PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE STABILITY AMONG COUPLES IN KAHAWA WEST WARD NAIROBI-KENYA

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and has never been presented to any other University of learning for academic credit.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my congregation superior Sr. Mary Isaac Waithera and ASEC-HESA office, Sr. Nancy Watenga, my close friends Samuel, Milka, David and all those preparing for marriage.

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Am grateful to God Almighty for His goodness in gracing me with good health throughout the journey and gracing me with patience, good will, courage and confidence in the whole writing process. Special appreciation to my dedicated supervisors Dr. Stephen Asatsa and Dr. Zachary Ondiek who provided continuous support, patience, concern and professional guidance throughout the writing process and for tirelessly going through my work and helping me to make it better whose insight and questions helped me immensely.

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ABSTRACT

The rising number of marriage breakups has become a universal disastrous phenomenon in recent times. There is an increase of reported cases of domestic violence some resulting to serious injuries and deaths. Domestic violence is like a symptom of marriage instability that can be addressed by Premarital Counseling. There are various factors that destabilize marriage in the recent time, therefore the study purposed to investigate relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi- Kenya. Four objectives guided the study to examine forms of premarital counseling given to couples, to determine levels of marriage stability among couples, to examine the perception of Premarital counseling among couples and to establish strategies that enhance marriage stability among couples. Family development theory (FDT) and Gottman theory supported the study. The study used convergent parallel design. The target population was 738 registered marriages from 6 denominational churches and one service provider from each church. A sample size of 259 marriages and 6 purposive sampled service providers totaling to 265 was employed to provide data. The study used purposive sampling to select churches and service providers. Simple random sampling was used to select couples. By use of NVIVO common information was grouped together and produced a theme. Quantitative data was analyzed by descriptive statistics using Pearson Correlation through SPSS Version 21. Findings from respondents indicated that Religious PMC was most preferred by couples. It was found that there was high level of marriage stability. Findings showed traces of variables that can cause instability such as rejection, dominance, dissolution, discontent and despair. Findings showed positive perception for PMC by couples. Finding showed strategies that can enhance stability in marriage such as mutual communication, General action, Ongoing Counseling and genetic counseling were established. Finding showed a positive significant relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability. The study recommended Churches to advocate for PMC programs to sensitize future partners. Ongoing counseling to be part of marriage policies, married couples to be good role models to promote positive perception on PMC and Exhaustive Implementation of strategies by counsellors. Further research was recommended on effectiveness of in-depth PMC programs and Religious counseling as most preferred PMC program.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYNONYMS

ACK- Anglican Church of Kenya

CUEA- Catholic University of East Africa

DNA- Deoxyribonucleic Acid

FIMSQ- Factors Influencing Marital Stability Questionnaire

FDT- Family Development Theory

K.A.G-Kenya Assemblies of God

NACOSTI- National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation

PMC-Premarital Counselling

PMS- Premarital Screening

PCEA- Presbyterian Church of East Africa

RDAS- Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale

SCD- sickle cell disease

SP- Service Provider

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Marriage- is a legally or lawfully acknowledged union of two individuals as partners in a personal relationship precisely between man and woman

Marriage stability- Remain legally married without divorce or physical separation

Married couples- Individuals living together as husband and wife and their union is recognized by law.

Marital instability- refers to the interpersonal difficulties within the marital relationship that might lead to separation or divorce.

Premarital counseling- is the type of therapy undertaken by individuals planning to get married. Premarital counseling informs the partners about various domains of the institution of marriage including how to stay together, make each other happy, rare children, manage finance and handle marital challenges.

Premarital counselors- these are individuals that offer counseling to individuals intending to get married. Premarital counselors include; traditional, religious, medical, and psychological counselors.

Service Provider- This is the acknowledged individual who conduct counseling to couples in a given church.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In today's society a developing assumption on marriage preparation has been identified where Partners cohabit living as husband and wife without paying attention to factors or considerations pertaining a happy marriage life. In the recent years, preparation for marriage and the various factors that contribute to its stability have been discussed. According to Kiura (1987), Such factors include length of courtship, priorities of each spouse, goal of marriage and other important aspects such as home, finance, work, religion/faith, status, interests, habits, sexual life in marriage, number of children, communication, parents' involvements, friends, in-laws and relatives, personality differences and role expectations. Premarital counseling attends such considerations as partners get prepared for marriage.

Marriage preparations that lead to stability in the recent past has been viewed as a condition in marriage. These preparations depend with individuals settling for marriage, therefore, the study purposed to examine relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa West Nairobi Kenya. Chapter One presents Background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Research objectives, Research Questions, Theoretical framework, Significance of the study, Scope and delimitation and Assumption of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Marriage is acknowledged as a lawful union of partners in a personal relationship (traditionally and in various jurisdictions precisely union between man and woman) (Lamanna, Riedmann, & Stewart, 2020).

Kepler and Baker (2015) stated that marriage was predestined by God for three purpose namely companionship, pleasure and procreation though marital dissatisfaction affect all races and cultural backgrounds leading to divorce. Premarital counseling is usually intended to keep couples working at a high level so it can be described as preventative. Individuals getting married have to be prepared to stay with each other and face every challenge that may come their way together. Premarital counseling is one of the major ways of preparing couples for marriage.

Counseling before marriage informs the partners about various domains of the institution of marriage including how to stay together, make each other happy, rare children, manage finance and handle marital challenges among other things Carlson et al. (2020). Premarital counseling is conducted during courtship just before people get married. It allows individuals to open up to one another and share their expectations and things that might affect their marriage. Premarital counseling should include general counseling sessions that offer skills and knowledge to deal with family and social issues.

Secondly, it should incorporate medical screening for Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) issues and couple compatibility especially the sickle cell disease where many couples go for screening before marriage Al-Qattan et al. (2019). Genetic information is very critical for couples before they get married.

Premarital counseling offers new skills and knowledge to cope with the new situation of the marriage. This knowledge is given by a counselor to couples on how to handle the new life they are going into (Gichinga, 2010). Premarital counseling is a skill-building process that tries to provide couples advice on how to strengthen their bond after getting married. Premarital counseling participants exhibit overall good psychological health and don't have significant relationship issues.

According to a survey by Stupart (2018) in America, 93% of Americans would like to have a happy marriage and a successful marriage. The poll found that couples who sought counseling before getting married had a 30% higher rate of marital success than couples who didn't. 40% of partners agreed to premarital counseling before taking their wedding vows. 75% of weddings and marriages take place in a religious setting where premarital counseling is mandatory for individuals getting married.

In the US the average cost of an average wedding ranges between $12,000 and $15,000 while premarital counseling costs only 1-2 % of the amount. Kepler (2015) in Minnesota found out that those who were involved in counseling before marriage experienced higher levels of satisfaction in their marriage later than those who did not.

Krupa and Bino (2017) did a survey in India among young people on their perception of premarital preparation and counseling indicated that young people in India wanted successful marriages and therefore viewed premarital counseling as an important aspect of preparing young people for marriage. The study showed that participants 27.5% were pessimistic about marriage, 50.8% had a realistic view while 21.7% were idealistic about marriage. The findings majority of the participants 89.2% were anxious about marriage and wanted to gain more information. 48.1% sought to understand expectations from partners while 43.6% wanted to know more about their in-laws. The participants additionally indicated that selecting, understanding, and adjusting with life partners was a very important part of their lives.

Oludare and Ogili (2013) did a review in Nigeria on Knowledge, attitude, and practice of premarital counseling for sickle cell disease (SCD) among youth in Yaba. The outcome indicated that on average, 80% of the respondents were knowledgeable about SCD, and SCD pre-marital counseling. 13.4% of the partners illustrated a negative attitude towards SCD and SCD premarital

counseling. 64.88% of the participants had good practices to SCD or SCD premarital counseling. About 65% of the couples had either been involved in or were willing to engage in practices concerning SCD premarital counseling like going for a seminar or counseling on SCD, among other approaches. . It can also be defined as unions where couples can stay together in their marriages in peace and harmony for so long a time without the intention of breaking up their vows (Mustapha, et al., 2017). However, a stable marriage does not mean there are no conflicts or misunderstandings, rather the couples can reduce the incidences of those conflicts as well as managing the existing conflict in a good way Esere, et al. (2015).

As per Adesokan et al. (2019) marital stability is a result of good listening, self-respect, a good sense of humor, willingness to adapt, and understand that one cannot change one partner. Newton (2012) added that communication is key in sustaining a stable marriage. Esere, Yusuf and Omotosho (2011) also opined since communication is the lifeline of any relationship, especially a marriage, a marriage without it is likely to end in divorce

Parhizgar, et al. (2017) indicated that premarital counseling influenced marital satisfaction among couples attending counseling in Alborz medical centers. In Nigeria, Egbo (2012) revealed that counseled couples were socially accustomed and had more stable relationships than non-counseled partners and also that there was a substantial association between social adjustment and marital stability. In Botswana, Moet, et al. (2017) illustrated that traditional premarital therapy proved beneficial and might keep couples stable.

In Tanzania, premarital education and counseling were viewed as an important part of beginning a marriage. According to an investigation by Basela (2015) showed that 100% of all the participants indicated receiving premarital advice and counseling traditionally either from, relatives or other organized traditional rulers before getting married. 80.8% of the participants

stated that they had received premarital counseling from religious institutions which was mandatory before they got married. 65.9% reported having learned about marriage in school, particularly childbearing and rearing. 46.8% argued that they received premarital education through print and visual media. There were other sources of marital counseling reported in this survey though they had little significance.

In Kenya Barasa and Nzangi (2015) surveyed 59 respondents on the role of marital counseling in handling marital issues. The survey revealed that 86% of respondents agreed that counseling played a major role in supporting marriages in Kenya. 4% of the participants said that marriage counseling supported marriages to a rate of 61-100%. 32% of the couples argued that counseling holds their unions to a rate of 31-60% while 13% rated it at between 1-31%. Findings indicated that counseling plays a key role in supporting marriages during difficult times

Ng'ang'a and Wasanga (2010) selected 80 couples and 8 ministers of the gospel from PCEA churches in Kiambu County to respond to the questionnaires. The researcher established that 90% of the respondents indicated that counseling of couples before marriage was very helpful and helped in managing marriage expectations. The above statistics across the world shows that everyone intending to get married desires a stable married that will lead to a happy life ever after. According to Basela (2015), marital stability entails an intact union where family members share ideas and plans positively.

Karimi, et al. (2019) revealed that an aspect like commitment acts to preserve the pillars of marriage in precarious circumstances, while other elements like intimacy, help to construct marital identity and satisfaction. These are just some of the studies that have identified factors that lead to marital stability. There are equally factors that threaten marital stability and cause issues like divorce. These elements are the reasons why premarital counseling is important to prepare

partners psychologically and equip them with coping skills. According to Killewald (2016), total financial resources, the allocation of labor, and a wife's capacity to support herself in the case of divorce are among the factors that determine marital stability and risk of divorce. Moreover, Nancy, et al. (2019) illustrated that management of family finances significantly affects marital stability.

The above findings were because married persons commit most of their time to the pursuit of wealth and in the process ignore their families. These researchers indicated that individuals seek to invest for their families at the expense of investing in their families. On the other hand, Van Kammen and Adams (2014) documented that spouse's careers influenced marital stability. These scholars stated that spouses that are dissimilar in terms of their occupations' activities have high chances of divorce. The latter suggests that every partner engages in particular activities to the marriage that reflects compatibility preferences for joint consumption of household public goods. Premarital counseling aims at reducing factors affecting marital stability and increasing aspects that lead to marital stability.

Kariuki (2018) indicated that premarital counseling increased marital satisfaction. (Muluhya, et al., 2020) found out premarital counseling results in marital harmony among families in Kakamenga County. Odero (2018) described that partners that received premarital counseling had more stable marriages with higher satisfaction than those who did not sought counseling prior to their marriage.

The above studies indicated the importance of reviewing premarital counseling and the impact on marriage stability. Therefore, this study intends to understand the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west Nairobi, Kenya.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In the recent time, there is an increase of reported cases of domestic violence some resulting in serious injuries and death. Domestic violence is like a symptom of marriage instability which premarital counseling can address. There are many dysfunctions in marriage portrayed by enmity and hatred between partners that leads to fights, separation, divorce and sometimes murder/killings cases reported. Some causes of the dysfunctional include financial strains, insecurity especially from the female partner, jealousy, communication breakdown and communication barrier, don't care attitude, age difference, family background, personality differences, infidelity, possessiveness and sometimes alcoholism among others.

In the recent times several deaths among partners and lovers had been recorded in Kahawa West. A 34 old woman had been stabbed to death by her boy- friend within Maziwa Kahawa west in Nairobi County after differing over her scheduled trip to Qatar where she had scheduled a job. Causes being disagreement between the two partners. Further Incidents of deaths reported at Kahawa west included a man fatally stabbed his girl-fiend with a kitchen knife then slit her throat and escaped after killing. In another case a wife stabbed her husband to death. (https://www.standardmedia.co.ke). Another case whereby a lover found stabbed at the neck dead and the male partner found in the same room having hanged himself. Cases of domestic violence were on rise of which many were fatal. Calls for couples to solve their differences amicably increased in number in the stated area of study but few people appear to listen.

Due to many domestic violence cases recorded in Kahawa west marriage instability has been fiercely felt in the area of study which premarital counseling can address as partners prepare to settle in marriage. Studies conducted agree that marriage stability does not accidentally happen, instead couples should adequately prepare before getting married if at all they should have stable

unions. Therefore, the current study intended to cover the research gap by examining the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west Nairobi.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study purposed to examine premarital influences on marriage among couples in Kahawa west Nairobi. As partners co-habit, they overlook some important factors that need prior consideration before living together. Domestic violence cases are increasingly reported which is like a symptom of marriage instability that premarital counseling can address. The researcher interested to find out whether where premarital counseling is conducted, couples experience instability. Therefore, this research purposed to examine the influence of premarital counseling on marriage among couples in Kahawa west, Nairobi.

1.5 Research Objective

i. To examine premarital counseling forms given to couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya

ii. To determine levels of marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi- Kenya

iii. To examine perception on premarital counseling among couples on marriage stability in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya

iv. To establish effective strategies that enhance stability in marriage among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya.

1.6 Research Questions

i. Which forms of premarital counseling do couples go through in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya?

ii. What are the levels of marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya?

iii. What perception of premarital counseling do couples in Kahawa west has in relation to marriage stability?

iv. What strategies can be recommended as remedies for marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya?

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Two theories supported the study namely; Family development Theory and Gottman Relationship Theory. Family Development Theory began after World War II with work on family stress by Reuben Hill (1949). According to Duvall's Family Development Theory, families move through stages in a particular order across time after members successfully master tasks for each stage (Martin, 2018). The approach focuses on the systematic and patterned changes that occur in families as they move through the family life course. The family development theory provides basis to study families over time. It emphasizes the developmental tasks of individual family member at every stage of the cycle. The model built in recognition of family stress at critical periods in development and lastly ever since 1949 it recognizes the necessity for services, supports and programs for families throughout their family life cycles (Russell & Russell,2018).

Family development theory uniquely describes and explains the processes of change in families. The model also shows the sequence of stages precipitated internally by the demands of family members (biological, psychological, and social requirements) and externally by the larger society (social expectations and ecological constraints) is the most significant focal point of the family development perspective (Martin, 2018).

