice, and forgiveness and not any of their specific demographic characteristics. It is also said by CHRISMA (2006) that contentment in marriage is a subjective experience and the perception of the couples involved in their marriage and this was not dependent on whether people were educated or not.

Among the spouses who participated in Barongo's (2015) study of the correlation between gender and marital happiness in Kisii Township, Kisii County, the results showed no statistically significant correlation between educational attainment and marital satisfaction. In this sense, marital adjustment did not vary on the basis of level of education. The evidence thus confirms that

regardless of level of education, people can be well adjusted in marriage after receiving premarital counselling.

Summary of Literature Review

This chapter provides a summary of the relevant research on the subject at hand. Following are some of the theories on which this review was founded. Robert Winch created and developed the complementary needs theory in the 1950s, which is a mate-selection theory. According to this theory, people should look for spouse whose opposite personality traits complement their own in order to find true love and be happy in their relationships (Winch, 1954). Individuals typically choose a spouse whose attributes compensate for their deficiencies so that they may fill in the gap in their lives. There are two ways in which needs complement one another. Various aspects of marital contentment are intertwined in the concept of "dynamic goal theory," which holds that the marital goal is what each partner expects from the union (Li & Fung, 2011; Wazir, Bashir & Ghaffar, 2020). For marriage fulfillment, achieving the most important marital aim is essential (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Li and Fung's (2011) dynamic goal theory explains and analyses the connection between marriage objectives and marital pleasure. From a lifespan viewpoint, this idea separates goals for the next stage of the partnership. Marital goals and their relationship to marital satisfaction are explicitly addressed in the paradigm. Solution focused therapy is a premarital counselling therapy which was propounded by Steve De Shazer, Insoomkimberg and their team which focus on finding solution to the problem as soon as possible without delay in order to reduce time spend in therapy to promote lasting relief for clients who are suffering or struggling. This therapy emphasis assists clients (couples to come

out of better solution to the challenges that they may encounter in marriage. It helps couples to develop strategies or plans that will assist them to achieve their goals of getting healthy or satisfied marriage.

The review suggests that the word “marriage” is conceptualized in many ways. Marriage is a social institution that has been there in societies since ages. The main aim of marriage is to acts as a link between families or couples. Marriage can be seen as matrimony or wedlock union which is customary agreed union, lawful joined couples that builds ritual rights between the marriage couples and their own children as well as they are in laws (Haviland, Prins, Bunning & Dana 2011). Abrah (2001) defined marriages as a complete union among two biological man and woman who live together in relationship manner in which they benefit from each other such as lawful ways to procreate, sexual gratification, affection and love each other. According to Haviland, Harald, McBride, and Walrath (2011), marriage is a legally recognised and socially sanctioned union or compact between a man and a woman that establishes mutual rights and responsibilities towards the couple's offspring and the couple's in-laws. Most people would agree that love and care are the foundations of marriage (Meredith & Meredith, 2003), which is why it is considered the most sacred human institution (Cutrona, 2004).

According to Syphus (2007), marital breakdown has become unprecedented rate in three decades ago. The breakdown of marriages and family are due to social and financial factors such as financial mismanagement (Ebenywa-Okoh, 2007) much participation in task or working activities (Guzman, 2000), emotional related challenges, absence of mutual respect among the couples (Osakwe & Ebenywa-Okoh, 2003). The proper remedy for

marital satisfaction and adjustment among the couples is premarital counselling. Many marriage and family authors consider premarital counselling as psychotherapeutic relationship between two or more people in which therapist assist or encourage clients such waters 2003 study has indicated that premarital counselling is the type of counselling which ensure marital satisfaction, adjustment and successful marriage. Premarital counselling provides couples with knowledge and skill-based training which enhances partners to improve their marital relationship. Empirical studies have been indicated that premarital counselling is most effective way in improving marriages and avoiding marital breakdown (Stanley 2010). Again, premarital counselling enhances partners to slow down their challenging time or situation (Bruhn & Hill, 2004).

Furthermore, particularly among Christian couples in Ghana, little is known about how premarital counselling affects marital satisfaction and adjustment. Therefore, research into the effects of premarital counselling on marriage happiness and well-being among Christians in Ghana's Central Region is warranted. Within the framework of couples' therapy, the Smalley Clinical Team's in-depth strategy for premarital counselling is unveiled, including its component ideas of emotional safety, the fear cycle, effective communication, teamwork, personal responsibility, and self-care. The article discussed how important it is to respect one's partner in a union from an emotional standpoint. Personal duties also include therapists explaining to partners their respective responsibilities in the marriage in order to enhance satisfied marriage, and the fear cycle discusses the fights or fight reactions on a physiological level, which can help explain the innate human drive to work towards safety when feeling threatened. According to proponents of self-care, one must look to God alone

for completeness and satisfaction rather than to other people. For two people to effectively convey their thoughts, feelings, and intentions to one another, they must interact positively and use a positive communication style.

Team work, which is last stage in safety is emphasized in premarital intensive programme. As human as we are, at time we want to defend, argue and debate in order to win in our minds. The notion of win or lose is only an illusion because if one couple wants to run over, the marriage relationship will surely suffer a big setback and the marriage relation can be automatically undermined by the sane behaviour. It is reasonably beyond doubt that premarital counselling is very important in marital satisfaction and adjustment. Premarital education emphasizes on key components that involved in marital relationship like intimacy, affection, finance, handle in-laws, rearing of children or children upbringing, conflict resolution management, sex, marital expectations, marital roles, interest, goal and personal adjustment. With this rich information on premarital counselling, it is not appropriate for would-be couples to marry without premarital counselling. Due to the importance of premarital counselling, there is a need for any who want to marry to go through premarital counselling. Premarital counselling works on the realities in marital relationship. Due to its significance of premarital counselling should be taken it seriously and much time should put into premarital counselling. Marriage and family therapists in order for couples to received rich knowledge and skills that benefit them. It is obvious that premarital counselling is a cornerstone or bedrock for marital satisfaction and stability.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, the various methods employed to conduct the study are discussed. It discusses data collection and analysis of data. The section deals with the research approach, research design, population, the study area, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, data collection and data analysis procedure.

Research Design and Research Approach

This research used a mixed-methods strategy informed by a pragmatist perspective. Instead of being based on metaphysical tenets, pragmatism is concerned solely with the application of ideas to real-world issues (Creswell, 2014; Shannon-Baker, 2016). Thus, "action-oriented" study methods are guided by pragmatism (Cameron, 2011). Pragmatism, according to Johnson et al. (2007), is an advanced philosophical approach that offers the epistemology and the logic for integrating quantitative and qualitative strategies. Creswell (2014) also notes that pragmatism is the ideology that allows for the blending of different theoretical frameworks, underlying assumptions, research strategies, and analytic techniques.

Mixed methods approach involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a study paying particular attention to how data is collected, analysed, interpreted and reported (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The term "mixed methods" refers to a type of research design in which "data are integrated at one or more stages of the research process," which can be done

simultaneously or in a sequential fashion (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005, p. 108).

Creswell (2009) viewed this approach as not staying committed to any one system or philosophy but drawing from different methods or approaches.

Creswell argued further that the basic assumption of a mixed method approach is that combining quantitative and qualitative methods in a study can help gain a greater insight into issues when compared to using only one approach. This is the reason why the study adopts a mixed methods approach. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will help the researcher gain greater insight into the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and adjustment among SDA members in the Central Region of Ghana.

Wisdom and Creswell (2013, p.13) added that a mixed methods strategy helps "compare quantitative and qualitative data, reflect participants' point of view, foster scholarly interaction, provide methodological flexibility, and collect rich, comprehensive data." In other words, this method will aid in collecting detailed information about partners' contentment and fulfilment in marriage.

The specific type of mixed methods that will be used is the concurrent triangulation mixed methods approach. In this approach researchers gather both quantitative and qualitative data in a concurrent manner so that the data from the two methods can be compared to see if there are similarities, convergence or differences in the responses provided by the respondents. This can be in the form of confirmation, disconfirmation, cross validation, or corroboration (Morgan, 1998). In this sense, the researcher will gather both quantitative and

qualitative data on how premarital counselling affects marital satisfaction and adjustment.

In using mixed methods, the qualitative method will help deal with the weakness of quantitative method which is the lack of in-depth information while the quantitative method will deal with the limitation of the qualitative method which is the inability of getting a large amount of data. Thus, using both methods will help ensure that the study has large amount of data and at the same time rich depth of information.

This study focused on the concurrent type of mixed method approach. In concurrent mixed method, the researchers converge both qualitative and quantitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009). Plastow (2016) added that concurrent research involves a single data collection episode in which various qualitative and quantitative strategies are used to answer a research question.

Concurrent research is used to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a particular study, as stated by Creswell, Tashakkori, Jensen, and Shapley (2003). Concurrent mixed-method data gathering strategies are used to verify one data type against another, to transform data for the purpose of comparison, or to answer a wide range of questions (Creswell et al., 2011). The researcher opted for a mixed-method study design so that he could simultaneously gather qualitative and quantitative data, then compare the two sets of findings during analysis to see if they were consistent (Creswell, 2014).

Research Design

Research design serves as a blueprint for the collection and analysis of data relevant to a certain problem. It serves as a guide for any investigation's

outcome. As stated by Gay (2002), research design includes the study's overall framework, hypotheses tested, and study variables. Research design is determined by the goal of the study in accordance with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). Causal comparative research design was chosen for the study.

According to Gall, Gall, and Borg (2007), "Causal-comparative research is a type of non-experimental investigation in which researchers seek to identify cause-and-effect relationships by forming groups of individuals in which the independent variable is present or absent... and then determining whether the groups differ on the dependent variable," making this a suitable design (p. 306). To best understand how premarital counselling affected the marital happiness and adjustment of SDA members in the Central Region, this research adopted a correlational design.

Unstructured comparative studies don't depend on connections. Instead, they're looking at two groups to determine if there was an effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable (Oppenheimer, 2022). A convincing, logical case must be made to establish a cause-and-effect connection when conducting causal comparative research; otherwise, the results are merely correlated.

The researcher can save time and money by using a causal comparative design, and the study can be completed more quickly. Because the independent variable has already happened, the researcher can now investigate its causes and the interrelationships among other variables (Oppenheimer, 2022). A weakness of the design, however, is that the researcher is not able to control or manipulate the independent variable. Regardless, the design is chosen for this study because it helped the researcher to trace the impact of premarital counselling on marital

satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members in the Central Region of Ghana.

Study Area

The area of the study is the Central Region. The Central Region is one of the sixteen regions in Ghana with one (1) metropolitan assembly, six (6) municipalities and thirteen (13) district assemblies. It is bordered by Ashanti and Eastern regions to the north, Western region to the west, Greater Accra region to the east, and to the south by the Gulf of Guinea. The capital town of the Central Region is Cape Coast with 122 square kilometres in the Cape Coast Metropolitan area. The Central Region covers an area of 9,826 square kilometres. The Central Region was formerly part of the Western Region until 1970. It was carved out before the 1970 population census. Central Region is the smallest region in terms of the area right after Greater Accra, Ahafo and Upper East Regions. Its Capital town Cape Coast was the first capital city in Gold Coast, now modern Ghana till 1877 when later Capital was moved to Greater Accra Region in Accra.

The Central Region is made up of the following; Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly, Abura Asebu Kwamankese, Agona East Assembly, Agona West Municipal, Ajumako Eyan Essiem District Assembly, Assikuma Odoben Brakwa District Assembly, Assin Central Municipal Assembly, Assin South District Assembly, Awutu Senya East Municipal Assembly, Awutu Senya West District Assembly, Efutu Municipal Assembly, Ekumfi District Assembly, Gomoa East, Central District Assembly, Gomoa West District Assembly, Komenda Edina Eguafo Municipal Assembly, Twi Afi Mokwa District Assembly, Twifu Hemang lower Denkyira District Assembly.

According to Ghana Statistical Service (Web), 2019, the population of the entire Central Region is 2,563,228. The population of rural areas is 1,163,985 and urban is 1,037,878. The population of male is 1,150,000 and female population is 1,251,700. Even though the majority of the citizens of the Central Region are Farmers and Fishermen. Besides these, some are civil servants, traders, mechanics, and government employees. Most people living in Central Region are of average middle-income status or people who have a fairly high standard of living and educational standard. The major religions practised by the people who are living Central Region are Islam, Traditional and Christian religion. The Christian religion is the most preferred religion among the people of the Central Region and next to it is Islam.

Education has been the region's hallmark in Ghana. The region has two major universities; the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education, Winneba, Perez University College at Gomoa Pomadzi near Winneba, and one technical university, the Cape Coast Technical University. The region also has three colleges of education: Komenda College; Assin Foso College; and Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) College, Cape Coast. The region also has famous historic secondary schools. These are Mfantshipim School, Saint Augustine's, Wesley Girls' High School, Adisadel College and Holy Child. Most prominent citizens in the country passed through these schools. The region is made up of mostly fishermen and small-scale farmers. The region has tourist attractions, such as Elmina Castle, Cape Coast Castle, and Kakum National Park. The history of Ghana cannot be complete without Central Region because of its first role in Ghana's development.

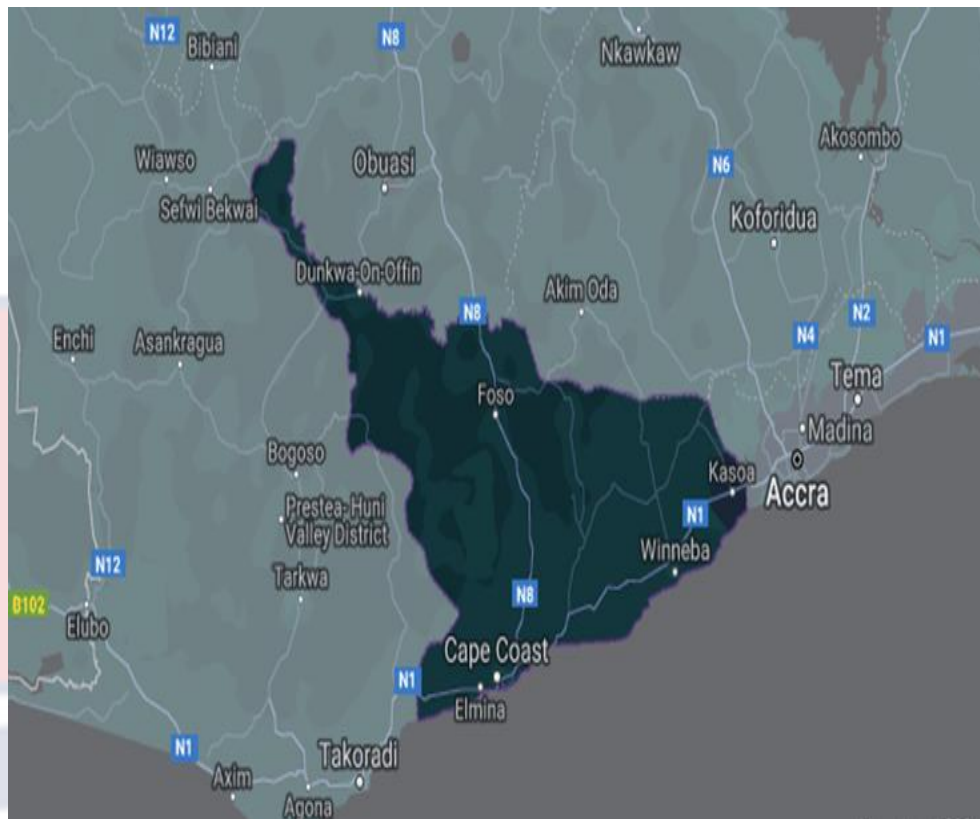


Figure 2: Map of Central Region

Source: Department of Geography and Regional Planning UCC, 2014

Population

People in a certain region upon whom a researcher depends for data constitute the population in a study. There needs to be uniformity in the information gathered about the human components. Population, as defined by Lavrakas (2008), is "the entire set of people about whom inferences are drawn or research is continued." Research relies on data collected from a population of units or elements, as mentioned by Frankel and Wallen (2006). There are two subsets of the population. These individuals make up both the intended and reachable demographics. The term "target population" is used to describe the complete set of individuals or entities to which the study's results are intended to be applied (Cox, 2008). The accessible community, on the other hand, is a subset of the target population that the researcher actually has access to (Polit

& Hungler, 1999). All Central Area residents who are married and identified as Christians will serve as the study's group. Since the purpose of the study is to examine the effects of premarital counselling on the happiness and adjustment of married Christian individuals in the Central Region during their marriage, choosing married Christian individuals for the study is appropriate. This is the main reason why the target population comprised all married Christian individuals in the Central Region.

