



Influence of Pre-Marital Counselling on Sustainability of Marriages in Greater Accra Region, Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on elements discussed during pre-marital counselling and how those elements mediate on the sustainability of marriages in Greater Accra Region. Concurrent triangulation mixed method design was chosen for the study. For the quantitative phase 100 marriage people were randomly selected from 10 churches. At the qualitative phase 4 head pastors were conveniently selected from the 10 churches. Mean and standard deviation was used to analyse the questionnaire for the quantitative phase while the semi-structured interview scheduled was thematically analysed to explain issues as they emerged in the study. The study showed conflict resolution, communication, adjusting to individual difference, sex and romance, family lifecycles in marriage and separation from past-memories and families were some elements discussed during pre-marital counselling to help sustain the marriages. Again, respondents were of the view that pre-marital counselling is vital for the sustainability of marriages and should be made compulsory for new couples. Lastly, it was revealed the philosophy of pre-marital counselling is not only being aware of potential land mines in their relationship, but to equip married people to learn the skills necessary to successfully deal with challenges throughout their marriage which help in the sustainability. Therefore, it was recommended that the churches should employ professional counsellors who understand the principle of marriage counselling to perform the act of counselling and follow-up service should be done to check if the elements discussed during pre-marital counselling are being put into practice.

Keywords: Pre-marital counselling, Marriage people, Conflict resolution, Communication, Ghana, Churches, Greater Accra Region

INTRODUCTION

Marriage preparations are a major concern for adults in Ghana as they grow up. The concern is what it's entailed about having pre-knowledge about what marriage is about. Haviland, Prins, Bunny and Dana (2011), defines marriage as wedlock of socially or ritually accepted partnership or legal contract between spouses defining rights and obligations between them, their children and their in-laws. Olson and Defrain (2000) all believe that marriage is the two people's emotional and legal dedication to sharing emotional and physical love, different responsibilities and economic resources.

Pre-marital counselling was identified as plaining or education received by counsellors or pastors before individual get into marriage (Taylor & Buku, 2006). Stahmann (2000) asserted pre-marital counselling as the avenue or therapy where tool for improving and enriching pre-marital relationships to promote more fulfilling and successful marriages and less divorce are discussed. The objectives of pre-marital therapy include promoting the transition from single to married life, improving partners' security and satisfaction, growing friendship and commitment to relationships, increasing spousal intimacy, and enhancing problem-solving and decision-making skills. Russell and Lyster (1992) agree that preparation for marriage gives couples the opportunity to examine important aspects of their relationship and develop the skills needed to communicate and negotiate in areas critical to intimacy development.

Amid marriage sanctity and its acceptance in today's society, rates of divorce are on the rise. Many divorce studies like the one conducted by Abra (2001) show a trend of divorce rate increases in Ghana due to lack of pre-marital counselling. However, the study Ambakederemo and Ganagana, (2006) asserted most adult fail to make critical decisions to examine the person to marry for life. In the same vein, Adesanya (2002) added choosing a partner was one of the critical decisions in life most where most youth fail to attach seriousness to it.

Historically, the education of couples falls under the pre-marital counselling umbrella. The goal of this pre-marital counselling was to work with married people first and foremost, while helping to focus on educational and therapeutic approaches rather than a remedial approach to helping couples (Bowling, Hill, & Jencius, 2005; Jakubowski, Milne, Brunner, & Miller, 2004). The researchers believe that that pre-marital counselling was an opportunity to help stem the tide of high rates of divorce and dysfunctional marriage structures. Pre-marital counselling has also been proposed as the ground-breaking approach to improve and maintain relationships marriage (Bowling al et, 2004). Senediak (1990) argues that many marriages still break apart despite numerous pre-marital counselling and further establishes that many marriages have been blamed for not doing well and couples do not need to go through counselling.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The researchers were informed by personal observation from our various home, experiences and empirical evidence on reports on divorce rate and registration of marriages in Ghana. A data from the Registrar General's Department report 2018, indicate that within the past decade, divorce rate has risen by 42%. A study conducted by Ansah-Hughes, Oteng Akyina and Oduro-Okyireh (2015) suggested that couples associate marital problems to lack of pre-marital or failure to have proper pre-marital counselling. A data gathered from Central Regional Registrar General's Department shows that out of the estimated 3,672 marriages register from 2016-2019, more than 678 of those marriages have been broken up to date. However, from the Greater Accra Region, the Domestic and Violence Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service reports (2015-2019) shows that household violence among married people has risen by 38%. Again, in the Greater Accra Region 5,418 registered marriages were recorded from 2014-2019 whereas estimated number of 1,092 of those marriages have been broken till date (Registry General' Department Report, 2019). A study by Bakko (2016) show couples who do not perform or attend pre-marital counselling seek guidance on marriage issues than those who attended pre-marital counselling. Despite the disturbing nature on divorce rate in the Greater Accra Region, not much studies have been carried out to assess the extent to which pre-marital counselling are carried out in the region.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The paper therefore sought to find out from married people about the elements discussed during pre-marital counselling, and how those elements mediate on the sustainability of marriages in Greater Accra Region. To achieve the stated purpose of the study. The following research questions were set.