This theory takes people through all the stages of life beginning with; marriage without children where individuals are adapting to stay and learn more about each other. Then a family with one young child, family with pre-school children, with school-going children, family with

adolescents, children leaving home to better their lives, middle aged couples and the last aging stage where spouses are leaving the active working environment and are settling down for retirement.

Every stage comes with its challenges and partners ought to be prepared to handle those difficulties as they come to be able to complete the family life cycle together. This study was also supported by Gottman theory of relationship.

The study also included Gottman theory of relationship which is preferred by many counselors since it gives a couple a background of their relationship as well as the purpose of their being. This again would enable them to withstand the differences that each carries hence ability to maintain their relationship in their marriage.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Premarital counseling has been conducted over years to prepare couples for stability in their marriage. In recent times and increase in marriage instability issues are being experienced in marriages. Such include communication breakdown, social classes, financial constraints, don't care attitude, separations, battering, insecurity of/in a partner, personality differences, possessiveness especially from female partner, killings, and homicides. These instabilities have caused a lot of despair to many upcoming families.

It's predicted that the outcomes of the research may enable individuals to hold firm to the knowledge and skills attained to sustain their marriage. Preparing couples before marriage may enhance marriage stability since partners would be empowered with knowledge/awareness, skills and values enabling them to understand each other and embracing the challenges optimistically

The findings of this study would be informative to religious leaders, understanding the importance and the role premarital counseling plays in stability of marriage allowing the religious leaders put

more emphasis and measure on counseling couples before marriage and in existing marriages in order to preserve peace and harmony hence preservation of lives.

The results of the study may also be beneficial to marriage counselors who handle couples intending to get married. This study may enlighten the counselors on the important aspects that contribute to marriage stability so they can focus more on those factors while counseling. The research findings may also benefit medical practitioners who offers medical tests to couples intending to get married. The medical educators understanding the importance of medical examinations may focus more on advising couples accordingly on medical matters before they enter into marriage.

The findings of this study may be insightful to traditional individuals that offer counseling to brides and grooms before marriage. The study may inform them on various areas to focus more while offering advice to wives and husbands to be.

The study may also be significant for the policymakers especially the attorney general office mandated with issuing of marriage certificate; the office can encourage premarital counseling by ensuring that couples get clearance from therapists before they can get their certificate.

Equally the outcome of this study may inform individuals intending to marry on the importance of preparing a firm foundation for their marriage by attending premarital counseling before they get married.

The documentation of the outcome of this investigation may further guide future researchers on areas to focus in terms of premarital counseling and marriage stability. It may also enlighten premarital service providers on different forms of counseling for implementation for the sustainability of marriages.

1.9 Scope and Delimitation

The main aim of the study was to examine on the influence of premarital counseling on marriage among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi. The study targeted couples with registered marriages in the church. 6 denominational churches with a population of 738 registered marriages with 269 participants.

The research narrowed forms of premarital counseling as follows; Religious counseling, Personal therapy, Traditional counseling, Medical counseling (genetic screening), Legislative counseling and Financial counseling. Marriage stability strategies included quality communication, ability to solve conflicts maturely, quality financial management, understanding one another, engaging in religious activities together, decision making, satisfaction, role function and self-disclosure.

Intervening variables of the study included; Economic status, Couples educational level, career, personality type and age factor. The location of the study was Kahawa West ward with different ethnicity groups of people.

1.10 Assumption of the Study

The researcher had the following assumptions;

- All respondents understood the study theme after giving explanation
- All respondents provided the required information through self- explicit expression in accordance with the study theme.
- All respondents appreciated the exercise on self -evaluation as marriage life was concerened.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter reviewed related literature on family development whose genesis is partners' relationship background. A critical review of theories used mainly were Family development theory and Gottman theory guiding the study in line with the empirical studies drawn from the four research objectives. This identified Research gaps and a detailed conceptual framework, summary and conclusion.

2.2 Critical Review of Theories

Family development theory by Reuben Hill (1949) and Evelyn Duvall (1957) supported the study focusing on systematic and patterned changes experienced by families as they move through their life course. In relation to the theories purpose, Couples are guided differently on bringing up a stable marriage during premarital counseling as well as mastering tasks for each individual stage. Gottman Theory was applied to add knowledge to the main theory in relation to the study. The theories' key concepts and weaknesses were looked at and discussed in the context of the study.

2.2.1 Family Development Theory

This theory began after World War II with work on family stress by Reuben Hill (1949) and Evelyn Duvall (1957). According to Duvall (1957), the approach focus on systematic and patterned changes experienced by families as they move through the family life course. Secondly, it offers guidelines for researching families over time. Thirdly, it highlights the roles that each family member and family plays in the cycle's many stages of growth. Fourthly, the model stresses

on family stress at critical developmental stages; and lastly, it recognizes need for services, programs, and supports for families at all stages of family life (Russell & Russell, 2018).

Family development theory uniquely describes and discusses how families change over time. The model also demonstrates the key point of family life cycle and the sequence of stages triggered both from within by biological, psychological, and social demands of family members and from without by the social expectations and ecological constraints of the larger society (Martin, 2018). This theory takes people through all the stages in life beginning with; marriage without children where individuals are adapting to stay and learn more about living with each other.

The family development theory is appropriate for this study because it highlights family as a system of interactions between the couple who get children and launch them into life and leaving the couple just the two as they started. The theory shows the importance of skills and knowledge to navigate the family safely to the final stage. Premarital counseling also prepares partners for unfortunate events in the family, like in the cases of having children with disabilities, becoming grandparents, retirement and health related issues and other losses in the family. Family development theory greatly informs this study.

2.2.1.1 Application of the Theory to the Study

As partners are taken through premarital counseling, therapist could take partners into realization that their marriage would keep developing where changes would be inevitable. Each of partner is sensitized of the tasks or responsibilities to handle that would bring harmony in marriage as well as in the family. The theory could sensitize them that changes come with their own crisis that need attention in which the family would enlarge and have other members who might be a cause of instability for the two partners. The family development theory plays a great role in

preparing partners for future roles to every family member in order bring harmony hence stability in their marriage. The awareness created by family development theory could drive the marriage into future stability

2.2.1.2 Strength of Family Development Theory

Family development theory's strengths makes it remain among the most commonly used approach at the local and international level in studying families. It also focusses on how families change over time and experience stress during development transitions. Scholars have applied this model in diverse topics relating to family and other variables. This approach has also been used in teaching family systems and how individuals in family develop over time. The theory has been used to understand different family dynamics. It has helped therapists understand how to handle families in crisis depending on the developmental stage.

2.2.1.3 Weakness of Family Development Theory

FDT focus on traditional nuclear family system, which is challenged by the changing family dynamics and might not be relevant for all family settings. The theory assumes that all families must go through a planned sequence of occurrences which might not be the case in all families. The theory also assumes of universality and the bias towards an individualistic or single generational focus. Due to its weaknesses, the researcher had to use the second theory.

2.2.2 Gottman Theory on Relationship

Gottman theory supported this study striving to assist couples to achieve a deeper sense of understanding, awareness, empathy and connectedness within their relationship ultimately leading to heightened intimacy and interpersonal growth (Gottman, 1999). Gottman theory of relationship stability supported this study. It provides a basis for identifying and interpreting aspects of marital stability to couples. It is based on the real science to have a happy healthy relationship. It also aims

to eliminate obstacles that cause a feeling of stagnation in contradictory situations, promote intimacy, respect, and affection, and foster a greater sense of empathy and understanding.

This theory presents components which are related to the stability of the couples' relationship in marriage which includes, creating love maps, expressing affection and appreciation, turning toward one another, perceiving the other favorably, handling conflict, realizing dreams, generating shared meaning, establishing trust, and forming commitment. Premarital counseling would prepare couples' relationship to be more effective even as they enter into their marriage life. Gottman's theory captures the basic of relationship which according to the conceptual framework of this study has been addressed directly or indirectly.

Gottman's approach (1977) is an integrated strategy that has served as a guiding principle for several therapeutic philosophies, including system theory, existential perspective, and narrative therapy. It adheres to the psychanalytic viewpoint and supports behavioral techniques because it aims to modify behavior.

It views having an effective relationship as the most crucial skill for couples and thinks that those who have one are able to come to an understanding, pay attention to their partner's needs, and attend to them. When there are disagreements, they focus on the issue and create a harmonious relationship (Gottman et al, 2013). Premarital counseling where Gottman theory is used would capture this reality and prepare couples for eventualities that might come along.

As much as Gottman addresses the conflicts in marriage life on relationship, the biggest percentage of marital conflicts are perpetual problems which couples have to live with forever since they are part of them. Therapists using this theory would advise couples on the alternative of the weakness that this theory holds.

2.2.2.1. Application of the theory to the Study

Partners undergoing premarital counseling could be guided on how to safeguard their relationship. Not only in time of crisis but also for the daily purpose of stabilizing their union. Through the program the partners could be guided on matters concerning relationship crisis and how they could overcome those crises. The theory was found relevant to this study.

2.2.2.2 Strength of Gottman Theory

Gottman theory was appropriate for this study because it highlighted the relationship between partners which enhance their relationship increasing respect, affection and closeness and the resolving of conflict discussions calm. It's also appropriate for it handles ways on how a couple support each other's hopes for the future (Gottman, 2017).

It also presents the sound relationship house whereby couples are sensitized of all the seven steps that builds up relationship not only in the moment of crisis but also in the future. It also educates partners more on their relationship and how to maintain their union healthy for a happy marriage. Premarital counseling would address all the seven steps of the sound relationship house hence enabling couples to live a harmonious life.

2.2.2.3 Weakness of Gottman Theory

One major weakness of Gottman theory is that it works more from outside than from inside. It also criticizes not only a specific action or behavior but the partner as a whole person showing consistency and negative personality flaw. The use of the two theories helped in reducing the weaknesses which each of them had and therefore made the theoretical framework of this study reliable and valid.

2.3 Conclusion

Premarital counseling being the preparation that partners receive before settling in marriage pertains different areas where they are given enlightment holistically which would bring stability all through in their marriage. The stability could only come about where couples are aware on how to tackle every eventuality that comes across in their marriage without traces of assumption. This begins right from the foundation of their relationship as the base of their marriage which Gottman's theory expresses bringing out the awareness of the purpose of their being. In the midst of their awareness, the results of their stable relationship brings forth children who furthers a family and here comes the Family Development Theory which explains how couples should handle all stages in the family hence stabilizing their marriage.

This justifies the importance of premarital counseling hence the purpose of the study researching on the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability. Theories used would enhance the understanding on how to attain and sustain stability in marriage.

2.4 Review of Empirical Studies

Globally, researchers have conducted studies on premarital counselling while focusing on various objectives. This study focused on forms of premarital counselling, levels of marriage stability, perception and strategies that enhance marriage stability. Couples who fail to undergo prior preparations before entering into marriage might at a given time encounter instability in marriage that might lead to separation or divorce therefore this study focused on the importance of PMC on marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west. The researcher reviewed literature related to services offered to couples during premarital counseling services as ways of attaining stability in marriage.

2.4.1 Forms of Premarital counseling used in training couples

Premarital counseling is becoming increasingly popular in many countries around the world so there are many forms of PMC available for couples of all ages. These include; Couples Therapy which help couples work through many issues they may have before getting married. They learn how to communicate more effectively, resolve conflicts and build stronger relationship. Individual therapy which help people identify and address any personal issues that may be affecting their relationship

Group counseling help in correcting couples with others who goes through similar experiences and Online counseling which help those unable to attend in-person sessions. These are the most forms of premarital counseling that couples opt to undergo. However, the researcher identified forms that were discussed in this study as Independent variables which included;

2.4.1.1 Religious Premarital Counseling

This type of counseling is often led by a religious leader and may focus on topics such as faith, spirituality and religious values. Religion has a great role it plays in the life of individual. A study conducted in Italy by Corey (2003) stated that Religion and Spirituality work hand in hand sometimes as part of problem and solution to the client. Benjamin & Lobby (1993) explained the importance of religious or spiritual aspect as an integrally connected to personal growth. Religion and spirituality are seen as contributing factors to life satisfaction, sense of personal efficacy, successful coping and self-esteem.

Wilmoth & Smyser (2012) interrogated the content and requirements addressed in the clergy provided marriage preparation. The study engaged a survey design. A sample size of 793 respondents from mainstream Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, and fifteen different Catholic denominations altogether. Several procedures with proven efficacy were typically omitted from

premarital education, despite the fact that many clergies included recommended elements. These included dealing with family of origin difficulties, using mentor couples, and following up after the wedding.

Osei-Tutu, et al. (2020) investigated the counseling services given before marriage by the Christians and Muslims to prepare young couples for a seamless marriage life in Ghana. The respondents of the study included the Clergy, Islamic Clerics and laity practicing in four selected urban centers. Data was collected through interviews and analyzed thematically. The research revealed that counseling services offered covered medical examinations, beliefs and values, managing expectations, relationship understanding, roles and responsibilities, sex, parenthood, financial management, communication and conflict. The findings provided an important insight into religious counseling in Ghana.

Ng'ang'a & Wasanga (2009) Investigated premarital counseling offered in PCEA churches in Kiambu District. The study adopted qualitative survey design. Target population incorporated Parish Ministers and church wedded couples in PCEA churches in one Division of Kiambu District. Sample of the study included 8 church ministers and 8 church wedded couples. Data was gathered through questionnaires for the wedded couples and interview for the parish ministers. The findings indicated that, on the personnel offering premarital counseling, Parish ministers mainly offer premarital counseling (94%) and the rest (6%) offered by the best couple. Parish ministers exposed the fact that church leaders, school guidance and counseling teachers, theological students, lay counselors, health workers and lay preachers also participate in premarital counseling. In this study, a relationship between religious counseling and marriage stability was examined.

2.4.1.2 Personal Therapy counseling

Personal therapy focuses on the individual's mental health and well-being. It's helpful to couples if one or both partners have unresolved emotional issues that could impact their relationship. It helps individuals to work through issues and develop healthy coping mechanisms that can benefit their relationship. Individual therapy helps to get the outcomes faster. Personal therapy or individual therapy means meeting with a licensed therapist at least once a week to meet therapy's goals (https://www.keithmillercounseling.com/)

Individual therapy may be the best choice for someone whose partner is not interested in going to marriage therapy. It's also the perfect place to work on individual issues that may contribute to relationship problems. It helps the individual partner to learn coping skills to avoid future issues. It helps one partner to forgive in case of unfaithfulness and move forward as the other partner learn to avoid infidelity in the future (Chris Massman, 2012). Individual therapy is not to change the other partner but oneself, "By changing yourself, your partner will be forced to change also". It also helps the individual to learn to recognize triggers and communicate ones needs to the other partner and also teaches one how to make healthy compromises (Chris Massman, 2022).

The researcher agreed with the previous study on Individual therapy that couples require to undergo for attaining more knowledge on how to cope with individual's issues and skills to adapt the partner's issues.