The population comprised married individuals. The target population of the study consist of all married individuals in the SDA church in the Central Region. But the accessible population comprised married individuals from the six selected SDA churches for the study. There were 526 churches with married individual's population of 21,472 as at the 2022, Mid-South Ghana Conference of SDA church, Regional Headquarters, Cape Coast. The married individuals were selected for the study because having gone through the marriage for some years, they stood in a better position to provide the necessary information for the study.

The accessible population for this study however comprises married Seventh-Day Adventist Church individuals in 6 selected churches in the Central Region. But the accessible population comprised married individuals from the six selected SDA churches for the study. The total number of married individuals in the 6 churches as obtained from the various churches is 1,371. The breakdown is shown in Table 1. This means that the sample for the study would be drawn from the six selected churches.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample refers to a population subgroup being studied to generalize with respect to the target population (Creswell, 2014). The need for sampling in a study, as stated by Fowler (2009), is to pick a segment of the population which is an actual representation of the population.

Three hundred married people made up the study's sample population. From a total of 1,371, 300 married people were chosen. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommend a minimum sample size of 300 when working with a population of 1,371. Cost, representativeness, and allowable sampling error all played roles in determining the final sample number.

Multi stage sampling procedure was employed to select married individuals for the study. The first phase involved obtaining sample from (a list of all the married individuals in the 526 SDA churches from the Mid-South Ghana Conference of SDA, regional headquarters, Cape Coast 2022).

The second phase involved proportional allocation of sample size among the 526 churches such that churches with large population obtain large sample size as shown in table 1. Finally, simple random sampling techniques (random numbers generated from excel) was employed to select the sample (300 married SDAs). This technique was to give equal chance opportunity for respondents to be selected. The sampling techniques are described in the stages in which they occurred.

Stage One: Purposive sampling technique was used to select six (6) churches from all the churches in the Central Region. Kasoa SDA Central Church; Agona Swedru SDA Central Church; Cape Coast Central Church; Seventh-Day Adventist Church; Dunkwa Offin Central Church; Assin Fosu Central Church

and Mankesim SDA Central Church. These churches were selected given their long years of existence and following in Ghana. Also, these churches have gained great recognition in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Ghana. Finally, given the total number of participants needed for the study, these churches have a suitable population of members who can serve as respondents for the study. Purposive sampling seeks to select participants who are representative of the population as a whole, share certain traits (such as religious affiliation and ideology), and are most likely to provide information that is useful for answering the research questions at hand (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003; Patton, 2002).

The researcher divided SDA churches in the Central Region into six zones. These are: Kasoa zone, Swedru zone, Cape Coast zone, Dunkwa on-Offin zone, Assin Foso zone and Mankessim zone. Then the researcher purposively selected one church from each to achieve both representative and widespread coverage. The SDA church selected to represent each zone was the central church of that zone. The six of them are the following: Kasoa Central SDA Church, Swedru Central SDA Church, Cape Coast Central SDA Church, Dunkwa-on-Offin Central SDA Church, Assin Fosu Central SDA church and Mankesim Central SDA Church.

Table 1: Population of Six Selected Schools

Six Churches	Population	Male	Female
Kasoa Central SDA Church	410	201	209
Swedru Central SDA church	403	296	207
Cape Coast Central SDA Church	337	166	170
Durkwa Central SDA Church	296	149	147
Assin Fosu Central SDA Church	304	150	154
Mankessin Central SDA Church	271	135	136
Total	2021	1097	1023

Source: Various Churches and Author's Calculation

Stage Two: Stratified sampling was used to select the respondents from the 6 churches based on a ratio proportionate to the total population. Stratified sampling was used because it allows researchers to obtain a sample population that best represents relative proportions in various strata of the entire population being studied.

In doing this, the number of participants to be taken from each church was calculated based on their proportions within the main population and grouped under each stratum. That is, those who received premarital counselling (PC) and those who did not (No PC). The total number of married SDAs in the six churches together is 1,371. This was obtained from the various churches. Simple random sampling (lottery method) was used to select respondents from each of the six churches based on their percentage in the population came to the following: 66, 65, 50, 38, 45, and 36 respectively. This selection is stated to

ensure equal representation from each of these churches based on their population. This will make the results preferably generalizable to all the churches. The distribution is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants from the Selected Churches

Sampled Churches	Married Individuals					Sub Sample		
	Fm	M	F	PC	NonPC	Fs	PC	NonPC
Kasoa Central SDA Church	300	221	79	220	80	66	48	18
Swedru Central SDA Church	298	195	103	228	70	65	50	15
Cape Coast Central SDA Church	228	106	122	166	62	50	36	14
Dunkwa on-Offin Central Church	186	98	88	142	44	38	29	9
Assin Fosu Central Church	195	102	93	135	60	45	31	14
Mankesim Central SDA Church	164	85	79	114	50	36	25	11
Total	1,371			1005	366	300	219	81

Source: Various Churches and Author's Calculation

Fm= Frequency of married individuals in the church

Fs= Frequency of sampled participants

PC= Premarital counselling recipients

NonPC= Non-recipient of Premarital Counselling

The simple random non-probability sampling procedure proved useful in selecting the participants. This is to ensure the equal representation of the participants from the churches. Given this distribution, the purposive and convenience sampling techniques will be adopted following the non-probability sampling.

Researchers can get more accurate results from their studies by using purposeful sampling, which involved selecting respondents based on their distinct characteristics and informative nature. Selecting elements based on their

possession of specific traits pertinent to the study is an example of how purposeful sampling is put to use (Nworgu, 2015). Since the researcher is interested in a category of respondents, it is, therefore, necessary to select an area where the respondents may possess the characteristics that the researcher needs for the study. Under the purposive sampling, I considered the typical sampling. This is because the participants are selected typically based on their experience which is related to the research. This, therefore, makes the purposive technique appropriate to use. The purposive sampling is used to select the churches and the individuals for the proposed study.

For the qualitative part of the study, 18 participants with 10 males and 8 females out of the sample of 300 were purposively sampled and interviewed. According to Latham (2016), a minimum of 15 is an appropriate sample for most qualitative interview studies. Latham argued that by the 15th participant, saturation would have been reached. Saturation is a phenomenon where additional participants in a qualitative study do not provide any additional insights. In this study, the researcher purposively chose three participants each from the six churches to make 18 participants for the qualitative part of the study.

Research Instruments

Data will be collected in this study using questionnaire and interview guide. Questionnaire was used in gathering the quantitative data while interview guide was used in gathering the qualitative data. The questionnaire was adopted from the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) developed by G.B. Spanier (1976) and the Index of Marital Satisfaction Scale (IMSS) developed by Hudson (1982). Content and Perception of premarital counselling was measured with

premarital counselling scale developed by Ansah-Hughes, Akyina & Oduro-Okyireh (2015).

The researcher will ensure that the instrument is "valid, reliable and unambiguous" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 438). The researcher did by ensuring that the items covered all the objectives of the study, reliability is established and the items are stated in clear terms. Several items or statements that are in keeping with the research study's goals make up the questionnaire, as described by Amedahe (2000). As a means to gather data from participants or a sample population, it is one of the most effective methods for obtaining accurate and dependable results.

Fast, inexpensive, valid, and accurate data can be gathered from a large number of participants using the questionnaire instrument. As a result, the questionnaire was used to help the researcher reach a large number of. Additionally, this questionnaire is recommended in this study because of its lack of personalization. In other words, the questions are the same for all participants, anonymity is taken into consideration, and there is no geographic barrier to its use. In addition, it raises one's social standing and yields a low profit (Ofori & Dampson, 2011).

Content of the questionnaire and return rate are taken into account throughout time (Walliman, 2005). Questions on questionnaires can be left unanswered or inaccurately represent participants' emotional states. According to Ofori and Dampson (2011), a questionnaire does not provide room for further questions or encouragement of participants. But other couples may decline to fill out the survey because they do not want to divulge the difficulties they face in their marriage to the general world, even if they are assured of privacy. Close-

ended questions were used in the study since they provided participants with an authoritative choice. To further aid in statistical analysis, the responses of different participants may be compared and analysed more quickly and easily than before.

Questionnaire administration can be broken down into two basic categories, according to Brown (2001). The first is a self-administered survey, which is typically delivered to those who have indicated their interest. There are serious flaws in this process. That is to say, respondents rarely, if ever, return the survey. Because of this, the researcher is not present to clarify any misunderstandings or vague inquiries that may emerge. The second kind is a questionnaire that is given out in a group setting. The questionnaire "is administered to the groups of persons all at one time and place..." in this method (Brown, 2001, p. 7). As far as questionnaire administration methods go, this one appears to be more effective than relying on respondents to fill out their own forms. There are high rates of returns, researchers are on hand to clarify any questions that may be obscure, and researchers are privy to the circumstances under which questionnaires were completed. The second strategy was used in the study to assure a high return rate and to aid in the generalisation of the results' reliability.

Closed-ended structured questionnaire items was used in this investigation. There are many types of closed-ended questionnaires, but the most common is the yes/no/multiple-choice questionnaire. Moreover, it is utilised to collect quantitative data from the participants as well. Quantitative or numerical data can be gathered through the use of closed-ended questionnaires. A key benefit of using close-ended items is that its structure offers participants

the authority to answer in whatever way they see fit. Participants can also react more quickly and more easily, and the responses of various participants may be more easily compared.

The selected church members were asked to fill out the questionnaire which is titled the Marital Adjustment and Satisfaction Inventory (MASI). Four sections were included in the survey (A, B, C and D). Section 'A' provided information on the couples' demographics. Participants will only be allowed to select the answer that they believe is the most accurate. Section 'B' will inquire into the opinions of married Christian individuals in the Central Region on premarital counselling. Data on marital adjustment are sought in Section 'C' of the questionnaire. Regarding marital satisfaction, Hudson's (1982) marriage satisfaction index will be used in Section D of the survey. The marital satisfaction of married couples was measured using this tool. The scale has outstanding discriminatory construct, content, and face validity, making it a reliable measurement tool.

Scales

Dyadic adjustment scale: As mentioned earlier, in assessing the marital adjustment of the participants, the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) was adapted. Dyadic Adjustment Scale was developed by G.B. Spanier in 1976. This scale has 32 items. Self-report instruments are used to evaluate partners satisfaction and also to evaluate how each partner within the partner perceives his or her relationship. This scale aims to measure psychometric properties. This original version of the measure included items and subscales aimed at evaluating relationship satisfaction, intimacy, affective expression and the degree to which partners agree on vital issues in the relationship.

The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS 32) was originally designed to evaluate relationship quality. It has four subscales which are Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion and Affective Expression. Dyadic Consensus refers to the degree to which the couple agrees on matters of importance to the relationship while Dyadic Satisfaction is seen as the degree to which the couple is satisfied with their relationship (Spanier, 1976). Additionally, Spanier viewed Dyadic Cohesion as the degree of closeness and shared activities experienced by the couple and Affective Expression as the degree of demonstrations of affection and sexual relationships.

Spanier (1976) reported an appropriate level of internal consistency for the whole scale of the Dyadic Adjustment Scale to be 0.96 and for each of the individual subscales (Cronbach's alpha: Dyadic Consensus = 0.90, Dyadic Satisfaction = 0.94, Dyadic Cohesion = 0.86, Affective Expression = 0.73). This means that the scale was deemed reliable.

Index of Marital Satisfaction: To assess the marital satisfaction of the participants in the study, the Index of Marital Satisfaction scale was adapted. Index of Marital Satisfaction was developed by Walter W. Hudson in 1982. The index marital satisfaction scale had 25 items instrument that measured the extent to which challenges are encountered in a romantic relationship. It is also used to evaluate marital satisfaction among marriage partners. The basic instrument that was used in this study is the Marital Satisfaction Inventory by Hudson (1982). This instrument is widely used globally to evaluate conflicts within the marital relationship. This scale has excellent discriminant, construct, content and face validity.

Hudson (1982) reported an alpha coefficient of .90 for the Index of Marital Satisfaction. This was the reliability co-efficient of the original instrument. This meant that the instrument was reliable.

Perception and Content of Premarital Counselling Scale

Content and Perception of premarital counselling was measured with adopted premarital counselling scale developed by Ansah-Hughes, Akyina and Oduro-Okyireh (2015). Perception of premarital counselling scale has ten (10) items and measured on five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale has an alpha coefficient of .90. Content of premarital counselling scale has thirteen (13) items and measured with Yes/No. the scale had an alpha coefficient of .67.

The SDA church has manual for premarital counselling written by the General Conference of SDA church (GCSDA, 2005). This manual is used by all the SDA pastors in the church for premarital counselling. The manual includes contents of premarital counselling such as sex in marriage, communication in marriage, financial management in marriage, conflict management in marriage, purpose of marriage, coping with each other's in marriage, couples' expectation in marriage, extended family relationships, future aspirations of each partner, child rearing and parenthood, divorce prevention in marriage, religious differences and previous marriage and children if applicable.

Interview Guide

Qualitative approach to research has a preference for 'natural' settings as the primary source of data and aims at a vivid and rich description and explanation of phenomenon with a view to understanding it from the

perspectives of participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In collecting the data for the study, an interview guide was used. An interview is “an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasises the social situatedness of research data” (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2003, p. 267). Specifically, the semi-structured interview guide was used for the study.

In a semi-structured interview, participants are given a series of free-form queries to answer (Ryan et al., 2009). Using semi-structured interviews as a data gathering method entails multiple steps, such as creating an interview guide, conducting the interview, and analysing the results (Rubin, 2005). Researchers here have zeroed in on the first two stages.

Development of the interview guide

In order to collect information that is relevant to the goals of the research, an interview guide must be developed (Ryan et al., 2009) Interview guides are useful because they allow participants to describe their own experiences rather than the researcher dominating the conversation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1995). Semi-structure interview permits the researcher to earn well detailed insight into the views, perceptions, characteristics and actual situations significant to the focus of the study without any predetermined bias about the study (Patton, 2002). The semi-structured interview guide was designed by the researcher to cover three key areas. These include the views of the participants about premarital counselling, marital adjustment and marital satisfaction. Specifically, the interview guide will comprise 10 questions.

Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was pilot tested in Western Region specifically Axim SDA Church, Tarkwa SDA Church, Sekondi SDA Church, Alubo SDA Church, Shamah SDA Church and Deboase SDA Church. Geographically close to the Central Region, its people share many of the same values and cultural beliefs as those found in the Central Region, which makes it an obvious choice. Six churches in the Western Region were chosen to administer an early questionnaire to 60 married men and women with comparable traits to those in the actual study; this was done as part of a pilot test, a small-scale trial in which a select number of participants address a research instrument and provide feedback on the study's viability and mechanics (Thabane et al., 2010).

In order to ensure that the questionnaire is appropriate for couples receiving premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and adjustment, pilot testing is being conducted. Additionally, it serves as a check on the efficiency of administrative procedures. The results of the pilot test will be used as a basis for implementing the new system. Prior to this, the questionnaire's design was changed to ensure that font size and line spacing were uniform. As a result, fieldwork planning was easier and less stressful. If there are any ambiguities or irrelevant items in the instrument, my supervisor checked it out for me. In addition, the instrument's internal consistency and dependability are established throughout the pilot testing. Input data was entered into the Stata programme (SPSS version 25). For the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, the results was utilised to compute. After the pilot studies the reliability coefficient the instruments were Cronbach's alpha: Dyadic Consensus = 0.85, Dyadic Satisfaction = 0.84, Dyadic Cohesion = 0.83, Affective Expression = 0.70), marital satisfaction scale

had a Cronbach alpha of .87 and perception of premarital counselling had an alpha coefficient of .88. Content of premarital counselling scale had an alpha coefficient of .66. This means that the instrument was reliable. This demonstrated the instrument's dependability. Even though, the reliability of the instruments has been established by the original developers, it would be necessary to establish in the reliability in the study area.

Validity of the Instrument

The validity of an instrument can be divided into four categories: internal, external, content, and construct. Before beginning the study, the instrument's content validity were examined. Two primary methods were followed by the researcher in order to ensure the validity of the instruments. Prior to instrument creation, it was checked to see if it was in accordance with the themes identified in the literature and conceptual framework. Second, my supervisor looked over the questionnaire after it is finished. My supervisor's feedback were taken into account while evaluating the questionnaire for the study.

Reliability of the Instrument

Data gathering methods and processes must be reliable and accurate in order to be considered reliable. How well a method performs when repeated under the same conditions is referred to as the method's reliability. If a method lacks reliability, it also lacks validity, but strong reliability does not guarantee high validity. To get the same results under different circumstances, it is feasible to employ the same approach without actually measuring what was intended (Yin, 2003). In the words of Denscombe (2003), dependability is a matter of whether the research tools are impartial and whether the same results can be

achieved in a similar study. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2019), reliability is the measurement instrument's stability and steadiness regardless of the stability of the test-takers. As stated by Stangor (2004), a reliable measuring instrument is one that does not have any errors, and so measures the consistency over time of interest.