- What are the elements discussed during pre-marital counselling?
- What perceptions do married people have towards pre-marital counselling?
- What are the significance of pre-marital counselling towards the sustainability of marriages?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study would guide married people as to how to achieve marital security, while helping to handle risky behaviours leading to divorce. The findings would help counsellors and religious leaders on some elements to focus on when providing pre-marital counselling. The study would also recommend some therapeutic procedure and approaches that can be used to support married people on satisfaction of their marriages. Again, the results may also help individuals to understand the need for pre-marital counselling and the need to attend all sessions during the therapeutic process of counselling. The results of this study would serve as complementary literature to explore aspects of pre-marital counselling for future researchers.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical basis for this research was rooted in Gottman's cascade principle of marital dissolution. Gottman's (1994) marital conflict and divorce cascade theory incorporates both behavioural psychology and the theory of social exchange. He looked past the multitude of factors associated with a sharp increase in marital dissolution rates, such as women's autonomy and more transparent laws on divorce and acknowledged that they do not explain why some marriages last and others do not last. Gottman's theory was based on scientific research findings using a hundred (100) couples from the Greater Accra region, as opposed to the ideas and information presented by researchers who have developed their material based on their experience with the couples they see in their practice.

A lasting marriage was one that profits from the willingness of a couple to resolve conflicts that are predestined for any relationship, based on Gottman's research (1994). The main factor was the distinction between attitudes that are positive and negative. If positive behaviour was higher than negative behaviour, marital permanence would term as higher. Furthermore, not all unhealthy habits lead directly to marital dissolution, but it was clearly stated that four behaviours lead to closure and frustration. Gottman's work has demonstrated a process of change over time in the views of spouses and their partnership that creates a cascade of distance and alienation. Lastly, their partner's pessimism was debilitating, unanticipated, and/or serious, to the extent that the spouse grasps the degree of hopelessness that he or she was to do whatever they can to eradicate the behaviour. There was a perceptual change when a couple enters this stage where feelings of affection, respect, and protection are replaced by feelings of pain, sorrow, fear, anxiety, and irritation. It may be extremely difficult to see marriage in a positive light once this cognitive change has occurred. Given that the essence of pre-marital counselling was based on engagement and other ways of cultivating and maintaining a healthy, fulfilling relationship, this theoretical framework focuses on how pre-

marital counselling may lead to greater longevity of marriages between married people in the Greater Accra Region.

METHODOLOGY

The study was based on pragmatic paradigm, where concurrent triangulation mixed method design was used (Creswell & Clark, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This design requires the researchers, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously and analysing them (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The population constitutes to all married people in Greater Accra, who undergo pre-marital counselling when getting married. The researchers chosen this population because the Registrar General's Department report show that the Greater Accra Region has a higher rate of divorce case in Ghana. The sample consist of 104. At the quantitative phase, simple random and convenient sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) married people from ten (10) churches in Greater Accra Region (Creswell & Clark, 2017). Again, convenient sampling procedure was used to select four (4) head pastors from the ten (10) selected churches in the quantitative phase (Creswell & Clark, 2017). A smaller sample was selected for the qualitative phase because it was manageable, and it would be appropriate to select a small sample that would enable the researcher to make in-depth review about phenomenon and to explore situations better (Creswell & Creswell, 2017, Kusi, 2012).