2.4.1.3 Traditional Premarital counseling

Traditional premarital counseling is closely linked to indigenous ways of doing things based extensively on oral history that is traditional knowledge and social skills pertaining critical issues, customs or practices handed down from one generation to another orally. It has always

existed to help couples in future challenges and expectations in marriage promoting a collective approach, problem identification, resolution and management (Amphin, 2003). A study conducted in Zambia stated that Traditional counseling is a collective wisdom of elderly Africans who are generally regarded as valuable resource in the community as repositories of traditional knowledge, embodiment of cultural competencies and experts of social skills and cherished models for emulation at the community level (Amphin, 2003). Couples receive advice from the community elders that prepare them for the future which is carried down from one generation to another.

Traditional counseling applies also to indigenous form of helping people experiencing various problems, situations and those who wish to make a transitional commitment such as marriage. The current study included it due to different customs and norms held by different communities in their rites of passage marriage included.

2.4.1.4 Legislative Premarital counseling

This refers to the legal requirements that some States have created encouraging couples to participate in premarital counseling. The incentives offered by the States include a reduction in marriage license to couples participating in premarital counseling.

The researcher indicated this type of counseling among couples since it was an area of interest to many couples. Dealing with finances or in mismanagement of finances would cause disagreement in marriage hence the idea to check on how its normally conducted. In the Star News in Kenya, an MP on the month of (June, 2019) stated that many marriages do not last because people marry when young without knowing the requirements for marriage. Cases reported that young people marry when not emotionally and psychologically prepared hence failing to cope with challenges that come along.

Research findings were in agreement with the researcher on the above statement which acknowledged on the importance of premarital counseling to the young as they set in marriage. The MP contemplated that a law should be enacted to ensure that young people are well trained and counselled before devoting themselves to each other. He reported further that many couples do not understand that both parties should own each other (Star News, Kenya, June 2019).

The Kenya Marriage Act 2014 stated that marriage is a voluntary union of man and woman whether in monogamous or polygamous registered under The Act. It also stated that both parties in marriage have equal rights and obligations at the time of marriage, during and at the dissolution of marriage The Marriage Bill Law (2019) stated that all registered marriages under the act has same legal status. As per the findings on the legislative counseling, the researcher agreed with the statement that couples need this orientation in counseling as they set to live with each other for prevention of conflicts in future when they settle in marriage. The current study examined the various forms of premarital counseling given to couples in Kahawa west ward.

2.4.1.5 Financial Premarital counseling

A financial imbalance is a frequent money issue in marriages that causes tension for couples. As couples prepare to set in marriage there is a need for financial issues to be part of that preparation since disagreements on finances never miss where no attention is never given. Due to this reason the researcher aimed to examine the main forms of premarital counseling given to couples as they set in marriage. Handling marital finances help the counselor to recognize the significant area of financial matters reviewing financial guidelines and answer targeted financial questions.

Paul Becknell (2013) stated that making the husband and wife one in finance decision making is to gain extra wisdom. For couples to have a good start free from financial disagreement, it could be well for both to undergo the premarital counseling so that they can both be advised on what pertains the finance and the manner to solve finance crisis in case they arise for stability of their marriage.

The finding was in line with the researcher's idea to have financial premarital counseling among other forms for ease when they settle in marriage.

2.4.1.6 Genetic Premarital counseling

Genetic counseling is a communication process that deals with human problems associated with the risk of a genetic disorder in a family (Suresh, 2010). Maybruch, et al. (2014) studied how 1244 married Orthodox Jews received premarital education from a religious perspective. The study findings indicated that education focusing on religious models and practices on sexual relationships is considerably connected to a greater marital quality. The findings also pointed to a need for more premarital instructions on the importance of communication and how to solve differences.

According to Al-Kahtani (2000), premarital counseling is the service offered to young couples on their way into marriage in order to guide, educate and prepare them for establishment of a healthy family. Premarital counseling is one of the most important strategies for the prevention of genetic disorders, congenital anomalies and several psychosocial marital problems (Mitwally, et al, 2000). It presents an opportunity for individuals to be informed about their genetic predisposition to disease and for couples to be aware of possible genetic characteristics of their unborn children.

Oludare and Ogili (2013) examined youths in Yaba, Nigeria towards counseling before marriage. The study engaged a sample of 280 respondents and the data was collected through questionnaires. The study showed that 80% of youths had knowledge, 86% had a positive attitude and 65% had practiced things related to sickle cell disease (SCD) and counseling prior to marriage. Findings indicated that there was a significant connection between participants' educational qualifications, knowledge, attitude and practices related to SCD and counseling before marriage

According to Mehta (2011), genetic disorder is an abnormal condition that a person inherits through genes or chromosomes. He stated that some disorders are caused by mutations in the DNA while others are caused by changes in the overall structure or number of chromosomes. WHO (2006) stated that the methods of preventing gene diseases are PMS and Genetic counseling. The current study was in agreement with the previous study findings that couples need genetic preparation setting their mind ready in case of any abnormality that comes in future. This would equip them accordingly.

Mwaura (2020) evaluated whether the counseling before marriage facilitated conflict resolutions among Christians. The research adopted descriptive survey research design with a sample size of 91 respondents (81 Christians and 10 Pastors). Christians who participated in the study had undertaken a therapy at least once due to problems linked in marriage. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 17 was utilized in data analysis with descriptive statistics such as mean and percentages were employed for data representation.

The findings indicated that marital pastoral counseling was effective in the Central Division of Narok County despite the inadequate training of pastors in the field. The researcher agreed with the findings that despite the inadequate ministers in the field, church ministers provide effective counseling which was attributed to the years of experience in the field.

2.4.2 Levels of Marital Stability among Couples

Couples in marriage experience marital stability differently based on the day to day interaction and situations that they find themselves. This differs from one couple to another daily experiences. (Kreutzer et al. 2016) studied to identify factors that predict marital stability. Marital Status Inventory (MSI) which gauges Relationship stability and Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) which gauges Relationship Quality were completed by 42 couples who had suffered mild to severe injuries. The results showed that 29% of partners and 24% of patients thought their marriage was unstable. The majority 72% agreed with their spouses that their relationship was stable. Clinically significant levels of marital dissatisfaction were reported by around half of patients (52%) and partners (50%) respectively. It was established that RDAS could be used to significantly predict marital stability. Furthermore, despite the significant levels of marital distress, data showed relatively high levels of marital stability.

In their 2018 study, Zhong and Fang looked at the connection between forgiveness and marital stability and the moderating role of the quality of marriage within the first three years. The study's data was collected for a period of three years with 268 Chinese couples. The Actor-Partner intermediate approach tests found concurrent and longitudinal direct effects of decisional and emotional forgiveness on husbands' level of marital stability as well as indirect effects of emotional forgiveness on both husbands' and wives' levels of marital stability. The study also found that wives' emotional forgiveness had a knock-on effect through their spouses' marital

quality on contemporary and long-term levels of husbands' marital stability. The findings therefore showed that longitudinal levels of marital stability are more likely to be influenced by marital quality than by decisional forgiveness.

Ofovwe, et al. (2013) investigated the satisfaction level of marriage and the association between marriage satisfaction, current employment satisfaction and mental health of secondary school teachers in Nigeria. The study adopted a cross-sectional design. From the target population, 300 teachers who were one year or more in marriage and in the teaching were involved. The data was collected using questionnaires and two standard instruments that is Index Marital Satisfaction (IMS) and the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ 28). The GHQ was utilized to evaluate workers' psychological health, while IMS was used to examine the degree of satisfaction in marriage. The findings indicated that 82.7% of the teachers reported marital satisfaction, 20% indicated psychological disorder while 56(21.5%) were not satisfied with the present job. A strong association between marital dissatisfaction and psychological disorder was also established. No connection was found between marital dissatisfaction and current employment dissatisfaction. Additionally, an association was found between current employment dissatisfaction and psychological disorder. The satisfaction level in marriage was confirmed to be high among the respondents.

Nayebare (2018) assessed the factors that influenced the stability of marriage among women who were married in Uganda. With the help of SPSS, the researcher examined 10876 women's UDHS data to determine the background variables that affected married couples in Uganda who experienced marital instability. The significance level was further examined using the Chi-square test. Additionally, multivariate binary logistic regression was employed to ascertain

the association between various demographic and socioeconomic factors influencing the marital stabilities of all married couples in various regions of Uganda.

According to the findings, individuals who were educated and wealthy were more inclined to believe that marriage will not last. Additionally, the participants who had graduated in any field had higher chances of separating with their spouses than those with no education. The outcome from the analysis revealed that women from rural areas had increased odds of marriage and separation than urban women. The results also demonstrated a strong correlation between demographic characteristics and married couples' stability in Uganda.

Musua (2016) looked studied the demographic, spatial-temporal, and consequences of rural women's marital instability on their ability to support their families. A case study approach was used for the investigation. 300 women between the ages of 15 and 49 who were divorcing, getting a divorce, or having their spouses depart them made up the study sample. Utilizing questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informants, primary data were gathered from the field.

The study also engaged secondary data from the library and the Internet. According to the research, of the selected women, 78% were separated, 11.3% had deserted, 9.5% had divorced, and 1.2% had really filed for divorce. It was discovered that as people aged, the frequency of separation decreased while that of desertion and divorce rose. Further, the outcome indicated that wives' and husbands' age at marriage influenced marital instability.

According to the study, mothers who had 2-3 or more children were more likely to separate by 51% and 80%, respectively. For those who courted for between one and two years, the probabilities decreased by 71% and 67%, respectively. The two most significant variables causing marital instability were found to be recklessness (74%) and disloyalty (51.3%). Other causes were ferocity (42.3%), drunkenness (38.7%), in-law issues (24%), joblessness (11%), age gap (10%),

and having more than one wife (10%). In contrast to cohabitation, which was shown to be inconsequential, the rate was similarly high among women with low levels of education.

The association between psychological health and marital quality in married Christian couples was examined by Njeri (2020. A descriptive design was used in the investigation. The study concentrated on a sample of couples in Kiambu County, Kenya Mukinyi Parish of PCEA. Data was gathered from married couples who had been together for at least five years. A questionnaire was used by the researcher to gather primary data, and books, articles, and journals were consulted to get secondary data. Yamane's formula was used to choose 96 couples as the sample size from a population of 4000 adults without children who make up P.C.E.A. Mukinyi parish. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24 was used to do inferential statistics on the data. According to the study's findings, married Christian couples in PCEA Mukinyi Parish had high-quality marriages. The majority of the couples had stable, high-quality marriages that were marked by high marital satisfaction. Marital adjustment, however, was only mildly high. Additionally, there was a strong correlation between psychological health and marriage stability, adaptability, and satisfaction. Thus, psychological health was a key predictor of marital quality.

The above studies on the level of marital stability among couples have revealed a dearth of studies examining levels of marital stability independently. Across the globe including Kenya, marital stability has been examined with other variables. Many of the above studies have revealed high levels of marital stability, however, the latter depended on the aspects related to levels of marital stability.

2.4.3 Perception of Premarital Counseling among couples on marriage Stability

In USA, perception of PMC may vary depending on their background, culture, religion, education and personal experience. Some couples may view PMC as a valuable tool to assess the potential of their relationship and to enhance their skills and knowledge for a successful marriage. Others may view PMC as an unnecessary intrusive step that may interfere with their plans or feeling foe each other (https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/magnetic-partners/202206/4).

In France, marriage rate compared to other European countries is low Which indicated that Fewer couples opt for formal marriage and prefer other forms of cohabitation or partnership. It also registers a high rate of divorce compared to other European countries which indicated that many marriages in France end up in dissolution or separation. Due to its secular culture and a strong separation of church and state, only 41% of adults are identified as Christians and only 12 % identify religion as important in their lives. This indicated that couples in France do not follow religious norms or traditions regarding marriage and PMC (https://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jnhs/papers/vol7-issue4/Version-2/C0704021826.pdf).

In Minnesota, PMC was found to have greater marital satisfaction to those who undertook it than those who never had it (Kepler, 2015). It was revealed that couples were socially accustomed and had more relationship than the uncounseled hence the substantial association between social adjustment and marital stability (Egbo, 2012). The above-discussed studies have indicated that premarital counseling of various kinds influences marital stability, marital satisfaction, marital harmony, and reduces divorce among couples from different places.

Based on the previous factors, the perception of PMC by couples in France may be influenced by Individual preferences, values and goals rather than by social or religious expectations or pressures whereby some couples may see PMC as useful and beneficial service

that can strengthen their relationship and prepare for marriage. Therefore, the availability of PMC in France may depend on the personal choice and motivation of each couple rather than on the general norm or policy of the society (https://iosrjournals.org/iosr-jnhs/papers/vol7-issue4/Version-2/C0704021826.pdf)

Marital stability is a phenomenon that cannot be standardized in the life of marriage. Reason being that there are various factors that lead to marriage stability depending on the base of relationship among couples which means the perception of stability is relatively different as per individual couple. With researches carried out, couples who never had an opportunity to undergo premarital counseling experience marriage instability. Some have separated, others have divorced or presently undergoing a lot of crises and conflicts. This justifies the positive effect of premarital counseling.

Kepler (2015) examined the connection between premarital counseling, marital counseling and marital satisfaction for couples in Minnesota. The study used a cross-sectional design and was guided by three main questions namely; Is Involvement in premarital counseling linked to greater satisfaction of a marriages? Is marriage counseling in times of marital discord connected with increased satisfaction of marriage and less possibility of divorce? Is a positive experience of premarital therapy related to a higher probability that partners will seek marital or couples counseling in difficult times in marriage? The study engaged twenty-seven people who responded to the study questions anonymously. The outcome of the study was not significant for any of the three questions. However, a trend was detected indicating that couples who took part in premarital counseling illustrated high marital satisfaction than those who did not engage in premarital counseling.

Parhizgar, et al. (2017) investigated the effect of communication skills on marital satisfaction among couples attending premarital counseling centers. A parallel interventional study was used and 60 couples were involved in attending a premarital counseling center (Shahid Rast Ravesh) allied to Alborz University of medical Sciences. Results of repeated measures revealed that marital satisfaction has revolved over time. Additionally, the results of a paired t-test illustrated a substantial relationship between the level of marital satisfaction in the prior investigation group and after evaluation. Marital satisfaction lot was significantly higher than in the control lot.

Married women's lived experiences were explored by Moet, et al. (2017) on the value of traditional premarital counseling, go laya, on marital stability in Botswana. A sample of 10 married women were interviewed for information in the study with varied durations in marriage. The results showed that traditional counseling before marriage is highly beneficial and has the ability to keep marriages together. The findings showed that although traditional counseling before marriage is a suitable anti-divorce approach, unlike the past when it was given honor it is latest not conducted in-depth hence not given its original importance.

Effectiveness of premarital education towards marital stability and parenting was assessed by Basela (2015) in Tanzania on experiences from Sandawe community in Dodoma. The outcome revealed that traditional premarital education has been the main approach used to ensure marital stability in Sandawe community inform of initiation rites. Traditional premarital education is currently combined with modern religious teachings such as formal schools, media, government and non-governmental premarital counseling. In the outcome, both traditional premarital counseling and religious premarital counseling were documented as effective in ensuring marital stability and improved parenting when well implemented. Findings showed that the status of

premarital education has changed due to globalization interfering with norms, values and practices connected with marriage and parenting in Sandawe community.

A study on the link between premarital counseling and marital harmony in families were investigated through solution focused theory with a target population of 20 men, 20 women and 10 premarital counselors interviewed in Lugari Kakamega county. Results showed statistically significant link between premarital counseling services and family harmony (Muluhya et al., 2020).