Cronbach's Alpha was utilised to calculate the instrument's reliability coefficients in this investigation. Reliability of data and findings is a key criterion in any research process. Reliability is primarily concerned with the "consistency, dependability, and replicability" of "the outcomes of a piece of study" (Nunan, 1999, p. 14). Data in numerical form may be checked for reliability, making it easier to get similar results in a quantitative way. The suggested study leveraged internal reliability. Internal consistency is concerned with the accuracy and precision with which data are collected, analysed, and reported back to the user. When the study re-examines the data from the pilot testing and gets the conclusions, it may be able to achieve internal reliability. The reliability of the different scales which were used in the study had been established by the original developers but would still be established in this study

Data Trustworthiness of Interview Data

Validity and reliability are viewed differently in qualitative studies. With respect to quantitative data, reliability refers to the extent to which there is consistency in data, whereas validity relates to the extent to which the data covers the objectives of the study. Nonetheless, "reliability in qualitative research refers to the dependability while validity refers to the extent to which a discovery is judged to have been interpreted in a correct way" (Golafshani, 2003, p. 13). This implies that the concepts of reliability and validity are

relatively foreign and not a good fit to the field of qualitative research (DeVault, 2018). Therefore, instead of centering on reliability and validity, researchers using the qualitative approach deal with data trustworthiness. Data trustworthiness “consists of the following components: (a) credibility; (b) transferability; (c); dependability; and (d) confirmability” (DeVault, 2018, p. 1).

Credibility: This is the most important criterion in establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative data and involves the researcher clearly linking the findings of a study with actual situations in order to illustrate the veracity of the study’s findings (Olivia, 2018). In establishing the credibility of data, the researcher used triangulation of sources which meant that data was gathered data from the different participants at different settings and different points in time. This ensured that the views of the participants are their own and not influenced by the views of other people.

Transferability: This is seen as the generalisation of the study’s findings to other situations and contexts (DeVault, 2018). Generalization is however limited in qualitative research due to the fact that qualitative studies involve small sample size. In addressing the extent of transferability of the data, the researcher’s choice of purposive sampling was helpful. Purposive sampling helped deal with transferability since information from targeted group of people is dwelled on rather than generalized.

Dependability: Dependability is significant to trustworthiness because “it establishes the research study’s discoveries as consistent and repeatable” (Olivia 2018, p.1). In establishing dependability, an outside researcher carried out an inquiry audit on the research study which meant the data collection procedure and analyses were vetted. This was done by the researcher’s supervisor.

Confirmability: This is concerned with the belief that researchers have in the results of their study as being a true reflection of the information obtained from the participants (Olivia, 2018). Thus, the researcher has to ensure that the data, findings and interpretations made in the study are the true reflections of the intents of the participants and not created by the researcher. In establishing confirmability in this study, the researcher documented every part of the study from the beginning to the end so that other researchers can verify the procedure of conducting the study. Also, some of the participants were asked to check copies of the transcribed interview to find out if it confirms what they actually said.

Data Collection Procedures

Church leaders were contacted using a letter obtained from the University of Cape Coast's Guidance and Counselling department. It is planned to hire and train a research assistant to help with the administration of questionnaires. A high return rate and proper instrument sorting are ensured by administering and collecting the instruments the same day they are finished. For each church, each questionnaire had a unique serial number. This was done to ensure that there is high return rate of the questionnaire for the participants.

The instrument was handed out in person in the conference room of each of the sample churches by deacons and ushers from the church. There was a presentation on the study's principal goal, explaining the rights of married couples to participate and how to complete the surveys. This is being done in order to ensure a high response rate to the survey and the collection of accurate data.

Concerning the interview data, the sampled participants were interviewed by the researcher. Specifically, the interviews were conducted at places of comfort by the participants. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. In all the data collection was carried out in a total of six weeks.

Objectivity

Objectivity in data collection procedures refers to the practice of minimizing bias and personal influence during the process of gathering data. It ensures that the data collected is accurate, reliable, and free from undue subjectivity, so that the results can be trusted and used for meaningful analysis and decision-making. To ensure objectivity in this study, standardized protocols and procedures was used for data collection. Consistent measurement techniques, tools, and methods across all data collection instances was employed.

Two research assistance were recruited and properly trained for the data collection procedures. This reduced the chances of errors introduced due to lack of understanding or misinterpretation of instructions.

Data Management Issues

Before data can be analysed, it must first be documented and modified in the field. Survey instruments must be transcribed, audited, coded and entered into a database utilising software. Because of the sensitive nature of the data, the researcher handled the inventories filled out by participants to verify that good data management policies are followed. A secured cabinet was used to keep the data safe after the collection process is complete. The transcribed interview was also be kept safe by the researcher. A password was required to

access the information once it had been inputted into the computer. Names of the respondents was not to be taken in order to maintain the anonymity necessary to protect them. Respondents were be identified by the code numbers that were assigned.

Ethical Considerations

According to Bell and Bryman (2007), a research study's ethical consideration is one of the most important sections. In a similar vein, Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) asserted that ethical considerations ensure participant rights while simultaneously preserving scientific objectivity. This study focused on the importance of anonymity for the individual in question. I made everyone in the congregation know about the upcoming study. Aside from that, a formal letter requesting permission to conduct the study in each church's home and family life department was written before the survey was done. As recommended by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), this study's scientific integrity necessitates an honest disclosure of the accurate suit. All participating congregations and couples received an introductory letter from the Guidance and Counselling Department. Finally, Bell and Bryman's eleven ethical principles and guidelines was evaluated in the study.

Many people believe that exposing responders to questions in a questionnaire could inflict physical and mental harm. A number of options was presented to respondents in the questionnaire and interview guide so that they can choose what they feel is most relevant to them. Respondents' privacy and anonymity was assured. To dispel any lingering questions and confusions, the researcher exposed his name to the participants. The researcher also ensured that any ideas, works, or publications they use are properly cited and recognised.

Data Processing Procedures

The items were updated to assist the researcher in ensuring that rules and criteria are followed. According to the study's goals and assumptions, the data was organised into themes and categories. The research questions were addressed in each segment. Concerning the quantitative data, there was a master sheet list developed to acquire responses from the closed-ended questionnaire in order to obtain significant responses from participants. After correcting the instrument, a list of sheets indicating the coding scheme was generated to provide a road map for the explanation of the analysis of the variables.

Windows-based SPSS 25.0 statistical package for social sciences was used to analyse the obtained quantitative data. The direction of the replies was utilised to determine the relationship using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentages, tables, and frequencies. Each questionnaire sent to responders was checked for completeness and consistency before the data was analysed. Data entry omitted questions that were not completed. This gave a solid foundation for the study's objective findings.

Quantitative data for research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 was analysed using mean and standard deviation. However, data for research questions 5 and 6 was analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Hypotheses one and two was tested using independent samples t-test. Hypotheses three to eight was tested using two-way ANOVA.

Regarding the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used in the analysis. Thematic analysis involves “identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 126). The data was transcribed and reported according to the research

questions of the study. In doing the thematic analysis, the researcher converted the audiotape recordings into text data and themes derived from the text. Some specific statements was quoted to support the meaning derived from the views of the participants.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The main purpose of the study examined the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and adjustment among married SDA individuals in the Central Region of Ghana. This chapter presents the results and discussion of the study. The demographic data are presented before the main results.

Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics are presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: Background Data of Respondents

Item	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	156	52.0
Female	144	48.0
Total	300	100.0
Length of Marriage		
1-5 years	77	25.7
6-10 years	82	27.3
11-15 years	66	22.0
16 years and above	75	25.0
Total	300	100.0
Age at Marriage		
20-30	227	75.7
31-40	69	23.0
41-50	4	1.3
Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3 shows that more than half of the respondents (52%) were males while 48% of the respondents were females. This implies that there were more males than females in the study. It is also shown in Table 2 that in terms of length of marriage, the respondents had been married for one to five years (25.7%), 6 to 10 years (27.3%), 11 to 15 years (22%) and 16 years and above (25%). From this data, it is clear that most of the respondents had been married for long enough to have experience needed to respond to the questions in the study. All the respondents were married.

Finally, it is shown in Table 3 that majority of the respondents (75.7%) got married between 20 and 30 years of age while 23% got married between 31 and 40 years. Only four respondents indicated that they got married between 41 and 50 years. It appears clearly from the data that more of the respondents married at a younger age.

The background data presented is relevant in the study because they can have some influence on issues of marital satisfaction and adjustment. This is why some of the hypotheses tested in the study focus on differences in marital satisfaction and adjustment on the basis of the background data.

Further, the educational and occupational data of the respondents are presented. The data is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Educational and Occupational Data of Respondents

Item		
Highest Educational Level		
No formal education	22	7.3
Basic	28	9.3
SHS / Technical	75	25.0
Tertiary	175	58.3
Total	300	100.0
Occupation		
Government employee	151	50.3
Private employee	88	29.3
Unemployed	23	7.7
Retired	9	3.0
Farming	23	7.7
Entrepreneur	6	2.0
Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 4 shows the educational and occupational data of the respondents. It is shown that more than half of the respondents (58.3%) had tertiary level of education while 25% of the respondents had secondary level of education. In terms of occupation, it can be seen that 50.3% of the respondents were government workers while 29.3% of the respondents were private employees. From the data, it can be seen that most of the respondents were educated and were employed.

The data on whether the respondents had received premarital counselling or not is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Data on Receiving Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling	Frequency (%)	Percentage (%)
Yes	196	65.3
No	104	34.7
Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 5 shows that 65.3% of the respondents received premarital counselling before getting married while 34.7% of the respondents did not receive premarital counselling before marriage. From the data, it can be said that majority of the respondents went through premarital counselling before getting married.

Demographic Data of Interviewed Participants

A total of 18 married individuals were interviewed in this study. All the participants were members of SDA churches in the study area. In terms of gender, it was found that 10 of them were males while 8 of them were females. Regarding length of marriage, 10 of the respondents had been married for 6 to 10 years, five had been married for 11 to 15 years and the remaining three had been married for above 16 years. Further, it was found that majority of the interviewed respondents (14) went through premarital counselling before getting married while four of the respondents did not go through premarital counselling.

Main Results

The results from the analysis in relation to the research questions and hypotheses are presented in this section.

Research Question 1: What is the level of marital satisfaction of married SDA members in the Central Region?

This research question aimed at finding out the level of marital satisfaction of married SDA members in the Central Region. The respondents were provided with a list of statements to respond to, so as to indicate their feelings concerning their marriage. The portion of the instrument answering this research question was scored on a scale: “1= Rarely or none of the time”, “2=

A little of the time”, “3= Sometime”, “4= A good part of the time”, and “5= Most or all of the time”. The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Based on the scoring, a cut-off point of 3.0 was used since the scale was a five-point Likert-type. This cut-off point is deemed appropriate according to Croasmun and Ostrom (2011). Mean scores above 3.0 were considered high with those less than 3.0 seen as low. A high mean score gives the indication that the respondents often had the particular feeling about their marriages while a low mean score gives the indication that the respondents rarely had the particular feeling about their marriages. Thus, higher mean scores show satisfaction with marriages while lower mean scores show dissatisfaction with marriages.

The results obtained from the analysis are presented in Table 6 and 7.

Table 6: Level of Marital Satisfaction of Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	130	43.3
High	170	56.7
Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 7: Marital Satisfaction of Respondents

Statement	Mean	SD
I feel my partner is affectionate enough	3.27	1.42
I feel that my partner treats me badly	2.12	1.28
I feel that my partner cares for me	3.42	1.46
I feel that I would not choose the same partner again	2.54	1.50
I feel that I can trust my partner	3.72	1.35
I feel that our relationship is breaking up	1.88	1.26
I feel that my partner doesn't understand me	2.51	1.28
I feel that our relationship is a good one	3.61	1.37
I feel that ours is a very happy relationship	3.44	1.41
I feel that our life together is dull	2.38	1.45
I feel that we have a lot of fun together	3.35	1.35
I feel that my partner doesn't confide in me	2.71	1.46
I feel that ours is a very close relationship	3.41	1.33
I feel that I cannot rely on my partner	2.39	1.43
I feel that we do not have enough interests in common	2.67	1.37
I feel that we manage arguments and disagreements very well	3.41	1.31
I feel that we do a good job of managing our finances	3.31	1.46
I feel that I should never have married my partner	2.67	1.53
I feel that my partner and I get along very well together	3.67	1.22
I feel that our relationship is stable	3.69	1.32
I feel that my partner is pleased with me as a sex partner	3.69	1.33
I feel that we should do more things together	3.75	1.34
I feel that the future looks bright for our relationship	3.40	1.48
I feel that our relationship is empty	2.16	1.39
I feel there is no excitement in our relationship	2.39	1.42
Mean of means/Average of Standard Deviation	3.02	1.38

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 6 shows that most of the respondents had high level of marital satisfaction. Table 7 shows that respondents often felt that they should do more

things together ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.34$) and often felt that they could trust their partners ($M=3.72$, $SD=1.35$). The respondents also often felt that their relationship was stable ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.32$) and often felt that their partners were pleased with them as sex partners ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.33$). Additionally, the respondents often felt that they and their partners get along very well together ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.22$) and felt that their relationship was a good one ($M=3.61$, $SD=1.37$).

The above statements were ones which recorded higher mean scores, showing that the respondents often had those feelings. The indication is that the respondents were satisfied with their marriages. This was confirmed by the mean of means score of 3.02. With a mean of mean score of 3.02, it can be said that the respondents were generally satisfied in their marriages. Specifically, the respondents trusted their partners, had stable relationship, were pleased sexually, got along well together and saw their relationship to be good.

The interviewed respondents made similar statements about their marital satisfaction. From those who were interviewed, three main themes were highlighted when they were asked about their marital satisfaction. These included: “marriage stability”, “trustworthy”, and “contentment”.

Marriage stability

The respondents indicated that they felt their marriages were stable. They were of the view that since been married, their marriages have been good and they felt that there was stability in their marriage. Some of the comments of the participants are as follows:

“mmm...for me my marriage has been stable. My husband and I have not been shaken by any situation we have encountered.” – Married woman 3

“My marriage is good and stable. My wife and I are really good with each other and our marriage keep growing stronger and stronger.” – Married man 7

Trustworthy

The participants who were interviewed also made it clear that their marriage was trustworthy. They indicated that the trust their partners and as such were satisfied in their marriages. Some of the comments are:

“I am satisfied in my marriage because of the trust that exists between myself and my spouse.” – Married man 8

Another participant made this statement:

“My wife trusts me and I trust her too. Because of the trust, my marriage brings me a lot of satisfaction.” – Married man 10

Contentment

The interviewed respondents noted that they are pleased with their marriages. For instance, one married woman noted that:

“I am pleased with what is going on in my marriage now. I can say I am satisfied.”

From the results, it can be seen that the data obtained from the interviewed participants are similar to that obtained from the questionnaire. Overall, the respondents considered their marriages stable, trusted their partners and were pleased with their marriages.

Research Question 2: What is the level of marital adjustment of married SDA members in the Central Region?

This research question aimed at finding out the marital adjustment of married SDA members in the Central Region. The respondents were provided with a list of statements to respond to, so as to indicate how often they agree or disagree on issues in their marriage. The portion of the instrument answering this research question was scored on a scale: “1= Always agree”, “2= Almost agree”, “3= Occasionally agree”, “4= Frequently disagree”, and “5= Always disagree”. The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Based on the scoring, a cut-off points of 3.0 was used since the scale was a five-point Likert-type. Mean scores above 3.0 were considered high with those less than 3.0 seen as low. A high mean score gives the indication that the respondents often had disagreements on specific issues in their marriage while a low mean score indicates that the respondents often agreed on specific issues in their marriage. Also, mean of mean score below 3.0 would indicate that the respondents were adjusted in their marriages while mean of mean score above 3.0 would indicate that the respondents were not adjusted in their marriages. The results are presented in Table 8

Table 8 shows that “handling family finances” recorded the lowest mean score (M=1.97, SD=2.31). This implies that the respondents agreed mostly on how to handle family finances. Also, the respondents agreed on spending time together (M=2.02, SD=1.23), making major decisions (M=2.09, SD=1.27), doing household tasks (M=2.11, SD=1.09) and dealing with parent in-laws (M=2.19, SD=1.24). The mean scores in all these cases were below 3.0.

Table 8: Marital Adjustment of Respondents

Statement	Mean	SD
Handling family finances	1.97	2.31
Ways of dealing with our parents or in-laws	2.19	1.24
Spending time together	2.02	1.23
Making major decisions	2.09	1.27
Doing household tasks	2.11	1.09
Demonstrations of affection	2.25	1.29
Discussing or considering divorce, separation or terminating your relationship	3.46	1.52
Getting on each other's nerves	3.02	1.45
Things going well between you and your partner	2.19	1.34
Confiding in your mate	2.37	1.45
Regretting that you married? (<i>or lived together</i>)	3.72	1.45
Quarrelling with your partner	3.53	1.37
Mean of mean/Average of Standard Deviation	2.58	1.42

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The issues which recorded mean scores above 3.0 indicated that the respondents disagreed to those issues. Thus, the respondents disagreed that they regretted marrying (M=3.72, SD=1.45) and that they quarreled with their partners (M=3.53, SD=1.37). Also, the respondents disagreed to the statements “discussing or considering divorce, separation or terminating your relationship” (M=3.46, SD=1.52) and “getting on each other's nerves” (M=3.02, SD=1.45).