The researchers spent six weeks for the data collection and the duration for data collection was between 26th April and 24th May, 2020. Before the researchers collected the data, a letter was written to pastors from the selected churches in Greater Accra. The letter clearly defines the target audience being married people who have undergo pre-marital counselling before (Kissi-Abrokwah & Kodua-Ntim, 2021). The instruments used for gathering data was questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The techniques for evaluating flaws and problems in the study were provided. For instance, colleagues (independent raters) from the Department of Guidance and Counselling in University of Cape Coast were given the instruments to assess for accuracy. The feedback from the independent raters was positive and the instruments were not change or updated. The researchers used to test the consistency of the report, after each interview, the interviewees were asked to either confirm or disconfirm their claims.

The qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis while the quantitative data was also analysed using mean and standard deviation. For the purpose of confidentiality and anonymity interviewee's identity were represented by serial codes. Pentecostal Pastor Interviewee (IPCoP-1); Christ Embassy Church Pastor Interviewee (ICEC-2); International Central Gospel Church Pastor Interviewee (IPICGC-3); and In Him His Life Church Pastor Interviewee (IPIHLC-4).

RESULTS

This section report data from the quantitative and qualitative perspective. The background information discussed was on gender, education qualification and prior knowledge about pre-marital counselling. The background information showed that out of the 100 respondents used for the study, 63 were female while 37 were male. On educational qualification, twelve (12) respondents asserted that they have completed Junior High School while twenty-eight (28) confirmed that they had Senior high school. The remaining sixty (60) respondents confirmed that they completed tertiary institution. Out of the 100 married people, eighty-nine (89) confirmed they have prior knowledge about pre-marital counselling while eleven (11)

suggested they have not no knowledge about pre-marital counselling. On the Likert-type four-point scale, respondents were asked to demonstrate their level of agreement or disagreement with the argument on the specific issue of testing. The mean score of 2.50 and above shows positive responses, whereas the respondents negative responses are shown by an average of 2.49 and below (Ofori & Dampson, 2012; Kissi-Abrokwhah, 2018). Through applying all scores to the Likert scale, the test value was determined. That's Strongly Accept graded as 4, Agree as 3, Disagree as 2 and disagree strongly as 1. The test rating was calculated by averaging all scores ($4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10$) and dividing by the Likert scale of four points ($10/4 = 2.5$) (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The presentation of results was grouped into two (2). The first phase represents the quantitative, follow by the qualitative phase.

Quantitative findings

Table 1: Elements/components of pre-marital counselling

Statement	N	Mean	St.D
Conflict resolution	100	3.77	0.42
Interferences in marriage	100	3.73	0.44
Sex and Romance in marriage	100	3.68	0.47
Communication in marriage	100	3.68	0.47
Adjusting to differences (education and temperament)	100	3.67	0.47
Management of resource in marriage	100	3.63	0.48
Stress management in marriage	100	3.62	0.49
Separation from past-memories and families	100	3.61	0.58
Dealing with couples and step children	100	3.57	0.54
Family lifecycles in marriage	100	3.54	0.55
Mean of Means		3.65	0.47

Source: Field data, Kissi-Abrokwhah and Aboyom (2021)

From Table 1 respondents asserted that “conflict resolution” was identified as the most frequent elements/components discussed during pre-marital counselling recorded ($M=3.77$, $SD=0.42$). However, it was reported that “interferences in marriage” which scored the second most frequent element discussed during pre-marital counselling with the mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.73$, $SD=0.44$). For instance, respondents commented that “sex and Romance in marriage and communication in marriage” which also recorded the same mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.68$, $SD=0.47$). In addition, adjusting to differences in education and temperament ($M=3.67$, $SD=0.47$) that shows respondents can deal with their difference effectively. However, the result show that “management of resource in marriage”, “stress management in marriage” and “separation from past-memories and families” also recorded a higher mean and standard deviation with a score value of ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.48$), ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.49$) and ($M=3.61$, $SD=0.58$) respectively. In addition, respondents asserted that “dealing with couples and step children” and “family lifecycles in marriage” were the least elements of subject discussed during pre-marital counselling with the score value of ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.54$) and ($M=3.54$, $SD=0.55$) respectively. The next section explains perceptions of married people towards pre-marital counselling.