Effectiveness of premarital counseling on marital stability among couples in Nairobi County in Kenya by Kariuki (2018). Quantitative descriptive research design was adopted involving 105 married persons from PCEA Milimani South Presbytery. The study used Revised Dyadic Adjustment Scale (RDAS) to determine level of marital distress as a measure of marital stability with ten years and below participants' experience in marriage.

Findings indicated a substantial variation in marital satisfaction by individuals who received several sessions of premarital counseling hence significant impact on marital satisfaction. An implication for premarital therapy program was established where premarital counseling should be carried out six months before the wedding with not less than eighteen sessions nor more than twenty sessions.

This study intends to find out the perception that couples have for premarital counseling in relation with the marriage stability and whether the case is the same among married couples in Kahawa West Nairobi

2.4.4 Effective Strategies that Enhance Marital Stability among Couples

Marriage stability is a source of joy and happiness that is outwardly reflected in various ways as couples live together. Some of these ways include effective communication between

partners which carries various values in it altogether such as tolerance, forgiveness and understanding.

According to Vail (2013) the covenant of marriage as instituted by God provides a way in which two individuals are connected in life. The researcher argued that every person has to love and to be loved in life time as a covenant between man and woman in order to satisfy that God-given desire. However, the divorce rate in America is nearly 50% as per the US Bureau of Census 2008. US administration mandates the church to engage couples in a formal premarital program as a prerequisite for marriage to ensure that marriages last and serve the purpose of their existence. This enabled policy maker to anticipate fewer divorces and an increase in marital satisfaction and stability.

Effectiveness of premarital counseling based on relationship education program was examined by Rajabi and Abbasi (2020) in reducing the idealistic marital expectation in single young adults of Ahvaz city. A control sample with pretest, posttest and follow-up under Quasi-experiment was used. The researcher involved thirty-two young adults where a half were used for investigation and the other half as control sample. Idealistic expectation subscale by Jones and Nelson was used to collect data in the three phases: pre-test, post-test and a two months' follow-up. The investigation sample was taken through a training program on love relations leading to marriage in 9 sittings, two times a week for one and a half hours, while the control sample received their counseling before marriage through a one sitting training only.

The findings showed that counseling before marriage based on the program on love relations leading to marriage reduced the uncompromising marital anticipation and increased realistic expectations in the examination group from pretest stage to follow –up stage in a conclusion that relationship education could be a prerequisite for a stable marriage. Genetic

counseling role on marital stability among married couples was assessed in Nigeria (Akinduyo,2016). The researcher argued that getting married without going through marital counseling is a marriage suicide. The study indicated that genetic counseling prepares partners for all eventualities in marriage. This aspect of premarital counseling informs couples about DNA, blood groups, sickle cell disease, albinism among other things that can happen in marriage and change relationships. This study, therefore, stated that for premarital counseling to lead to marital stability, genetic counseling has to be part of the process. As per the findings, the study recommended constitutionalizing compulsory genetic counseling before establishing any family. Also, more professional genetic counselors are needed in all sectors to efficiently curb martial instability adversely affecting Nigerians.

Effectiveness of premarital education towards marital stability and parenting in Tanzania were assessed by Basela (2015) based on experiences from Sandawe community in Dodoma and found that premarital approaches such as realistic premarital education objectives, ample couple training duration and qualified/reputable counselors assure marital stability.

Connection between premarital counseling and marital conflict among Christian couples was looked into in Sameta Sub- County, Kisii County, Kenya by Omae (2018). A sample size of 400 respondents on the total population of approximate 20,000 married spouses was engaged in the research area. Descriptive correlation and cross-sectional research methods were engaged.

Approaches that can improve premarital counseling and lead to marital stability were indicated as communication, financial counseling, sexuality and biblical counseling. The above mentioned strategies were found essential factors contributing factors to control marital conflicts among married Christian couples. The study highlighted various premarital counseling strategies used in different places that contribute to marital stability. Therefore, more strategies were

explored by the current study for the purpose of preventing future crisis hence enhancing stability in marriage.

2.5 Research Gaps

A lot has been studied in the past on the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability though with some gaps that the current study attempts to fill. These include Previous studies were conducted on the advantages of Premarital counseling but never researched on the relationship between premarital counseling and domestic violence as this study intends to examine.

Studies on premarital counseling conducted showed the relationship between PMC and marriage stability but has never been researched on in-depth levels of marriage stability as the current study intend. Several previous studies on PMC outcomes have been extracted from the western culture but for the current study the researcher focused the response from the African culture experience in a cultural context.

Previous studies used questionnaires as the dominant data collection tool for the individual couples on which validity issues can be raised since it's one sided. The current study uses both questionnaire and interview for couples and service providers for detailed results.

The previous studies showed that premarital counselors offered counseling services to couples despite being few in number which showed delay in completion of the program. It was noted that research on matters concerning rural educated women in marriage required further investigation as far as marriage stability is concerned. The previous study reported that more odds and separation in marriage mostly are from rural areas which gives a generalized view of biasness. The current study explains both gender's contribution towards marriage stability which is reflected by both partners in marriage

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1

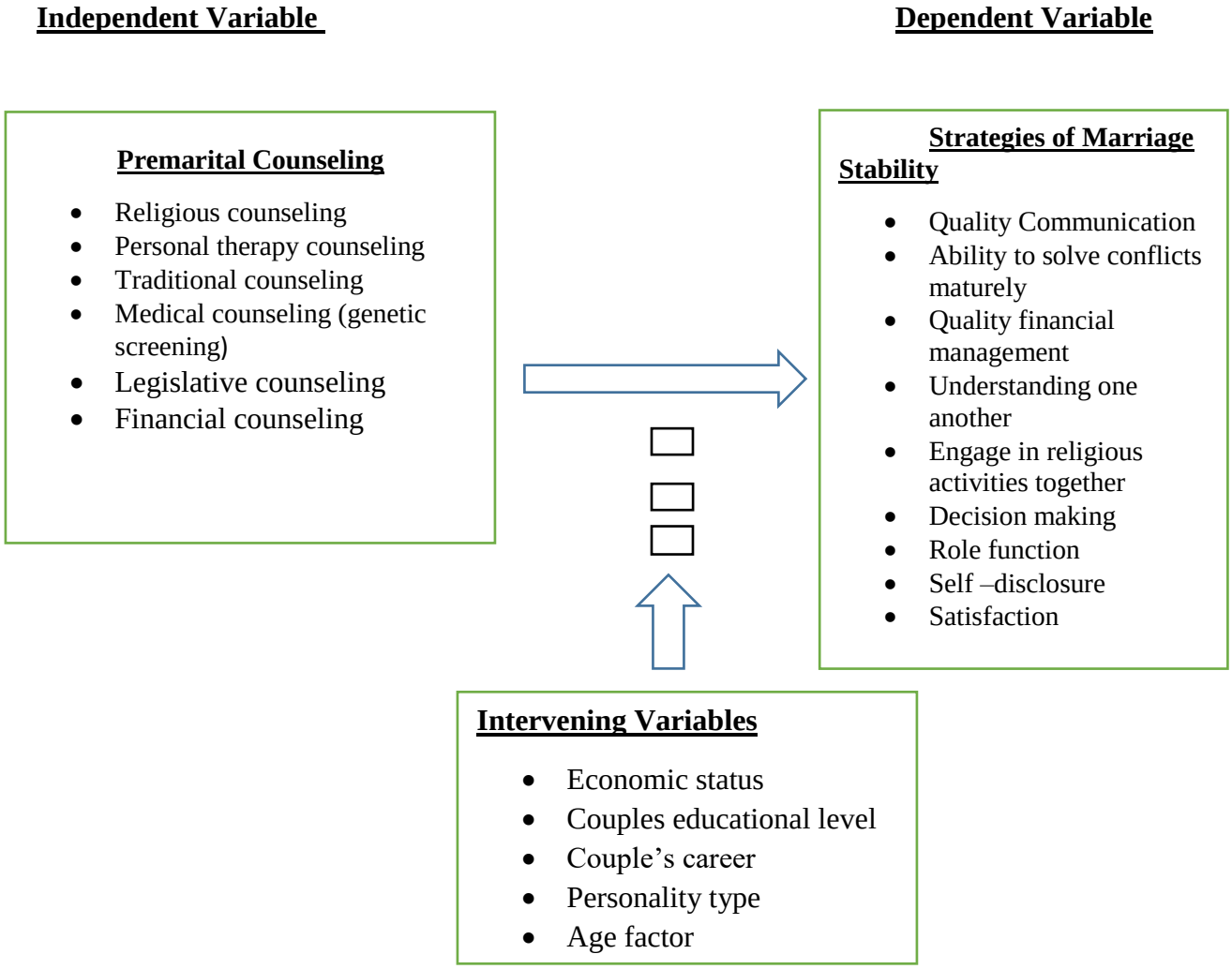

Figure 1: shows the relationship between Premarital counseling and marriage stability.

The conceptual framework presents study interactions variables. Independent variables of the study as premarital counseling were presented in different forms of premarital counseling that individual couples receive which include; Religious counseling, Personal therapy, Traditional counseling, Medical / genetic screening, Legislative and Financial counseling. The dependent variables presented as marital stability depends on Premarital counseling that couples receive

illustrated by quality communication, ability to solve conflicts maturely, good financial management, understanding one another, attending religious events together, decision making, satisfaction, role function and self-disclosure.

Intervening variables in the conceptual framework showed some connection between independent and dependent variables. They included financial status, couple's educational level, couple's career, personality type and age factor. These variables may intervene on marital stability among couples.

2.7 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

Literature showed that couples who enter into marriage through cohabitation with no preparation mostly encounter challenges that may lead to instability in marriage. It also shows that premarital counseling can do a lot of good whereby couples undergo training that adds knowledge, attitudes and values that protects their marriage in future leading to stability in marriage.

Literature reviewed showed some challenges that couple's encounter which include daily conflicts which sometimes may lead to separation, divorce and sometimes murder. Reviewed research showed that lack of premarital counseling affects marriage and weakens the relationship functionality and performance of individual partners. Different forms of premarital counseling are provided in different churches whereby no detailed program is used for training couples on their marriage stability as addressed by this study.

Again, literature indicates values and attitudes offered in premarital counseling which include effective communication, techniques to solve conflicts, understanding, tolerance, importance of engaging in religious activities, being there intimately for each other and concerns about in -laws, relatives, friends and society at large. PMC have potentials in building interpersonal relationship in marriage.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The Chapter presents methodology of the study consisting of research design, location of the study, study population, sampling techniques and sample size. It also shows data collection methods and instruments, description of instruments, data quality control and trustworthiness. It also presents data collection procedures, analysis, limitations and ethical considerations and finally summary and conclusion.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a plan that focuses on basic strategies applied to acquire relevant data for the research (Creswell, 2014). The study adopted mixed methods- convergent parallel design. It involves collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously and independently and then comparing or relating the two sets of results to draw overall conclusions. The researcher used Convergent parallel design to enhance the validity and reliability of findings. The Convergent Parallel design was applicable in the study since it captures on behavioural, health and complex societal situations. The qualitative data aimed at grasping in-depth information on relationship between the problem and the study population.

3.3 Location of the Study

This study was carried out in different denominational churches which were purposively selected namely Our Lady Consolata (Catholic), A.C.K, Baptist, Methodist, P.C.E.A and K.A.G in Kahawa West Ward Nairobi. The area occupies a high population of mixed diversities different ethnic communities in the republic of Kenya. The different denominations hold different perceptions on handling marriage partners before engaged in marriage. In that perspective the

researcher focused on relationship between premarital counselling and effects attached to marriage life.

3.4 Target Population

The target population comprised of 738 registered marriages from 6 denominational churches in Kahawa West Ward which included Catholic, K.A.G, Baptist, P.C.E.A, Methodist and A.C.K. 738 was the target population of marriages where the researcher dealt with married individuals since every partner had his/her own marriage experience. Age of the couples was not considered significant in the study rather the duration in marriage as most seen significant. The study presumed that couples who wedded in church underwent PMC and had relevant primary information required in the research questions.

The target population of service providers i.e. Priests/Pastors/Catechists was 6 individuals representing each denomination purposively chosen based on the experience they had in provision of PMC hence considered significant in the study.

Table 1

Target Population

Denomination	Catholic	K.A.G	Baptist	P.C.E.A	A.C.K	Methodist	Total
No. of Registered Marriages Year 2000 - 2022	178	87	105	101	112	155	**738**

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The Section presents sampling techniques and sample size that the researcher applied.

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2013) stated that selecting a number of individuals to represent a larger group is referred as sampling. Purposive sampling technique was used to select churches which were each presented by a service provider/ Counsellor. This technique enables individual who are knowledgeable and experienced to provide an in-depth information.

Sample random sampling was used to select couples. This technique eliminates bias (Creswell and Clark, 2012). Reason for selecting service providers was because they handle couples in preparations of weddings and they had relevant information needed in the study.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The study used Yamane Formula (1967) as follows: $n=N/ 1+N (e)^2$

Where n= sample size; N= population size (738 married couples) and e=standard error (0.05

Thus $n= \frac{738}{1+738 (0.05)^2}$

n=738_1+738(0.0025)

n=738_1+1.845

n=738_2.845=259.4

n=259.

Based on the above formula, a sample of 259 registered marriages was arrived at. The researcher purposively selected 6 service providers from the 6 denominational churches making a total sample size of 265 participants.

The researcher used simple random sampling for married couples who participated in the study from the six churches that were purposively randomly sampled in Kahawa west Ward. Simple random sampling gives each member an equal chance for being chosen for the study. The above method of sampling guaranteed that a sample selected is a representative for the population and not biased in any way (Taherdoost, 2016).

The researcher used purposive sampling for service provider from each church, who was directly involved in premarital counseling. Purposive sampling depends on the judgement of the researcher when selecting units like people, cases/ organizations/ events, pieces of data to be (Taherdoost, 2016). It is usually employed in investigations where the population is quite small.

3.5.3 Sampling Procedure

The researcher purposively selected the church denominations which were 6 in total. The researcher explained the intension to conduct the study to the church in-charge of the 6 churches. After the acceptance of the letter arrangements to meet the couples were made at different dates as per the availability of the in-charge as well as the couples. Every church provided 1 service provider a Priest /Pastor/Catechist. These were purposively chosen based on the experience they have in providing PMC counseling programs. Researcher sought permission from the church in-charge to address the willing participants as per the study. Arrangements were made to meet the willing participants. Agreement was passed to conduct the exercise on Sunday for the availability of participants. The researcher could collect data from the willing participants on Sundays as per the date for every church.

Table 2

Service Providers

Service Providers							
	Catholic	P.C.E.A	Baptist	A.C.K	Methodist	K.A.G	**Total**
Priests/Pastors/Catechists	1	1	1	1	1	1	**6**

3.6 Methods of Data Collection and Instruments

The researcher conducted interviews for qualitative data collection and questionnaires for quantitative data collection. Interview guide provided detailed information for open-ended questions which could not limit the respondent and interviews conducted on study objectives to the service providers. The researcher used the Self- Report Questionnaire (SRQ) on Marital Quality Scale (MQS) to collect quantitative data. The purpose of using SRQ was because each question addressed the individual partner (participant). The researcher engaged standardized questionnaire to confirm, validate and complement the qualitative method approach.

