

Pre-Marital Counseling and Marital Conflicts Among Christian Couples in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the relationship between premarital counseling and marital conflict among Christian couples in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County, and Kenya. The sample size of the study was 400 respondents based on total population of approximately 20,000 spouses married couples in the study area. Descriptive, correlation and cross sectional research designs were using structural questionnaire and interview guide were used as research instruments. Data was analyzed using both descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and Pearson correlation and multi-regression analysis. Based on a 5-likert scale measure, it was found that, premarital counseling was assessed as high (grand mean = 3.49. std. = 1.12) and marital conflict (grand mean =3.60. std. = 1.15) was also high. Premarital counseling and marital conflict among Christian couples were significantly associated ($r=-0.310$. $p = 0.035$). Dimensions of premarital counseling communication ($b = -0.027$. $p = 0.034$); financial counseling ($b = -0.034$. $p = 0.027$); sexuality ($b = -0.030$. $p = 0.039$); biblical counseling ($b = -0.023$. $p = 0.045$) were found to be significance contributing factors that control marital conflicts among married Christian couples in the study area. The dimensions in-laws ($b = -0.001$. $p = 0.067$); parenting ($b = -0.021$. $p = 0.053$), anatomy & physiology ($b = -0.006$. $p = 0.072$) were not found to be significance contributing factors to marital conflicts.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of marriage is unity complimentary and Oneness and this point comes clear from Gen: 2:20-24, but for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. "Happiness" the man said "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" which means a happy marriage is where a family experiences least social and economical challenges.

However, in the contemporary society, the rate of marital dissatisfaction due to marital conflicts is as an alarming rate, not even the church has been spared (Onyango, 2013). He further noted that most recent couples are engaged in divorce and separation. Children suffer psychologically, husbands suffer stress, depression, anxiety or rather have asked for divorce between the partners before their respective pastors to dissolve their marriages. It is notable that these conflicts have trickled down to Christian churches in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County Kenya. There is scanty information regarding marital and pre-marital education and it is on this background that the study aims at establishing premarital counseling and why there is marital conflict.

Research Questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions.

1. What is the level of premarital counseling in Sameta Sub County?
2. What is the status of marital conflicts in Sameta Sub County?
3. What is the relationship between premarital counseling and marital conflict in Sameta Sub County?

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Assess the level of premarital counseling in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County.
2. Find out the status of marital conflicts in Sameta Sub County Kisii County.
3. Establish whether there is relationship between premarital and marital conflicts in Sameta Sub County Kisii County.

Hypothesis

1. There is no statically significant relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital conflict in Sameta sub county, Kisii county

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marital Conflicts

Onyango (2013) states that one of the greatest problems the church faces today is that of the broken or unhappy families due to marital conflicts. Most marriages today are far from good. Rather they are bearable, tolerable or just endurable. Those who refuse to separate or divorce, just stay together for the sake of the children. A close association with families today indicates that marriages are for the most part unhappy. The strength of the church

lies in the unity of its constituent family units. A church with broken families is one that cannot be effective in his mission hence the need to educate and counsel young people who have not gotten into marriage.

He further observed that unmarried men and women are not receiving adequate information as to what marriage is all about. They enter marriage as green people with no prior knowledge on the institution of marriage. It is high time premarital counseling or education was made mandatory and compulsion before holy matrimony.

Wright (1992) points out that in America before many marriages take place, most couple could have known each other for about three years and seems so ideally

suiting for each other and since they were in their earth teens man people have said that this couple seem destined to be together, they are intelligent, expressive, capable, involved in their activities of the church and each has a stable family background.

However who would think that just four years later this couple would meet in a court room to finalize the details of the dissolution of their marriage? Divorce happens, it has happened to a couple you know. In Los Angeles the attitude toward marriage today was revealed in the office of a marriage counselor when a young woman said "when I got married, I was looking for an ideal, but I married an ordeal and now I want a new deal.

In California, the divorce rate varies radically from county to county. In Los Angeles County there were 41,326 licensed marriages and 32,011 all confidential marriages in 1989 for a total of 73,392 marriages. There were 42,088 divorces that year, overage count} 3,883 licensed marriages and 6079 confidential marriages took place totaling to 9,967. There were 16,123 divorces for the year 1992 (Wright, 1992).

According to (Wieland, 1980) Africa, Kenya and other parts of the world are not spared. In his study he concludes that one cannot deny the truth. Marriage is in trouble. There is an old adage that says what California is today, the world will be tomorrow. For sure California is leading the world in divorce cases, which are climbing much faster than marriages. Daily newspapers are full of case of family fights and even killings, parents abandon young children because they cannot lend for them. In Kenya Daily Nation of 25th December 2013, the Kenyan family is in danger of failing apart.. Quite apart from being the centre of love and nurturing but steadily becoming a hot bed of greed and violence (www. nation.co.ke no: 17799). Poor or lack of communication, incest financial misunderstanding, physical violence, lack of moral commitments, domestic violence and parenting are identified as the main reasons for marriage break downs and -childlessness has led to the failure of many marriages, since in practically)- all the local communities, children are the ultimate harvest of a marriage (Wieland, 1980).