Table 2: Perceptions of married people towards pre-marital counselling

Statement	N	M	St.D
Pre-marital counselling must be mandatory in all marriages.	100	3.50	0.70
Pre-marital counselling has the potential to build a successful future for prospective couples.	100	3.33	0.79
Pre-marital counselling address issues that could impact marriages.	100	3.19	0.80
Pre-marital counselling helps the couple understand what's going on in marriage and the discrepancies they must contend with each other.	100	2.87	0.94
Pre-marital counselling discusses the challenges couple may face in their marriage.	100	2.76	0.99
Apart from going through pre-marital counselling, the success or failure of marriage can also rely on the degree of knowledge that partners have from books, magazines and film.	100	2.72	0.94
Pre-marital counselling is not important because the success or failure of a marriage depends on advice from friends or family members.	100	2.68	0.97
Pre-marital counselling must start when couples decide to marry.	100	2.44	0.99
Pre-marital counselling gives partners the opportunity to discuss their marriage obligations.	100	2.43	1.04
It is not appropriate to disclose the issues discussed during pre-marital counselling sessions to other family members.	100	1.45	0.54
Mean of Means		2.73	0.87

Source: Field data, Kissi-Abrokwah and Aboyom (2021)

The results from Table 2 shows that the perceptions of married people towards pre-marital counselling was moderate. The overall mean and means score was ($M=2.73$, $SD=0.87$). This shows that married people found in study have prior knowledge about pre-marital counselling. Respondents' comments stated as "pre-marital counselling must be mandatory in all marriages" recorded ($M=3.50$, $SD=0.70$) shows highest response rate. Further, Table 2 further reported that "pre-marital counselling has the potential to build a successful future for prospective couples" was recorded as ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.79$) which was the second most frequent about perceptions of married people towards pre-marital counselling. With respect to high response, respondents suggested that, pre-marital counselling should address issues that could impact marriages and this recorded a mean score of 3.19 and standard deviation value of 0.80. Moderate response rates are recorded in Table 2. For instance, respondent's comments on "pre-marital counselling helps the couple understand what's going on in marriage and the discrepancies they have to contend with each other" recorded ($M=2.87$, $SD=0.94$) while respondents suggested that pre-marital counselling discusses the challenges couple may face in their marriage which recorded ($M=2.76$, $SD=0.99$). Table 2 further shows that respondents were of the view that "apart from going through pre-marital counselling, the success or failure of marriage can also rely on the degree of knowledge that partners have from books, magazines and film" recorded a mean and standard deviation value of ($M=2.72$) and ($SD=0.94$). Finally, Table 2 recorded a low response that "It is not appropriate to disclose the issues discussed

during pre-marital counselling sessions to other family members” and therefore only recorded a mean value of ($M=1.45$) and a standard deviation of ($SD=0.54$). The analysis of scales from Table 2 shows that married people have prior knowledge about the perception of pre-marital counselling. The table explains the significance of pre-marital counselling on the sustainability of marriages.

Table 3: Significance of pre-marital counselling on sustainability of marriage

Statement	N	Mean	St.D
Build communication skills in marriage.	100	3.78	0.47
Plan for unfortunate incidence.	100	3.59	0.31
Build a strong marriage and bound.	100	3.48	0.21
Prevent divorce.	100	3.17	0.47
Couple absorb wisdom	100	3.45	0.48
Provide opportunity to address issues.	100	2.87	0.50
Couples to discover new things about themselves	100	2.55	0.50
Mean of Means		3.27	0.42

Source: Field data, Kissi-Abrokwah and Aboyom (2021)

The results from Table 3 shows that married people understand why is important to have pre-marital counselling. The overall mean and means score was ($M=3.27$, $SD=0.42$). From Table 3 respondents asserted that “pre-marital counselling was important because it help to build communication skills in marriage” recorded ($M=3.78$, $SD=0.47$). However, it was reported that “Plan for unfortunate incidence” which scored the second was regarded as the important of pre-marital counselling to married people with the mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.31$). For instance, respondents commented that pre-marital counselling was important because it help “build a strong marriage and bound” which also recorded mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.48$, $SD=0.21$). In addition, respondents also believe that pre-marital counselling help to prevent divorce ($M=3.17$, $SD=0.47$) that shows lack of pre-marital counselling may increase divorce rate in the country. However, the result show that “Provide opportunity to address issues” and “Couples to discover new things about themselves” also recorded a moderate mean and standard deviation with a score value of ($M=2.87$, $SD=0.50$) and ($M=2.55$, $SD=0.50$) respectively.