3.6.1 Description of Research Instruments

The researcher collected data in standardized questionnaires and Self-developed questionnaires. Self-developed questionnaires were under Section B as per research objectives which discussed about forms of premarital counseling. Both the standardized and Self- developed questionnaires shared Section A on the Background Information i.e., Gender, duration in marriage and sessions attended during the program.

Section B consisted of the forms of premarital counselling whereby the respondent ticked appropriately as per the agreed statement in the Likert scale. This consisted of 1-5 Scale where 1 =Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly disagree. The participant was to tick the appropriate feeling.

Section C dealt with levels of marital stability whereby the respondent ticked appropriately as per the agreed statement in the Likert scale. The standardized questionnaire was Marital Quality Scale (MQS) used for quantitative data as well as the self-developed questionnaires for couples and qualitative data was collected using the interview guide for service providers.

A four-point Likert Scale was provided to indicate the level of marital stability which scored as Usually, Sometimes, Rarely and Never.

3.6.2 Interview Guide

Interview guide was provided for service providers as a qualitative data collection with no limit of words on the role of PMC to couples as per the research objectives. The interview guide covered all the objectives as followed. Question 1 and 2 covered forms of PMC. Question 3, 4 & 5 covered Levels of PMC. Question 6 covered perception and question 7 & 8 covered strategies. Some sampled questions included;

- A part from biblical premarital counseling, do you incorporate any other methods of premarital counseling? Explain.
- How would you rate marital stability among couples in your church?
- What are some of the indications that premarital counseling contributes to marital stability?
- What do you think can be carried out to improve premarital counseling in efforts to build more stable marriages?

The study consisted both open-and close ended questions that sought to gather data as per the research objectives. The use of interview was to bring out in-depth explanation on the influence of PMC to couples which could not be captured in the questionnaires. The researcher probed the necessity and seriousness of PMC to partners engaging in marriage and the importance of follow-up even after the wedding for sustenance and stability of the marriage. The interview was

administered orally on one-on-one basis to the service providers who were primarily involved in conducting the premarital counselling.

3.7 Pre-test Study

A pre-test study to check on validity and reliability of the instruments. was carried out. It was carried out to ensure that the language used in the instruments suited the target population of the study for understanding purpose. This was carried out in a Catholic Church in Zimmerman ward. The researcher pretested the instruments with married individuals who represented married couples. The total number of participants was 6 whereby 4 were women in marriage and 2 men in marriage. The tools were found suitable for the pretest group and so no modification was carried out.

3.8 Data Quality Control

The researcher checked on validity and reliability to ascertain that quality findings of the study were provided The researcher was assisted by the presence of validity and reliability to modify research instruments before the actual data collection for precise results (Mohajan,2017)

3.8.1 Validity of Instrument

The validity of any instrument is when a tool measures exactly what it is designed to measure (Mohajan, 2017). To ensure the validity of the study, study objectives guided the formulation of the questionnaires and the interview guide. The researcher used content validity in the collection of qualitative data from service providers who engaged with couples during PMC. Again, the instruments were checked by the participants during pilot stage before the main data collection. The supervisors certified the tools and the researcher ensured that data was collected as per the tools indicated.

Table 3

Validity Analysis

		I and my partner were taken through marital counseling regarding emotional support before we got married	My partner and I were taken through financial expectations in counseling before we got married
I and my partner were taken through marital counseling regarding emotional support before we got married	Pearson Correlation	1	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	176	173
My partner and I were taken through financial expectations in counseling before we got married	Pearson Correlation	.673**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	173	176

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

Table 3 represented the correlation between the Independent variables and dependent variables that covered the four objectives of the study.

3.8.2 Reliability of Instruments

Reliability is defined as a measure of the degree to which research instruments give consistent results after repeated trials (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2009). Reliability was assessed during pretest where pretest participants were so prompt in answering questions which was also seen during the actual period of data collection. The pretest group responded to questions as per the researcher's expectations. Pretest participants showed the same interest in answering questions as the study participants did.

Table 4

Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach Alpha	N of Items
.792 = 0.8	65

Researcher agreed with Taber (2018) when stated that a research instrument is reliable when Cronbach Alpha coefficient is above 0.70 as shown in Table 4. Therefore, the Cronbach Alpha of the study 0.8 being greater than 0.7 indicated that all items in the tool had an adequate level of inter-item reliability.

3.8.3 Trustworthiness of Qualitative Instruments

Researcher ensured credibility through a prolonged engagement and persistent observation of the respondents during the interview findings. The researcher examined the true characteristics of the data obtained through the criteria of credibility. The study ensured the criteria of transferability where the researcher gave detailed description of the study area, the research process, findings as well as the criteria of participants (Vais Moradi et al., 2013)

This study was reviewed and examined by experts ensuring that findings and data analysis were consistent hence the dependability of the study as Korsten and Moser (2018) put it. Korsten and Moser (2018) described four criteria of trustworthiness which include; Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Conformability.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher was provided with an introductory letter from the department after the approval of a proposal at Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The introductory letter was submitted to National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) which

sought permission for data collection. After NACOSTI approval, the researcher sought permission from the denominational churches in-charge of the selected churches which was carried out one at a time. Debriefing to the in-charge was carried out and the researcher expressed the desire on how data will be collected. Approval was granted and specific dates were allocated for the exercise in the church of study.

On the particular date as allocated, the researcher started with the service providers for premarital counseling who were purposively selected. Each was debriefed at his own time and afterwards the interview was conducted through the interview guide. The researcher collected the information which took a lengthy of time due to the in-depth information that was being given. This was carried out to all the six denominational churches purposively selected for study where the service providers embraced the exercise with a lot of readiness. After the data collection the researcher could thank every service provider for the positive response.

After the interview with service providers next was to deal with the respondents which could take a different date since respondents could be available only on Sundays. On the particular date the respondents congregated and were debriefed. Only the willing respondents participated as indicated by Deng et al., (2013) who were involved and questionnaires were issued. The respondents were issued with questionnaires after debriefing where the exercise took between 10-15 minutes. After the exercise the questionnaires were collected and respondents appreciated. The six service providers attended the interview 100% with well detailed information.

The respondents issued with questionnaires in the six selected churches were 259. A total number of 211 were returned duly completed with 48 not returned. The participants of each church handed back the questionnaires to the researcher on the same day. The researcher appreciated the

participants. The researcher collected them after all were being filled. The researcher stored both the soft and hand copies as a backup in case of loss.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedures

Objectives one and two were quantitative in nature so data was analysed and summarized by use of (SPSS) Version 21. The coded data was tallied, tabulated, analysed and summarized at the same time. Qualitative data collected covered all the four objectives

Mean and standard deviation as descriptive summarized quantitative data based on the study objectives and demographic data characteristics. The study used tables to present the information. The information obtained from the interview was organized into themes and discussed as per the study.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

Researcher sought permission from the university for data collection which was carried out by the University Counselling Psychology Department issuing a permit for data collection from National commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). The researcher received permit from NACOSTI which enabled for the next step. This was carried out by the researcher approaching the different churches in-charge seeking permission to interact with the target participants.

In every church that the researcher visited, the purpose of the research was fully explained during introduction which built a rapport with the participants also to obtain their informed consent. Due to the diversity of culture the researcher worked with the willing participants so it was not a barrier and so the language of communication used was English and Kiswahili. Due to the nature of the research and the area of study, the researcher remained firm to the topic of study to avoid biasness of the faith professed by the participants.

The researcher observed UPR every time the participant would ask for clarity of any statement during data collection period. Anonymity and confidentiality was assured by instructing not to write names on the questionnaires. Participants were appreciated by the researcher after data collection.

3.12 Chapter Summary and Conclusion

This Chapter consists the methodology that guided the research which aim was to examine the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples. The researcher used both Qualitative and Quantitative approach. The study took place at Kahawa West Nairobi, Kenya where the study target population was married couples from different Christian denominational churches which included Catholic, KAG, Baptist, PCEA, ACK and Methodist. The study population was 738 whereby the researcher sampled to 259 couples with 211 who willingly and positively responded to the invitation by filling the questionnaires.

The Churches involved in the study were purposively selected into a total of six together with their premarital counsellors who were also purposively selected for the study. Couples were simple random sampled from the target population. Questionnaires that consist self-report statements were used for couples while Interview Guide was for the service providers. Quantitative data research questions were statistically analysed while interviews research questions were thematically analysed backed up with participants' narratives.

The study used validity and reliability of instruments where three criteria were used to prove trustworthiness of the qualitative data. Data collection procedures were followed systematically as well as observing ethical considerations. Both Qualitative and Quantitative data was analysed and later interpreted as the next chapter presents.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents findings based on data collected and analyzed for interpretation. Both descriptive statistics and thematic data were presented and summarized using frequency, percentages and tables. The study main objective was to examine relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west Nairobi, Kenya. The target population was married couples from different Christian denominational churches in Kahawa west and the service providers/premarital counsellors (Priests/Pastors/catechists)

The chapter consists of seven Sections with the first presenting demographic information of participants including gender, duration in marriage and number of PMC sessions attended. The second section reports on the questionnaire return rate. Third section presents findings on forms of premarital counseling in relation to marriage stability. Forth section present findings on the levels of marriage stability and correlation between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples. Fifth section presents perception of premarital counseling among couples while the sixth presents the findings on effective strategies that enhance marital stability among couples and seventh section presents summary and conclusion.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The section presents characteristics of participants. Demographic information captured areas on gender, duration in marriage, Sessions attended during premarital counseling and forms of premarital counseling.

4.2.1 Gender of Respondents

The concept of gender was viewed as important in this chapter since each partner has personal experience of marriage life. It contributes to feminity and masculinity perception of marriage hence different experiences. Table 5 shows the results of gender participants.

Table 5
Gender Distribution of Participants

	Couples		**Service Providers**	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	87	41.6	5	**83.3**
Female	122	58.4	1	**16.7**
Total	**209**	**100**	**6**	**100**
No response	**2**			

Table 5, demonstrated that female participants were the majority with 58.4% followed by male participants with 41.6%. According to the total number of participants 2 participants were missing in either side. Based on the findings, female participants were more than male participants. Reason could be associated to the fact that most males don't like exposing their inner life. They like holding issues to themselves. More females in the study could be associated with assumption that ladies are always after stability and growth of their marriage to an extent of protecting and bringing up their children in a conducive environment. Another reason for females being more than males could be that they needed their many unanswered questions concerning their marital life to be addressed.

Based on the findings, male service providers were more than females. Male Service providers were more than females with 90% and 10% consecutively. Reason could be that in most

of the churches, those in-charge are men and most of them give counseling programs to their Christians and it's their wish to see growth and stability in those families.

4.2.2 Duration in Marriage

Duration in marriage determines the experience or the forces that an individual partner has for the stability in marriage. Couples might have stayed for a short duration but the determination and readiness to sustain a marriage are well visible. Others could have lived in marriage for a reasonable period but no efforts applied towards stability which becomes a great challenge to both partners. Therefore, duration in marriage depends with the experience that the couple had in marriage.

Table 4 shows the distribution of participants' duration in marriage.

Table 6

Duration in marriage

	Period	**Frequency**	**Percent %**
	0-2 Years	4	1.9
	2-5 Years	6	2.9
	5-10 Years	39	18.9
	Over 10 Years	161	76.7
	Total	**210**	**100**
No Response		1	

Table 6, demonstrated that couples who have been in marriage more than 10 years were the majority with 76.7%. Those between 5-10 years in marriage were 18.9% while those in marriage between 2-5 years were 2.9%. Those below 2 years were 1.9% and I participant was recorded as missing in the system according to the sample size displayed.

All participants identified the duration they have been in marriage. As the findings reflects on table 4 above, at a given point it cannot be satisfying that those with long duration of marriage

experience stability in marriage. This depends with the individual partner's efforts to stabilize and sustain that stability. Therefore, being in marriage for short or long duration depends with partner's determination.

4.2.3 Sessions attended in Premarital Counseling

The researcher assessed the sessions attended by the participants assessing on the value that couples have in attending PMC. This could help service providers in providing adequate knowledge and skills given to couples for strengthening the relationship between them. Couples could also understand different strategies that would bring stability in marriage by attending premarital counseling programs. Table 7 shows the number of sessions attended in counseling by couples.

Table 7

Sessions attended in Premarital Counseling

	Frequency	Percent %
1-5 Sessions	75	64.1
5-10 Sessions	33	28.2
10-15 Sessions	9	7.7
Sub-Total	**117**	**100**
No Response	94	44.5
Total	**211**	

Table 7 shows that participants who attended fewer sessions are highest in percentage 64.1% as compared to those who attended between 5-10 sessions attaining 28.2% and sessions attended by fewer participants were between 10-15 sessions presented with 7.7%. This called for consideration on whether the more sessions attended could result to more understanding of themes that brings stability in marriage or was that the number of sessions attended couldn't matter to

couples. In an umbrella, the findings contradicted the findings on indication of sessions attended whereby 94 participants equivalent to 44.5% didn't indicate the sessions attended whereas 117 participants equivalent to 55.5% specified the number of sessions they attended.

4.3 Questionnaire Return Rate

The researcher sampled 259 couples from Kahawa west from different churches as the main respondents in the study. Six premarital counsellors were purposively selected for interview. The total sample of married couples was 259. Service providers were 6 purposively selected giving a total of 265 respondents. From the sampled size of couples, 48 questionnaires were left blank leaving 211 filled questionnaires. The service providers completed the interview at 100%. The total number of returned participants was 217. Table 8 showed the response rate.

Table 8

Response Rate

Category	**Sample size**	**Return Response**	**Response Rate**
Married Individuals	259	211	81.40%
Service Providers	6	6	100%
Total	**265**	**217**	

The findings were in agreement with the positivity of service providers responding to their interviews in 100%. Married couples successfully filled the questionnaires at 81.4% whereas 18.6% not filled. The percent that filled questionnaires was above 60% which confirmed that the rate was adequate for data analysis (Berg, 2004). The service providers' response rate was 100% which showed it was positively responded. The researcher administered the filling of questionnaires and conducting of interviews personally hence the higher rate of response.

4.3.1 Forms of Premarital Counseling given to Couples

The researcher explored different forms used in giving premarital counseling to partners. This was important for it could help service providers to know the most preferred forms that guide partners in delivering knowledge that pertain keeping the marriage stable. In understanding the forms mostly used by partners, then it could help service providers to strengthen it by deepening areas of concern that would guide partners on how to establish a stable marriage.

Table 9

Forms of Premarital Counseling Given to Couples on Frequency and Percentage

	Frequency	Percent %
Religious/Church	105	70
Personal Therapy	18	12
Traditional	23	15.3
Legislative	1	0.7
Financial	3	2
Sub-Total	**150**	**100**
No Response	61	
Total	**211**	

Table 9 findings were in agreement with the literature where Religious counseling was showed to be commonly preferred by couples with 70% (Mwaura (2020) noted religious or pastoral counseling as commonly used since most churches and mosques across the world require PMC before officiating a wedding) followed by traditional with 15.3%, followed by personal therapy counseling with 12.0%, followed by financial with 2.0% and finally legislative with .7% as the least form utilized by the service providers. This means that the guidance given in the church termed as religious counseling was more preferred by couples.