Onyango (2013) asserts that families are undergoing rapid and dramatic changes in form, composition and structures as follows: both (lie husband and the wife will hold job outside of (he home, there is increase in .single - parenthood, there is a sharp rise in single people living alone, and there is the greater prevalence of step families, increases in cohabitation, rise in intermarriages, prevalence of out of wedlock children, the need to balance work and family responsibilities, postponement of marriage and family responsibilities, arid increase in child free marriages arid high divorce rate.

There has been resurgence in the number of registered divorces in Tanzania in the past two years after declining between 2005 and 2006. According lo Insolvency and Trusteeship Agency (RITAS registered divorces rose to 43 in 2007/2008 year compared to 37 in the previous year. Data collected from 1994/95 lo 2007/2008 show that 2005/06 had the lowest number of registered divorces with only 28 divorces, which is a 34 per cent decline compared to the previous ear. On the other hand, 2001/02 had the highest number of divorces, with 54 divorces recorded in the same period, a 45 per cent increase from the previous year's 37 divorces. Most couples agree to marriage without fully understanding the terms of the contract, leading to divorces." explained Rev Gamanywa. However, the number of registered divorces, totaling 405 in 10 years, is said to be small compared to the real situation on the ground as most divorces go unregistered. "If you go through court documents only, there are many divorces granted in the courts Alipo (2009).

Impact of marital Conflicts on Spouses

Marital conflict has deleterious effects on mental physically and family health. Many studies have found evidence that negative marital functioning has significance for physical health and mental well-being (Kiecoit-Glaser & Newton, 2001). Studies show direct physiological changes accompany negative spousal interactions. For example, high levels of negative marital communication behaviors such as hostility and aggressive avoidance have been associated with elevations in cardiovascular reactivity. Marital conflict has been linked to the onset of depressive symptoms, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, episodic drinking, binge drinking, out-of-home drinking, and male alcoholism. Although married individuals are healthier on average than the unmarried, marital conflict is associated with poorer health and with specific illnesses such as cancel', cardiac disease, and chronic pain perhaps because hostile behaviors during conflict are related to alterations in immunological endocrine and cardiovascular functioning (Grych & Fincham, 2001).

Research also points to the positive impact of marriage on the health and well-being of the couple. In a chapter —Social Science Finds: Marriage Matters, Linda Waite presents findings that the case for marriage is strong in

producing more health, wealth, improved intimacy, and other benefits not enjoyed by those who live alone. In that way, quality of interaction with

Effects of marital Conflicts on Children

Effects of marital conflict and divorce on child development are well documented. Ellis and Garber (2000) showed that there is an increased probability for child disorders due to marital discord. Results showed that parental conflicts effects on cognitive, social, academic, and psychobiological functioning in children. Marital conflicts negatively affect family functioning, premium and family relationships. Children who were exposed to frequent, intense, and poorly resolved inter-parental conflict experienced increased risk of adjustment problems (Cummiims & Davics. 2002: Grych & Fincham. 2001). In some cases this also increased the risks of maladjustment, families in high marital conflict were associated with greater internalizing problems, such as anxiety and depression, and externalizing problems, such as aggression and delinquency (Davies et al.. 2004).

Marital Conflict Resolution

Conflict is inevitable in any marriage. In the contemporary family, there is a great need to negotiate the changing roles of husbands and wives, for example, discussions about who make the decisions and how they should be made create a great potential for marital conflict. (Gottman and Levenson, 1988) suggest that the manner in which a couple handles negative effect in a conflict determines whether the marriage succeeds or fails. The couple's skill in conflict resolution and the subsequent impact that such resolution and on each, partner hold the key to whether the marriage continues to function in a constructive way or becomes a destructive or malfunctioning system. The ability of couples to resolve conflicts between them is a major predictor of marital satisfaction.

Despite the lack of focused research on the origin of conflict resolution styles there are various examples of the intergenerational transmission of relational conflict. For instance, individuals who grew up in divorced families carry a higher likelihood of displaying negativity in their own marital communication than individuals who had intact families (Story, Karney, Lawrence, Bradbury, 2004). Also Booth and Edwards (1989) discovered that those who described their parents as having an unhappy marriage had a greater chance of disagreements and instability in their own marriage. More recent finding connected negative exposure to parental conflict with young adult using similar conflict tactics in their own romantic relationships (Weber and Kahn, 2005).