From Table 8, it can be seen clearly that the respondents handled family finances, spent time together, made major decisions together, did household tasks, and dealt well with in-laws. Also, the respondents did not regret marrying, did not quarrel with their partners, did not consider divorce and did not get on each other's nerves. All of these indicate that the respondents were adjusted in

their marriages. A mean of mean score of 2.58 which was lower than 3.0, confirmed that the respondents were generally well adjusted.

The interviewed respondents also indicated generally that they were adjusted in their marriages. This was shown in two main themes which included:

“we resolve issues well” and “we are not considering divorce”.

Table 9: Level of Marital Adjustment of Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	233	77.7
High	67	22.3
Total	300	100.0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 9 shows that most of the respondents have low level of marital adjustment.

Conflict resolution

The respondents who were interviewed made it known that they resolve issues well in their marriage. One participant made this comment:

“We have had issues in our marriage but in most cases, we have resolved these issues very well.” – Married woman 2

Another participant mentioned that:

“Every conflict we have had in our marriage has been resolved very well. So I think my marriage is good.” – Married man 11

Not considering divorce

The participants who were interviewed indicated that they were not considering divorce. They argued that in spite of any challenge in their marriage, they were not considering divorce. For instance, one participant made this comment:

“There have been challenges that we have faced in our marriage. But my wife and I have never considered divorce. We are ready to work our marriage out.” – Married man 14

The results from the interviewed participants are similar to the results from the questionnaire. This gives the indication that generally, most of the respondents were well adjusted in their marriages.

Research Question 3: What is the content of premarital counselling offered by the SDA churches in the Central Region?

This research question sought to find the content of premarital counselling offered by the SDA churches in the Central Region. The portion of the questionnaire answering this research question was on a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ scale. Thus, the respondents were given a list of items to indicate Yes or No to, in order to confirm the content of the premarital counselling they received. Only the respondents who had received premarital counselling (196, as in Table 4) responded to this part of the questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 shows the content of premarital counselling as indicated by the respondents. Conflict management in marriage was indicated by 94.9% of the respondents as part of the content of premarital counselling. It can be also seen that 93.4% each indicated that communication and financial management were part of the content of premarital counselling. Additionally, 92.3% of the respondents indicated that premarital counselling addressed how couples can cope with each other’s differences in marriage.

Table 10: Content of Premarital Counselling**N=196**

Content	Yes		No	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Sex in marriage	177	88.8	22	11.2
Communication in marriage	183	93.4	13	6.6
Financial management in marriage	183	93.4	13	6.6
Conflict management in marriage	186	94.9	10	3.3
Purpose of marriage	176	89.8	20	10.2
Coping with each other's differences in marriage	181	92.3	15	7.7
Couples' expectation in marriage	173	88.3	23	11.7
Extended family relationships	174	88.8	22	11.2
Future aspirations of each partner	176	89.8	20	10.2
Child rearing and parenthood	175	89.3	21	10.7
Divorce prevention in marriage	172	87.8	24	12.2
Religious differences	146	74.5	50	25.5
Previous marriage(s) and children, if applicable	139	70.9	57	29.1

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Further, 89.8% respondents were of the view that future aspirations of each partner are also discussed as part of the content of premarital counselling while 89.3% of the respondents also child rearing and parenthood are discussed as part of premarital counselling. Additionally, 88.8% of the respondents each indicated that sex in marriage and extended family relationships were discussed as part of premarital counselling.

From the results in Table 10, it is clear that there are a variety of topics and issues discussed as part of the content of premarital counselling. These included conflict management, communication, finances, coping with differences, future aspirations, parenting, sex and extended family relationships.

The interview data showed similar results to the quantitative data. Specifically, the main topics indicated by the respondents as part of the content of premarital counselling included sex, communication, finances and resolving conflicts.

One woman made this comment:

“yes, I remember some of the topics that were taught included sex in marriage, communication in marriage and then financial issues; having joint account, how as couples we are supposed to put our money together and we should be trusting each other in terms of money.” –

Married woman 3

One man made a similar comment:

“mmm...some of the topics we were taught were issue of sex, issue of finance, issue of extended family relationship, issue of worship as believers because my partner-to-be was a Seventh Day Adventist. So, some of the areas were faith-based issues, financial issues, child-birth issues, these were some of the things.” – Married man 8

The topics identified by those who were interviewed were the same as the topics identified from the quantitative data. Thus, the data from the questionnaires were confirmed and supported by the data from the interviews.

Research Question 4: What is the perception of married SDA members in the Central Region on premarital counselling?

This research question sought to identify the perception of married SDA members in the Central Region on premarital counselling. The portion of the instrument answering this research question was scored on a scale: “1= Strongly

Disagree”, “2= Disagree”, “3= Neutral”, “4= Agree”, and “5= Strongly agree”.

The data were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Based on the scoring, a cut-off point of 3.0 was used since the scale was a five-point Likert-type. Mean scores above 3.0 were considered high with those less than 3.0 seen as low. A high mean score gives the indication that the respondents agreed to the specific statement while a low mean score indicates that the respondents disagreed to the specific statement. The results are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 shows that the respondents were of the view that effective premarital counselling should deal with critical issues that could influence the success or failure of the marriage than mere pre-ceremonial meetings with counsellors ($M=3.86$, $SD=1.23$). The respondents also indicated that premarital counselling is necessary ($M=3.79$, $SD=1.45$). In terms of the perceived benefits, the respondents indicated that premarital counselling helps the couple to know what goes into marriage and the differences they must deal with in each other ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.20$).

Table 11 shows that the respondents advocated that the issues discussed in premarital counselling sessions must not be revealed to other people ($M=3.76$, $SD=1.32$). The respondents also noted that apart from going through premarital counselling, there are other more important means of getting information about marriage ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.27$).

Table 11: Perceptions about Premarital Counselling

Statement	Mean	SD
My perceptions on premarital counselling include:		
Premarital counselling is necessary.	3.79	1.45
Premarital counselling brings out problems of the would-be couples that have not been previously noticed.	3.39	1.29
Premarital counselling must be made compulsory in all churches.	3.48	1.36
Premarital counselling helps the couple to know what goes into marriage and the differences they must deal with in each other.	3.69	1.20
There should be a follow up after premarital counselling.	3.67	1.29
The issues discussed in premarital counselling sessions must not be revealed to other people.	3.76	1.32
Apart from going through premarital counselling, there are other more important means of getting information about marriage.	3.68	1.27
Effective premarital counselling should deal with critical issues that could influence the success or failure of the marriage than mere pre-ceremonial meetings with counsellors.	3.86	1.23
Premarital counselling should begin as soon as the man and woman are sure they want to marry.	3.67	1.26
Premarital counselling provides an opportunity for a couple to talk about their responsibilities in the marriage.	3.67	1.29

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From the results in Table 11, it can be realized that the respondents perceived premarital counselling to be effective in dealing with critical issues in the marriage while helping would-be couples to what goes into marriage and the differences, they must deal with in each other. The respondents, however,

perceived that there are other means of getting information about marriage other than premarital counselling.

The interviewed respondents highlighted several views about premarital counselling. The common themes in the views of the respondents included: “premarital counselling necessity” and “premarital counselling impact”.

Premarital counselling necessity

The interviewed respondents indicated that premarital counselling is necessary for marriages to survive or excel. They had the perception that premarital counselling was necessary and important.

One participant in responding to the question on how he perceives premarital counselling, made this statement:

“During the premarital counselling, you get to know a lot of things relating to the journey of marriage. So, I think premarital counselling is very necessary.” – Married man 11

Some other comments included:

“Oh yes, I think premarital counselling is very necessary and very important. You get a lot of information.” – Married man 14

“I think it’s very necessary that couples have premarital counselling because it will give them a first-hand information as to what marriage entails.” – Married woman 9

Premarital counselling impact

The respondents who were interviewed also expressed that premarital counselling is a form of education which prepares would-be couples for the journey of marriage. They held the view that for couples to have success in

marriages, they have to be prepared through premarital counselling. Some of the actual comments are as follows:

“I will say premarital counselling is a sort of education one needs to go through before he or she enters marriage. It is a form of preparation towards marriage; that is how I see it. It is something you need to pass through to equip you for marriage.” – Married man 8

“Premarital counselling gives you a privy about how marital life and marriage is going to be. As in, it exposes you to things you need to know before marriage.” – Married woman 3

“Premarital counselling is a very good aspect of marriage which we must all take in a good faith and it prepares you to see the future, your expectations, the dos and the don'ts and prepares you for the good work of marriage ahead of you.” – Married man 11.

From the interviewed respondents, they indicated clearly that premarital counselling is necessary and prepares would-be couples for marriage. This was also confirmed in the quantitative data.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not.

H_{a1}: There is a significant difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not.

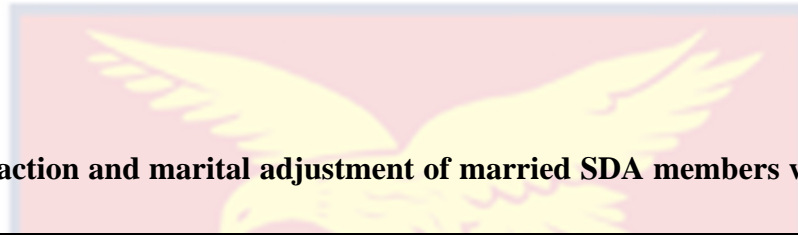


Table 12: Difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Marital Satisfaction	759.711 ^a	1	759.711	3.930	.048	.013
	Marital Adjustment	389.047 ^b	1	389.047	7.555	.006	.025
Intercept	Marital Satisfaction	1530320.378	1	1530320.378	7915.559	.000	.964
	Marital Adjustment	266327.447	1	266327.447	5172.165	.000	.946
Premarital Counselling	Marital Satisfaction	759.711	1	759.711	3.930	.048	.013
	Marital Adjustment	389.047	1	389.047	7.555	.006	.025
Error	Marital Satisfaction	57612.539	298	193.331			
	Marital Adjustment	15344.750	298	51.492			
Total	Marital Satisfaction	1770713.000	300				
	Marital Adjustment	302857.000	300				
Corrected Total	Marital Satisfaction	58372.250	299				
	Marital Adjustment	15733.797	299				

a. R Squared = .013 (Adjusted R Squared = .010)

b. R Squared = .025 (Adjusted R Squared = .021)



The results of the one-way Multivariate Analysis of variance (MANOVA) in Table 12 indicated that the evaluation assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (The Box's M of 10.73) indicates that the homogeneity of covariance matrices across group is not assumed ($F(3, 1217277) = 3.545, p = .014$). With the use of Pillai's Trace criterion, the combined DVs (marital satisfaction and marital adjustment) were significantly different in SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not (Pillai's $T = .037, F(2, 297) = 5.69, P = .004, \eta^2 = .037$). An estimated mean demonstrating that those who receive premarital counselling had significantly higher means on marital satisfaction and higher mean score on marital adjustment is shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Mean Estimate for Premarital Counselling, Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment

Dependent Variable	Premarital counselling	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Marital Satisfaction	Yes	76.709	.993	74.755	78.664
	No	73.365	1.363	70.682	76.049
Marital Adjustment	Yes	30.107	.513	29.098	31.116
	No	32.500	.704	31.115	33.885

The mean score for those who received premarital counselling was 76.71 which was higher than those who did not receive premarital counselling which was 73.37. The scoring of the scale for marital satisfaction was such that high scores depicted high satisfaction and low scores depicted low satisfaction. On this basis, it can be said that the respondents who received premarital counselling had high marital satisfaction compared to those who did not.

The mean score for those who received premarital counselling was 30.11 which was lower than those who did not receive premarital counselling which

was 32.50. The scoring of the scale for marital adjustment was such that high scores depicted high adjustment while low scores showed low adjustment. On this basis, it can be realized that the respondents who received premarital counselling were less adjusted than those who did not since their mean score was high.

Hypothesis Two

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

Ha2: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

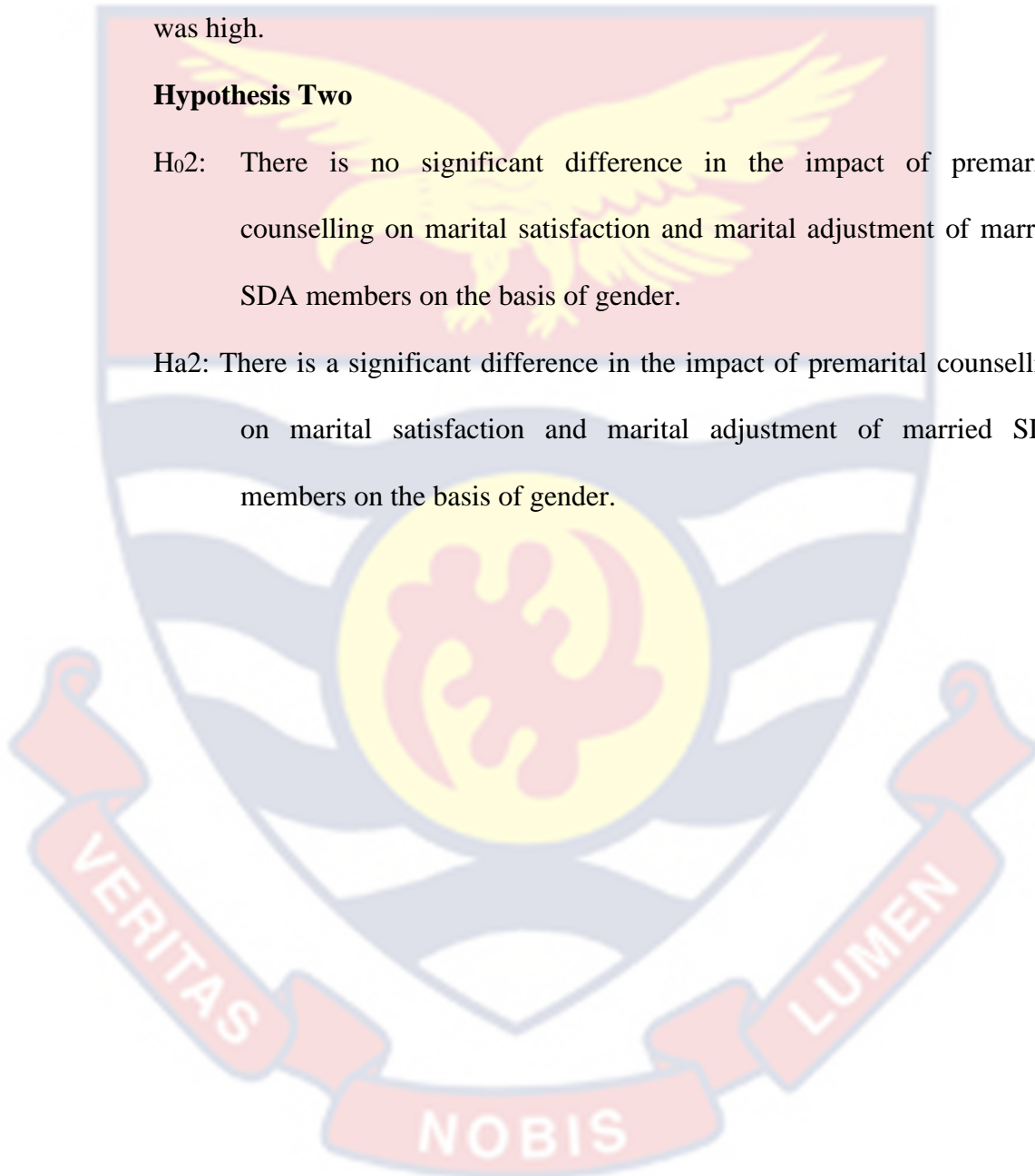


Table 14: Difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Square
Corrected Model	Marital Satisfaction	2099.746 ^a	3	699.915	3.682	.012	.036
	Marital Adjustment	450.481 ^b	3	150.160	2.908	.035	.029
Intercept	Marital Satisfaction	1530945.946	1	1530947	8052.96	.000	.965
	Marital Adjustment	265790.434	1	265790.4	5147.70	.000	.946
Gender	Marital Satisfaction	1094.912	1	1094.912	5.759	.017	.019
	Marital Adjustment	.254	1	.254	.005	.944	.000
Premarital Counselling	Marital Satisfaction	674.597	1	674.597	3.548	.061	.012
	Marital Adjustment	401.676	1	401.676	7.779	.006	.026
Gender*Premarital Counselling	Marital Satisfaction	629.000	1	629.000	3.309	.070	.011
	Marital Adjustment	57.718	1	57.718	1.118	.291	.004
Error	Marital Satisfaction	56272.504	296	190.110			
	Marital Adjustment	15283.316	296	51.633			
Total	Marital Satisfaction	1770713.000	300				
	Marital Adjustment	302857.000	300				
Corrected Total	Marital Satisfaction	58372.250	299				
	Marital Adjustment	15733.797	299				

a. R Squared = .036 (Adjusted R Squared = .026)

b. R Squared = .029 (Adjusted R Squared = .019)

The two-way Multivariate Analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine differences in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

Results of evaluation assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (The Box's M of 32.502 indicates that homogeneity of covariance matrices across groups was not assumed ($F(9, 346446) = 3.562, p < .001$), linearity and multicollinearity were satisfactory. With the use of Pillai's Trace criterion, the combined DV's (marital satisfaction and marital adjustment) were not significantly different by gender (Pillai's $T = .019, F(2, 295) = 2.88, p = .058, \eta^2 = .019$), significant difference was found in the combined DVs and premarital counselling (Pillai's $T = .036, F(2, 295) = 5.58, p = .004, \eta^2 = .036$). No significant interaction was found (Pillai's $T = .015, F(2, 295) = 2.22, p = .109, \eta^2 = .015$).