The traditional form of counseling also preferred by couples here is not necessarily given in the church by service providers. It could also be given by parents to their young adults in

preparation for marriage or village elders. Personal therapy was another form of counseling that couples used which could also give guidance on how individual partners could contribute in stabilizing marriage focusing on individual's potentials. Some partners also preferred receiving guidance on legal grounds in understanding their roles hence stabilizing their marriage in that dimension. On financial matters, some partners preferred being guided on strategies to handle finances as they engage in marriage. Religious counseling as a form of therapy was seen as mandatory for individuals getting married and the most preferred (Stupart, 2018).

The religious form of counseling given before marriage as a preparation for wedding in the church reflected as the commonly used form of premarital preparations that majority of partners' embraced. In line with these findings, Ng'ang'a and Wasanga (2009) explains that the personnel offering PMC are mainly the Parish ministers and the best couples. Similar studies were carried out that showed individuals involved in getting married, involved themselves 100% in traditional counseling either by relatives or organized traditional rulers before they settle in marriage (Basela, 2015).

In response to the findings the researcher agreed that religious education given by the church ministers for marriage preparations is the most preferred by high numbers of partners as they prepare to settle in marriage. This has also been reflected by other similar studies states that clergy provided marriage preparations by Wilmoth and Smyser (2012) as an investigation is a requirement and content for marriage preparation.

4.4 Levels of Stability in Marriage

Research question number two examined the levels of marital stability. It was attended by both qualitative through interview and through the filling of questionnaires reviewed and

reorganized data both in qualitative and quantitative. The researcher ensured that all questions were responded.

Table 10

Levels of Marriage Stability Among Couples in Kahawa West

	Mean	Std Dev
Understanding	3.25	0.71
Rejection	2.59	0.56
Satisfaction	3.36	0.66
Affection	2.46	0.64
Despair	2.23	0.74
Decision Making	3.28	0.97
Discontent	2.09	0.94
Dissolution Potential	2.13	1.88
Dominance	2.59	0.85
Self-Disclosure	2.83	0.57
Role Function	3.39	1.04

Analyzing qualitative data involves organizing, re-organizing, reviewing and coding as well as identifying themes According to Sunday (2017). The service providers gave a description of marriage stability levels that they experienced after handling premarital counseling sessions to couples as well as in handling ongoing counseling to couples already in marriage and their day-to-day interactions. The highest level of stability in marriage was shown on the role function ("M" = 3.39; SD= 1.04), followed by satisfaction ("M" =3.36; SD =0.66), decision making ("M" 3.28; SD = 0.97), understanding ("M" =3.25; SD = 0.71), self-disclosure ("M" = 2.83; SD = 0.57) with the least level of stability recorded on affection ("M" = 2.46; SD = 0.64). The findings recorded both levels (High and Low) stability and instability.

The first six stability levels indicated that scores were above average of 2.5. On the other hand, instability levels were recorded where rejection showed the highest among instabilities with ("M" =2.59; SD=0.56), followed by dominance ("M" =2.59; SD=0.85), despair ("M" = 2.23; SD 0.74), dissolution potential ("M" =2.13; SD 1.90) and discontent ("M" =2.09; SD 0.94). Rejection and dominance recorded above average 2.5 while the other three i.e. despair, dissolution potential and discontent recorded below average 2.5. Levels in mean and standard Deviation were shown in Table 8. The findings showed both levels of marriage i.e. stability and instability on couples in Kahawa west, Nairobi. Despite a couple having marital satisfaction, it doesn't mean there are no conflicts and misunderstanding but having gone through PMC, these eventualities can be reduced or managed in a good way.

The researcher was interested with marriage stability levels related to marital satisfaction in the previous studies. This showed that marriage stability or marital satisfaction depends with individual couple's day to day interaction which varies from one couple to another. The researcher recorded six levels that indicated marriage stability among couples as well as those that recorded instability in marriage.

In response to the findings, couples can stay together for a long time in peace and harmony without breaking their vows in their marriage (Mustapha, et al., 2017). PMC plays a key role in supporting marriages during difficult times as indicated by Barasa and Nzangi (2015). The findings were in agreement with the literature that PMC is important as a major role in supporting marriages in Kenya (Barasa and Nzangi, 2015). The findings showed six indicators of high level of stability and five indicators of low level as a general over view. Stability could only be experienced at individual partner's daily interactions.

In the current study role function recorded the highest in level of marriage stability which can be concluded that partners who understand and respect their roles are eligible to have a stable marriage. Role function enhances respect, positive attitude, boundaries and commitment where each individual partner takes charge. One participant reported "*couples who engaged in premarital counseling showed high marital satisfaction than those who didn't engage in premarital counseling".* The findings were in agreement with literature that premarital counseling bring marital satisfaction in marriages

Service provider stated;

> *Having journeyed with a good number of my Christian couples in the church and through different occasions of interaction, I feel a lively spirit in the lives of these couples indicating that there is marital satisfaction as well stability in their marriage. I see couples committed in matters of the church. Their children appear friendly, lively and committed in matters of the church as they interact with other children. That's an indication that at home there is room for freedom of expression which of course must have come from the parents. This showed that the couples enjoy their marriage life which is a manifestation that there is stability hence full commitment in their interaction with their fellow Christians. (SP 01, Verbal communication, June 18th, 2022).*

This goes in line with a previous study from Killewald (2016) who stated that PMC is important in preparing partners psychologically by equipping them with coping skills especially when threatened by factors that can cause divorce such as domestic violence, financial problems, infidelity and lack of commitment.

In relation to the above statement, role function reflected that there is that understanding of the individual marriage partners hence living a fully satisfied life. In further interview, the Pastor reported,

> *It's very easy to note where role function is not exercised in marriage. It's mostly reflected where some families have separated due to the fact that fathers not responsible to their roles, leaving mothers to carry the burden all by themselves. People being together but don't live their marital bedroom or marital actions. There's a lot of cries from mothers, daughters or sons. Children having a lot of rebellion since they don't experience love.*

> *Why all these problems? Economic status; money not enough, generations not well anchored with information, Children not informing the parents on when to start a family, partners feel shy or avoid to pay the dowry and no blessings from the parents. All these presents themselves where PMC is not carried out hence future or long life instability (Verbal Communication, SP 02, June 25th, 2022).*

In this study, satisfaction recorded second highest level of marriage stability with a score of 3.362. This satisfaction must have been contributed by various individual experiences of day-to-day life of the participants. Participants showed that they are satisfied in their marriage where the researcher was convinced that the range of satisfaction is due to the implementation of the knowledge attained during premarital counseling. One service provider (Pastor) reported.

> *It is my joy and happiness whenever I find my Christians happy especially couples coming for service and participating in the church. This motivates me greatly to know that there is warmth in families especially in the life that families are experiencing today. Like now I have a couple who are waiting to enter the office for their session in preparation for their wedding. I believe as they show this commitment in attending to sessions, they will retain that commitment as they look forward to living a happy marriage life. (SP 01, personal communication, June 18, 2022).*

In this study, decision making recorded third in level of marriage stability with a score of 3.279. This showed that couples agree on the issue of making decisions together which reflects understanding between them. This showed that decision making to couples becomes a milestone that promotes stability in their marriage since they respect each other hence remaining focused as well as being a source of strength that stabilizes their marriage geared by the aspect of understanding of each other.

In this study, self-disclosure recorded a score of 2.826. This showed that couples find value in being open to each other by disclosing one's experiences and issues which acts as background of stability in their marriage due to that sharing of issues. This enable couples to find assurance and security towards each other hence enabling them to stabilize their marriage since no game of hide and seek. This also develops trust that calls for more and more sharing hence moving together

towards stability that brings joy and happiness in marriage. This shows that premarital counseling equips couples with adequate knowledge and skills that enhance stability in marriage hence happy marriages.

In this study, affection also found part in its contribution to marriage stability having scored 2.461 but being the least in values that add value or to stabilize marriage. It showed that partners are there for each other in both good and difficult moments. The sense of feeling each other's presence gives room and one finds value of the other in their marriage which brings stability. The above mentioned values enables couples to find roots in stabilizing their marriage in awareness that unpleasant moments are to come which can destabilize marriage but that doesn't mean that the marriage will remain unstable. Couples who attend premarital counseling get equipped with knowledge and skills on how to keep their marriage stable.

On the other hand, five issues were recorded present in the lives of couples which included rejection, dominance ("M" 2.59) consecutively. Despair ("M" 2.23), dissolution potential ("M"2.13) and discontent ("M" 2.09). These five were below the ("M" 2.5) showing that they were not counted to stabilize marriage among couples. The five dimensions held ("M" 2.5) showed that they occur in marriage and can weaken the stability of marriage of couples. These findings agreed with the statement that despite a couple having marital satisfaction, it doesn't mean there are no conflicts and misunderstanding but having gone through PMC, such eventualities can be reduced or managed in a good way (Esere, et al., 2015).

Findings showed that premarital counseling has positive dimensions that can bring stability in marriage. The weak dimensions which occurred showed that through premarital counseling, couples would be helped to work on them hence turning them positive in order to bring stability in their marriage.

The current study also showed that couples who attends premarital counseling get sensitized of the possible happenings in marriage and are helped on how those possibilities could be handled in preventing hick-ups that could bring instability. The knowledge and skills attained through PMC could help them on how to handle the weak dimensions turning them into positive hence contribute in stabilizing their marriage.

4.5 Correlation between Premarital Counseling and Marriage Stability among

This study examined the relationship between PMC and marriage stability in relation with the dependent variables, i.e. understanding, rejection, affection, satisfaction, despair, decision making, discontentment, dissolution on potential, self- disclosure, role function and dominance. Table 11 shows coefficient correlation analyzed through Pearson correlation.

Table 11

The correlation between Premarital Counseling and Marital Stability Among Couples

	Understanding	Rejection	Satisfaction	Affection	Despair	Decision Making	Discontent	Dissolution Potential	Dominance	Self-disclosure	Role Function
Personal Therapy	.210 142	-.235 147	.239 149	-.124 141	-.172 .033 154	.157 .056 149	-.241 .003 154	-.111 .159 162	-.077 .336 157	.161 .046 154	.236 .004 151
Financial Counseling	.240 .004 144	-.132 .108 149	.176 .030 152	-.213 .011 142	-.124 .123 156	.183 .024 152	-.232 .004 156	-.074 .346 164	-.013 .869 159	.110 .172 156	.210 .009 154
Traditional Counseling	.251 .002 145	-.152 .062 152	.177 .028 153	-.044 .602 143	-.087 .273 159	.120 .140 154	-.186 .019 159	-.042 .588 167	-.073 .360 161	.144 .072 158	.210 .008 156
Legislative Counseling	.154 .070 139	-.141 .090 145	.201 .015 146	-.132 .122 139	-.122 .133 152	.084 .313 147	-.245 .002 153	-.086 .284 159	-.095 .241 155	.096 .242 151	.166 .043 150
Religious	.294 .000 144	-.225 .006 149	.236 .003 151	-.056 .506 142	-.159 .047 156	.137 .092 152	-.212 .008 156	-.031 .691 164	-.005 .952 160	.201 .012 156	.240 .003 153

The study showed moderate correlation between personal therapy and three variables namely, understanding (r =0.210; p = 0.012), Satisfaction (r =.239; p = 0.003) and role function (r = .236; p = .004). Findings showered a moderate negative correlation between personal therapy and two variables namely, discontentment (r =-0.241; p = 0.003) and rejection (r = 0.235; p =

0.004). It implied that understanding, satisfaction and role function between couples in their marriage life were positively influenced by personal therapy as a form of Premarital counseling.

Conversely, the findings showed that discontentment and rejection reduced among couples in marriage after undergoing personal therapy. Finding showed a moderate and positive correlation between financial counseling and two variables namely, understanding ($r = 0.024$; $p = 0.004$) and role function ($r = 0.210$; $p = 0.009$). It implied that understanding and role function among couples were positively influenced by financial counseling as a form of PMC. The findings showed a moderate negative correlation between financial counseling and discontentment ($r = -0.232$; $p = 0.004$. It implied that couples who had undergone financial counseling as a form of PMC led to a decrease in discontentment among couples in marriage.

Findings showed positive moderate and significant correlation between traditional counseling and two variables that is role function ($r = 0.210$; $p = 0.008$) and understanding ($r = 0.251$; $p = 0.002$). It implied that Traditional counseling as a form of PMC contributed to a high level of understanding between couples and clear understanding of their roles in marriage. The findings showed a positive and significant correlation between legislative counseling and satisfaction ($r = 0.201$; $p = 0.015$). It implied that couples who had undergone legislative counseling portrayed a higher sense of satisfaction in their marriage. Further, findings showed a negative moderate correlation between legislative counseling and discontentment ($r = -0.245$; $p = 0.002$). It showed a decrease level of discontentment among couples who had undergone legislative counseling.

Findings showed moderate positive and correlation between religious counseling and four variables namely; understanding ($r = 0.0294$; $p = - 0.000$), satisfaction ($r = 0.236$; $p = 0.003$), self-disclosure ($r = 0.201$; $p = 0.012$) and role function ($r = 0.240$; $p = 0.003$). It implied that there was

increase in understanding, satisfaction, self-disclosure and role function in couples who had undergone religious counseling as part of PMC.

In line with the findings, marital stability comes as a result of good listening, self-respect, a good sense of humor, willingness to adapt and understanding one another (Adesokan, et al., 2019). Effective communication is an added advantage that can effect on marital stability and in its absence, marriage can dissolve since it's the life wife of any relationship particularly marital relationship (Esere, Yusuf and Omotosho, 2011). A further study revealed that commitment preserves the pillars of marriage such as honesty, team, contentment, spirituality and unselfishness in unsteady circumstances. Intimacy help in constructing marital identity and satisfaction (Karimi, et al., 2019).

4.6 Perception of Premarital Counseling among married Couples in Kahawa

Perception is only measured qualitatively so the findings showed the connections between the value attached to PMC by couples that is enhanced by knowledge and experience. The findings revealed that PMC had a significant impact on marital satisfaction, marital harmony and marital stability thus reducing divorce among couples in different places.

The findings showed that partners have positive perception on PMC. This is supported by a study conducted in Minnesota whereby PMC was found to have greater marital satisfaction to those who undertook it than those who didn't have it (Kepler, 2015). It was revealed that couples were socially accustomed and had more relationship than those uncounseled hence the substantial association between social adjustment and marital stability (Egbo, 2012).

A similar report was given by service Provider who stated that, since he started giving premarital counseling services, his attitudes towards marriage life changed and that there's nothing he takes for granted.

> *My brother whose family dissolved due to perpetual alcohol taking jeered himself saying how well he has been since he separated from the wife. The wellness used ironically since he knew the mess he had carried out. They cohabited and started bearing children who were recklessly brought up. Out of this experience and many others that I have come across, I strongly believe that preparation before marriage is paramount for a marriage to last long.*

Odero (2018) supports that couples who received PMC had higher marital quality and satisfaction compared to those who never participated in PMC before getting married. The researcher agreed with the findings expressed by the participant and reviewed similar studies.

4.7 Strategies that Enhance Marriage Stability among Couples

The researcher wanted to identify other strategies that would be beneficial to couples in enhancing stability in their marriage. This research question required responses from interviewees that is the service providers who played the role of counseling as well as being participants in the study. The following themes were identified after exploration of strategies.