In fact, it has become apparent that conflict management skills are not suddenly developed with the initiation of marriage, but largely driven from family of origin experiences (Hanzal and Segrin, 2008). Those with a familial background displaying negative inter-parental conflict may have social learned and therefore repeated those behaviors hence contributing to predisposed characteristics that could to negative outcomes (Jacquet and Surra, 2001). The possibility of parental conflict lowering offspring' s relationship quality has been evident in both, childhood friendships and young adult romantic relationships (Kirk. 2002). These findings suggest that an individual's early exposure to dysfunctional conflict has a harmful effect prior to marriage, and thus has a chance to continue into marriage.

As research suggests, couple conflict resolution styles are significant to marital health. Gottman (1999) believed that couples dealt with arguments in one of two ways. He termed these two different couples "regulated" and "non-regulated." Gottman labeled regulating couples more functional as validating, conflict-avoiding and volatile couples, and warns against labeling one type as better than the other.

Validating couples are characterized as having a lot of togetherness and working openly to resolve their differences. They typically utilize an ample amount of positive effect and respectfully consider their partner's opinions. Conflict-avoiding couples have a lesser degree of persuasion between partners man other couple-conflict styles. Instead, they focus on the strengths of their marriage and "agree to disagree" (Gottman. 2009). Essentially, the avoid dealing with conflict head on and rather than come to a solution, their goal is acceptance. On the other hand, volatile couples have a greater frequency fl persuasion and influence attempts. Gottman (1994) describes these partners a passionate and very emotionally expressive, frequently and openly displaying both positive and negative effect. However, contrary to Gottmans belief that the three regulated styles are equivalent. Holman and Jarvis (2003) consistently found superiority in the validating style.

Despite the pervasiveness of conflict in marriages, non-regulated couples make more use of highly dysfunctional ways to interact then regulated couples. Those couples that embody negative interactions such as personal attacks and withholding positive affect are labeled "hostile" couples. Hostile couples are also more likely to utilize what Gottman called the Four Horseman of the Apocalypse: Criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and withdrawal. Moreover, unlike regulated couples, hostile couples typically lack the mechanism to soothe their own emotional reactivity as well as their partner's overwhelmed affect (Gottman. 1994, 1999).

Despite grounded research on different couple-conflict types, it cannot be assumed that partners in a marriage have the same approach to conflict. If the aforementioned styles (validating, conflict-avoiding, and volatile) are a mismatch between individuals, the lack (if understanding can lead to a higher polen-tial for

divorce (Gottman, 1999).

Another study furthers the idea of mismatched relationship personalities stating that over time in a marriage conflict resolution styles become more ingrained. Once this occurs, dysfunctional communication patterns are amplified and can lead to relationship dissatisfaction (Schneewinc and Gerhard, 2009). Certain mismatches may be more detrimental to others. For example, when one partner in a relationship exhibits a hostile style of conflict, their relationship is more likely to be unstable than in couples where neither partner has a hostile style (Gottman and Levenson, 2000).

Rubin et al. (1994) describe four conflict resolution styles: 1. Avoiding, 2. Disregarding (3) obliging/yielding and 4. Integrating/problem solving. Avoiding is a way of dealing with conflict in which partners try not to overtly recognize its existence or to acknowledge their respective role in the conflict. Avoiding is a style characterized by such behaviors as denial of a conflict, equivocation, being noncommittal, and using jokes as a way not to deal with the conflict at hand. The avoiding partner may sidestep the issue by changing the topic or simply withdrawing from dealing with the issue. Avoiding a conflict gives the impression that a partner does not care about the relationship. It allows conflict to simmer and heat up unnecessarily. The avoiders usually suppress conflicts until they explode. Yielding or obliging during a clash of incompatible needs involves disregarding one's own needs and acceding to the partner's desires. It is nonassertive of one's own needs. Spouses who consistently yield during such interaction are often avoiding conflict. This is often motivated by the desire to please one's partner, to avoid the partner's anger, and to maintain a harmonious relationship, this pattern can result in a pseudo solution, especially if the yielding is recent. Spouses whose conflict resolution style is to yield will ultimately experience increased psychological distance from each other. Their marriage will become stagnant, boring, and lonely.

Dominating refers to a partner's effort to resolve the problem of differing spousal needs based on one's own terms without regard for the spouse, this competitive style is characterized by behaviors such as aggression, coercion, manipulation, intimidation, and arguing. Another aspect of the dominating style is disregarding. Disregarding refers to passive acts of neglect in which one partner fails to consider the need of the other partner. When both partners have contentiously derogatory accusations, defensiveness, and counteraccusation that result in increased inner distress and autonomic arousal in both spouses. Disregarding style is related to unhappiness in marriage (Gottman, 1990).