Table 13 shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of gender. Since the significant value of .017 is less than .05, it can be seen that the main effect of gender is significant. This means that there was gender difference in terms of how premarital counselling affected the marital satisfaction of the respondents.

Since there was a significant difference on the basis of gender, there was the need to show the mean estimates. The mean estimates for gender are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Mean Estimates for Gender, Premarital Counselling and Marital Satisfaction

Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction					
Premarital Counselling	Gender	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Yes	Male	76.238	1.372	73.538	78.938
	Female	77.211	1.415	74.427	79.995

Source: Field survey (2022)

From Table 15, it can be seen that the mean score of females was high among those who received premarital counselling ($M=77.21$) than males ($M=76.24$). This result implies that after exposure to premarital counselling, marital satisfaction was high for females than for males.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

H_{a3}: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

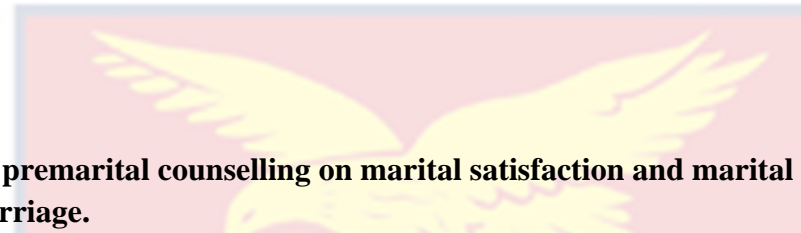


Table 16: Difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

Corrected Model	Marital Satisfaction	4107.003 ^a	7	586.715	3.157	.003	.070
	Marital Adjustment	805.586 ^b	7	115.084	2.251	.030	.051
Intercept	Marital Satisfaction	1376852.8	1	1376852.8	7408.8	.000	.962
	Marital Adjustment	244204.29	1	244204.29	4776.7	.000	.942
Premarital Counselling	Marital Satisfaction	1088.918	1	1088.918	5.859	.016	.020
	Marital Adjustment	398.359	1	398.359	7.792	.006	.026
Length of Marriage	Marital Satisfaction	1621.689	3	540.563	2.909	.035	.029
	Marital Adjustment	30.755	3	10.252	.201	.896	.002
Premarital counselling*Length of marriage	Marital Satisfaction	1850.331	3	616.777	3.319	.020	.033
	Marital Adjustment	371.583	3	123.861	2.423	.066	.024
Error	Marital Satisfaction	54265.247	292	185.840			
	Marital Adjustment_	14928.211	292	51.124			
Total	Marital Satisfaction	1770713.0	300				
	Marital Adjustment	302857.00	300				
Corrected Total	Marital Satisfaction	58372.250	299				
	Marital Adjustment_	15733.797	299				

a. R Squared = .070 (Adjusted R Squared = .048)

b. R Squared = .051 (Adjusted R Squared = .028)



The two-way Multivariate Analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine differences in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the length of marriage.

Results of evaluation assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (The Box's M of 58.77) indicates that homogeneity of covariance matrices across groups was not assumed ($F(21, 63280) = 2.721, p < .001$), linearity and multicollinearity were satisfactory. With the use of Pillai's Trace criterion, the combined DV's (marital satisfaction and marital adjustment) were significantly different by premarital counselling (Pillai's $T = .044, F(2, 291) = 6.663, p = .001, \eta^2 = .044$), no significant difference was found in the combined DVs and length of marriage (Pillai's $T = .031, F(6, 584) = 1.544, p = .162, \eta^2 = .016$). Significant interaction was found (Pillai's $T = .057, F(6, 584) = 2.88, p = .009, \eta^2 = .029$). Significant difference existed between length of marriage and marital satisfaction. Since there was significant interaction, Post Hoc and Simple effect are shown in Table 17 and Table 18.

Table 17: Tukey's Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction

(I) Length of marriage	(J) Length of marriage	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1-5 years	6-10 years	5.09	2.163	.089	-.50	10.68
	11-15 years	-.67	2.287	.991	-6.58	5.24
	16 and above	1.18	2.212	.950	-4.53	6.90
6-10 years	1-5 years	-5.09	2.163	.089	-10.68	.50
	11-15 years	-5.76	2.254	.054	-11.58	.07
	16 and above	-3.91	2.178	.278	-9.53	1.72
11-15 years	1-5 years	.67	2.287	.991	-5.24	6.58
	6-10 years	5.76	2.254	.054	-.07	11.58
	16 and above	1.85	2.301	.852	-4.09	7.80
16 and above	1-5 years	-1.18	2.212	.950	-6.90	4.53
	6-10 years	3.91	2.178	.278	-1.72	9.53
	11-15 years	-1.85	2.301	.852	-7.80	4.09

Source: Field survey (2022)

In Table 17, it is shown that a significant difference exists between the respondents who had been married for 6 to 10 years and those who had been married for 11 to 15 years ($p=.05$) with a mean difference of 5.76. This indicates that marital satisfaction was high for those married for 11 to 15 years than those married for 6 to 10 years. The difference observed in the two-way MANOVA test can therefore be attributed to this difference between those who had been married for 6 to 10 years and those married for 11 to 15 years.

Table 18: Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction							
Length of marriage	(I) PMC	(J) PMC	Mean Diff(I-J)	SE	Sig. ^b	95% CI ^b	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1-5 years	Yes	No	-1.524	3.318	.646	-8.054	5.006
	No	Yes	1.524	3.318	.646	-5.006	8.054
6-10 years	Yes	No	6.185	3.203	.055	-.120	12.489
	No	Yes	-6.185	3.203	.055	-12.489	.120
11-15 years	Yes	No	12.838*	4.105	.002	4.759	20.916
	No	Yes	-12.838*	4.105	.002	-20.916	-4.759
16 and above	Yes	No	-.723	3.149	.819	-6.919	5.474
	No	Yes	.723	3.149	.819	-5.474	6.919

Mean difference significant at .05; PMC = Premarital Counselling

In Table 18, it is shown that a significant difference exists between the respondents who had been married for 11 to 15 years ($p < .05$) regarding their premarital counselling and marital status with a mean difference of 12.84. The difference observed in the interaction in the two-way MANOVA test can therefore be attributed to this difference between those who had been married for 11 to 15 years.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married SDA members on the basis of education level.

H_{a4}: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married Christian individuals on the basis of education level.

Table 19: Difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married Christian individuals on the basis of education level

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	Marital Satisfaction	4266.806 ^a	7	609.544	3.290	.002	.073
	Marital Adjustment	860.821 ^b	7	122.974	2.414	.020	.055
Intercept	Marital Satisfaction	836295.26	1	836295.2	4513.4	.000	.939
	Marital Adjustment	150355.82	1	150355.8	2951.9	.000	.910
Premarital Counselling	Marital Satisfaction	65.482	1	65.482	.353	.553	.001
	Marital Adjustment	9.255	1	9.255	.182	.670	.001
Educational level	Marital Satisfaction	1649.164	3	549.721	2.967	.032	.030
	Marital Adjustment	126.209	3	42.070	.826	.480	.008
Premarital Counselling*Educational level	Marital Satisfaction	1233.088	3	411.029	2.218	.086	.022
	Marital Adjustment	357.980	3	119.327	2.343	.073	.024
Error	Marital Satisfaction	54105.444	292	185.293			
	Marital Adjustment	14872.976	292	50.935			
Total	Marital Satisfaction	1770713.0	300				
	Marital Adjustment	302857.00	300				
Corrected Total	Marital Satisfaction	58372.250	299				
	Marital Adjustment	15733.797	299				

a. R Squared = .073 (Adjusted R Squared = .051)

b. R Squared = .055 (Adjusted R Squared = .032)

The two-way Multivariate Analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to examine differences in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the educational level.

Results of evaluation assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices (The Box's M of 65.81 indicates that homogeneity of covariance matrices across groups was not assumed ($F(21, 16721) = 2.99, p < .001$), linearity and multicollinearity were satisfactory. With the use of Pillai's Trace criterion, the combined DV's (marital satisfaction and marital adjustment) were not significantly different by premarital counselling (Pillai's $T = .002, F(2, 291) = .264, p = .768, \eta^2 = .002$), significant difference was not found in the combined DVs and educational level (Pillai's $T = .038, F(6, 584) = 1.88, p = .082, \eta^2 = .019$). Significant interaction was found (Pillai's $T = .045, F(6, 584) = 2.262, p = .036, \eta^2 = .023$).

Table 19 shows that there was significant difference between educational level and marital satisfaction since $p < .05$. Post Hoc was conducted and shown in Table 20.

Table 20: Tukey's Post Hoc Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Marital Satisfaction						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Highest educational level	(J) Highest educational level	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound Upper Bound	
No formal education	Basic	-9.30	3.878	.080	-19.32	.72
	SHS/Technical	-4.39	3.300	.544	-12.92	4.13
	Tertiary	-9.10*	3.079	.018	-17.06	-1.15
Basic	No formal education	9.30	3.878	.080	-.72	19.32
	SHS/Technical	4.90	3.015	.365	-2.88	12.69
	Tertiary	.19	2.771	1.000	-6.96	7.35
SHS/Technical	No formal education	4.39	3.300	.544	-4.13	12.92
	Basic	-4.90	3.015	.365	-12.69	2.88
	Tertiary	-4.71	1.879	.061	-9.56	.14
Tertiary	No formal education	9.10*	3.079	.018	1.15	17.06
	Basic	-.19	2.771	1.000	-7.35	6.96
	SHS/Technical	4.71	1.879	.061	-.14	9.56

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

Source: Field Survey (2022)

It is shown in Table 20 that a significant difference exists between the respondents who had no formal education and those with tertiary level education ($p=.018$) with a mean difference of -9.10. This indicates that marital satisfaction after exposure to premarital counselling was high for those with tertiary education than those with no formal education. The difference observed in the two-way MANOVA test can therefore be attributed to this difference between those who with no formal education and those with tertiary level education.

Discussion

Marital Satisfaction of Married Christians

The study found that the respondents (married SDA individuals) were generally satisfied in their marriages. Specifically, the respondents trusted their partners, had stable relationship, were pleased sexually, got along well together and saw their relationship to be good. These were confirmed in the interview data where the interviewed respondents indicated that their marriages were stable, they trusted each other and they were pleased with their marriages.

The results of this current study support the results of Aman, Abbas, Nurunnabi, and Bano (2019) who assessed marital satisfaction among Christian couples and found that most of them were satisfied with their marriages. Aman et al. added that a strong religious commitment and religious practice enhanced their satisfaction in marriage.

The present findings corroborate those of Kamomoe, Pinto, and Selvam (2017), who investigated the connection between Christian religious commitment and marital contentment. Their findings demonstrated that most Christian couples in marriage were happy despite the inherent complexity of their connections. Christian devotion was found to be a significant predictor of marriage contentment. Christians who tied the knot reported high levels of marital contentment. The current study is similar to the one in question because both concentrated on Christian married couples.

Korir (2017) looked into how Christians' religious practices, beliefs, and faith community impacted their marital satisfaction, and his findings corroborate those of the current research. Korir stated that the Christian married couples were happy in their unions. In particular, it was found that both religious

practise and membership in community faith groups influenced marital happiness.

Further, the findings of this current study are consistent with those of Njeri (2020) who explored the relationship between psychological wellbeing and marital quality among married Christian couples in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kiambu County, Kenya. Njeri found that marital quality was high among married Christian couples in the study area. Njeri indicated further that when marital quality is high, marital satisfaction is high. This is why Njeri's study was considered similar to the current study.

Additionally, the results are in line with the results of Sauerheber, Hughey, Wolf, Ginn and Stethen (2021) who examined the relationship between marital satisfaction, religious faith, and political orientation for 285 married Christian individuals. Sauerheber et al. found that marital satisfaction was high among the participants.

In the Ghanaian setting, the findings of the current study are consistent with some existing studies. For instance, the findings confirm the findings of Norman (2015) that majority of the Christians in his study were 'very satisfied' in their marriages. This satisfaction was mostly attributed to the counselling they received prior to the marriage. In line with the current study also, the study of Aikins (2016) in the Cape Coast Metropolis found out that, married people in Orthodox and Pentecostal Churches in the Cape Coast Metropolis were satisfied with their marriages.

All the studies discussed so far have shown that most married Christians are satisfied with their marriages. Even though the current study did not establish that their satisfaction was because they were Christians, some of the

studies discussed like that of Kamomoe, Pinto and Selvam (2017) and Korir (2017) clearly indicated that couples who were practicing Christians were satisfied in their marriages because of their Christian practices.

Contrary to all the studies discussed, the findings of the study are in contrast to the findings of Spence (2011). Spence investigated marital satisfaction levels among couples in the Ottawa Seventh-day Adventist Church and found that of the 12 couples who were surveyed, only one couple was satisfied with their marriage. Spence concluded that most married members of Ottawa SDA church were dissatisfied in their marriages. This contradiction between the current study and that of Spence could be due to the different approaches and scales used in measuring marital satisfaction.

From the results discussed, it can be seen clearly that most married individuals, particularly, Christians were satisfied in their marriages. This was confirmed not only in the current study but also in almost all the other studies discussed.

Marital Adjustment of Married Christians

The study revealed that the respondents (married SDA individuals) handled family finances, spent time together, made major decisions together, did household tasks, and dealt well with in-laws. Also, the respondents did not regret marrying, did not quarrel with their partners, did not consider divorce and did not get on each other's nerves. All of these indicate that the respondents had high adjustment in their marriages. The interviewed respondents also indicated generally that they were adjusted in their marriages. This was shown in their views that they resolved issues well and did not consider divorce.

Marital adjustment is usually depicted in the harmony and empathy which exist in marriages and the desire in achieving common goals of life between husband and wife. In essence, with adjustment in marriages, there would be less conflicts and couples would enjoy being together instead of contemplating divorce.

The results of the current study are consistent with the results of Strong (2010) who examined issues of marital adjustment among members in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and found that the respondents were adjusted in their marriages. Specifically, the respondents saw their marriage to be strong and they felt well connected to each other.

Schramm, Marshall, Harris, and Lee (2012) found that religious husbands and wives had significantly better marital adjustment scores than their less religious counterparts, which is consistent with the results of the current research. Presler (2014) looked at the complexities of the relationship between religious attendance, personal religious activity, and significance of religion, and found that religious people had the best marital adjustment.

From their results, the married individuals did not consider divorce and were willing to stay married. All of these were confirmed in the current study.

Further, the findings of the current study support the findings of Karney and Bradbury (2020) that most of the married people in their study enjoyed their marriages and were willing to stay together. In a similar light, Knabb (2014) explored the relationship between religion and marital adjustment among a sample of 116 married adults (58 couples) from a conservative Christian megachurch and found that those who were matured in their Christian faith had

high marital adjustment. The study of Knabb focused on only Christians and as such concluded that most Christians are well adjusted in their marriages.

This study's findings are also in line with those of Sedighi, Shahsiah, and Rasooli (2014), who investigated the connection between religious belief and marital satisfaction and adjustment in Qom City couples and discovered a positive correlation between the two. According to Sedighi et al., most Christian relationships are healthy.

The results of the current research corroborate those of a previous, more in-depth investigation by Mullins. (2016). Mullins discovered that married people whose habits included frequenting religious events had a higher success rate. Mullins also discovered that married people whose partners regularly attended worship sessions had happier marriages. Mullins claimed that their marriage was sanctified through exposure to sermons and religious services, and that their long union was evidence of this conviction.