Qualitative findings

From the qualitative phase four (4) key pastors were conveniently interviewed to throw more light on significance of pre-marital counselling on sustainability of marriages. IPCoP-1 noted that pre-marital counselling helps married people to aware of how, where and when to communicate their needs and aspirations to their partners. In the same vein, IPICGC-3 asserted that they teach and educate couple on how to develop empathy and good communication skills on how to inspire one another during the time of difficulties. In support of this ICEC-2 stated that a word of wisdom on the topic of marriage would benefit couples during pre-marital counselling. IPCoP-1 argued that pre-marital counselling creates growth opportunities while helping couples learn more about each other. It's also a fun place for people to talk with their peers about issues they're upset about and angry about (IPIHLC-4).

The issue of divorce usually arises from misunderstanding among marriage couples. Pre-marital counselling helps to enhance the thoughtful of couples which goes a long way prevent marital struggles that may lead to the ultimate divorce and its

consequence. This normal results from gross ignorance and ill preparedness by the young couples before getting into the marriage (IPIHHLC-4).

ICEC-2 asserted that pre-marital counselling therefore paves the way for the understanding of the couples and helps to stimulate the unique connectivity between them to ensure healthy relationship for the safety of the marriage. In the same vein, IPICGC-3 supported that pre-marital counselling thus serves as a guide for the success of marriages.

It is often said that a foundation of a building determines the type of structure to be set up, and so for a marriage or a family to become strong and stronger pre-marital counselling is a necessity (IPCoP-1). The respondent further asserted that pre-marital counselling as a foundation increases the stability of the marriage and generally provides the ingredients for vitality (IPCoP-1). In addition, IPICGC-3 posits that pre-marital improves the ability of the partners to set realistic expectations for marriages to work. Also, IPIHHLC-4 supported that

Pre-marital counselling enables the young couples to develop the problem-solving skills in marital relationships towards building strong families and homes. This is an essential component of the processes for the survival of marriages in the current dispensation.

On the contrary, IPICGC-3 concludes that attaining a happy marriage is beyond true love, honesty and trust as communication in marriage is crucial but all these can be achieved with the help of pre-marital counselling. IPCoP-1 asserted that Some couples enter in marriage often pay attention to communication until things get out of hand. Speaking out is the best way to identify a problem and responding appropriately. If partners do not communicate, the marriage union will be faced with many frustrations, which will eventually lead to a break down. All these realities are thought during the pre-marital counselling session.

In addition, IPICGC-3 suggested:

Pre-marital counselling strengthens the communications among young couples. This enables the young couples to begin to appreciate the mode of inter-personal communication among the potential marriage couple and work to improve the communication deficiency. Clear communications enhance vital decisions making to avoid misunderstanding in marriages.

IPIHHLC-4 narrated:

Pre-marital counselling provides the opportunities to address issues such as diseases, child birth, sex related issues, power and control, and ownership of property objectively. These are realistic issues that have the propensity of destabilizing marriages when they are not properly handled.

In the same vein, ICEC-2 posits:

Pre-marital counselling is essential because it provide some key issues to prepare the road map for couples to put things for the sustainability of the marriage. Aside, when two people are in love, they often overlook those things that they ultimately must face when married. Pre-marital counselling can shed light on these issues and help the couple solve them before it takes them by amazement.

IPCoP-1 concludes that pre-marital counselling provides future direction to potential couples. One of the main reasons why marriages turn sour are financial and money issues. He further asserted that pre-marital counselling also provides young couples with an idea of what it takes to manage finances together as a couple. *IPICGC-3* said that pre-marital counselling help to shape the future and career objectives of these individual for the parties to strive towards the achievement of the marital goals, taken into consideration the prioritization of needs.

These respondents (*ICEC-2* & *IPIHHL-4*) gave a divergent view on the significance of pre-marital counselling on sustainability of marriages.

Pre-marital counselling enables the couple to gain knowledge and wisdom from professional counselors. As a result, some of the dos and don'ts in marriages are handled with a lot of circumspection with maturity, because not all issues arisen from the marriage needs the third party who may not even be a professional (ICEC-2).

To have a successful marriage, you need to have a Godly wisdom and shared your vision and dreams with your partner. The idea is a conscious knowledge and deliberate way to create your relationship together towards your destination. It also gives couples a kind of roadmap to help them assess whether they are "on course" in their relationship, so that they can put in the required adjustments and corrections before and during marriage (IPIHHL-4).