The integrating or problem-solving style describes the approach to conflict resolution in which there is mutual concern for another in the marriage. This emphasizes the importance of both the marital relationship and partners' goals. It is also known as a collaborative style. When there is mutual concern, partners are able to engage one another, to express and to show concern for each other's needs. Awareness of the needs of self and the other and willingness to attempt to reconcile differences offer the best chance of resolving conflict. When mutual concern is present, partners will sense that their needs have been considered during the marital interaction and will be more likely to be able to live with any unresolved differences. Sillars and Scott (1981) report that the problem solving style results in better decisions and greater marital satisfaction.

Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling is an immunization function that boosts the partners' capabilities to handle potential difficulties that may emerge later in the marriage life. These are communication skills programs, assessment inventory tool to educate engaged couples in the habits and skills that lead to happy enduring marriages. Couples who do receive premarital counseling get it from their religious advisor.

Premarital and marital counseling give people the benefits of a supportive environment, the skills to deal with the problems a marriage can have during a life time. The couples acquire real expectations, real knowledge of partner and self to face the marital conflicts of a happy relationship. Professional and religious counselors present a list of skills and knowledge areas, essential to endurance of marriage.

Communication skill, compatibility, long term goal, conflict expectation, intimacy and sexually and personalities are also covered by successful counselors.

Statistics show that 2/3 of planning to be married couples does not take any sort of premarital inventory (McManus & McVlanus, 2003). Valient et al. (2002) explains that most young people who are anticipating marriage do not seek premarital counseling services due to the fact that they fear that their secrets or information that they may divulge to the counselor may harm their relationship. Further, in the explanation it is purported that partners may not disclose their past relationship history. Additionally, couples also fear that exploring some issues in counseling may lead to a decrease in their stability marriage, which may ultimately lead the couple to end their union. Ultimately, premarital counseling is a choice (Murray, 2004).

Even though young couples experience the fears outlined above, participating in premarital counseling sends positive messages to the couple. Therefore, making premarital counseling is an important aspect in their journey to the institution of marriage. Premarital counseling has a number of benefits. Firstly, premarital counseling encourages couples to slow down and deliberate about their impending marriage. In addition to that,

premarital counseling helps the young couples to have in depth insight that marriage matters and is not a decision to be made hastily. Next, premarital counseling helps inform couples of options available for help later in their lives should they ever need to seek counseling for marriage problems. Finally, premarital counseling has shown that couples who partake in the counseling sessions are at low risk for marital conflicts such as divorce (Stanley, 2002).

Wright (1992) states that what does the passion or other counselor hope to accomplish by spending several hours with a couple? There are numerous goals and benefits for Christian premarital and marital counseling. This include making arrangement for the procedural details (if the wedding ceremony, relationship with the couple larger family and society, communication process, ensure that couples understand and have a knowledge of the biblical order of the home, ensure a basic knowledge of practical matters like budgeting .sexuality and relationship with parents (Hieber. 1997). Usually in premarital counseling there are eight sessions, each session meet specific areas of interest such as biblical education, finances, in-laws and happiness. The most consistent patterns in this counseling are geared towards helping both male and female build skills and develop the emotional coping and communicative tools necessary to have a functioning health}' marriage, skill based programs which (each couples communication and conflict resolution skills for couples (Williams. 2007).

Bible and premarital counseling

God instituted marriage. He has the purpose, a plan and principles through which the relationship should be built. Marriage is a permanent relationship and was given for the partnership of man and woman, for their pleasure, for procreation and the propagation of the human race and the protection of the society (Gen 1: 26-28. 2:18-25; 1 Thes. 4: 3-8). The Scripture may be used profitably in every form of counseling, including preparation for marriage. Because the Word of God has been a source of understanding, behavior change, and decision making for centuries, its importance in premarital counseling is not to be underestimated (Holy Bible. KJV).

Using the Bible as the basis for such an assessment helps to assure one that his insight is reality-based rather than she kind of superficial 'starry-eyed" understanding with which too many individuals, even Christians, begin marriage. For

should be read and discussed verse by verse by the counselor and counselees as they take the inventory. The scripture provide an adequate basis for premarital counseling. Psychology and other disciplines are useful, but only providing tools and methodologies to apply the principles of the originator and sustainer of marriage and family. Only the scriptures provide a solution for man's basic problem sin. Sin is the basic cause of" I he dysfunctional ties in ail relations Bucknell (2011).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted based on both quantitative and qualitative research approaches, using descriptive, correlation and cross-sectional research design.

Quantitative approach was used because numerical calculations were applied to explore traits in the situations. From which numerical data could be obtained. Qualitative approach explores traits of individuals and settings that could not be easily described numerically. The research design was correlation for purpose of allowing establishing the relationship between premarital counseling and marital conflict. It was cross-sectional because data was corrected one in time covering many respondents.