4.7.1 Mutual Communication

One service provider expressed, "Mutual communication help couples to plan their responsibilities such as good maintenance of finances which in most cases becomes a solid cause of conflicts among couples. Mutual communication also enables the partner to bear with the other partner's views in search for an agreement" (Verbal Communication, participant 02, June 29th, 2022).

Another service provider exclaimed,

> *I believe where there is reciprocity of information between partners, there would be greater understanding that prevents misunderstanding and one directional thinking. There could be collaboration on decision making. Partners can move far in their marriage.*

> *When doing premarital counseling specially to partners for wedding purpose, I normally share with them of an incident where couples wedded in the Church on a Saturday and by Wednesday of the following week, they had divorced.*
>
> *To my belief if the two had mutual communication which enhances understanding and collaboration, their marriage would have been saved (Verbal Communication, participant 01, June 22nd, 2022)*

Newton (2012) noted that communication is key in sustaining a stable marriage. According to Esere, et al., (2011) Marital relationship can only be sustained by effective communication which is a life wire of any relationship. Adesokan, et al., (2019) noted that effective communication includes aspects such as good listening, self- respect, a good sense of humor and understanding that one cannot change one partner. This keeps the partners on toes in sustaining of marriage. The researcher agreed with the findings that mutual communication is a key factor to sustain a marriage. Partners would only get this information on the importance of mutual communication through the programs given in PMC as they settle in their marriage.

Krupa and Bino (2017) indicated that participants viewed PMC as important for a successful marriage since partners are enabled to select, understand and adjust with each other as important parts of their lives. Partners going through PMC are enabled with skills of effective communication since communication is the key to every productive marriage. Couples exercising mutual communication identifies partner's weaknesses by exercising patience.

4.7.2 General Actions for themselves and the Society

Findings showed that couples should consider having general actions in order to enhance their union, calling the other to be reliable in response to the actions which spill off to the society. This means couples consulting those role model couples in the society. A respondent expressed,

For partners acknowledging one's identity and personality, they exercise patience with each other, role modelling from senior couples who have already undergone premarital counseling since they are able to withstand or use premarital counseling advise as a standard of living (Verbal communication, participant code 01, June 22nd, 2022)

This means engaging in conversations with couples who shows stability in matters of experience in marriage life in search for wisdom on matters related to marriage stability. Couples should engage in reading and interpreting the word of God together for enlightment. A respondent expressed,

Serious Christians give themselves to God for Him to lead and guide them. They possess mature believes and strong relationship with God. Those who depend on the bible has more stable relationship. They love more and forgiveness is carried out quickly in case of any conflict that arise. Doing this raise up stability in their marriage life. Regular attendance of church as a family, the Christ like character seen in their children and high respect between couples is seen to those who are stable in marriage (Verbal communication, Participant code 02, June 29th 2022).

Encourage effective communication both in verbal and non-verbal that enhances personal empowerment. This minimizes suspicion towards each other. Ability to open up especially dealing with the third party for example the extended families (in-laws). Enhance their sexual intimacy and planning together understanding each other's needs. This leads to honesty and a sense of spirit of prayer leading to God fearing spirit hence ability to cement their relationship between themselves and the society.

4.7.3 Attend ongoing counseling sessions

Report findings indicated that it's necessary to have ongoing counseling for marriage stability. This creates more understanding as life unfolds itself. One of the service provider stated,

When PMC is carried out in a particular way or rather as a condition it leads to Instability. For stability in marriage, PMC should be carried out or felt as a qualification other than a condition. Being carried out as condition, partners are always under pressure to qualify for a church wedding so it's carried out hurriedly with partners preoccupied by wedding preparations other than visualizing what future will take for that particular marriage. There is no much consideration given

> *to PMC by a number of partners at that moment. Others don't find it worth making and so they ignore about PMC. The partners fail to grasp the purpose of their being in a happy marriage which later leads to instability.*
>
> *PMC should start as early as 13 years where teenagers should be taught on the importance of knowing qualities of a future life partner "wife material" This should be in agreement with the government where parents also should be made aware so that there can be cautions in the process of preparations to the young ones not to jump into relationships which are not well grounded (Verbal communication, participant 01, June 22nd 2022).*

These findings consides with Wilmoth & Smyser (2012) who noted that there are some aspects which are left out that can stabilize marriage that include, follow-up meetings after wedding, utilization of mentor couples and dealing with issues of family of origin such as upbringing, emotional abuse etc.

Bela (2015) in a similar study indicated that some participants reported having received PMC in school on issues of child bearing and rearing. Another group of participants consisting of 46.8% stated to have received it through print and visual media though there were other sources that gave little significance as far as the study was concerned.

4.7.4 Relationship Education

Relationship education deal with fundamental building blocks on positive relationships, focusing friendships, family relationships and relationships with peers and adults. Partners undergoing PMC should be trained on different forms of relationships to equip them with awareness on how different relationships are handled. Such include; family relationships, friendships, romantic relationships, sexual relationships, work relationships and situational relationships. These relationships would shape partner's behavior as social skills are concerned in getting a wider range of understanding. Enabling partners to safeguard relationships hence minimizing conflicts in marriage life as well as shaping behaviors of individual partner.

A service provider quoted one of his client who confessed his honesty to him when he went to seek permission to wed in the church. I have learnt to involve God in all details of my life. When I felt the need for a wife, I prayed God for one because in His word it is clear that "Whoever finds a wife finds a good thing". I was moved by the client's seriousness which made me feel the need for partners to be helped on how to progress on identification of a future partner. (Verbal Communication, participant 4, 30th June 2022)

Findings of Maybruch, et al., (2014) reported that religious models and practices are considerably connected to a greater marital quality supported by relationship education. The researcher opines that in order to establish stability in marriage and getting to know how to deal with issues that can bring instability in marriage, different forms of PMC should be exercised in the PMC programs. For instance, acquiring skills in relationship matters, communication skills that enhance relationship, finance management issues, family of origin issues among many others. The researcher acknowledged the importance of the church leaders to offer training programs to partners to acquire techniques and skills that can bring happiness, harmony and stability in marriage.

4.7.5 Genetic Counseling

Charles Venditti (2005) defined Genetic counseling as guidance related to genetic disorder that a specialist provides to an individual or family. Partners make informed decision after receiving psychological counseling enabling them to adapt their condition or risk.

It provides information how a condition can affect an individual or family and help estimate the risk of a disease.

Service Provider reported an expression he experienced from his client and said,

I had one difficult experience with my clients who had come to register church wedding and as a tradition, they had to undergo prior preparations before the wedding. In one case, the wife had experienced two miscarriages and the pregnancy she had of two months had put her in great distress. After enquiring whether they had undergone premarital counseling before they settled in marriage, the husband exclaimed strongly saying no. To my suspicion I guessed that the couple had issues especially with the wife's biological make

> *up which needed the two to have been prepared of such eventualities. I connected the couple to a gynecologist for further checkups. This had placed the couple into a dilemma on who between them could be having issues. (Verbal Communication, Participant 3, 2nd July 2022).*

Report findings indicates that partners should undergo genetic counseling during PMC. This gives them information about how genetic conditions might affect their marriage/family. This is carried out by the counselor taking partner's personal and family health history. Akinduyo (2016) reported that compulsory genetic counseling before establishing any family was recommended as a way of attaining marital stability. PMC informs couples about genetic eventualities in marriage such as blood groups, SCD, albinism and others that can change a relationship.

The researcher agreed with premarital counseling being given on genetic counseling since genetic information is key for couples before marriage where screening for DNA issues as well as SCD can be carried out for sustenance of marriage (Al-Qattan et al., 2019).

This would equip partners with the understanding of their genetic conditions for example, Issues to deal with disease management, risks and benefits of further testing and other options. It also helps partners to identify psychological tools required to cope with potential outcomes, hence reducing family anxiety.

For partners who are fully prepared for a stable marriage free from anxiety, it's important to undergo PMC where such a program can be provided, hence a way of dealing with doubts of the other partner's wide status e.g. the issue of family tree i.e. Sickle Cell Disease

Findings indicated that there is a significant connection between participants' educational qualification and knowledge, attitudes and practices related to SCD and SCD premarital counseling and between age, attitude and practices related to SCD premarital counseling. According to Mwaura (2020) Medical/genetic counseling is also documented as an important aspect before marriage.

4.7.5.1 Psychosocial Issues and Tools

Partners should be prepared on how to cope with psychological issues that might come as a result of genetic testing. Such include; denial, guilt, hostility, grief and mourning and psychology of defectiveness.

> *An interviewee exclaimed with a lot of concern during the interview saying. I had a couple started their counseling program in preparation for a church wedding. In the midst of the first session, the wife interrupted stating that she can't stomach the mother in law again that enough is enough. The husband wasn't fully aware of all that what was taking place between the wife and the mother in-law. The husband as the only son of the mother loved his mother so much and couldn't stomach that. The wife shouted that she can't withstand her any more they better be in their own place without meeting the mother in law every morning as she(wife) moves out of the house. Personally I felt the case a bit complicated since the son(husband) loved the mother so much. I felt that I had to commit them into a number of sessions until the two were to reconcile as the couple were preparing for the church wedding." He continued. "I had to request the mother in law to join the sessions so that there could be a ground for them to build harmony. (Verbal communication' Participant 4, 4th July2022)*

The researcher agreed with the importance of PMC given to partners as they prepare for marriage. This would cater for all the issues that are likely to come in their life of marriage that could bring instability. The individual partner would be helped on how to cope with the issue (s) whereas the other partner is helped to accept and embrace the condition of the partner. This statement was in line with what the interviewee expressed. If the couple were prepared before they started living together.

4.7.5.2 Psycho Spiritual Counseling

Partners should undergo psycho spiritual counseling which would help the individual to get his/her issues healed when faced with difficult issues. This would help the individual in opening up to share the inner most issues that seem overlooked in most cases in life. The researcher agreed it's only through PMC that partners can have such need attended for their future sustainability. When a partner is faced with issues, the other partner can help with the skills attained

during the psycho spiritual counseling techniques/skills. This is because the PSC enables individual to deal with tension, crisis such as financial, relationship crisis and can promote individual growth and well-being.

A Service provider expressed to the researcher the following that concerned a partner who shared to him (service provider) how he felt fed up with life and stated,

> *I have tried by all means to let my wife understand my condition in my working place that could make me get into the house contrary to her expectation. Our staying together was hardly one year in marriage but she never trusted my being faithful to the commitment I had taken. Her continuous noise and assumption whenever I get back into the house worried and bothered me on how we shall carry on. I tried committing self into prayer sessions as well involving a third party for mediation but this was all in vain until I decided to leave the house for a period of three months to test on her seriousness to live as a wife. He added, After the three months she called me stating that she would wish us to have a sitting with community elders to discuss on the matter. Finding the initiative coming from her made me to feel her readiness to change. (Verbal communication, participant 6, 8th July, 2022).*

The researcher concluded from the participant's story that when premarital counseling is conducted, it gives room to individual partners to express their mind as well their desires with total openness which contributes to more understanding of each other.

4.8 Summary and Conclusion

The finding revealed that not all couples attend PMC before settling in marriage. Time given for sessions is inadequate. Service providers not enough to provide services as per expectations. Positive significant relationship between PMC and marriage stability among couples was reported for those who undergo premarital counseling. Perception of PMC depends on couple's background, culture, religion, education or personal experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The study examined the relationship between PMC and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa West Nairobi Kenya. The chapter presented summary of the study in line with objectives. Data was collected, analyzed and interpreted leading to the summary, conclusions and recommendations. Knowledge gaps and further recommendations were identified so as to appreciate PMC as it address relationship conflicts and enhance marriage stability among couples.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The study's main purpose was to examine the relationship between PMC and marriage stability among married couples in Kahawa west Nairobi, Kenya. The review of related literature relating to premarital counselling and marriage stability was carried out. The study employed mixed approaches of convergent Parallel design. The four study objectives were looked upon to be certified by literature review. Relationship between Independent and dependent variables was identified and presented by a conceptual Framework. Target population consisted of 738 marriages from six denominational churches. Purposive sampling was carried for the 6 churches and a sample size of 259 was adopted giving a total of 265 participants. Questionnaires were filled by 211 married partners. Six churches were purposively selected with a service provider who provides PMC services to couples. Participants involved in the study were 217. Two theories supported the study and enabled the researcher to expand knowledge on PMC.

The researcher collected data by use of interview guide, self-developed questionnaires and standardized questionnaires. Themes and narratives presented Qualitative data and Quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS (Statistical Package of the Social Sciences) Version 21. Research

tools were validated by the University Supervisors. Analyzed data enabled the researcher to give conclusion on premarital counseling and suggested future recommendations.

5.3 Summary of the Findings

5.3.1 Premarital Counseling Forms given to married couples in Kahawa west

Religious form of counseling was found to be commonly used by service providers in sharing of knowledge to couples in PMC programs at Kahawa West Nairobi. Most of the study participants embraced religious form of PMC. The findings were in agreement with the conceptual framework whereby different forms of PMC were attempted by the participants though differed in popularity with religious PMC which was highly preferred by many couples in the preparation for the church wedding.

5.3.2 Levels of Marital Stability among Couples in Kahawa west Nairobi

Findings showed there were two levels of stability. This included High level of marital stability which was reflected on Role Function Mean 3.39, satisfaction Mean 3.36, decision making Mean 3.28, understanding Mean 3.25 and self-disclosure Mean 2.83.

The findings also showed low levels of stability reflected with rejection Mean 2.59, dominance Mean 2.59, affection Mean 2.46, despair Mean 2.23, dissolution Mean 2.13 and discontent Mean 2.09. The study findings showed that presence of premarital counseling addresses negative variables minimizing them for couples to attain high level of stability. This justified the importance of ongoing counseling to couples which was found as part of strategies that enhance stability in marriage. The researcher agreed with the findings that PMC is important to couples before and after marriage.

5.3.3 Perception of Premarital Counseling among Couples in Kahawa West Nairobi

Report finding showed that PMC registered positive impacts on marriage stability. Finding showed there was a weak positive relationship between perception of PMC among couples and their PMC program attendance. The findings revealed that some couples perceive PMC in line with their background, culture, religion, education and personal experience. The researcher agreed with the study since perception is not measured numerically but measured by the couple's attitude towards PMC.

5.3.4 Strategies that Enhance Marriage Stability

The findings showed strategies that can enhance stability in marriage which included relationship education that reduce idealistic expectations thus increases realistic expectations. Genetic counseling, Mutual communication, understanding, good listening, self-respect and good sense of humor, Ongoing Counseling, psychosocial Issues and tools and psycho Spiritual counseling. These strategies would minimize if not fully stabilize any marriage which can lead gradually to future stability. The concept of family Development Theory and Gottman Theory shows a good foundation of relationship to couples.

5.4 Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west Nairobi, Kenya in line with general objectives as (a) Examine forms of Premarital counseling given to couples in Kahawa West Nairobi (b) Determine levels of marriage stability among couples (c) Examine perception of premarital counseling among couples in Kahawa West Nairobi (d) Explore strategies that enhance Marriage stability among couples in Kahawa West Nairobi. According to the findings, statistic positive significant relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability was identified.

The study found there was statistically significant positive relationship between PMC and marriage stability strategies including relationship education which reduces idealistic expectations and increase realistic expectations. Genetic counseling, mutual communication, understanding good listening, self-respect and good sense of humor. General actions and good sense of humor.