However, Mullins (2016) found that too much time spent in worship was bad for marriage. Some partners said their overly religious partners experienced tension because they had to sacrifice time with their families to fulfil religious responsibilities. He discovered that tensions emerged when married Christians disagreed with sermon content, especially when the content was at odds with their own experiences of marriage and family. The negative impacts of the stressful event were compounded because the family did not attend worship services together.

Even though the current study did not directly correlate religious affiliation with marital adjustment, the sample comprised only Christians and

as such the results were considered similar to the study of Mullins (2016) which directly correlated religion with marital adjustment.

Contrary to these studies as well as the findings of the current study, Njeri's (2020) study on the relationship between psychological wellbeing and marital quality among married Christian couples in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Kiambu County, Kenya showed that marital adjustment was moderately low. Njeri's study contradicted the current study probably because of differences in how marital adjustment was measured.

Apart from the study of Njeri (2020), all the studies discussed in this section were supported by the finding of the current study that marital adjustment was high among most married Christians. From the foregoing, it is clear that marital adjustment was possible for most married people, particularly, Christians.

Content of Premarital Counselling

The study revealed that there are a variety of topics and issues discussed as part of the content of premarital counselling. These included conflict management, communication, finances, coping with differences, future aspirations, parenting, sex and extended family relationships. The interview data showed similar results to the quantitative data. According to the findings, all couples who are thinking about making the lifelong commitment of marriage can benefit from premarital counselling, a specialised form of counselling typically given by marriage and family counsellors. It's an effort to help couples strengthen their bonds before they tie the knot, with the hopes of reducing the likelihood of divorce and setting the stage for a more fulfilling marriage. (Osei-Tutu et al., 2020). On the basis of this, most of the content in premarital

counselling are based on securing marriages and preventing problems in marriages.

The data show that most couples believe that pre-marital sessions are helpful, which is consistent with the findings of Nganga and Wasanga (2010), who evaluated the pre-marital counselling programmes provided at PCEA churches in Kiambu district. The couple felt like they gained insight into their marriage from the session's discussions of sexuality, communication, finances, and their duties and responsibilities.

Similarly, the findings support the findings of Busby (2007) that premarital counselling treated topics related to skills of resolving conflicts and how to communicate in the marriage relationship. Also, Clinton and Sibcy (2006) found that premarital counselling equipped couples on how to manage individual differences in marriage and how to deal with issues relating to their families.

Further, Gupta (2021) revealed that premarital counselling as a means of preparing partners for marriage is intended to cover a range of issues so that both partners can be on the same page on critical issues in marriage. Gupta added that this involves discussing significant aspects of a marriage usually covering financial planning, roles of the couple in the marriage, decision-making processes, relationship among family members, number of children and how children would be raised. These issues were confirmed in the current study.

Additionally, the findings of the current study support several previous studies which have all shown that topics dealt with in premarital counselling include communication, commitment, resolving conflicts, raising children,

sexual issues and dealing with in-laws (Kariuki, 2017; Kiuna & Kiuna, 2012; Kardan-Souraki, Hamzehgardeshi, Asadpour, Mohammadpour & Khani, 2016).

The results have shown clearly that premarital counselling covers a wide range of topics which can be beneficial to couples within their marriages. These are not only confirmed in the current study but also in other studies.

Perceptions about Premarital Counselling

Regarding the perceptions about premarital counselling, the study revealed that the respondents perceived premarital counselling to be effective in dealing with critical issues in the marriage while helping would-be couples to what goes into marriage and the differences, they must deal with in each other. The respondents however perceived that there are other means of getting information about marriage other than premarital counselling. The respondents also advocated that the issues discussed in premarital counselling sessions must not be revealed to other people.

The interviewed respondents highlighted several views about premarital counselling. The common themes in their views included: “premarital counselling is necessary for marriages” and “premarital counselling prepares would-be couples for marriage”.

Ansah-Hughes, Akyina, and Oduro-Okyireh (2015) conducted similar research with married people in Techiman, Ghana, and found that the vast majority of couples agreed that premarital counselling was beneficial. Ansah-Hughes et al. (2015) also discovered that couples saw pre-marital counselling as highlighting potential problems the couple might encounter once married, preparing them for the challenges that inevitably arise.

The results also confirm those of Nganga and Wasanga (2010) that most couples were of the view that pre-marital sessions were helpful and believed that premarital counselling adequately prepares couples for their marriages. Additionally, Mohamady, Said and Sayed (2017) conducted a qualitative study aimed at evaluating the health belief model on females' knowledge and practice regarding premarital counselling. They found that the more people knew about the importance of premarital counselling, the more they were likely to engage in premarital counselling. In the current study, the participants perceived premarital counselling to be important for would-be couples and as such advocated that all couples should receive premarital counselling before marriage.

Premarital counselling is the most important part of a couple's entire marital preparation. Prior to marriage, couples who seek a more satisfying and secure relationship can benefit from premarital counselling, a schedule of activities designed to help them do so (Stahmann, 2000). The schedule of issues discussed in premarital counselling can help get couples ready to handle any issues that marriage would throw at them later in their lives.

Difference in Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment of People Who Received Premarital Counselling and those Who Did Not

The study found that there was a significant difference between those who received premarital counselling and those who did not in terms of their marital satisfaction. The mean score for those who received premarital counselling was 76.71 which was higher than those who did not receive premarital counselling which was 73.37. The scoring of the scale for marital satisfaction was such that high scores depicted high satisfaction and low scores

depicted low satisfaction. On this basis, it can be said that the respondents who received premarital counselling had high marital satisfaction compared to those who did not.

These findings are consistent with the findings of Udofia et al. (2021), who investigated the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and discovered that married couples who had attended premarital counselling were significantly happier in their marriages than those who had not. The findings are in line with those of Kepler (2015), who discovered that spouses who had gone through pre-marital therapy were more satisfied with their marriages than those who hadn't.

Furthermore, this study's findings corroborate those of Odero (2018), who investigated the impact of premarital counselling on marital quality among members of Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Kibera District of Nairobi County, Kenya. He discovered that premarital counselling participants were more likely to report high levels of marital satisfaction. Since both studies centred on Seventh-day Adventist congregations, the findings from Odero and this one are identical.

This study's results corroborate those of Ntim's from Ghana. (2014). Ntim found that many Christian husbands and wives in the Cape Coast Metropolis had a favourable approach towards premarital counselling when he studied its effect on adjustment among Christian couples. The reason for this is that couples who participated in premarital counselling reported higher levels of marital happiness.

A similar study by Parhizgar, Esmaelzadeh-Saeieh, Kamrani, Rahimzadeh, and Tehranizadeh (2017) found that couples' marital happiness

evolves over time after they've been exposed to counselling because of improvements in their communication skills. Couples who participated in premarital therapy reported higher levels of satisfaction than those who did not. The results of the current research were consistent with those of the experimental study by Parhizgar et al.

Theoretically, the findings of this current study are consistent with the Complementary Needs Theory. Robert Winch created and developed the complementary needs theory in the 1950s and argued that people are on the lookout for partners who can fill the inadequacies they may have in their personal and professional lives. In the Complementary Needs Theory, a couple would be satisfied in their marriage if they complement each other and as such during premarital counselling, would-be couple gets to know each other more and look out for ways in which they can complement each other in marriage. This means that premarital counselling can have an impact on how couples complement each other in marriage and thus enhancing their possibility of being satisfied in their marriages.

Acosta (2020) found no statistically significant difference in the overall marital satisfaction of Christian couples based on their participation in couple relationship education (CRE) or marriage relationship education (MRE), which runs counter to the findings discussed. The study looked at whether or not marital setting, ethnicity, and CRE/MRE participation affected marital satisfaction in Christian couples. (MRE). Acosta found no significant difference in marital happiness between couples who had premarital counselling and those who did not. Acosta explained that the findings could be due to some couples not taking premarital counselling and education seriously.

From the forgoing discussion, it is clearly indicated that married people who received premarital counselling report marital satisfaction higher than those who did not receive premarital counselling. This has been confirmed in all the studies reported except the study of Acosta (2020). Basing on the results discussed, it can be said that if would-be couples take premarital counselling seriously, learn and develop themselves, then there is the likelihood that marital satisfaction would be improved later in the marriage.

The study revealed that there was a significant difference between the respondents who received premarital counselling and those who did not in terms of their marital adjustment. The mean score for those who received premarital counselling was 30.11 which was lower than those who did not receive premarital counselling which was 32.50. The scoring of the scale for marital adjustment was such that high scores depicted low adjustment while low scores showed high adjustment. On this basis, it was realized that the respondents who received premarital counselling were more adjusted than those who did not receive premarital counselling.

The findings corroborate the findings of Egbo (2012), who found that premarital counselling significantly affected marriage stability. Egbo also noted that couples who sought premarital counselling were more likely to have harmonious, conflict-free relationships than those who did not. It has been shown by Olson (2008) that premarital counselling programmes help couples share their understanding of various topics. Key to marital adjustment is the sharing of meaning between the couples. This will make it easier for couples to agree to disagree (Olson, 2008).

Similarly, Bruhn and Hill (2004) revealed that a benefit of premarital counselling education programmes is that it enables spouses to know that they can turn to other counsellors if they face difficulties in their marriage in the future. This will give couples a sense of security that they can turn to in the event of a breakdown in their relationship rather than contemplating divorce or separation. In addition, couples can draw on the premarital counselling education resources they received to gain the knowledge and skills they need to adjust to married life.

Overall, premarital counselling courses have been found to be successful in lowering divorce rates and improving the stability and satisfaction of married life (Waters, 2003). Couples who participate in premarital counselling have a higher chance of being happy in their relationships than those who do not. There are two primary roles of premarital counselling, according to Olson and Defrain (2005). Firstly, premarital counselling teaches partners how to have a satisfying marriage; secondly, premarital counselling helps couples recognise issues and their solutions or prevention as a result of individual differences during the marital connection (Scott et al., 2006).

The solution focused therapy which was reviewed in the study emphasized that couples are assisted during premarital counselling on how to adjust successfully in their marriage. This theory lays emphasis on couple's strength to come out with better solutions to the challenges that they are encountering in marriage. Solution focused premarital counselling is basically strengthening skills method of counselling that focuses on a partner's strategies to come out or develop a shared vision for their marriage relationship. Thus, it

assists couples to work together with their vision in order for them to have healthy marriages (Douglas et al., 2001).

According to Douglas et al. (2001), the solution focused premarital counsellor can use the framework of a number of topics that are discussed in premarital education or counselling such as finance, parental roles, communication and conflict resolution skills. This skill-based training will help couples to get more experience in marriage and expose them to some possible challenges in marriage and how they can overcome them in future. For example, it will help partners to know how to communicate with each other positively and also have quality time with each other. Through these, marital adjustment is likely to improve among couples who have had premarital counselling.

When comparing Christian husbands and wives who had and had not participated in premarital counselling, Ntim (2014) found no substantial difference in the degree of marital adjustment experienced by the two groups. According to Ntim, this is because engaged couples often disregard the advice of wedding counsellors.

Generally, most of the studies mentioned in this section have confirmed that premarital counselling can improve marital adjustment. This means that couples who receive premarital counselling are more likely to have high marital adjustment than those who do not.

Difference in the Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment on the Basis of Gender

The study found that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of gender. This means that there was gender difference in terms of how premarital

counselling affected the marital satisfaction of the respondents. On the basis of the results, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction of married SDA members on the basis of gender is rejected.

The mean estimates showed that the mean score of females was high than males. This result implies that after exposure to premarital counselling, marital satisfaction was high for females than for males. The results are in line with those of Schachtner (2017) who found in her study that there was a significant gender difference in the level of marital satisfaction of married couples. Schachtner added specifically that women had higher marital satisfaction than men.

Similarly, Gottman and Silver (1994) found that spouses of different sexes experience vastly different levels of marital happiness. This was also consistent with the results of the present investigation. Also, the current study's results corroborate those of etinkaya and Gençdoan (2014), who looked at the effect of gender norms on marriage. A favourable and statistically significant correlation was found between marital quality, gender roles, and happiness. Marriage quality and happiness were also discovered to vary by partner's gender.

Kowal, Groyecka-Bernard, Kochan-Wójcik, and Sorokowski (2021) found that gender was a major factor in the level of marital satisfaction of couples, and these results corroborate that finding. Using a massive, international population, Sorokowski, Kowal, and Sorokowska (2019) analysed marital happiness among Muslims, Christians, and atheists. According to their findings, males report greater marital happiness than women do. Sorokowski et

al. found that there were significant gender differences in marriage happiness. The results of the present research confirmed this.

The findings of Sorokowski et al. (2019) however showed that males had high marital satisfaction than females while the current study showed that females had high marital satisfaction than males. This difference could be due to differences in sample characteristics and instruments used in assessing marital satisfaction.

The current study's results also corroborate those of Rosowsky, King, Coolidge, Rhoades, and Sega (2012), who investigated the personality dimensions that influence marital satisfaction in long-married older couples and discovered that it differed for husbands and wives. According to Rosowsky et al.'s findings, men and women experience different levels of marital happiness for different reasons.

These results are in line with those found by Yoo (2022), who studied the correlations between gender role attitude, quality of dialogue, and marital happiness in Korean couples. Yoo discovered that men and women have different perspectives on gender roles, dialogue, and marital happiness. Females placed a higher value on a more gender-neutral outlook, while males placed a higher value on effective dialogue and happy marriages.

In Ghana, the findings of the current study support the findings of Adzovie and Dabone (2021) that there was a significant mean difference between male and female married people in terms of how they perceived the impact of premarital counselling on their marriage lives. This means that how satisfied couples were after premarital counselling varied by gender.

Contrary to all the studies discussed, Putra and Afdal (2020) examined marital satisfaction of long-distance married couples and revealed that there is no difference in marital satisfaction between husband and wife who were in long distance marriages. This contradiction could be because Putra and Afdal focused solely on couples in long distance marriages unlike the current study.

It can be seen from the discussion that males and females have different levels of satisfaction after been exposed to premarital counselling. Specifically, females showed more satisfaction with their marriages compared to males. This was realized in most of the findings discussed in relation to the findings of the current study.

The study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment on the basis of gender. This means that there was gender difference in terms of how premarital counselling affected the marital adjustment of the participants. From the results, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender is rejected.

The mean estimates showed that the mean score of females was low ($M=29.66$) than the mean score of males ($M=30.53$). Considering the scoring of the marital adjustment scale, it can be inferred that after exposure to premarital counselling, females had high marital adjustment than males.

The findings of the current study confirm the findings of Mickelson, Claffey, and Williams (2006), which found that males and females differed in terms of their contentment with their marriages. Nurhayati et al.(2019) also reported that in terms of how adjusted couples were, males were more likely to

contemplate divorce compared to females. This confirmed the existence of significant differences in the marital adjustment of couples. Also, in consonance with the current study, Yilmaz Karaman, Sonkurt and Gulec (2021) evaluated the quality of marital relationship in Turkish women and men with diagnosed sexual dysfunction (SD) and showed that gender was significant in the marital adjustment of couples.

Singh and Bahadur (2021), who looked at the spirituality and marital adjustment of single and dual earner couples between the ages of 25 and 45, found no significant gender difference in marital adjustment, contradicting the findings of the current study and the previous research. The current research was conducted on a more general population without regard to income, whereas the Singh and Bahadur study only included participants from certain high-income occupations. The present study's results also went against the findings of Muraru and Turliuc (2013), who found no distinction between the sexes in terms of marriage satisfaction. They came to the conclusion that romantic attachment was the only significant predictor of marital adjustment, independent of gender.

From the studies discussed, it is evident that most of the studies supported the finding that gender difference exists in marital adjustment. This implies that males and females are likely to be adjusted differently after exposure to premarital counselling.

Difference in the Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment on the Basis of Length of Marriage

The study found that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of length

of marriage. On this basis, the null hypothesis which states that: there is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage is rejected. Because the main effect of length of marriage is significant, a post hoc was carried out since there are more than two categories within length of marriage.

The post hoc test showed that a significant difference exists between the respondents who had been married for 6 to 10 years and those who had been married for 11 to 15 years ($p=.05$) with a mean difference of -5.76 . This indicates that marital satisfaction was high for those married for 11 to 15 years than those married for 6 to 10 years.

The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of Norman (2015) that significant differences existed in how satisfied the participants were on the basis of length of marriage. Similarly, Siji and Rekha's (2018) study in Kerala state, India showed that differences in marital quality and satisfaction was found to be existing in individuals who had been married for not more than five years in comparison with married people who had been married for a period of more than 10 years. Thus, marital satisfaction differed on the basis of length of marriage. It is possible that as people stayed married, they found ways of enjoying their marriages more.