The study was carried out in Sameta Sub-county. Kisii County. Kenya which is approximately 10 kilometers from Kisii town. The sub-county covers approximately 5000 family households. It covers a radius of about 23 kilometers with a population of about 33.000 people according to sub-county population' census of 2009.

The study was carried out in thirteen (13) Christian churches in Sameta sub-county. Kisii County, Kenya. The selection of the churches for the study was based on included; SDA - Boronyi. Nyansongo. Kenverere, Nyamonema and Nvamokenve. Catholic churches - Nyamagwa, Nyakegogi. Nyansakia and N'yagancha and: PAG churches - Sameta, Etor. Nyagesa

Study Population

The target population of Christians married couples in the Sameta sub county was 8,000 upon which the appropriate sample size of '400 couples was considered using Cochran's formula. The study involved 13 churches found in Sameta Sub-county. Kisii County. Kenya. In this case the researcher used Cochran's pre-determined sample sizes. The churches involved are:-SDA churches: Boronyi. Nyansongo. Kenverere. Nyamonema, Nvamokenve and Gesure. Catholic churches: Nyamangwa. Nyakegogi. and Nyansakia. PAG churches: Sameta. Eiora and Nyagesa. in this case the researcher used the total of 400 married couples according to the churches sample sizes and 7 pastors and 2 priests.

Sample Size

The target population of Christians married couples in the Sameta sub -county was 8,000 upon which the appropriate sample size of 400 couples was considered using Cochran's formula. The sample size from were all married couples from the selected churches. The 9 pastors and 2 priests were selected purposively since they understand the importance of premarital counseling and marital conflicts.

Sampling procedure

The study used purposive sampling technique for selecting the pastors and priests and Christian married couples. Random sampling was used to select die respondents while purposive sampling was used to identify the 9 key informants who were pastors /priests.

Research instruments

During the study a validated questionnaire which was piloted used as recommended by Amin, 2005. Kothari. 2004 and Enon. (1998).The questionnaire was supplemented with the interview guide targeting pastors as key informants and focus group discussions identified

A structured questionnaire was used to collect qualitative data from married couples tor easy tapping of data that can he correlated. The questionnaire was both open ended and closed ended questions. The researcher was concerned with the respondents' views, opinions, and perceptions as attitudes. Such information was best be collected by the use of questionnaire because it enabled the researcher to collect a large amount of data from the respondents within a short time for quick analysis.

The respondents' opinions on the items on the questionnaire were enlisted on a live Doim Likert scale of: 1= strongly disagree. 2=disagree. 3=neutral. 4= agree. 5 = strongly agree.

An interview guide was used for collecting in-depth information from pastors and priests. Focused group discussion was be used to collect data from deaconry elders and women leaders. The key in depth information about premarital counseling and marital conflicts among the Christian couples in area of study

Validity and Reliability of Data Instruments

Before data collection the instrument were tested for validity and reliability. **Validity**

The instruments were validated through checking the clarity, consistency of the items in it. Coherence of instruments with connection to the conceptual framework, objectives of the study, statement of problem and research title. Consultation with my supervisor further checked the relevance and ambiguity of the instruments. To ensure validity, the content validity index (CVI) was used that is: the total number of valid items divided by the total number of items in the instruments as shown b the formula below.

$$CVI = \frac{\text{total No of Valid Item}}{\text{Total no of item}}$$

Reliability

Before the instruments were used, the instruments were pre - tested to establish the consistence of the research instruments. Therefore the purpose of the pretest of the study was to find out how dependable, stable, consistent, predictable and accurate the instruments were. Cronbanch's alpha coefficient was done to access characteristics of the area of study on 20 respondents. Prom the pilot study using 20 respondents. ($\text{Alpha} \wedge 0.803$) reliability coefficient was recorded.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher was given an introductory letter from the dean of graduate school Bugema in a University exploring the nature of the study as requesting the permission to study the research in the selected churches in Sameta Sub-County. After permission was granted, the researcher made appointment when to carry out the stud; on the respondents to fill the questionnaires.

Data Analysis

During the analysis Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used. Specifically, objectives L 2 and 3 were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages, means and standard deviation). Objective 4 was analyzed using Pearson correlation analysis. Results from interview were thematically analyzed to derive the trends.

Null hypothesis was rejected when the calculated p- value is less ih.al Alpha coefficient value (0.05).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This Chapter covers and discusses the findings which are presented, analyzed and interpreted following the stated objectives and hypotheses. The total populations of married couples who received and returned the questionnaires were 392. In analyzing the demographic characteristic of the respondents the following items

were considered: sex, average monthly income level of education of marriage.