The findings found that those who attended few sessions (1-5) had 64.1% as the highest which was contrary to researcher's expectations. Those attended (5-10) sessions had 28.2% the range which is mostly taken and those who attended more than ten (10-15) had 7.7% as the lowest which was contrally to researcher's expectations.

The findings showed religious form of Counseling as the most preferred with 70%. The researcher concluded that religious form of counseling is the most commonly used by couples. Legislative form of counseling had the least participants. The researcher concluded that legislative counseling was not commonly used.

Findings showed a significant positive relationship between PMC and marriage stability in relation to levels of marriage stability which include; role function, self-disclosure, understanding, satisfaction and decision making where role function was recorded to be the highest in enhancing marriage stability. Based on the above findings, recommendations were noted down in line with research objectives.

5.5 Recommendations

The following were study recommendations;

- Church ministers advocate for PMC programs and sensitize partners
- Ongoing Counseling to be part of marriage policies for promotion of stability
- Married couples to be good role models to promote positive perception on marriage to young partners preparing for marriage

- Exhaustive implementation of strategies by Counsellors

5.6 Further Study Recommendations

- Further research on effectiveness of in-depth PMC Program
- Why Religious Counseling is most preferred in PMC Program

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa

P.O. Box 62157- 00200

Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Participant,

Jane Watenga is a post –graduate student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa, pursuing MA Degree in Counseling Psychology. **She is carrying out a study on Relationship Between Premarital Counseling and Marriage Stability among Couples at Kahawa West –Nairobi, Kenya**

You are kindly requested to fill the attached Questionnaire

Your shared information will remain confidential where your name will not appear anywhere

However, you will be asked questions about your background in relation to the study where your knowledge will be of great help to the study.

You have the freedom to accept or decline to participate in this study or withdraw at any time during the process. If you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, kindly put down your signature.

Participant's Signature ……. Date: …….

Researcher's Signature ……. Date: …….

Thank you for your availability to participate in this study.

Jane Watenga

Cell Phone 0702401315

Email: wajanje2018@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: LETTER TO THE PASTOR/PRIEST IN-CHARGE

Date: 31ST MAY 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST PERMISSION FOR DATA COLLECTION

I am writing to request you for permission to collect data from your Christian Couples. I am a student at Catholic University of Eastern Africa pursuing MA degree in Counselling Psychology.

The title of the Topic is **PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE STABILITY AMONG COUPLES IN KAHAWA WEST NAIROBI, KENYA.**

Thanking you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jane Watenga. (Sr)

APPENDIX C: STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire honestly and possibly give as much details as possible.

This questionnaire intends to gather information on the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa West Ward Nairobi-Kenya

Kindly tick (√) appropriately to indicate your honest opinion.

SECTION A: Background Information

1. Gender

a) Male ( )

b) Female ( )

2. For how long have you been in marriage?

0-2 years ( )

2-5 years ( )

5-10 years ( )

Over 10 years ( )

3. Did you attend premarital counselling before marriage?

Yes ( )

No ( )

4. If your answer in no. 3 is yes, how many counselling sessions did you attend?

1-5 sessions

5-10 sessions

10-15 session

5. Which form of premarital counselling sessions did you attend before marriage?

Religious/ Church ( ) Personal therapy ( ) Traditional ( ) Legislative ( ) Financial ( )

SECTION B: Forms of Premarital Counselling Among Couples in Kahawa West.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on the forms of premarital counseling utilized by couples in Kahawa West?

Kindly use a scale of 1 to 5; where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = strongly agree.

	Statement	5	4	3	2	1
1	I and my partner were taken through marital counseling regarding emotional support before we got married					
2	My partner and I were taken through financial expectations in counselling before we got married					
3	My partner and I were taken through career and living arrangements before we got married					
4	My partner and I were counselled on gender roles and expectations in marriage before we got married					
5	My partner and I received counselling on intimacy and sexual preferences before we got married					
6	I and my partner were counselled on family planning and raising children before we got married					
7	My partner and I were counselled on conflict resolution in marriage before we got married					
8	My partner and I were counselled on spirituality and religious beliefs before we got married					
9	My partner and I were taken through the in-laws in-depth relationship before marriage					
10	Myself and my partner were taken through the importance of dowry payment before marriage					
11	My partner and I were advised on the booking of our marriage with the Attorney General					
12	My partner and I were taken through on the importance of safeguarding document concerning marriage					
13	My partner and I were taken through on conflict management					

14	My partner and I were advised on job maintenance before marriage					
15	Myself and my partner received counselling on self-awareness					

SECTION C: **Levels of Marriage Stability Among Couples in Kahawa West Ward.**

Marital Quality Scale(MQS) By Anisha Shah (1995)

Instructions

There are 50 statements in this form. Some of these statements may refer to the way you may be thinking and/or feeling about your husband/wife. Some others may refer to the way you may be interacting with your husband.
Please read each statement carefully and decide as to how often the content of that particular statement holds true in your case.
Tick any one of the 4 choices that follows each statement namely Usually, Sometimes, Rarely, Never. Make sure that you do not leave any of the statement unanswered. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers of any of the statement. Don't consult your husband/wife or anyone else before completing this form.

No	ITEM	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	My husband's/wife's opinion carries as much weight as mine in money matters				
2	My husband's/wife's tendency to dominate over me creates problems between us				
3	Whenever we have argument, my husband/wife thinks that he is right				
4	I look forward to being with my husband/wife				
5	My husband/wife doesn't allow things to be carried out in the way I want				
6	My husband/wife does not trust me				

7	My husband/wife decides where we will go and what we will do, when we go out.				
8	When my husband/wife plans our vacation, I enjoy it				
9	My husband/wife satisfies my needs				
10	My husband/wife makes me feel secure				
11	My husband/wife is rigid in his opinions				
12	My husband/wife understand my sexual needs				
13	I feel satisfied with the way our vacation is spent				
14	I can't win in an argument with my husband/wife				
15	My husband/wife complaints that I do not understand him				
16	My husband/wife participates in taking decisions for our home				
17	I discuss my problems with my husband/wife, as he is capable of helping me				
18	My husband/wife passes sarcastic comments about me				
19	My husband/wife is not concerned about my parents				
20	My husband/wife doesn't satisfy my sexual needs				
21	My husband/wife understands what I value in life				
22	The thought of divorcing my husband/wife crosses my mind				

23	My husband/wife decides where we will live				
24	My husband/wife does not about the feeling towards him				
25	I discuss my long-term plan for our family with my husband/wife				
26	I feel comfortable in sharing my mistakes with my husband/wife				
27	My sex life is satisfactory				
28	My husband/wife is happy with me				
29	My husband/wife is capable of making timely independent decisions				
30	My husband/wife tries to understand how am feeling				
31	I appreciate the sacrifices made by my husband/wife				
32	My husband/wife does not like me				
33	My husband/wife is indifferent to me				
34	My husband/wife expects me to do things as he desires				
35	My husband/wife does not have much affection for me				
36	My husband/wife pays timely attention to his responsibilities				
37	My husband/wife shares his feeling with me				
38	My husband/wife co- operates with me in maintaining relationship with my parents				
39	My husband/wife believes me				

40	My husband/wife criticizes me more than appreciating				
41	I regret being married to my husband/wife				
42	My suggestions are well taken by my husband/wife				
43	I feel that decision taken after a discussion with my husband/wife are good for us				
44	My husband/wife argues with me in front of others				
45	My husband/wife is not able to make me happy				
46	I agree with my husband/wife regarding the discipline of children				
47	My husband/wife tries to comfort me when am upset				
48	I share my feeling and thoughts with my husband/wife				
49	My husband/wife is capable of carrying out his responsibilities				
50	On financial matters, my husband/wife consults me				

Source: Shah (1995)

Thank you.

APPENDIX D: THE INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PREMARITAL COUNSELLOR/ SERVICE PROVIDER.

You are kindly requested to take part in this interview and your honest views and opinions are required. This interview intends to gather information to establish the relationship between premarital counseling and marriage stability among couples in Kahawa west ward Nairobi-Kenya. This interview is voluntary and will be carried out during your own free time. Thank you for agreeing to be part of this study.

1.A part from biblical premarital counseling, do you incorporate any other methods of premarital counseling? Explain.

2.Do you think that traditional premarital counseling should be practiced among Christians intending to get married in churches? Why or why not?

3.How would you rate marital stability among couples in your church?

4.How would know whether couples experience low, moderate or high marital stability?

5.Do you think that premarital counseling contributes to marital stability?

6.What are some of the indications that premarital counseling contributes to marital stability?

7.What are some of the things you advise couples to do during premarital counseling to ensure stable marriages?

8.What do you think can be carried out to improve premarital counseling in efforts to build more stable marriages?

APPENDIX E: WORKPLAN

Year	**2021**			**2022**			**2023**		
Quarter	Jan-April	May-Aug	Sept-Dec	Jan-April	May-Aug	Sept-Dec	Jan-April	May-Aug	Sep-Dec
Activities									
Concept Development	1								
Defend Concept at Department		2							
Concept Approval		2							
Proposal Development		2							
Defend Proposal			3						
Proposal Approval					2				
Field Activities					2				
Data Collection					2				
Data Cleaning and Analysis							1		
Thesis Write Up								2	
Defend/Oral Examination								2	
Presentation of Papers for Publication and making Relevant Corrections								3	
Graduate									3

APPENDIX F: RESEARCH LETTER

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Department of Counseling Psychology

Our Ref: CUEA/DVC-ACAD/FASSc/Psychology/Research/Nacosti/ May 2022

Date: 4th May 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: JANE NJERI WATENGA (SR) REG. NUMBER: 1035137

I am writing to introduce to you **Jane Watenga** who is a final year MA Degree student at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi – Kenya, and to request you to assist her to accomplish her academic research requirements.

Her MA Degree specialization is in Counseling Psychology. She has completed all course work requirements for this programme. However, every student in the programme is required to conduct research and write a report/thesis submitted during the final years of studies.

Accordingly, her research topic has been approved. She will conduct research on the following topic:

"PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE STABILITY AMONG COUPLES IN KAHAWA WEST WARD NAIROBI-KENYA".

Thanking you in advance for any assistance you give to her.

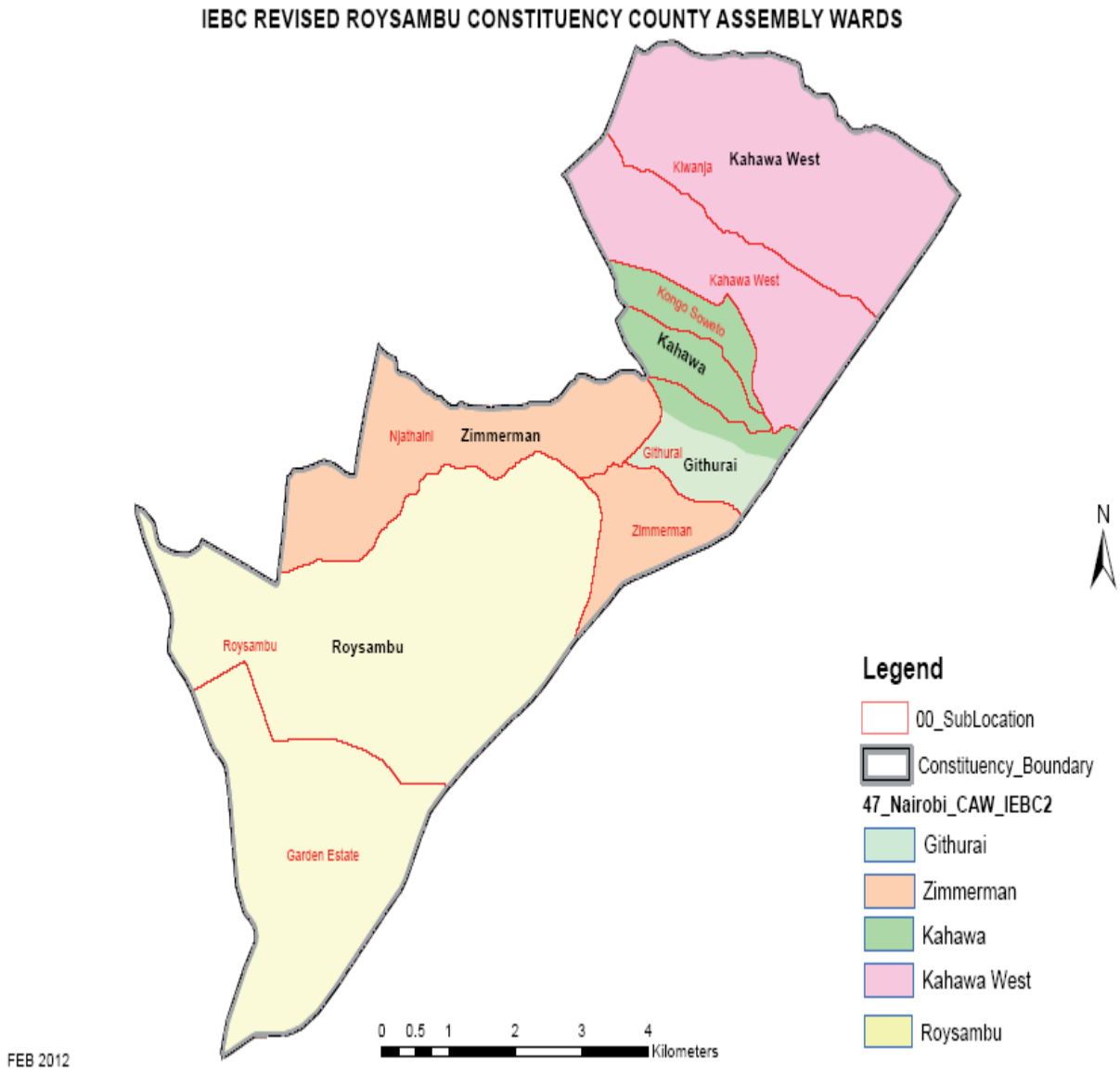
Sincerely,

4 MAY 2022

Dr. Stephen Asatsa,
HOD. PSYCHOLOGY.

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA (CUEA) P.O. BOX 62157 00200 Nairobi – KENYA
Tel: 020-2525811-5, 8890021-4, Fax: 8891084, Email: psychology@cuea.edu, Website: www.cuea.edu
Founded in 1984 by AMECEA (Association of the Member Episcopal Conference in Eastern Africa)

APPENDIX G: STUDY AREA MAP



Source: Google Map 2022

APPENDIX H: NACOSTI PERMIT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **860136**

Date of Issue: **27/May/2022**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Sr.. JANE NJERI WATENGA of Catholic University of Eastern Africa, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE STABILITY AMONG COUPLES IN KAHAWA WEST WARD NAIROBI KENYA for the period ending : 27/May/2023.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/22/17915**

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APPENDIX I: PLAGIARISM REPORT



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I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT **JANE NJERI WATENGA** REG NO: **1035137**, SUBMITTED A CHECK OF ANTIPLAGIARISM ON CRITICAL EVALUATION OF **PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARRIAGE STABILITY AMONG COUPLES IN KAHAWA WEST WARD NAIROBI-KENYA. A THESIS SUBMITTED TO FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS DEGREE IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA.**

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