Moreover, the findings are consistent with those of Ahangar, Juhari, Yaacob and Talib (2016). Ahangar et al. examined the relationships between demographic factors and marital satisfaction and indicated that length of marriage has significant relationship with marital satisfaction. In like manner, Bulgan, Kemer and Yıldız (2018) investigated the role of marriage type (family-

arranged versus self-choice), duration of marriage significantly predicted marital satisfaction. Prasetyo, Wahyuningsih and Karunia (2015) also found that marital satisfaction differed at different periods of marriage.

Marital satisfaction has been shown consistently in the discussion to be connected to length or duration of marriage. In most cases, the more people stay married, it is likely that they would know more about each other and through that improve their satisfaction in their marriage. During premarital counselling, couples are made aware that in the course of marriage, issues may come up and the ability of couples to resolve these issues may have an impact on their satisfaction in their marriage.

Regardless of how long a couple has been married, the research found that premarital counselling had no discernible effect on their level of marital satisfaction. Based on the findings, the null hypothesis is maintained or accepted, which says that there is no significant difference in the effect of premarital counselling on marital adjustment of married SDA members based on duration of marriage. A post hoc test was unnecessary due to the lack of significance in the main impact of marital duration.

The results are in line with the findings of Schachtner (2017) also supported this by indicating that duration of been married was not a key element in how adjusted couples are within their marriages. Similarly, the findings are consistent with the findings of Oprisan and Cristea (2012) who investigated marital satisfaction issues among couples and found that satisfaction or dissatisfaction does not depend on years spent in a marital relationship.

In contrast to the findings of the current study, however, Norman (2015) revealed that stability in marriage was a function of duration of been married.

This contradiction probably stems from the different instruments used in measuring stability and adjustment.

The evidence shown through the discussion is therefore that marital adjustment could be the same irrespective of how long the couple has been married. Since there have not been a lot of studies in this regard, there is the need for more investigation on this particular subject.

Difference in the Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Marital Adjustment on the Basis of Educational Level

The study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of educational level. In this sense, the null hypothesis which states that: there is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction of married SDA members on the basis of educational level is rejected. Having a found significance in the main effect of educational level, a post hoc was carried out since educational level had four different categories.

The post hoc test showed that a significant difference exists between the respondents who had no formal education and those with tertiary level education ($p=.018$) with a mean difference of -9.10. This indicates that marital satisfaction after exposure to premarital counselling was high for those with tertiary education than those with no formal education.

The findings support the existing findings of Dabone (2012) that the level of marital satisfaction of couples varied on the basis of their level of education. Specifically, Dabone found that higher educated married people were significantly more dissatisfied than individuals whose level of education was low.

In a similar light, the current findings are consistent with those of Norman (2015) who revealed that significant differences existed in how satisfied the participants were on the basis of their level of education. Also, Ojukwu, Woko and Onuoha (2016) sought to determine the impact of educational attainment on marital stability among married persons in Imo State and concluded that marital stability which was connected to satisfaction levels differed on the basis of level education.

The results also corroborate those of Kowal, Groyecka-Bernard, Kochan-Wójcik, and Sorokowski (2021), who found that higher levels of schooling were associated with greater levels of marital contentment. It was also found that education, age of the spouse, and duration of marriage were all associated with marital satisfaction by Nouri, Kebria, Ahmadianfar, Khosravi, and Amiri (2019). Ahangar et al. (2016) looked at how different demographic variables correlated with marital happiness, and they found that higher levels of education were positively associated with happier marriages.

It can be seen from these studies that marital satisfaction varies on the basis of level of education. It is possible that those who are highly educated may obtain more information which they can use to enhance their satisfaction in marriages.

Finally, the study found that there was no statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment on the basis of educational level. On the basis of the results, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of

educational level was retained. Because the main effect of length of marriage was not significant, there was no need for a post hoc test.

The results confirm the existing results of Reis and Gable (2003) that for people to adjust in marriage, the main elements were commitment, sacrifice, and forgiveness and not any of their specific demographic characteristics. It is also said by CHRISMA (2006) that contentment in marriage is a subjective experience and the perception of the couples involved in their marriage and this was not dependent on whether people were educated or not.

Additionally, the results of the current study support the findings of Barongo (2015). Barongo (2015) examined the impact of gender and marital satisfaction among selected spouses in Kisii Township in Kisii County and revealed that there were no statistically significant relationship between level of education and adjustment in marriage among the selected spouses in Kisii County. In this sense, marital adjustment did not vary on the basis of level of education. The evidence thus confirms that regardless of level of education, people can be well adjusted in marriage after receiving premarital counselling.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the results and discussion of the study. In all, six research questions were answered and eight hypotheses were tested. The results showed clearly that premarital counselling was perceived to be necessary and premarital counselling improved marital satisfaction and marital adjustment among those who received it. Gender, length of marriage and level of education were all shown to be demographic variables which were key in how satisfied couples were even after exposure to premarital counselling.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study's findings and suggestions are presented here. Counselling applications and directions for future study are discussed.

Summary of Study

The study's overarching goal is to learn how premarital counselling affects marriage happiness and success among SDA couples in Ghana's Central Region. Six research queries and four hypotheses were aimed at in this investigation.

Research Questions

1. What is the marital satisfaction of married SDA members in the Central Region?
2. What is the marital adjustment of married SDA members in the Central Region?
3. What is the content of premarital counselling offered by the SDA churches in the Central Region?
4. What is the perception of married SDA members in the Central Region on premarital counselling?

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not.

H_{a1}: There is a significant difference in marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members who received premarital counselling and those who did not.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

H_{a2}: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of gender.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

H_{a3}: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married SDA members on the basis of length of marriage.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married SDA members on the basis of education level.

H_{a4}: There is a significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment and marital satisfaction of married Christian individuals on the basis of education level.

Literature related to the study were reviewed. Dynamic Goal Theory of Marital Satisfaction, Social Exchange Theory, Solution Focused Premarital Counselling Therapy and the Complimentary Needs Theory were reviewed as the theoretical framework for the study. The study adopted a mixed methods

approach. The causal comparative design was chosen for the study. A sample of 300 married individuals from SDA churches in the Central Region was selected through multistage sampling for the study. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview guide. Quantitative data analysis was done through both descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data analysis was done through thematic analysis.

Major Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

1. The study found that the respondents were generally satisfied in their marriages. Specifically, the respondents trusted their partners, had stable relationship, were pleased sexually, got along well together and saw their relationship to be good.
2. The study revealed that the respondents were less adjusted in their marriages.
3. The study found that there are a variety of topics and issues discussed as part of the content of premarital counselling. These included conflict management, communication, finances, coping with differences, future aspirations, parenting, sex and extended family relationships.
4. Regarding the perceptions about premarital counselling, the study revealed that the respondents perceived premarital counselling to be necessary and effective in dealing with critical issues in the marriage while helping would-be couples to know what goes into marriage and the differences, they must deal with in each other.
5. The study revealed that there was a statistically significant negative relationship between premarital counselling and marital satisfaction.

6. The study found that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between premarital counselling and marital adjustment.
7. The study found that there was a significant difference between those who received premarital counselling and those who did not in terms of their marital satisfaction. The respondents who received premarital counselling had high marital satisfaction compared to those who did not.
8. The study revealed that there was a significant difference between the respondents who received premarital counselling and those who did not in terms of their marital adjustment. The respondents who received premarital counselling were more adjusted than those who did not receive premarital counselling.
9. The study found that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of gender. Specifically, marital satisfaction was high for females than for males.
10. The study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment on the basis of gender. Specifically, females had high marital adjustment than males.
11. The study found that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of length of marriage. Marital satisfaction was high for those married for 11 to 15 years than those married for 6 to 10 years.
12. The study revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment on the basis of length of marriage.

13. The study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital satisfaction on the basis of educational level. Marital satisfaction was high for those with tertiary education than those with no formal education.

14. Finally, the study found that there was no statistically significant difference in the impact of premarital counselling on marital adjustment on the basis of educational level.

Conclusions

On the basis of the findings, it is concluded that most married SDA members went through premarital counselling. For those who received premarital counselling, their perception was that premarital counselling was necessary for marriage and that the topics covered during premarital counselling were helpful in marriages.

It is concluded that premarital counselling can improve the marital satisfaction and marital adjustment of married individuals. This is because would-be couples would be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to cope and handle issues which may come up in their marriages. Through this, couples would feel more connected to their spouses and feel more satisfied in their marriages.

It is concluded that satisfaction is attributed to factors such as trust, stability in the relationship, sexual satisfaction, good compatibility, and overall positive perceptions of their relationships.

It is concluded that premarital counselling is seen as a valuable resource for helping couples understand the intricacies of marriage and how to navigate differences. Contrary to expectations, the study revealed a statistically

significant negative relationship between premarital counselling and marital satisfaction. This finding is unexpected and warrants further investigation to understand the underlying reasons.

On the other hand, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between premarital counselling and marital adjustment. This suggests that couples who receive premarital counselling tend to be better adjusted in their marriages, possibly due to the skills and knowledge gained during counselling. Gender plays a significant role in the impact of premarital counselling. Females reported higher levels of marital satisfaction and adjustment after receiving counselling compared to males. This implies that premarital counselling may have a more pronounced positive effect on females.

It is concluded that the benefits of premarital counselling may become more evident over time. Educational level also influences the impact of premarital counselling. This implies that education may contribute to greater marital satisfaction but may not necessarily affect marital adjustment.

The findings that females tend to be more satisfied in their marriages than men, and that longer-married couples tend to be more satisfied than recently married couples, can be understood through various sociological, psychological, and relational factors. Women may place a greater emphasis on expressions of affection and intimacy. When men actively engage in these behaviors, it can enhance overall relationship satisfaction. Couples who have been together for a longer time have likely faced and overcome various challenges together. Successfully navigating these challenges can strengthen the relationship and contribute to a sense of achievement and satisfaction.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the findings:

1. SDA church leaders should make premarital counselling a key prerequisite for marriages in their churches. This is because the study found that it was not all the married individuals who took part in premarital counselling.
2. Since the study found that premarital counselling was perceived to be necessary, SDA church leaders should encourage their church members to see premarital counselling as something they have to be part of.
3. Having found that premarital counselling enhanced marital satisfaction, it is recommended that SDA church leaders strengthen their premarital counselling structure or system in the church so that all would-be couples can benefit greatly and improve their marital satisfaction. Premarital counselling can be strengthened by emphasizing marital satisfaction issues.
4. Since the study found that marital adjustment was improved through premarital counselling, it is recommended that SDA church leaders improve their premarital counselling structure by emphasizing issues of marital adjustment so that all couples who receive premarital counselling can improve their marital adjustment.
5. Since the study showed that premarital counselling covers a wide range of topics, it's important to continually update and refine the content to reflect evolving societal norms and challenges. Consider incorporating discussions on emerging issues such as technology use, work-life balance, and mental health awareness.

6. SDA leaders should recognize that gender plays a significant role in the outcomes of premarital counselling. They should tailor counselling approaches to address the unique needs and concerns of both males and females. Create gender-specific modules within counselling sessions to provide relevant guidance.
7. SDA churches should acknowledge the influence of length of marriage on the impact of counselling. Implement follow-up sessions or support for couples who have received premarital counselling to address the evolving challenges that arise as marriages progress. This ongoing support can reinforce the skills and strategies learned during counselling.
8. Church counselors should consider the diverse cultural backgrounds of couples seeking premarital counselling. Churches should train counselors to be culturally sensitive and adaptable in their approach. Incorporate culturally relevant examples and case studies to make the counselling experience more relatable.
9. SDA churches should recognize the role of education in marital satisfaction. Provide additional resources or support for couples with lower levels of education to bridge the gap in marital satisfaction. This might involve simplified educational materials or additional counselling sessions.
10. Counsellors should make counselling sessions at church more engaging and practical by incorporating interactive exercises. Role-playing, simulations, and real-life scenarios can help couples apply the concepts

they learn during counselling and build stronger communication and problem-solving skills.

11. Given the significance of communication in relationships, prioritize comprehensive communication training within premarital counselling.

Churches should teach active listening, assertiveness, conflict resolution, and empathy-building techniques to empower couples to navigate challenges effectively.

12. Churches should make premarital counselling more accessible to a wider range of couples, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Consider offering online counselling options, sliding-scale fees, or community-based initiatives to reach a broader audience.

Implications for Counselling

The findings of the study have implications for the practice of counselling. In the first place, premarital counselling should be given pre-eminence in all churches and should be paid the utmost attention. This means that those who provide premarital counselling should not just be religious leaders but should be those who are trained in the field of counselling so that they can provide the best of service. This is necessary since the marital satisfaction and adjustment of married individuals can be determined by the premarital counselling provided.

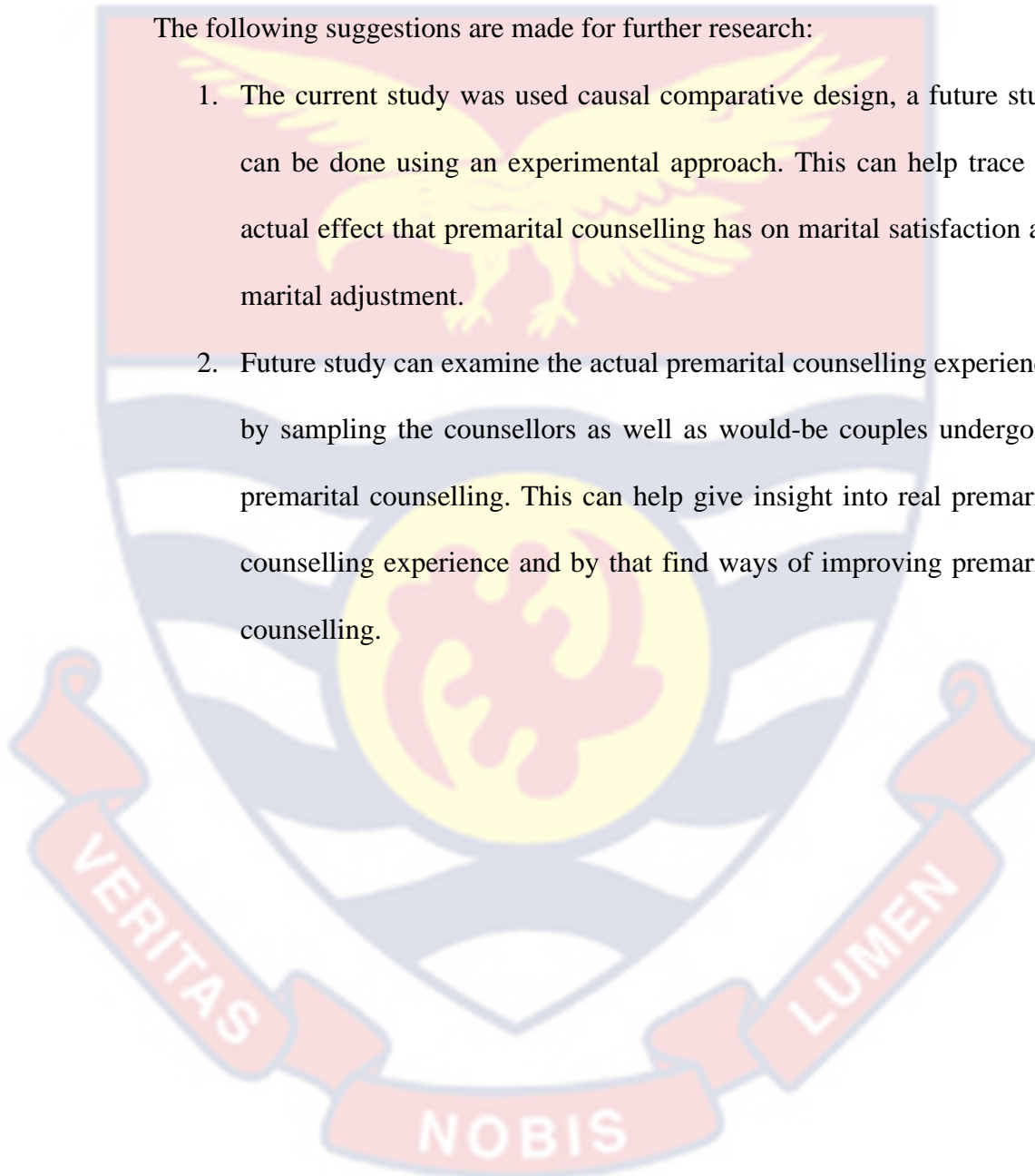
Secondly, topics treated in premarital counselling should be such that they can address all the pertinent and current issues plaguing marriages. This can help ensure that couples who receive premarital counselling are well prepared to meet new challenges facing marriages today. Finally, instead of premarital counselling being a routine, counsellors providing premarital

counselling could make couples aware that the benefits of premarital counselling are immense and as such, it would be advantageous to them to commit fully throughout the period of the premarital counselling.

Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions are made for further research:

1. The current study was used causal comparative design, a future study can be done using an experimental approach. This can help trace the actual effect that premarital counselling has on marital satisfaction and marital adjustment.
2. Future study can examine the actual premarital counselling experiences by sampling the counsellors as well as would-be couples undergoing premarital counselling. This can help give insight into real premarital counselling experience and by that find ways of improving premarital counselling.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARTICIPANTS

I am a graduate student conducting a research on the topic: “The Impact of Premarital Counselling on Marital Satisfaction and Adjustment of married Christian individuals in the Central Region, Ghana.” Please kindly complete the questionnaire as frankly and objectively as possible by ticking (√) the column that is most applicable to you on each item. Your responses will be treated confidentially and will be used solely for the study. Thank you for taking the time to help with this research.

SECTION A

Demographic Characteristics of the Couples

Instruction: Please, for each item, tick (√) the box that most appropriately applies to you.

1. **Gender:** Male Female
2. **Length of marriage:** A. 1 - 5 years B. 6 –10 years
C. 11 – 15 years D 16 and above
3. **Highest Educational level:** A. No formal education B. Basic
C. SHS/ Technical D. Tertiary

4. Occupation:

- A. Government employee B. Private Employee
 C. Unemployed D. Retired
 E. Farming F. Others (specify).....

5. Did you receive premarital counselling before getting married?

Yes No

6. At what age were you married?

SECTION B

Perceptions on Premarital Counselling

Instruction: *Please put a tick mark (√) where appropriate against the following statements using the key below to guide you:*

- 1 stands for Strongly Disagree
- 2 stands for Disagree
- 3 stands for Neutral
- 4 stands for Agree
- 5 stands for Strongly Agree

SN	My perceptions on premarital counselling include:	1	2	3	4	5
1	Premarital counselling is necessary.					
2	When partners go through premarital counselling , they often uncover issues they had been blind to before.					
3	Premarital counselling must be made compulsory in all churches.					

4	Marriage is a lifelong commitment, and premarital therapy can help couples prepare for the challenges of their future together.					
5	Premarital therapy should be followed up with further sessions.					
6	Confidentiality is of the utmost importance during premarital counselling meetings.					
7	Apart from going through premarital counselling, there are other more important means of getting information about marriage.					
8	Meeting with advisers before the ceremony is not enough to ensure a happy marriage, however. Instead, premarital counselling should focus on the most important factors that will determine the couple's happiness together.					
9	As soon as a man and a woman have decided they want to get married, they should seek premarital therapy.					
10	A couple's premarital counselling session is a great time to discuss roles and expectations for the union.					

Content of Premarital Counselling

Instruction: *Please put a tick mark (√) where appropriate against the following statements*

	Content of Premarital counselling should include:	Yes	No
1	Sex in marriage		
2	Communication in marriage		
3	Financial management in marriage		
4	Conflict management in marriage		
5	Purpose of marriage		
6	Coping with each other's differences in marriage		
7	Couples' expectation in marriage		
8	Extended family relationships		
9	Future aspirations of each partner		
10	Child rearing and parenthood		
11	Divorce prevention in marriage		
12	Religious differences		
13	Previous marriage(s) and children, if applicable		

SECTION C

Marital Satisfaction

Instruction: Please put a tick mark (✓) where appropriate against the following statements using the key below to guide you:

1 stands for Rarely or none of the time

2 stands for A little of the time

3 stands for Sometime

4 stands for A good part of the time

5 stands for Most or all of the time

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel my partner is affectionate enough					
2	I feel that my partner treats me badly					
3	I feel that my partner cares for me					
4	I feel that I would not choose the same partner if I had it to do over					
5	I feel that I can trust my partner					
6	I feel that our relationship is breaking up					
7	I feel that my partner doesn't understand me					
8	I feel that our relationship is a good one					
9	I feel that ours is a very happy relationship					
10	I feel that our life together is dull					
11	I feel that we have a lot of fun together					
12	I feel that my partner doesn't confide in me					
13	I feel that ours is a very close relationship					
14	I feel that I cannot rely on my partner					
15	I feel that we do not have enough interests in common					
16	I feel that we manage arguments and disagreements very well					

- 17 I feel that we do a good job of managing our finances
- 18 I feel that I should never have married my partner
- 19 I feel that my partner and I get along very well together
- 20 I feel that our relationship is stable
- 21 I feel that my partner is pleased with me as a sex partner
- 22 I feel that we should do more things together
- 23 I feel that the future looks bright for our relationship
- 24 I feel that our relationship is empty
- 25 I feel there is no excitement in our relationship

SECTION C

Marital Satisfaction

Instruction: Please put a tick mark (✓) where appropriate against the following statements using the key below to guide you:

- 1 stands for Rarely or none of the time
- 2 stands for A little of the time
- 3 stands for Sometime
- 4 stands for A good part of the time
- 5 stands for Most or all of the time

S/N	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I feel my partner is affectionate enough					
2	I feel that my partner treats me badly					
3	I feel that my partner cares for me					
4	I feel that I would not choose the same partner if I had it to do over					
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7	I feel that my partner doesn't understand me					
8	I feel that our relationship is a good one					
9	I feel that ours is a very happy relationship					
10	I feel that our life together is dull					
11	I feel that we have a lot of fun together					
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14	I feel that I cannot rely on my partner					
15	I feel that we do not have enough interests in common					
16	I feel that we manage arguments and disagreements very well					
17	I feel that we do a good job of managing our finances					
18	I feel that I should never have married my partner					
19	I feel that my partner and I get along very well together					
20	I feel that our relationship is stable					
21	I feel that my partner is pleased with me as a sex partner					
22	I feel that we should do more things together					
23	I feel that the future looks bright for our relationship					
24	I feel that our relationship is empty					

25	I feel there is no excitement in our relationship					
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SECTION D

Marital Adjustment

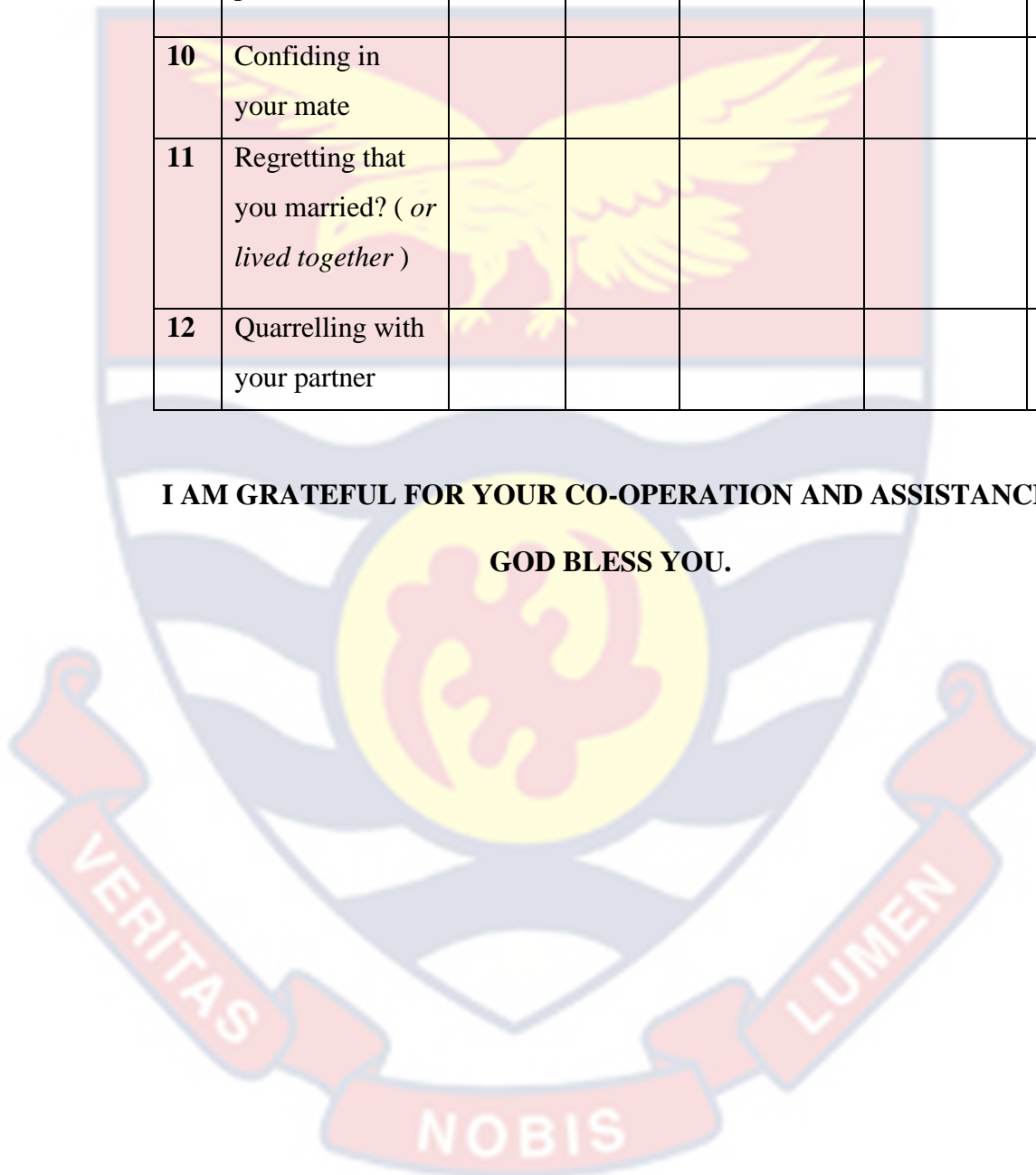
Instructions: Most couples argue at some point or another. In the space provided below, please indicate how much you and your partner concur or disagree with each of the following statements.

	Statement	Always agree	Almost agree	Occasionally agree	Frequently disagree	Always disagree
1	Handling family finances					
2	Ways of dealing with our parents or in-laws					
3	Spending time together					
4	Making major decisions					
5	Doing household tasks					
6	Demonstrations of affection					
7	Discussing or considering divorce, separation or terminating your relationship					
8	Getting on each					

	other's nerves					
9	Things going well between you and your partner					
10	Confiding in your mate					
11	Regretting that you married? (<i>or lived together</i>)					
12	Quarrelling with your partner					

I AM GRATEFUL FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION AND ASSISTANCE.

GOD BLESS YOU.



APPENDIX B**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MARRIED CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUALS****Introduction**

I appreciate your time and cooperation with this research. The purpose of this interview schedule is to learn how premarital therapy affected the happiness and well-being of married Christians in Ghana's Central Region. This would help to make recommendations for policy makers to help improve the conduct of premarital counselling. The whole interview is likely to last for at most 20 minutes. I would like to record this interview with your permission.

Confidentiality

I want to reassure you that everything we discuss in this conversation will be held in the strictest confidence. If any of the material you provide is used without any changes, no attribution to you will be made. As a result, your identity will never be revealed for any reason.

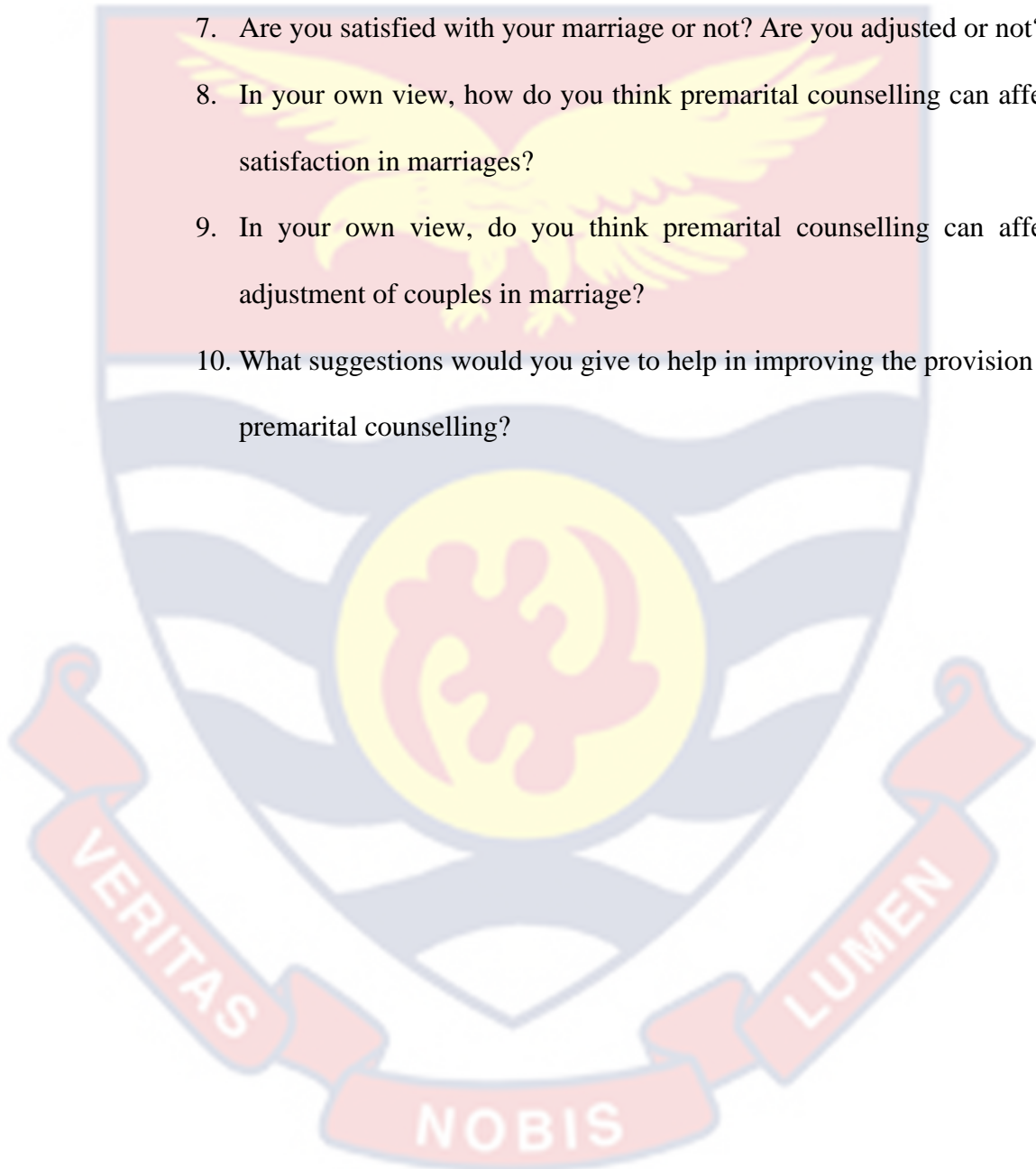
You can choose not to respond if discussing a topic that makes you uncomfortable. You may terminate your participation in this interview at any moment, and I will understand.

This interview session will be recorded and transcribed.

Questions

1. Please tell me about yourself (your age, your level of education and how long you have been married)?
2. Did you receive premarital counselling before getting married?
3. If yes, please tell me some of the issues which were discussed during the premarital counselling?
4. If no, please tell me why?

5. What is your personal opinion about premarital counselling? Do you think it is or it is not necessary? Why do you think so?
6. To what extent are you happy in your marriage, and how well have you adjusted to married life so far?
7. Are you satisfied with your marriage or not? Are you adjusted or not?
8. In your own view, how do you think premarital counselling can affect satisfaction in marriages?
9. In your own view, do you think premarital counselling can affect adjustment of couples in marriage?
10. What suggestions would you give to help in improving the provision of premarital counselling?



APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA



Our Ref: ces/erbucc/edu/2022-146
Your Ref:

Date: 4th November, 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Omotosho
j.omotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0244784739

Chairwoman, CES-ERB
Prof. N. Edjah
nedjah@ucc.edu.gh
0244784237

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
lforde@ucc.edu.gh
0244786680

The bearer, Isaac Amath-Deah, Reg. No. FT/19616/2005 is a
M.Phil / Ph.D. student in the Department of Guidance
and Counselling in the College of Education Studies
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to
undertake a research study on the topic:

Impact of premarital counselling on marital
satisfaction and adjustment among married
Seventh-Day Adventist Church members in
Central Region, Ghana.

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies
(CES) has assessed his/her proposal and confirm that the proposal
satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the
study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval
to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would
give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said
research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)

APPENDIX D

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA



Our Ref: ces/erb/ucc/edu/vcb/2-146
Your Ref:

Date: 4th November, 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Omotosho
jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh
02443784739

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh
02444784557

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
Linda.Dzama@ucc.edu.gh
02444784680

The bearer, Isaac Amadi-Teah, Reg. No. FF/acc/16/2007 is a
M.Phil / Ph.D. student in the Department of Guidance
and Counselling in the College of Education Studies
University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He / She wishes to
undertake a research study on the topic:

Impact of premarital counselling on marital
satisfaction and adjustment among married
Seventh-Day Adventist Church members in
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The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies
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satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval
to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would
give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said
research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)