Household Monthly Income

As can be seen in Table 2, Majority (113 (28.83%)) of respondents earn Ksh.21, 000 and above which indicates that majority of the respondents were possibly employed. Very few, [64 (16.32%)] were earning meager income of less than Ksh. 1000

No. of Premarital Counseling

Findings in Table 2, indicate that more than half, [203 (54.7%)] reported that they had received premarital counseling at least six (06) times.

Level of Education

According to study findings in Table 2, a fewer [58 (14.73%)] were primary school leavers, implying that the respondents were relatively educated. Duration of marriage.

According to study findings in Table 2, many [148 (37.75%)] of the respondents reported that they had been in marriage for more than ten (10) years, this would mean that they had been in marriage for a longtime, it can as well be argued that they were appropriate respondents.

Objective 2 of the study was to assess the level of premarital counseling in the study area. It was assessed in respect to communication, financial counseling. Table 3 provides the summary of the findings.

Communication

Results in Table 3 indicate that communication as a dimension of a dimension of premarital counseling was assessed by respondents as high (agg. mean = 3.52, std = 1.15). This implies that communication is the sampled churches were taken as priority during premarital counseling. In the interview, respondents also supported the findings in the question, where they reported that communication during premarital counseling was a key component of premarital counseling, it implies that most respondents were given knowledge about communication in marriage more than financial counseling

Financial

According to Table 4, financial counseling was assessed by the respondents as high (agg mean = 3.37, std = 1.19). As observed in communication, financial counseling during premarital counseling was always covered. However, while in the interview some respondents agreed not to carry out, others reported that they have never heard of the church.

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low), 1.80-2.59 (low), 2.60-3.39 (moderate) 3.40-4.19 (high), 4.20-5.00 (very high)

Table 5;

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In table 5, it indicates that premarital counseling associated with the in-laws was also given assessed as high (agg mean=3.53, std=0.99). In the interview, it was noted that it was inadequate in respect to in-laws.

In the table 6, Parenting as a dimensions of premarital was and as high (agg mean=3.73, std=0.94). in the interview, respondent mentioned that in church, they were told how to make bed for the child, weaving or knitting the children fabrics. They mentioned that (they had learnt that, there are some food stuffs they should not eat while pregnant. They were also counseled about the emotional stability while pregnant

According to Table 7, counseling in respect to parenting was assessed as high (agg. mean = 3.76, std. = 0.94). This implies that respondents understood biblical counseling. Respondents in the interview revealed that they had learnt a lot in respect to biblical counseling. They mentioned that in the church they learnt that love, respect and submissiveness by female spouse were an important aspect of marriage. This is consistent with the findings of Bueknell (2011) who mentioned that only scriptures provide the solution for men's basic problems.

Legend: 1.00-1.75 (very low), 1.80-2.59 (low), 2.60-3.39 (moderate), 3.40-4.19 (high), 4.20-5.00 (very high)

Study findings in Table 8 indicate that anatomy and physiology during premarital counseling was as assessed as high (agg mean = 3.17, std = 1.30). In the interview, respondents reported that they were counseled about menstruation as a natural process/pattern for an adult female. For breast feeding mothers, they were told that breast feeding is the very important for child growth.

Based on the (grand mean 3.49, std. = 1.12), the level of premarital counseling was generally assessed of high. However, communication was assessed higher than financial counseling. The findings in this study contrast the earlier findings by, McMamy and McMamy 2003 and a Valiant et al 2002 who said that statistics show that Wright. (1992) states that what does the pastor or other counselor hope to accomplish by spending several hours with a couple? There are numerous goals and benefits for Christian premarital and marital counseling. This include making arrangements for the procedural details of the wedding ceremony, relationship with the couple larger family and society, communication process, ensure that couples understand and have a knowledge of the

biblical order of the home, ensure a basic knowledge of practical matters like budgeting sexuality and relationship with parent (Hiebert, 1997). Usually in premarital counseling there are eight sessions, each session meet specific areas of interest such as biblical education, nuances, in-laws and happiness

In summary, the (grand mean = 3.49. std = 1.12). shows that the level of premarital counseling was generally assessed as high. However, communication was assessed highest financial counseling. Findings in this study contrast earlier finding by (Markmus, Msenumus. 2008) and (Barletel. 2002) was said that the statistics show that two-thirds of planning to be married couples does not take any sort of premarital inventory (McManus & McManus. 2003). Valiente et al. (2002) explains that most young people who are anticipating marriage do not seek premarital counseling services due to the fact that they fear that their secrets or information that they may divulge to the counselor may harm their relationship. Further, in the explanation it is purported that partners may not disclose their past relationship fusion. Additionally, Couples also fear that exploring some issues in counseling may lead to decrease in their stability marriage, which may ultimately lead the couple to end their union ultimately; premarital counseling is a choice (Murray. 2004).