IPCoP-1 and *IPICGC-3* shared similar comment by concluding that pre-marital counselling help in self-discovery and social life in relationships. *IPCoP-1* further asserted that pre-marital counselling helps the couple to discover their unique human temperaments, personalities, and true behavioral nature, hunger, and health status among other critical elements associated with the individual. In the same vein, *IPICGC-3* added that pre-marital counselling provides the opportunity for self-discovering and shared on the danger of not disclosing one's life style to the other party, thereby improving the relationships. Again, self-discovery is important for couples to start to appreciate their true personality and make the effort to foster understanding and to tolerate each other to ensure the marriage is maintained.

DISCUSSIONS

The results from both quantitative and qualitative phase was emerged in the discussion section. From the analysis of quantitative data, conflict resolution recorded the highest mean value. The result also shows that interferences in marriage was among the frequent element discussed during pre-marital counselling. From the analysis it was shown that sex and romance in marriage, communication in marriage, adjusting to differences and stress management in marriage were all effective elements discussed during pre-marital counselling. The qualitative interview data respondents asserted that pre-marital counselling provides the opportunities for self-discovering and to expect individual difference. Risch, Riley, and Lawler (2003) state that pre-marital counselling material includes: communication, conflict resolution, marital expectations, role identification, sexuality, economy, parenting, leisure, and religion. Stahmann (2000) indicates that important issues include marital quality/stability, financing/budgeting, engagement, decision-making, intimacy, parenting, and sexuality during pre-marital counselling are discussed.

The researchers believe that the apostle Paul to prepare others who would teach the younger generation in his pastoral guidance to Titus (Titus 2:1-6). The researchers further argued that the application of biblical truth, principles, and absolutes in one's relationship with others was the core of pre-marital counselling. Based on biblical principles, pre-marital counselling explains husband and wife's roles as they relate to each other and their prospective children (Ephesians 5:22-6:4; Colossians 3:18-21). In support, Myrick, Green and Crenshaw (2014) asserted that pre-marital counselling aimed at preparing married people to begin a good and healthy relationship that leads to marriage. In the same vein, Harway (2005) suggested that pre-marital counselling is a form of training that equips young couples with the necessary skills to advance in their relationships and adjust to differences.

On issue of perception of married people towards pre-marital counselling. The study shows that pre-marital counselling was mandatory programme couples goes through before getting married in some churches. However, other respondents suggested that they attended the pre-marital counselling because they perceive such programme have the potential impact in their success in married. In the same vein, pre-marital counselling was perceived as avenue to address marital issues and learn rudimental knowledge in marriage. The researchers argued that religious groups and organizations should go beyond just organizing pre-marital counselling for couples but activities or elements discussed during such session must be imbedded in the teaches when preaching. In support, Goerz and Goerz (1999) asserted that pre-marital counselling enable couple to have a better understanding and foundation knowledge needed in married life.

The study revealed that pre-marital counselling could sustain marriages because to provide support for young couples, pre-marital counselling would help unresolved personal issues that knowingly or unknowingly can bring dissonance in marriages. Problems like low self-esteem, unresolved issues at home, unresolved guilt, and others may rear their ugly heads and wreak havoc on a new marriage. Pre-marital counselling gives couples trust above all else.

CONCLUSION

- The study revealed that pre-marital counselling was an excellent avenue where married people received training and skills in communication, conflict resolution, how to handle individual differences, clarification of roles and expectations.
- It was revealed that the philosophy of pre-marital counselling is not only being aware of potential land mines in their relationship, but to equip married people to learn the skills necessary to successfully deal with challenges throughout their marriage which help in the sustainability.
- The study concluded that pre-marital counselling helps the young couple to understand conflict resolution, interference in marriages, adjusting to difference, sex and romance and communication are the key elements that help in the sustainability of marriages.
- It was concluded that married people attending pre-marital counselling had no fore knowledge about the session but they perceive it was mandatory procedure when you want to have your marriage from the church.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It was recommended that the church should employ professional counsellors who understand the principle of pre-marital counselling to perform the act of counselling.

- It was recommended that counsellors should do follow-up service to check if the elements discussed during pre-marital counselling are being put into practice.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- An aspect of the training should be giving to pastors and elders in our communities to understand the rubrics of pre-marital counselling. Again, the training and development of religious should be focus on counselling to enable them to assist young couples on their fundament decision in the marriages.
- The government through the various religious councils should make pre-marital counselling compulsory for young couples before they married to avoid divorce, suicide, single parenting and other marital problems which may affect the individual and the community they live.
- Counsellors should avail their services to young couples to avoid or ameliorate some of the emotional and psychological challenges couples may go through without pre-marital counselling.

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