Wright, (1992) states that what does the pastor or other counselor hope to accomplish by spending several hours with a couple? There are numerous goals and benefits for Christian premarital and marital counseling. This include making arrangements for the procedural details of the wedding ceremony, relationship with the couple larger family and society", communication process, ensure that couples understand and have a knowledge of the biblical order of the home, ensure a basic knowledge of practical matters like budgeting, sexuality and relationship with parents (Hiebert. 1997). Usually in premarital counseling there are eight sessions, each session meet specific areas of interest such as biblical education, finances, in-laws and happiness

Objective 2 of the study was to assess the level of marital conflicts in the stud area. It was measured based on quarrels, anger, verbal abuse, physical abuse, murder and psychology abuse.

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low), 1.80-2.59 (low), 2.60-3.39 (moderate) 3.40-4.19 (high), 4.20-5.00 (very high)

According to Table 9. Counseling in respect to household quarrels was assessed as very high (agg- mean = 4.30. std. = 1.15). This implies that respondents found out that there were quarrels couples, Several respondents in the interview reported that quarrels among Christian community were frequent. They mentioned several causes which indicate witchcrafts, extra marital affairs among the spouses.

According to Onyango. (2013) states that one of the greatest problems the church faces today is that, of the broken or unhappy families due to marital conflicts. Most marriages today are far from good. Rather they are bearable, tolerable or just endurable. Those who refuse to separate or divorce, just stay together for the sake of the most part unhappy. The strength of the church lies in the unity of its constituent

family units. A church with broken families is one that cannot be effective in its mission hence (he need to educate and counsel young people who have not gotten into marriage.

According to Table 10. Counseling in respect to marital murders was assessed as low (agg. mean = 2.32. std.=1.04). This implies that (he respondents found out that there were no murders in their communities. Whereas it was assessed as low. in the interview, one respondent reported that, one deaconess had killed her husband using panga and axe.

According to (Wieland, 1980) Africa. Kenya and other parts of the world is not spared, in his study he concludes that one cannot deny the truth. Marriage is in trouble. There is an old adage that says what California is today, the world will be tomorrow. For sure California is leading the world in divorce cases, which are climbing much faster than marriages. Daily newspapers are full of case of family fights and even killings, parents abandon young children because they cannot fend for them. In Kenya Daily Nation of 25th December 2013. the Ken) an family is in danger of falling apart. Poor or lack of communication, incest financial misunderstanding, physical violence, lack of moral commitments., domestic violence and parenting are identified as the main reasons for marriage break clowns and childlessness has led to the failure of many marriages, since in practically all the local communities, children are the ultimate harvest of a marriage (Wieland, 1980). Onyango (2013) asserts that families are undergoing rapid and dramatic changes in form, composition and structures as follows: both the husband and the wife will hold job outside of the home, there is increase in single - parenthood, there is a sharp rise in single people living alone, and there is the greater prevalence of step families. Increases in cohabitation, rise in intermarriages, prevalence of out of wedlock children, the need to balance work and family responsibilities, postponement of marriage and family responsibilities, and increase in child free marriages and high divorce rate.

Legend: 1.00-1.75 (very low), 1.80-2.59 (low), 2.60-3.39 (moderate), 3.40-4.19 (high), 4.20-5.00 (very high)

In Table 10. verbal abuse as an indicator of marital conflict among respondents was assessed as very high (agg mean = 3.89. std. ~ 1.07). Respondents mentioned that there are several abuses among the spouses which include name calling. One respondent reported that her spouse had called her dead body and good for nothing. These findings are supported by Wieland. (1980) Africa, Kenya and other parts of the world are not spared

Legend: 1.00-1.79 (very low), 1.80-2.59 (low), 2.60-3.39 (moderate): 3.40-4.19 (high), 4.20-5.00 (very high)

According to Table 12. Counseling in respect to physical abuse was assessed as high (agg. mean = 3.25, std. = 1.57). It implies that the respondents found out that there is physical abuse among Christian couples. In the interviews, beating of spouses featured prominently, using iron box, threatening with kitchen knives. This is supported by Wieland. (1980) Africa. Kenya and other parts of the world are not spared. In his study he concludes that one cannot deny the truth.

According to Table 13, Counseling in respect to Psychological abuse was assessed as very high (agg. mean = 1.23, std. = 0.90). It implies that the respondents found out that there is psychological abuse among Christian couples in the communities.

Psychological abuse was assessed as very high (agg. mean = 4.32, std. = 0.09). In the interview, one respondent mentioned that one spouse need abandoned (neglect) of the family causing a lot of suffering to the family.

Given the (grand mean = 3.60, std. = 1.15), the overall marital conflict was assessed as high.

Relationship Between Marital Counseling And Marital Conflict

Objective 4 of the study was to establish the relationship between marital Relationship between marital counseling and marital Conflict in the study area. It implies that marital the relationship between marital counseling and marital conflicts. The respondents found out that there exist the relationship. Where marital counseling is low then marital conflicts increases.

According to study findings using Coefficient of Determination ($r=0.310$, $p=0.035$), marital counseling reduces marital conflict by 9.30%. This implies that the respondents found out that if premarital counseling can be offered regularly then marital conflicts will be reduced

The study further explored the contribution of each dimensions of marital counseling in this study on marital counseling. Table 14 provides the summary of the study findings.

Communication, parenting, biblical counseling, and anatomy and physiology were analyzed using multi-regression to establish the contribution of each dimension to marital conflict. According to model summary $R^2 = 0.01$. $R^2 = 0.01$; Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.909

According Table 14, study results based on standardized coefficients (beta) and p - value, indicate that, communication counseling ($b = -0.024$ or 2.4%, $p = 0.034$), financial counseling ($b = -0.034$ or 3.4%, $p = 0.027$), sexuality ($b = -0.030$ or 3.0%, $p = 0.039$), biblical counseling ($b = -0.023$ or 2.3%, $p = 0.045$), have a significant contribution to the reduction to marital conflict in the model. Marital counseling contributes most to reduction, of marital conflict. This implies that if all premarital sessions are offered effectively then it will contribute the reduction of the marital conflicts reduction in the communities.

However, marital counseling in respect to in-laws ($b=-0.001$ or 22.4%, $p=0.067$), parenting ($b = 0.021$ or 2.1%, $p = -0.053$), and anatomy and physiology ($b = -0.006$ or 2.1%, $p = -0.072$) do not have significant contribution to the reduction to marital conflict in the study area.

The study findings are consistent with the findings of Hanzal and Segrin (2008), Jacquet and Surra (2001) and (Kirk, 2002). These findings suggest that marital counseling is associated with marital stability

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the calculated P- value 0.035 which is less than 0.05 level of Significance; the null hypothesis is rejected in this study hence, there is a significant relationship between premarital counseling and marital counseling.

However, through the interview held some respondents said premarital counseling is lacking in churches. This is directly responsible for marital conflicts. Another respondent said the couple which attended premarital counseling sessions has less marital conflicts. Further it implies that communication sampled in churches was taken as a priority during premarital counseling and in the interviews respondents also supported the findings that communication during premarital counseling was a key component of premarital counseling.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This presents summary, conclusions and recommendations which drawn from the findings in line with the objectives of the study.

SUMMARY

The study assessed premarital counseling and marital conflicts among Christian couples in selected churches in Sameta sub-county Kisii County - Kenya. A sample of 13 churches, SDA churches 6; Catholic churches 2; PAG churches 5 were used. The sample size of the study was 400 respondents based on total population of 800 married couples in the study area. Descriptive, correlational and cross sectional research designs were using structural questionnaire and interview guide were used as research instruments.

It was found that, premarital counseling was assessed as high (grand mean = 3.44, std. = 1.12) and marital conflict (grand mean = 3.60, std. = 1.15) was also "high. Premarital counseling and marital conflict among

Christian couples were significantly associated ($r = -0.310$, $p = 0.035$). Dimensions of premarital counseling [communication ($b = 0.027$, $p = 0.034$); financial counseling ($b = -0.034$, $p = 0.027$); sexuality ($b = -0.030$, $p = 0.039$); biblical counseling ($b = -0.023$, $p = 0.045$)] were found to be significant contributing factors that control marital conflicts in the study area. The dimensions "in-laws ($b = -0.001$, $p = 0.067$); parenting ($b = -0.021$, $p = 0.053$); anatomy & physiology ($b = -0.006$, $p = 0.072$)] were not found to be significant contributing factors to marital conflicts

CONCLUSION

Premarital counseling and marital conflict among Christian couples are significantly associated with marital conflict. Dimensions of premarital counseling i.e., communication financial counseling, sexuality and biblical counseling are significant contributing factors that control marital conflicts in the study area. The dimensions (in-laws, parenting and anatomy & physiology are not significant contributing factors to marital conflicts in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need to train marital counselors in handling premarital and marital education.
2. There is need to involve institutional heads and policy makers in premarital courtship education.
3. Affirmative action need to be taken in order to ensure more women acquire knowledge about premarital and marital counseling skills to enable them offer counseling effectively.
4. There is need to train elders/pastors/Priests and catechists on conflict resolution and problem solving skills.
5. Fusilier studies should be conducted to assess premarital counseling and marital conflicts whether they continue being practiced and therefore there are more marital conflicts among the couples.
6. There head of institutions should apply the policy inclusion of premarital counseling and marital conflicts resolutions in institution of higher leadership and to embrace marital and family seminars/workshops regularly
7. Further studies should be conducted to assess premarital counseling and other counseling service to be started counseling in the institution.
8. Make use of marital and family professionals therapists.

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